



North American Team Study Number 08
“Open Data, Open Government, Big Data: Implications for the Management of Records in an Online Environment”

Managing Records of Citizen Engagement Initiatives: A Primer

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Summary

Launched under the InterPARES Trust (*ITrust*) project, this primer is a final product of a research project titled “The Implications of Open Government, Open Data, and Big Data on the Management of Digital Records in an Online Environment” (*NA08*). As part of the final phase of a multi-year collaborative research initiative, the primer narrows project NA08’s focus to Government-Citizen Engagement (GCE) initiatives and the recordkeeping implications such projects could present for any organizations looking to launch such an initiative or currently managing similar projects. The objectives of the primer are:

- to enhance awareness of the relationship between recordkeeping and GCE initiatives; and
- to suggest approaches for addressing recordkeeping issues that impact trust relationships between governments and their citizens.

The primer is a tool designed to help guide the drafting, execution and/or evaluation of GCE initiatives as they relate, specifically, to the open government initiatives within their organization and, more generally, to their recordkeeping needs and requirements and internal information management culture.

The International Association for Public Participation Canada (IAP2) Spectrum helps illustrate the different characteristics of GCEs, the different types of engagements and, as a result, the different types of relationships that can develop between governments and the public. As significant as these shifts in power dynamics can be for the parties involved, there are an equal amount of considerations to be made on the effects that such relationships could have on the records being produced, distributed, collected and retained as a result of the initiative. Regardless of whether a particular GCE initiative falls within the realm of an ‘Inform’-type of engagement, where power and responsibility are mostly held by the government body, or an ‘Empower’-type of engagement, where power and responsibility are placed in the hands of the community, there are important recordkeeping requirements that must be taken into account when considering the management of the records that support the initiative. The success of a GCE initiative may be threatened by lapses in existing policies and procedures; by a lack of government experience with community engagement initiatives; by an unclear assignment of control over a particular initiative, shared or otherwise assigned; or by weaknesses in an existing technological infrastructure that is being relied upon for the creation and management of the records that support the initiative. Such risks could lead to lost opportunities for government and the community participating in the initiative; a high tally of unwarranted and unsuspecting costs, or an increase in risks to the government’s current information management framework; and challenges to the reliability, completeness and authenticity of the records supporting the initiative. On a greater scale, risks may extend to the initiative as a whole, and to the trust relationship between the government and the public.

Effective GCE initiatives must be supported by a solid records management framework, one that is built upon reliable standards and practices, enabling technologies, and resourceful individuals. These individuals must then in turn be supported by an effective accountability framework, a comprehensive policy, and a governance structure that is comprised of individuals with a high level of awareness and understanding of the importance of records to the achievement of the goals and objectives of GCE initiatives. In addition to being able to identify the right strategies that can be employed to support a given GCE initiative, a comprehensive plan must also be carefully outlined and executed to help further contribute to the overall success of the initiative in question. In calling attention to the important relationship that exists between GCE initiatives and records management, the primer hopes to offer those responsible for GCE initiatives, regardless of professional background, some level of guidance in addressing the potential challenges that could arise when managing such a project.

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Managing Records of Citizen Engagement Initiatives: A Primer

1. Introduction

Government-Citizen Engagement (GCE) initiatives are part of a rapidly developing global experiment to enable citizens to participate in government. Initiatives may range from simply making information available in a transparent manner, to highly dynamic processes that interactively involve communities and individuals in decision-making. The promise is that these initiatives will create stronger links between citizens and governments, bolster trust in government, and ensure that decisions and services adequately reflect citizen needs, from local issues to national matters. The range of contexts, approaches and methods that can be attributed to citizen engagement, not to mention the various topics through which it can be explored, is extensive and continuously growing. A quick browse through Participedia, a website that tracks the occurrence of a various types of participatory projects around the world, shows specific questions ranging from how to best design a local park in Italy,¹ to broad-based citizens' parliament addressing government effectiveness in Australia.² Though there is great promise in strengthening governance and trust in government through citizen engagement, there is also the risk that these projects are initiated only to legitimize governments without adequately accounting for citizen involvement in the final results. There are therefore many challenges that must be overcome by those looking to lead successful GCE initiatives.

This primer explores this complex domain through the unique lens of records and recordkeeping. By bringing attention to the role of records in citizen engagement, the primer contributes to a stronger understanding of GCEs as a whole, and will assist in improving and evaluating specific initiatives 'on the ground.' The records and information that are generated from a citizen engagement initiative tell the story of that initiative, from its motivation and goals, through to its processes and politics, and on to its final results. A government's and/or citizens group's ability to readily access these records means that they have the opportunity to understand these activities and results, as well as properly assess and evaluate them, on their own terms, and in ways that could be beneficial to them and to future projects in which they may choose to initiate or participate in. Knowing how to identify what to keep and how to keep it in a complex and dynamic environment will assist in preserving that story. Records have the power to document evidence to bolster (or detract from) accountability. They provide citizens with the ability to advocate for rights and entitlements based on promises made during engagement initiatives, as well as provide valuable information and data about what happened and how, which is information that can be re-used for analysis, assessment and comparison.

¹ See Maria Lucia Tomasello, "'Together We Design Acque Chiare Park' Participatory Planning (Reggio Emilia, Italy)," Participedia, last modified May 29, 2016, <http://participedia.net/en/cases/together-we-design-acque-chiare-park-participatory-planning-reggio-emilia-italy>.

² See Vicki Anne Lane, "Australia's First Citizens' Parliament (Canberra, Australia)," Participedia, last modified May 23, 2016, <http://participedia.net/en/cases/australias-first-citizens-parliament-canberra-australia>.

Citizen engagement initiatives have a unique ability to transfer decision-making authority to citizens. With the transfer of this authority also comes the transfer of recordkeeping considerations, from records frameworks, policies, and practices to the standards and technologies used to create, manage and store them. How will records be defined and managed within records management frameworks, and what new implications does citizen engagement have on records and records management? How will governments and citizens navigate this complex terrain, particularly where communities (and additional parties) are delegated authority for recordkeeping? How will resources be managed? What role do technologies play? How will various parties come together to document the ‘story’ of an initiative from beginning to end? In answering these questions, this primer takes a holistic view of records management through attention to policy, governance, people, standards and practices, technology and awareness. It provides an explanation of records concepts, an analysis of the implications of citizen engagement for records management, and a discussion of the issues and strategies to deal with them with detailed example situations.

1.1 How to Read this Primer

All readers are encouraged to read all sections of the primer; however, those coming to the primer from specific backgrounds may guide their reading as follows:

- Records professionals should consult sections 2, 4, 5 and 6 for discussions on the concepts and background of citizen engagement; the implications of citizen engagement for records management; and the issues and strategies for moving the management of records relating to citizen engagement forward in their organization.
- Government citizen engagement professionals should consult sections 3, 4 and 5 for an understanding of records concepts; the implications of citizen engagement for records management; and the issues and strategies for ensuring that records management is an integral part of GCE.
- Community groups or individuals who are interested or involved in GCEs and want to learn more about recordkeeping should consult section 2 if they are unfamiliar with citizen engagement; section 3 if they are unfamiliar with recordkeeping concepts; and sections 4 to 6 for discussions of how recordkeeping may impact their initiatives.³

1.2 Background

This primer is one of the products of a research initiative titled “The Implications of Open Government, Open Data, and Big Data on the Management of Digital Records in an Online Environment” (NA08) which was initiated under the InterPARES Trust (*ITrust*) project. ITrust is a 5-year collaborative, multi-national and interdisciplinary research initiative gathering academics, professionals and students from around the world. Together, they are working to “generate theoretical and methodological frameworks to develop local, national and international policies, procedures, regulations, standards and legislation” that will assist in addressing issues concerning digital records and data entrusted to the Internet (InterPARES

³ It should be noted that the primer does not explore all the implications of records management and citizen engagement from the citizen or community-group side due to the limitations of our study.

Trust 2014). The research initiative, led by Dr. Luciana Duranti, is based at the *Centre for the International Study of Contemporary Records and Archives (CISCRA)* of the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Project NA08 has focused its research on the implications that open government, open data and big data have on the management of digital records. The project and its deliverables have been made possible by the collaboration between its research team⁴ and a number of open government leads⁵ and recordkeeping professionals⁶ spanning across the country, who agreed to share their stories and experiences throughout different phases of the project.

The project was preceded by a separate but related research initiative titled “Establishing Retention and Disposition Specifications and Schedules in a Digital Environment” (*NA09*). The project, which explored the conceptual evolution of open data and big data and how these new initiatives affect the setting of retention and disposition rules in government organizations, published its findings in a 2014 article by John McDonald and Valerie Léveillé titled “Whither the Retention Schedule in the Era of Big Data and Open Data?”, appearing in *Records Management Journal*⁷. Subsequently, project NA08 has itself spanned three separate phases. The first phase served as introductory research into the topics identified in its research objectives. It resulted in the publication of an article by Valerie Léveillé and Katherine Timms in June 2015 titled “Through a Records Management Lens: Creating a Framework for Trust in Open Government and Open Government Information” that appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*⁸. Preliminary research and consultations in the early stages of this research initiative highlighted that Government-Citizen Engagement (GCE) initiatives, an important aspect of open government, had yet to be explored from a recordkeeping perspective. As a result, a general consensus was reached among research collaborators to refocus the scope of the project to touch specifically on GCE initiatives within Canada.

This shift helped usher in the second phase of the project, which aimed to gather valuable feedback from real-world examples of GCE initiatives in Canada at various levels across government. Semi-structured interviews with open government and GCE leaders across different Canadian jurisdictions were conducted in order to gather general information on past,

⁴ Team members include John McDonald (research collaborator), Jim Suderman, (City of Toronto), Katherine Timms (Library and Archives Canada), Valerie Léveillé (freelance researcher) and Grant Hurley (freelance researcher), and Kelly Rovegno (Graduate Research Assistant, SLAIS, UBC).

⁵ Federal; Provincial: Ontario, Alberta; Municipal: Vancouver, Toronto.

⁶ ITrust leads and key members (Dr. Mary Francolli, Dr. Vicki Lemieux, etc.), Government of Canada (e.g. Treasury Board Secretariat), Government of Alberta, Government of British Columbia, Government of Ontario, City of Toronto, City of Vancouver.

⁷ John McDonald and Valerie Léveillé, “Whither the Retention Schedule in the Era of Big Data and Open Data?,” *Records Management Journal*, 24, no. 2 (2014): 99-121, accessed September 26, 2016, <http://doi.org/10.1108/RMJ-01-2014-0010>.

⁸ Valerie Léveillé and Katherine Timms, “Through a Records Management Lens: Creating a Framework for Trust in Open Government and Open Government Information,” *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*, 39, no. 2 (2015): 154-190, accessed September 26, 2016, <http://doi.org/10.1353/ils.2015.0010>.

current or future GCE initiatives, including the principles and purpose of the initiative, the challenges faced throughout with regards to the creation, management and retention of records, and the lessons learned and future considerations for similar projects. The result of these consultations led to several deliverables including case studies, a research paper assessing the impact of information technology on GCE and recordkeeping⁹, and a research paper analyzing recordkeeping and the Spectrum of Public Participation published by the International Association of Public Participation.¹⁰ This primer thus represents the third and final phase of the project.

1.3 Scope & Objectives

Knowledge gained from this research and the deliverables produced to date led to the observation that a serious gap may exist in the capacity available within organizations to address recordkeeping issues associated with GCE initiatives. Though there may be exceptions, it appeared that recordkeeping professionals had yet to develop a sufficient level of awareness of the characteristics of a GCE initiative, the recordkeeping issues being experienced by those managing GCE initiatives, the implications of these issues for the ‘business’ of the organization, and the means by which the issues can be addressed. Likewise, there was little awareness of recordkeeping considerations by GCE leads contacted by the study. These observations led to the decision to produce a primer that would be directed to records professionals in those organizations that are planning to or are currently undertaking GCE initiatives as a part of the overall open government strategy within their organization.

The objectives of the primer are:

- to enhance awareness of the relationship between recordkeeping and GCE initiatives; and
- to suggest approaches for addressing recordkeeping issues that impact trust relationships between governments and their citizens.

It aims to offer its readers a tool to help guide the drafting, execution and/or evaluation of GCE initiatives as they relate, specifically, to the open government initiatives within their organization and, more generally, to their recordkeeping needs and requirements and internal information management culture. As open government has become a staple of the modern bureaucracy, all repercussions, both anticipated and unanticipated, stemming from these projects must be taken into account and dealt with in a responsible, feasible and reasonable manner, one that helps increase transparency, establish a framework for accountability, and maintain a trust relationship between government and citizens.

The primer will be of value to records professionals, GCE professionals and those involved in managing GCE initiatives, regardless of their professional background. Given that the general

⁹ For more information, please see Grant Hurley’s “Contextualizing Technologies for Citizen Engagement: Seeking the Records and Supporting Transparency” (forthcoming).

¹⁰ For more information, please see John McDonald’s “The Contexts of Records and the Spectrum of Public Participation Research Paper”, InterPARES Trust, North American Team 08.

characteristics of GCE initiatives are common across national boundaries, it follows that the primer will have international application beyond the Canadian context in which it was developed.

1.4 Organization of the Primer

The primer begins in section 2 with an overview of the key terms and concepts that are used and referenced throughout. This section will give records managers an opportunity to gain an understanding of the evolution of open government, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and key concepts of recordkeeping as they relate to the open government landscape in Canada across all levels of government. The primer situates GCE initiatives as a subset of open government and explores their characteristics, their evolution and the tools – for example, the International Association for Public Participation Canada (IAP2) Spectrum – that help us to understand these initiatives as they relate to open government and recordkeeping. An analysis of citizen engagement and recordkeeping will follow. Section 3 looks to give GCE leads some background on the role of records and framework. Section 4 discusses the characteristics of the GCE environment and the implications these characteristics have for recordkeeping. Section 5 identifies key issues concerning GCE and recordkeeping, and proposes strategies for addressing the issues in the context of the components of the framework. Section 6 provides readers with guidance on establishing a comprehensive plan designed to help records management professionals position themselves in a manner that is effective and relevant, especially in terms of their relationship with other GCE professionals and leads.

2. Open Government & Citizen Engagement: Definitions and Concepts

2.1 Definitions

accountability: The obligation to answer for actions for which one is responsible.¹¹

citizen engagement: a communicative, interactive and iterative process or initiative that actively involves citizens in policy or program development at any level of government.¹² Citizen engagement processes and initiatives aim to share or transfer decision-making power from governments to citizens by using “collective problem-solving and prioritization.”¹³ Citizen engagement initiatives may make use of technologies to connect with citizens, but technology use is not a required element.

synonyms: citizen participation; civic participation; civic engagement; open dialogue

open data: Data available to anyone that may be used for any purpose and that is in a structure that facilitates its use at little or no charge.¹⁴

open government: An approach designed to provide greater access to unrestricted information held by public bodies in order to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement and participation, to accomplish a larger outcome of building and enhancing citizens' trust in their governments.¹⁵

open information: the release of government records and published materials for public use, typically in unstructured formats.¹⁶

transparency: (The condition of) timely disclosure of information about an individual's or organization's activities and decisions, especially to support accountability to all stakeholders.¹⁷

2.2 Tracing the Evolution of Open Government

Open government is a concept intended to increase trust in government through access to information and greater involvement in government processes. It brings together the principles of transparency and accountability, which are supported through access to information, with citizen engagement, which is intended to strengthen communication between governments and citizens and open decision-making processes to active citizen participation. Practices

¹¹ InterPARES Trust, “Accountability,” Terminology Database, accessed September 22 2016, <http://arstweb.clayton.edu/interlex/>.

¹² Hurley, forthcoming.

¹³ Amanda Sheedy, Mary Pat MacKinnon, Sonia Pitre, and Judy Watling, *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2008), 5, accessed September 22, 2016, http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf.

¹⁴ InterPARES Trust, “Open Data,” Terminology Database.

¹⁵ Ibid., “Open Government.”

¹⁶ Léveillé and Timms, 159.

¹⁷ InterPARES Trust, “Transparency,” Terminology Database.

enabling open information, open data and citizen engagement are the most common manifestations of open government. While open data and open information programs supported by senior officials as strategic directions have become the new norm, the promise of citizen engagement is arguably just beginning to be realized. As governments plan and implement GCE initiatives, it is crucial that practitioners and records and information managers understand its ideas and outcomes. Records emerging from citizen engagement initiatives provide key evidence of the inputs, analysis and final products of an engagement. Without this evidence, it is difficult for citizens to know how their participation influenced actual results. This section first discusses the history of open government and the Open Government Partnership. Second, it surveys the practice of open government in Canada. Finally, it defines and describes citizen engagement and the IAP2 Spectrum, an assessment tool for CE initiatives, as a unique and developing aspect of open government.

As a concept, “open government” has had many meanings over its long lifetime.¹⁸ Its Western basis extends from the challenging of many authoritarian governments during the Enlightenment period, when the principle that governments should be accountable to citizens was still a radical idea: an “open government” was one that treated citizens equally by admitting them to open democratic participation.¹⁹ Early concepts established during this period that link to post-World War II concepts of “open government” were the freedom of the press (instituted in the late 1700s by countries such as Sweden and Denmark) and the availability of information via public archives created by the state. After World War II, “open government” came to refer to access to information and the related concepts of accountability and transparency.²⁰ Challenges to the secrecy of records resulted in freedom of information legislation in democratic governments from the 1960s onward, including the 1966 Freedom of Information Act in the United States, and the 1983 Access to Information Act in Canada.²¹

Recently, the concept of open government has come to include uses of technology as an aspect of its principles. This turn originated during the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the use of new technologies that enabled faster, more personalized dissemination of information began to be actively taken up by governments.²² As a result, open government came to encompass not only the continued disclosure of previously unavailable information, but also methods to make information accessible and usable through open data and open information initiatives. The emphasis that President Barack Obama’s Administration put on transparency was a turning

¹⁸ See Amanda Clarke and Mary Francoli, “What’s in a Name? A Comparison of ‘Open Government’ Definitions Across Seven Open Government Partnership Members,” *JeDEM* 6, no. 3 (2014): 248-266, accessed September 22, 2016, <http://jedem.org/index.php/jedem/article/view/227>.

for a detailed analysis of the term and its history.

¹⁹ William Cuninghame, *Principles of the Constitution of Governments* (London: James Ridgway, 1811), 48, accessed September 22, 2016, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=fHIIAAAAYAAJ&dq=Principles%20of%20the%20Constitution%20of%20Governments&pg=PR1#v=onepage&q=Principles%20of%20the%20Constitution%20of%20Governments&f=false>.

²⁰ Clarke and Francoli, 248.

²¹ Léveillé and Timms, 156.

²² Harlan Yu and David G. Robinson, “The New Ambiguity of ‘Open Government,’” *UCLA Law Review Discourse* 59 (2011): 190-195.

point for open government. The Obama Administration's Open Government Directive implemented its principles of transparency, participation and collaboration within a technological framework and directed agencies to publish information online in accessible formats. The Obama Administration's influence has been taken up the world over via the Open Government Partnership's initiatives as open government has been embraced by nations seeking its economic and reputational benefits.²³

2.3 The Open Government Partnership (OGP)

The Open Government Partnership is a multinational organization that was launched with the *Open Government Declaration*, its key guiding document, in 2011. The United States and seven other countries endorsed the *Declaration* as founding signatories, and since then 61 additional countries have signed on. Following a preamble that declares the values of civic participation, transparency, anti-corruption and "greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity in our own countries," the *Declaration* is divided into four sections. They are: "Increase the availability of information about governmental activities," "Support civic participation," "Implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administrations," and "Increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability."²⁴ A nation's membership in the Open Government Partnership means they must prepare an action plan with set goals and timelines, and report regularly on their progress. For example, Canada has developed three consecutive action plans to date that cover 2012 to 2018, and their section of the OGP website includes independent reports on their progress. The OGP has since been a primary driver of open government in Canada, and though it applies to the federal level of government, its influence and principles has extended to provinces and municipalities. Indeed, in July 2015 the OGP established a pilot for sub-national (provincial and municipal) governments.²⁵

2.4 The Practice of Open Government in Canada

Open government in Canada has been implemented at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government. In their 2015 scan of open government initiatives in Canada, Léveillé and Timms identified how the principles of open government have been realized by governments. At the federal level, the government is concerned with implementing the OGP action plan in three key areas: open information, open data, and open dialogue.

Open information involves making government records and information available, including the results of access to information requests. In the Canadian federal context, it also includes initiatives such as "open science" and "open contracting" to open format-specific types of

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Open Government Partnership, "Open Government Declaration," accessed September 26, 2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-government-declaration>.

²⁵ See Open Government Partnership, "Press Release: OGP Global Summit Ends with Progress on Global Goals and Implementation of Open Government on a Local Level," accessed September 26, 2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/open-government-partnership/2015/10/29/press-release-ogp-global-summit-ends-progress-global>.

government information. Open information may also include the results of proactive disclosure initiatives, which are based on the principle that all information should be made available by default except when there are authorized exceptions.

Open data is information made available through the disclosure of structured datasets as opposed to individual records. Open data is distinguished as a subset of open information for its emphasis on accessibility through computer processing-friendly formats or user-friendly web portals; the large quantity of information available; its reusability to allow manipulation and redistribution; and its generally free use. However, many jurisdictions make use of data licenses that stipulate certain terms, such as citing the source data, and may limit access to sensitive data to certain approved parties.²⁶ As a result of these characteristics, open data is often valued for its ability to support significant research and business purposes through third party use. The Canadian government is currently developing an integrated portal for data sets produced across jurisdictions in Canada, including concomitant data and licensing standards development.

Finally, the federal government's open dialogue program includes a single initiative, "Consulting with Canadians," which involves standardizing processes and practices for public consultations and developing a government-wide consultation portal to involve citizens.²⁷ "Open dialogue" is a synonym for citizen engagement or participation, the concepts of which will be discussed more fully below.

At the provincial and municipal levels, Léveillé and Timms' scan reveals that the first response to open government has been the provision of open data and open information. The development of open data catalogues and portals, and the necessary standards, business processes, and educational resources to support them, has generally taken priority over citizen engagement. Many Canadian provinces and municipalities now maintain fully functional open data sites, including British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Toronto and Vancouver.

The emphasis on data and information is symptomatic of the maturity of citizen engagement in Canada. Provincial and municipal jurisdictions are beginning to explore this aspect of open government more fully through consultation initiatives that address public policy, legislation and decision-making. For example, the British Columbia government reached out to industry stakeholders and the general public to seek feedback on its revision of liquor control laws from 2013-14. The process involved collecting information from the public online through social media, blog posts, and e-mail, and in person for identified stakeholders. The results were analyzed using a text analysis tool and a final report was produced with recommendations for

²⁶ See "Open Government Licence – Canada" for an example: <http://open.canada.ca/en/open-government-licence-canada>.

²⁷ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Canada's Action Plan on Open Government 2014-2016: Mid-Term Self Assessment Report* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2016), <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canadas%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Open%20Government%202014-2016%20Mid-term%20Self-assessment%20Report.pdf>.

new legislation, policies, and programs.²⁸ An approach at the City of Toronto has involved creating a space for ongoing, smaller scale consultations. In 2014-15, the City piloted a citizen engagement tool called IdeaSpaceTo based on a platform designed by a company called MindMixer. Topics and questions were described in detail by City representatives, and citizens were encouraged to submit “ideas,” which were specific solutions to a posed problem. City representatives responded to ideas, and all were able to add further comment and promote certain ideas.²⁹ Another initiative that ran from December 2014 to June 2015 asked citizens about new bicycle lanes in certain sections of the city and whether they should be made permanent. While these are all noteworthy examples of open dialogue-type initiatives, most governments in Canada, including the federal government, are still at the learning stage when it comes to designing and conducting citizen engagement initiatives.

2.5 Citizen Engagement as Subset of Open Government

As emphasized in the *Open Government Declaration*, citizen engagement is a cornerstone of open government. However, the concept is unique in contrast to the more straightforward provision of information and data because it involves a process of exchange between citizens and governments. Citizen engagement is a communicative, interactive and iterative process or initiative that actively involves citizens in policy or program development at any level of government. The level of engagement and flow of information (described in more detail in the IAP2 Spectrum below) can range from simply making information available, to gathering feedback and ideas, and on to more complex relationships where individuals and groups are transferred greater decision-making power and authority to deliberate issues and their solutions.³⁰ Though many citizen engagement initiatives originate in government, other instances may involve citizen-originated initiatives that are designed to engage government. When more complex, two-way engagement initiatives are in play, citizen engagement processes and initiatives may share or transfer decision-making power from governments to citizens by using “collective problem-solving and prioritization.”³¹ In many other cases, citizens may submit feedback or ideas, but governments will take authority over final decision-making power. Successful citizen engagement programs are grounded in transparent, trusted information and mutual respect between all involved participants. Individuals are given an equal chance to speak or contribute, and their contributions are treated with respect.³² These principles do not assume that citizens may not have adversarial interests in an engagement initiative either between each other or with governments, but that in order for the results of initiatives to be trustworthy, the process has to take place in an environment of trust. As is clear from the difficulties in establishing definitional boundaries for the concept of citizen

²⁸ See <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/liquorpolicyreview/>.

²⁹ The IdeaSpaceTo site is no longer publicly active. A press release describing the project is available here: <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=af71df79b2df6410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&nrkey=87EB51596C675E6085257D3C0052C9BE>.

³⁰ Hurley, forthcoming.

³¹ Sheedy, 5.

³² Ibid.

engagement, it is highly context-dependent: each initiative will differ in its rationale, intentions, participants and methods of determining success.

The benefits of citizen engagement are manifold: strong citizen engagement initiatives can help remedy the power inequities between citizens and governments, boost the value of government leadership through creating stronger governance and policy, and help citizens cultivate a better understanding of the issues their communities face.³³ Critics of citizen engagement point to the inefficiencies created by the time, money and effort used to consult citizens, both on the part of governments and citizens' lost time.³⁴ Citizen engagement initiatives may also be criticized as merely token measures to make governments appear more accountable and transparent without necessarily acting on the results of an initiative. The question remains for these critics whether citizen contributions have a meaningful or lasting impact on decisions or actions.

The principles behind citizen engagement have existed for as long as governments have actively sought citizen support and feedback, whether through the basic function of elections, or town hall meetings, surveys, consultative studies and the influence of lobbying and protests. However, the field has changed to develop into an aspect of the open government movement and the broader field of participatory democracy, which actively solicits citizen involvement at the beginning of a decision making process rather than working to reactively respond to citizen feedback after a decision has been made. Robert B. Denhardt and Janet Denhardt write in a 2000 article and subsequent book titled *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering* that these concepts came from a reevaluation of government practices in the 1990s. Where prior governments had attempted to learn from private sector practices and to manage government as a business, the "new public service" was motivated to "place citizens at the center."³⁵ "Administrators should see citizens as citizens (rather than merely as voters, clients, or customers)," they write, "and should share authority and reduce control, and ... should trust in the efficacy of collaboration."³⁶ These concepts are clearly connected to current ideas around citizen engagement initiatives that make use of technologies for interaction with governments, including social media platforms for creating input, and processing technologies to analyze this input. For example, the British Columbia government produced a plan called *Citizens at the Centre: Government 2.0* (2010)³⁷ to communicate its plans for open government technology as a means of delivering government information and services to citizens, and supporting greater participation and industry innovation. The plan emphasizes the key role that technology will

³³ Tina Nabatchi, "An Introduction to Deliberative Civic Engagement" *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*, ed. Tina Nabatchi, John Gastil, G. Michael Weiksner and Matt Leighninger (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁵ Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt, "The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering," *Public Administration Review* 60 no. 6 (2000): 550, accessed September 26, 2016, <http://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00117>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 552.

³⁷ See Province of British Columbia, *Citizens @ the Centre: B.C. Government 2.0*. (Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia, 2010), accessed September 26, 2016, http://www.gov.bc.ca/cit/citizens_engagement/gov20.pdf.

play “to deliver services that better support citizens and help them meet their needs,” with the expectation that citizens will increasingly turn to web-based venues to interact with their government directly.³⁸ Now that such initiatives are in place and being actively developed, an important method for evaluating the kinds of initiatives that spring from citizen engagement as a principle is the IAP2 Spectrum discussed in detail below.

2.6 The IAP2 Spectrum

The IAP2 Spectrum was developed by the International Association for Public Participation in 1999 and has been widely used by practitioners managing engagement initiatives since. It was developed alongside the IAP2’s “Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation” and corresponding “Code of Ethics for Public Participation Practitioners.” The Spectrum includes five types of engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower (see Fig. 1). As one moves to the right of the Spectrum, the level of input and power a community or the public has over government decision-making increases. A second section of the chart involves what promises governments make to citizens at each level. Whereas ‘inform’ at the far left involves the presentation of accurate information (and a government’s promise to keep citizens informed), the ‘empower’ level at the far right involves enabling decision-making to occur solely in the hands of the public, with a government’s promise to implement these decisions. Such power might be entrusted to a community organization or other formal group, or placed in the hands of individuals, as in elections and referendums. An example of a degree in between these is ‘involve,’ where citizens are consulted for information throughout a process and this information directly influences a government’s final decision.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Figure 1: The IAP2 Spectrum (International Association for Public Participation, 2014). Image copyright the International Association for Public Participation, www.iap2.org. Image used with permission

³⁸ Ibid., 8.

While the movement from left to right generally indicates increasing complexity and a shift in power from the government to the public, no type of engagement is necessarily “better” than another: its application is flexible and descriptive rather than prescriptive.³⁹ Secondly, the IAP2 places a strong emphasis on the government side of the power equation as initiators, and can imply that participation is a simpler process than it can be in reality, particularly as the dynamic between citizens and governments may be complex and multi-phased. Nevertheless, the Spectrum remains a highly relevant tool for understanding and categorizing engagement initiatives and understanding their characteristics.

2.7 Examples of Engagements on the IAP2 Spectrum

The following examples are designed to help enhance understanding of the five types of engagement.

Inform: A municipal government publishes information on its website about the steps it takes for approving building development proposals. The published information attempts to increase the transparency of the process on how development decisions are made.

Consult: A provincial government conducts a survey and a series of public hearings on citizen attitudes towards proposed changes to the primary school education curriculum. The consultation is intended to obtain feedback and inform potential alternatives or decisions on the curriculum content.

Involve: A federal government department invites proposals for new legislation regulating telecommunications. Representatives from the department meet with individual stakeholders and representatives from community organizations and industry groups. The representatives seek advice on the means by which those impacted by the proposed legislation can be consulted and how any concerns raised as a result of the consultation process can be brought forward for consideration as drafts of the legislation are prepared.

Collaborate: A municipal transit authority wants to implement bus routes in a new suburb with a high population density. The transit authority and a newly-formed community group concerned about transit planning across the suburb establish a formal partnership to decide, jointly, on where, when, and how the bus routes will be implemented.

Empower: A provincial government delegates the responsibility to develop a specific section of a proposed health services plan for a region to a citizen’s jury of randomly selected individuals from the region. The government will incorporate the section in the plan and implement whatever decisions the citizen’s jury makes.

³⁹ Max Hardy, “Reflections on the IAP2 Spectrum,” accessed on September 26, 2016, <http://maxhardy.com.au/reflections-on-the-iap2-spectrum/>.

3. Recordkeeping Concepts

If one is to understand the implications of GCE's for the management of records then it is important to understand the concept of 'records.' While the previous section explained GCE concepts this section explains fundamental recordkeeping concepts and how they relate to the management of GCE initiatives. The section provides an overview of the characteristics and qualities of records and describes the components of the records management framework that must be in place if records are to be managed effectively for as long as they are required.⁴⁰ The GCE concepts described in the previous section and the records concepts described in this section set the stage for the exploration of recordkeeping issues and strategies that will be explored in Section 4.

3.1 The Role of Records in the Context of Citizen Engagement

Records⁴¹ are at the core of any professional or personal life. They are created out of necessity or circumstance, as a result of specific procedures, events, actions, decisions and/or transactions, and subsequently retained for purposes of preserving corporate or human memory for as long as deemed necessary. Records result from transactions supporting business processes. Examples in a government context include the transactions associated with the processing of applications for benefits, licenses, etc. or the drafting of policies, or the conduct of research projects. Collectively, records tell the story of the processing of the application, of the drafting of the policy, of the conduct of the research project, etc. In general terms, GCE initiatives are little different from other government processes. They are planned, designed, executed, and evaluated. Similarly, the records resulting from GCE initiatives are little different from other records in terms of their role. When well managed, they serve to tell the 'story' of, for example, a specific initiative by the government to disseminate information to a given community group, of a sensitive consultation process between the government and a community organization, or of a government-community collaboration. Regardless of the nature of the records' content, their creation, capture, and preservation are instrumental in the planning, design, execution and evaluation of GCE initiatives.

Records serve multiple **purposes** when they are complete, authentic and well managed.

- Records can serve as evidence. For instance, they can be used to demonstrate that in the context of a partnership between a given government organization and a community organization, both organizations respected the terms of their 'collaboration.'
- Records enable organizations to hold themselves accountable pursuant to various laws. For instance, in an 'inform' engagement, where sensitive information was disseminated to the public, citizens can make a formal request under the Access to Information Law for records documenting the process by which the disseminated information was

⁴⁰ An expanded discussion of the concepts described in this section including an elaboration of the concepts of 'data' and 'information', as well as the concept of a 'business process' is provided in Appendix A.

⁴¹ A record is "a document that is created or received in the course of a business activity and is set aside for later use." (InterPARES Trust, "Record," Terminology Database).

produced.

- Records support the attainment of individual rights and entitlements. For instance, in an ‘empower’ engagement, the records documenting the government’s willingness to accept the recommendations of a given community organization concerning the disposition of specific crown lands could be used to hold the government organization to account for the actions it takes in response to the recommendations.
- Records are the source of valuable data and information that can be analyzed to support purposes beyond those that led to the creation of the records. For instance, as the result of a ‘consultation,’ the data from completed survey forms when merged with data from census records and other related sources could be used to perform analyses that would not have been possible using the survey data alone.

The **context** of records defines their characteristics, determines their meaning, and drives the way in which they are managed. There are five types of context⁴²:

- **Juridical-administrative context:** The legal and organizational system in which the creating body belongs. For instance, the government organization engaging in a ‘consultation’ with a given community is enabled to do so pursuant to laws governing its responsibilities, as well as policies that both guide and control its functions.
- **Provenancial context:** The creating body, its mandate, structure and functions. For instance, in a ‘collaboration,’ the mandate, structure and functions of both the participating government organization and the community organization, as well as any supporting secretariat to the collaboration would provide the ‘provenancial’ context for records generated as a result of the collaboration.
- **Procedural context:** The business procedure in the course of which a record is created. For instance, in an ‘empower’ engagement, the government organization would enable the empowerment of a given community organization through agreements that would be developed in accordance with formal procedures supported in both the government organization and the community organization. Records resulting from the process, including the agreement itself, would document the terms of the empowerment.
- **Technological context:** The characteristics of the hardware, software, and other components of an electronic computing system in which records are created, or, more simply, the hardware and software environment in which the record exists and/or was created. For instance, in an ‘involve’ engagement, the government organization may use a range of technologies to communicate with and ‘involve’ a given community organization. Both organizations may use a variety of technologies, including electronic document and records management systems, to manage the records resulting from the engagement.

⁴² InterPARES, Focus Task Force, “Appendix 07: Diplomatic Analysis Template,” [electronic version] in *International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) 2: Experiential, Interactive and Dynamic Records*, Luciana Duranti and Randy Preston, eds. (Padova, Italy: Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana, 2008), accessed on September 26, 2016, http://www.interpares.org/ip2/display_file.cfm?doc=ip2_book_appendix_07.pdf.

- **Documentary context:** The archival fonds to which a record belongs, and its internal structure. For instance, in a ‘collaboration,’ records documenting a given partnership between a government organization and a community organization could be held by three entities: the government organization, the community organization and the secretariat to the partnership. While there may be one fonds (i.e. records documenting the collaboration), there may be three distinct approaches to how the records are organized and structured.

The value of these records is rooted in their ability to reflect the following qualities for the length of time the records are required to serve their multiple purposes:

- **Authenticity:** The trustworthiness of a record as a record; i.e., the quality of a record that is what it purports to be and that is free from tampering or corruption.⁴³
- **Reliability:** The trustworthiness of a record as a statement of fact. It exists when a record can stand for the fact it is about, and is established by examining the completeness of the record's form and the amount of control exercised on the process of its creation.⁴⁴
- **Integrity:** The quality of being complete and unaltered in all essential respects. With identity, a component of authenticity.⁴⁵

As the five types of context of a record are clearly identified and established, the record’s characteristics, as listed above, are also defined, which in turn gives value to the record and defines the ways in which the record is to be managed through its life cycle. The records **life cycle** is the life span of a record through three stages: creation, maintenance and use, and final disposition. Records must be capable of respecting the characteristics and qualities described above, together with certain functionality e.g. behavior, reproduceability, manipulability – i.e. the extraction and manipulation of data from the records – throughout all three stages of the life cycle.

Records underpin the ability of organizations, including organizations leading or participating in GCE initiatives, to achieve their operational and strategic goals and to hold themselves accountable for their decisions and actions. Records that are not well managed, including those resulting from GCE initiatives, may be placed at risk when:

- They are not created or acquired when needed;
- They are not found or are not accessible;
- They are unreliable (not accurate, timely, complete, relevant, authentic, etc.);
- Their creation, collection, storage are unnecessarily duplicated;
- They are poorly and inconsistently identified, described and filed;
- They are not shared when needed;
- Privacy and security are not protected;
- Low value records are kept too long;

⁴³ InterPARES Trust, “Authenticity,” Terminology Database.

⁴⁴ Ibid., “Reliability.”

⁴⁵ Ibid., “Integrity.”

- Important records are destroyed without authority;
- Valuable records are not preserved; and
- Business, information management and technology needs are not coordinated.

In the case of GCE initiatives, these risks may be a result of the following factors:

- There is a lack of understanding of records management and limited awareness of its importance in support of GCE initiatives.
- Records management and technology requirements are not integrated or well aligned to support the goals and objectives of GCE initiatives.
- The accountability framework for managing records resulting from GCE initiatives is weak and fragmented.
- The framework of policies, standards, practices, systems and people needed to support the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives is insufficiently developed.
- There is a lack of the knowledge and tools required to assess the quality and integrity of the framework and to take remedial action as required.

These factors are being exacerbated because the majority (and sometimes all) of the records resulting from GCE initiatives are in digital form. Digital records are fragile, and their integrity is dependent upon a confusing and quickly changing array of hardware and software. Unless digital records are carefully managed and protected, organizations leading and/or participating in GCE initiatives will be unable to guarantee their availability, authenticity and usability over time and across sites.

Poor records management threatens the ability of government and community organizations alike to achieve the goals and objectives of GCE initiatives. At the core of these issues, where records cannot be found, the accuracy of the information in the records cannot be trusted, or the records are lost or destroyed, is the erosion of trust in those organizations leading GCE initiatives. Ultimately, the outcome is the lack of trust in the results of GCE initiatives and in the decisions that are made based on an analysis of those results.

3.2 Framework for Managing Records

The authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of records and their ability to serve their multiple roles for as long as they are required is dependent upon the quality of the records management framework established by a given records-creating organization.

The components of the framework for managing records are little different from those established for the management of other valued assets within a given organization, such as human resources and financial resources. All are based on asset management principles and all are dedicated to supporting the effective management of the objectives, goals, and functions of the organization. In the case of records management, the components of the framework are as follows:

- **Laws and policies** that assign accountability for the activities associated with the capture and management of records;
- **Standards and practices** that enable the management of records as ‘records’;
- **Systems and technologies** that support the capability to capture, organize, retain, make available and otherwise manage records throughout their life cycle;
- **People** who have the required knowledge and abilities to plan, design, implement and maintain the framework for managing records;
- A **management and governance structure** that allocates and controls the resources for managing records; and
- A level of **awareness** among all of those involved in creating, capturing and managing records about the importance of records and their responsibility for their proper management.

Ideally, while part of the framework will reside in a central office, such as a records management office, other parts will be integrated in the frameworks supporting the administrative and operational programs of the organization. An example of this integration from a human resources management perspective is the manager of a program unit in the organization hiring and managing staff according to human resources policies and rules established centrally by the human resources office but integrated into the policies and rules for managing his or her program. An example from a records management perspective is the same manager managing the records resulting from his or her program activities in accordance with policies and procedures established by the records management office but integrated into the policies and procedures for managing his or her program.

3.3 Configuration of the Records Management Framework

Similar to the frameworks for managing human and financial resources, the management of a framework for managing records typically exists at the level of the organization. An example is a records management office located in a central ‘corporate’ area of the organization such as ‘administration’, an ‘information management’ department, or a ‘corporate secretariat.’ This enables the achievement of a number of organizational goals, such as the ability to respond to legal obligations, the opportunity to exchange information across the organization and maximize its value through policies and the application of standards, and the potential to reduce costs and achieve economies of scale.

While the framework may be established at the whole-of-organization or at a corporate level, it is normally configured to support the requirements of the individual business lines or programs of the organization. For instance, just as human and financial resources are configured to support the communications function of an organization and its role in disseminating information to a given community, so too should the records management framework be configured to capture and manage the records resulting from the dissemination activity. Similarly, it should be configured to support the capture and management of the activities associated with a consultation, or with undertaking a collaboration, or empowering a given

community organization to carry out tasks normally associated with a given government organization.

The framework may also extend beyond a single organization. For instance, in a GCE initiative it may extend to embrace one or several government organizations and/or one or several community organizations. The specific configuration of the extended framework, however, will be influenced by the nature of the GCE initiative. In 'inform', 'consult' and 'involve' engagements for instance, the frameworks in each of the given government and community organizations may be distinct even though they are supporting the same joint activity. In an 'inform' engagement, for instance, the government may support a distinct framework for disseminating information while the community organization may support its own distinct framework for receiving information. Typically there would be little if any overlap between the frameworks. Similarly, in an 'empower' engagement, the government's records management framework might be used to manage the records documenting the empowerment while the records management framework in the community organization might be used to manage the records documenting document the empowered activity, such as the development of a specific chapter of a national strategy on water resources management that would be accepted by the government. The potential for overlap may increase in 'involve' and 'consult' engagements as the government organization and community organization interact more closely to achieve common goals such as the development of methods for consulting a given community or managing a shared consultation process. In cases such as these where the capture and maintenance of a documentary record of the entire activity may be important, the records management frameworks of both the government and community organizations may overlap. In a 'collaboration', an entirely new framework for managing records may be established. One part may reside with the participating government organization(s), another with the participating community organization(s) and a third with the secretariat or similar governance and management structure established for the 'collaboration.' If it is important that a complete record of the collaboration be captured and maintained then it follows that the records management frameworks of all three entities (government, community, secretariat) may be required to overlap.

Regardless of the type of engagement or the configuration of the records management framework supporting a given engagement, the quality and integrity of the records will be dependent on the quality and integrity of the framework. At a broader level, the quality and integrity of the records management framework will be dependent upon the overall framework for managing the GCE initiative itself. If there are weaknesses in the policies, procedures, standards, technologies, and governance/management structures supporting the management of the GCE initiative then it follows that the quality and integrity of the supporting records management framework may be placed at risk.

4. Citizen Engagement: The Recordkeeping Implications

An important pre-requisite to identifying the issues and strategies for managing records resulting from GCE initiatives is understanding the characteristics of the GCE environment and the implications these characteristics have for recordkeeping. With this pre-requisite in mind, the section highlights the characteristics of GCE initiatives and their recordkeeping implications as organized according to the five records contexts described in Section 3.1. The section sets the stage for the following section which articulates the records issues organizations may face as they undertake GCE initiatives and proposes strategies to address the issues. While the issues and strategies focus on the recordkeeping dimension, they should also help guide strategies for enhancing the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of GCE initiatives themselves.

4.1 Key GCE Characteristics and their Recordkeeping Implications

The following descriptions of the characteristics of GCE initiatives and their recordkeeping implications are not meant to be exhaustive. They are also tentative. Although case studies conducted by the InterPARES NA08 team revealed interesting characteristics about the specific GCE initiatives under study, they are not conclusive for all GCE initiatives. This meant that any description of GCE characteristics had to be based on what could be found in various sources, combined with the knowledge and experience of those developing the primer. In contrast, there was a rich body of knowledge to draw upon concerning recordkeeping and its role in modern organizations. As a result, it was possible to make suppositions about the GCE landscape and to superimpose on that landscape some concrete perspectives on the recordkeeping implications.

The individual sub-sections are organized in line with the five records contexts described in Section 3.1. The intent is to place the characteristics of GCE initiatives within the context of the five records contexts, thus illustrating the close symbiotic relationship that exists between the GCE initiatives and the records resulting from such initiatives. If the records issues are to be understood effectively, then it is important to understand the characteristics of GCE initiatives from a recordkeeping perspective. For more information on the characteristics of GCE initiatives and how these relate to the management of records, consult “The Contexts of Records and the Spectrum of Public Participation” (McDonald, 2016).

4.1.1 The Juridical-Administrative Context and GCE Initiatives

Government-citizen engagements in an open government context appear to be at various stages of maturity depending on their type. Many government organizations seem to understand how to conduct ‘inform’, ‘consult’, and even ‘involve’ engagements but generally speaking, only a few appear to have had much experience in conducting ‘empower’

engagements.⁴⁶ In the case of ‘collaborations,’ many seem to still be learning what it means to establish effective governance and management frameworks that account for all of the issues that are associated with sharing accountability among participating organizations, as well as with the organizational entity that may have been created to administer the collaboration; for example, the secretariat created to administer a community-government partnership.

Recordkeeping strategies should be tailored to the level of maturity of the organization in terms of its level of engagement with citizens. For instance, there would seem to be little point in developing recordkeeping strategies for ‘empower’ initiatives if the organization has yet to support this type of initiative. Similarly, if a government organization and a community organization lack the experience and tools required to manage a ‘collaboration,’ this would be expected to have an impact on the extent to which recordkeeping strategies can be implemented. If the management and governance structures for a ‘collaboration’ are weak, then it follows that the framework for managing records may be weak. Conversely, if both the government organization and community organization establish a well-managed framework for managing the ‘collaboration,’ then it follows that the potential for the recordkeeping framework to be well-designed is high. The problem arises when one organization becomes concerned that the other is failing to respect generally-accepted practices for managing a ‘collaboration’ and, as a result, the records. The extent to which one organization can impose recordkeeping requirements on the other as a pre-requisite to the ‘collaboration’ can become problematic, especially if the organizations reside in entirely different jurisdictions.

GCE are not exclusive to government and community organizations or organized groups. They can also take place between a government and individual citizens, or between a government and both individuals *and* organized community groups or organizations. For instance, a government may conduct (or distribute) a survey at a ‘citizen-level,’ gathering individual results (i.e. one survey per one citizen) as they are filled out and returned to the government department overseeing the project. Records resulting from the survey would presumably be captured and managed by the government. From the point of view of the individual, however, whether these records are kept or managed would be entirely up to them. As a result, in preparing this primer, it was assumed that the recordkeeping implications at the level of the individual would be far less significant than would be the case for a community organization or group.

It was also assumed that the role of the individual as an individual interacting in a GCE initiative would become less prominent as one moved to levels of participation that were to the right of the Spectrum, where formal community groups would become the focus of attention. In an ‘inform’ engagement for instance, where the focus is on the government organization broadcasting information to a given community – for example, disseminating information to

⁴⁶ This observation is borne out elsewhere. A study of citizen engagement initiatives in Latin American countries conducted by the Open Government Partnership showed that 79% of the 80 commitments surveyed fell in the Inform, Consult or Involve range of the IAP2. See J. Preston Whitt, *Civic participation in Latin American OGP commitments* (Open Government Partnership, 2015), accessed September 26, 2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/LatAm%20Participation%20Web.pdf>.

individuals in a community about a change in a municipal policy – the capture and maintenance of records resulting from the actions of an individual citizen being ‘informed’ by a government organization may be important from the perspective of the individual citizen. From the perspective of community organizations representing individuals in a given community, recordkeeping at the level of the individual may be of less importance than the capture and maintenance of records resulting from engagement types where the iterative and dynamic interactions between a community organization and the government are strong. In an ‘empower’ initiative for instance, the nature of the initiative (i.e. empowering a community to develop a chapter of a forthcoming strategic plan being produced by the government) will likely require the community to organize itself to carry out the ‘empower’-type activity. In this case, the community organization, rather than the individual, might be expected to play a more dominant role.

In a GCE initiative, the extent of the formality of the relationship between an individual and/or a community organization and a government organization may range from the very informal and nearly non-existent, in the case of ‘inform’ initiatives, to the very formal, as reflected in a partnership terms of reference established to oversee a ‘collaboration’ or an agreement established to oversee an ‘empower’ initiative. Typically, GCE initiatives do not extend to contracts between for instance, government organizations and third party private sector companies or other organizations. This definition of the scope of GCE initiatives and their governance has implications for recordkeeping. On a relative scale, it is much easier to incorporate recordkeeping requirements in a contract, the terms of which are being **controlled** by a government organization than it is to incorporate these same requirements in a ‘terms of reference’ or agreement that is being **negotiated** with community organizations participating in a GCE initiative.

4.1.2 The Provenancial Context and GCE Initiatives

There are multiple types of community organizations and multiple ways in which the government interacts with these organizations. For the purpose of this primer,

“community organization covers a series of activities at the community level aimed at bringing about desired improvement in the social well-being of individuals, groups and neighborhoods. It is being often used synonymous to community work, community development and community mobilization. It can represent both community-based organizations, operating as civil society non-profits, and also as a function of organizing within communities defined by geographical location, shared work space, and/or shared experience or concerns. Community organizing is a democratic instrument to create sustained social change. Community organization is a process by which a community

identifies needs and takes action, and in doing so... develops co-operative attitudes and practices.”⁴⁷

Community organizations may take many forms, such as public interest groups, associations representing the interests of specific communities, and organizations created temporarily to address specific issues. Some are formally incorporated, with a written constitution and a board of directors, while others are much smaller and are more informal. Regardless of their size or type, community organizations participating in any of the five levels of the IAP2 Spectrum will be generating records. The quality, integrity, and completeness of the records will be dependent on the quality, integrity, and completeness of the records management framework each has established, understanding that the configuration and sophistication of the framework will be in line with the nature of the engagement and the characteristics of the organization.

Across the Spectrum, control over a GCE appears to shift from the government organization in the case of ‘inform’ engagements, to the community organization in the case of ‘empower’ engagements. For instance, in an ‘inform’ engagement, one would expect the government to control the means by which a message is communicated, such as providing updates on the progress being made in developing a strategic plan, while in an ‘empower’ engagement, one might expect control to rest with the community organization. An example would be the community organization being empowered to develop a chapter of the strategic plan which the government has agreed to accept. In the case of a ‘collaboration’ engagement, control may be shared between the government organization and the community organization, and, in some cases, with a third ‘authority’, enabled jointly by the government organization and the community organization, in the form of a secretariat or equivalent entity created to support the collaboration or partnership. For example, the community organization and the government organization form a partnership to assume shared responsibility for the development of various drafts of the strategic plan.

It follows that a shift in control over the type of engagement could result in a shift in control over the records resulting from the engagement. For instance, the characteristics of an ‘inform’ engagement would suggest that most of the records would be under the control of the government organization while in an ‘empower’ engagement, most of the records would be expected to be under the control of the community organization. In a ‘collaboration’, the records could be held jointly by three or more authorities: the participating community organization(s), the government organization(s) and the secretariat or equivalent managing the partnership. From a recordkeeping perspective, the quality and integrity of the records resulting from a GCE will be dependent upon the quality and integrity of the records management practices being applied by each authority. It may be assumed that the risk to records would be less when the locus of control is focused on one organization, the assumption being that only one set of policies, standards and practices, and technologies would be brought to bear on the management of the records. In an ‘inform’ engagement for instance, the

⁴⁷ Murray G. Ross, *Community Organization; Theory, Principles, and Practice* with B. W. Lappin (Harper & Row, 1967).

government would be the dominant player, which would suggest that records resulting from the engagement would be managed relatively well if its recordkeeping framework was complete and effective. Similarly, in an 'empower' engagement, the community organization would be the dominant player which would suggest that records resulting from the engagement would be managed relatively well but again, only if its recordkeeping framework was complete and effective. In both cases, and in line with the nature of 'inform' and 'empower' engagements, there would typically be only one organization involved; the government organization for an 'inform' engagement and the community organization for an 'empower' engagement. Conversely, in a 'collaboration' engagement, up to three and more authorities might be participating in the 'collaboration,' with each assuming some level of responsibility for the management of the records resulting from the collaboration. The quality, integrity and completeness of the records would be dependent upon the quality and integrity of the records management framework in each authority, a condition of quality that might vary from one authority to another, thus introducing the potential for the records to be placed at some level of risk.

4.1.3 The Procedural Context and GCE Initiatives

The conduct of any of the five engagement types (i.e. how a given engagement is undertaken) is based on a series of related transactions which themselves are governed by **policies** and defined by **procedures**. While in general terms the procedures for any of the engagement types would be expected to be the same (i.e. initiate the engagement 'project', plan the engagement, design how it will be conducted, test the methodology, conduct the engagement, produce the results, assess the 'project'), the specific characteristics could vary. For instance, in an 'inform' engagement, it is assumed that the procedures would tend to be few in number and dedicated to controlling the one-way communication of information from the government to the community. In an 'empower' engagement on the other hand, procedures might be in place to support the role of the government in empowering the community organization, but it would be assumed that the procedures required to carry out the 'empower' activity would be supported by the community organization. While these could be complex and sophisticated depending on the nature of the 'empower' activity, they would be under the control of and managed by the community organization.

It is assumed that the recordkeeping challenges for any one engagement type will be in direct relationship to the complexity of the procedures supporting the type of engagement and, above all, the degree of control being exercised by a given organization. In 'inform' engagements, for instance, the nature of the engagement type would suggest that most of the control, and therefore the stewardship responsibility would rest with the government. As a result, it follows that most of the records resulting from the engagement would be retained by the government organization. Conversely, it follows that most of the records resulting from an 'empower' engagement, where control tends to be with the community organization, would be retained by the community organization.

It is towards the middle of the Spectrum where the design of the procedures and their management could become especially complex. In the case of a 'collaboration' engagement for instance, up to three (and perhaps more) sets of procedures could be at play dependent on the number of government organizations and community organizations that are involved in the establishment and oversight of the collaboration. Procedures might also be in place to control the administration of the collaboration such as managing human and financial resources, logistics, etc. Finally, procedures might be expected to be in place to control the actual work that needs to be performed to support the objectives of the collaboration, such as jointly conducting a research project, developing a policy, etc. Although some of the procedures controlling the conduct of the collaboration may be supported by the government organization(s) on the one hand and the community organization(s) on the other, other procedures may be supported by the governance structure (partnership) established for the collaboration itself. In this example, if the relationship between the often diverse procedures supported in each of the three organization types (i.e. government organization, community organization, collaboration) has not been defined prior to or as a result of the establishment of this collaboration, then it may be difficult to establish relationships among the records that are generated as a result of the processes; capturing the complete story of the 'collaborate' engagement may therefore present a challenge.

4.1.4 The Technological Context and GCE Initiatives

Given the impact of computer-based information technologies on the delivery of government programs and services and their role as an increasingly dominant means of communication, it is assumed that the records generated as a result of the processes supporting a given engagement type will tend to be primarily in digital form. This is not to say that all records and technologies will be digital. Hardcopy survey forms may be mailed to individuals and completed hardcopy survey forms may be mailed back to the government organization. Printed paper-based reports may augment or duplicate digital documents containing the same information. Nevertheless, it is expected that the dominant means of supporting and managing all five types of engagements and the dominant form of the records resulting from these engagements will likely be digital.

The type, purpose and functionality of the technologies should be in direct relation to their role in enabling a given GCE initiative. At the 'inform' level, the nature of the engagement type would suggest that they would tend to focus on pushing information out to citizens while at the 'consult' and 'involve' levels, they would be expected to focus on the gathering of information from citizens through their input. At the 'collaborate' and 'empower' levels of the Spectrum, they might be expected to support the exchange of information as well as the more substantive and long term back-and-forth conversations required to identify options and make decisions. They may also be used in sophisticated ways that go beyond their original purpose, especially when seemingly basic technologies such as email, Tweets, blogs, and other social media platforms are brought together and employed to support objectives that reach beyond what they might have been able to achieve individually. For instance, individual emails received by a

government organization as a result of “informing” a given community of the status of a government initiative might not be considered of much value on their own. On the other hand, when aggregated and compared with data from other data sources, such as survey data and social media such as Tweets and blogs and then analyzed using digital analytics technologies, they could lead to findings that would not have been possible had the emails been analyzed on their own. For instance, matching the locations where the emails were generated with demographic data, geo-cartographic data, and related opinion survey data could lead to a deeper understanding of how citizen opinions on a proposed government policy are being expressed at a regional level.

The effective management of these technologies and, by extension, the records generated by the technologies normally require a framework of policies and procedures, standards, and qualified people supported by a comprehensive accountability framework and effective governance and management structures. It follows that the extent to which records are at risk of loss or destruction will vary according to the strength and integrity of the framework, which in turn is dependent on the type of engagement employed and the capacity of the organization(s) involved. Individual community members may be the least able to support the required ‘framework’ capacity because they may lack an awareness of what it means to capture and manage records of their actions. Dependent on the nature of the GCE initiative, they may also lack the incentive. Community organizations may face challenges if the engagement is a one-time activity and of short duration. In such cases, there may not be an incentive to establish a comprehensive technology-supported records management framework to the extent required. On the other hand, governments normally have policies in place that require the existence of a records management framework that is supported by relevant and effective technologies. As a result, with exceptions, they might be expected to be in the best position to address these challenges and requirements.

A ‘collaboration’ engagement faces particular challenges with regards to technology. In certain cases, there could be as many as three distinct technology environments: those of the government organization, those of the community organization, and those of the secretariat or equivalent entity supporting the collaboration. If the collaboration is addressing a highly complex issue where accountability for the conduct of the collaboration is crucial, where communication across those involved in the collaboration is essential, and where all players involved in the collaboration are concerned about the management of the records resulting from the engagement, then it follows that steps will be taken to ensure that the technology environments are capable of meeting requirements for control, security, integrity and information interoperability. Conversely, if the technology environments are not compatible across the three organizations, it may be difficult to relate the records documenting the collaboration to one another. Given that these types of engagements tend to be of relatively short duration, there may not be the incentive to establish a comprehensive technology infrastructure dedicated to the proper management of records resulting from the ‘collaboration’ engagement. In such cases, the secretariat or equivalent would be dissolved at the conclusion of the collaboration, and if a technology infrastructure was in place to support the management of the records held by the secretariat, it would be dismantled, and the records

themselves disposed of with little or no regard being given to the role they would normally play in documenting the collaboration.

For more information on the characteristics of the technology environments supporting GCE initiatives and their implications for recordkeeping see Hurley (2016).⁴⁸

4.1.5 The Documentary Context and GCE Initiatives

What does it mean to document a GCE initiative regardless of its type? What criteria should be used to define the kinds of records that would need to be in place to properly document the GCE? Who decides on the criteria and how should those criteria be applied when multiple government and community organizations may be involved in the GCE initiative? The answers to these questions help define the recordkeeping policies, standards and practices that should be established in any given GCE initiative, whether they will be restricted to supporting the ability of the individual players in a given engagement to document their individual roles in the engagement, or whether they will be extended to support the ability of all players in a given engagement to document, collectively, their combined involvement in the entire engagement.

Records result from tasks that comprise a process (the *how*), that supports a function (the *what*), which in turn supports the mandate of an organization. The records resulting from processes supporting GCE initiatives may shift in type and complexity. In the case of ‘inform’-type engagements, for example, processes in place may produce emails, Tweets, blog entries, ‘published’ documents, data, etc., while in ‘empower’-type engagements, emails, meeting agenda, minutes, reports, blog entries, Tweets, project management documents, statistics, data, etc. may be produced by often more complex operational activities and processes. In the case of ‘collaboration’ engagements, multiple types of records may be created and maintained in multiple locations by multiple technologies supporting diverse functions and processes carried out by up to three (or perhaps more) authorities. Decisions regarding the kinds of records that will be created, how they are created and by whom they should be managed should be made during the planning stage of the GCE initiative. Defining the criteria, the documentation standards, the requirements, and the means by which these can be implemented after the fact can be challenging when the GCE initiative is already underway. If such a planning step is not taken *before* the implementation of a GCE initiative, regardless of the engagement type, there is a risk that the documentary story will be fragmented and incomplete.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See Hurley, forthcoming.

⁴⁹ Specific guidance on the criteria, standards, requirements, and implementation strategies were considered to be beyond the scope of the primer.

5. The Issues and Strategies

5.1 Introduction

This section is based on the premise that records are valued organizational resources. The management of such resources should be based on the same resource management principles as those applied to people, finances, and materiel. The application of management principles to any organizational resource, including records, requires a framework which, as explained in previous sections, comprises **standards** and **practices**, enabling **technologies**, and qualified/trained **people**. These criteria/characteristics must be supported by an effective **accountability** framework, a comprehensive **policy**, and **management** and **governance** structures that are supported by people that have a high level of **awareness** and **understanding** of the importance of the asset to the achievement of the organization's goals and priorities. It follows that such a framework must be aligned with the framework established to support the business functions, activities, and processes of the organization, including those that support GCE initiatives. The framework for managing records should form an integral component of the framework supporting GCE initiatives and be configured to support directly the goals and objectives of these initiatives.

From a recordkeeping perspective, the absence of a strong records management framework could lead to the following outcomes:

Lost opportunity

- The inability to communicate and share information across jurisdictions, both external and internal; for instance, between government organizations and community organizations participating in a 'collaboration'-type engagement.
- Data incompatibility or the inability to merge data with other data to achieve new findings; for instance, opinion data from a major survey blended with geo-cartographic information and census data to create a database that can be used to support multiple objectives.
- The inability to exploit information to the maximum extent possible; for instance, turning an innovative consultation process into a documented model that can be made available free of charge or at a price to others; building a database of merged data derived from multiple diverse records sources to support the ongoing needs of a given research community.

Increased risk

- To achieve goals and priorities; for instance, the findings from a GCE initiative cannot be trusted because the source data and related documentation has been lost or is incomplete.
- To make complete and effective decisions; for instance, decisions concerning the next steps in a 'collaboration'-type engagement are incomplete because records held by the government and community partners are fragmented and/or difficult to relate to one another.

- To account for decisions made, funds allocated, etc.; for instance, the manager responsible for a GCE initiative is unable to comply with an audit because the information documenting the initiative is fragmented or missing.
- To comply with legal and policy obligations; for instance, records identified by a community organization under a formal Access to Information request are unable to be provided because the records are poorly organized and scattered among the various government programs involved in the consultation with the community.
- To retain and preserve the historical record; for instance, the records of a major government-community collaboration and consultation, most of which were in digital form, have been lost because of the absence of standards in both the government and the community concerning what records ought to be captured, the fragility of the media upon which they were recorded, technology obsolescence, insufficient metadata for understanding the information content in the records and ensuring their ongoing access, and the absence of anyone to manage the records through time.

Increased costs

- Increased operating costs as a result of growing needs for technical infrastructure for managing records, time taken to find records, etc.; for instance, considerable resources/time was spent searching through a mass of unorganized records that were created as a result of a series of multi-year consultations; digital records required costly conversion before they could be accessed.
- Reduced value of technology investments; for instance, the community organization and government organization supporting a 'collaboration' initiative made separate decisions on what technologies should be procured to store the records of the collaboration; the inability to search easily across the two repositories meant that one of the organizations had to change its storage technology, or that both had to consider establishing a single shared repository.
- Unexpected and/or additional costs; for instance, failure to address questions of where and how the records of a 'collaboration' engagement would be stored at the planning stage of an initiative resulted in increased costs to pay for the after-the-fact addition of storage technologies.

All of these outcomes are a result of weaknesses in the planning, design, testing, implementation and maintenance of a framework for managing records. Collectively, they point to the erosion not only of the quality and integrity of the framework, but also of the viability and integrity of the GCE initiative itself.

While in ideal circumstances such a framework should be in place across the entire organization, it should at the very least be in place within the government and community organizations that are supporting GCE initiatives. This framework should also be at a level of integrity and quality that supports directly the effective management of the records resulting from the GCE initiatives and the achievement of the goals of the GCE initiatives themselves.

5.2 The Issues and Strategies

The issues and suggested strategies for addressing the recordkeeping challenges described in this sub-section are aligned with the records management framework perspective. They are not organized in a chronological sequence or according to the steps in a plan; this will be covered in the next section. Rather, they are set out as building blocks that can be used as a checklist to ensure that all components of the framework are addressed when developing plans to address the issues.⁵⁰ As previously mentioned, focusing on only one or a few of the components, such as technologies, to the exclusion of the others, will result in solutions that are weak, inadequate, incomplete, and difficult to sustain, which could ultimately undermine any efforts being made to establish positive relations with all parties involved in the GCE initiatives.

5.2.1 Issues and Strategies at the Level of Policy

Issues

- Records management policies, especially if the collaborating organizations (government and community) are residing in different jurisdictions, may be fragmented, inconsistent and even contradictory, or they may not exist at all.
- The provisions of existing records management policies may not be relevant to GCE initiatives.
- The assignment of accountability (typically enshrined in legislation or policy) for all facets of a GCE initiative involving multiple jurisdictions (government and community) may be weak, unclear, inconsistent, or absent; this will likely have a negative impact on efforts to establish an accountability framework for the records resulting from the GCE initiative.

Example:

The records management policy in a municipal government organization supporting an 'empower' engagement does not address the management of records generated by non-government organizations, such as the citizens' jury formed to undertake the development of a section of a provincial government-sponsored health services plan. While policies and procedures support the establishment and conduct of the citizen's jury, a policy on records management has yet to be established in the provincial ministry. A records management policy exists at the level of the individual municipality but it is weak and few in the municipal government have implemented it; accountability for records is weak or non-existent. Moreover, records management professionals lack the required expertise, especially with respect to managing digital records. These factors, combined with the absence of a records management policy at the community level, is placing records generated as a result of the initiative at risk. Compounding the risk is the fact that the provincial government, which is coordinating the development of the plans at the municipal level, has yet to provide municipal governments with guidance on the management of records resulting from their 'empower'-type initiatives. Each municipality is on its own with respect to the management

⁵⁰ The strategies described in this section are organized into a checklist that can be found in Appendix B.

of the records resulting from the initiatives with the outcome being fragmented approaches to records capture, classification, retention, etc. across the municipalities.

Strategies

- Use sources, such as policies developed in other jurisdictions, to identify/express policy requirements that relate to the management of records in GCE initiatives undertaken by the government organization, recognizing that such policy requirements may need adaptation to account for the manner in which GCE initiatives are designed and managed, as well as the role played by participating records-generating community organizations.
- Review existing policies governing the management of GCE initiatives and identify gaps. Use the components of the records management framework and the five records contexts as a checklist to assess where policy is required. Determine how and where proposed records management policy statements (i.e. records management requirements expressed as policy statements) could fill the gaps.⁵¹
- As a minimum, use the policy statements to define the accountability framework for the management of records within the context of the overall accountability framework for the management of GCE initiatives.
- If possible, collaborate with GCE leaders to integrate records management policy statements with policies for the management of GCE initiatives, recognizing that the integration could extend to related policies supported in relevant community organizations.

Example:

The municipal records manager assessed the impact of the policy situation on the GCE initiative and identified the policy gaps. The key gap was the absence of an accountability framework that would define who is responsible for ensuring that a documentary record of the initiative was in place. Fortunately, an accountability framework for the GCE initiative was already described in the policy governing its planning and conduct. The records manager worked with the GCE lead in the municipality to identify where recordkeeping principles and statements could be incorporated into the GCE policy especially as it related to the establishment and management of the citizen jury. Consultations were also held with the community organization to determine if elements of the proposed updated policy could be adopted for use in the community organization as it participated in the development of the section of the government-sponsored health services plan. The proposed updated policy was also discussed with representatives from the Health Ministry at the provincial level to determine if it might be helpful to other municipalities managing similar GCE initiatives.

5.2.2 Issues and Strategies at the Level of Governance and Management

Issues

⁵¹ A template that may be useful in developing policies for the management of records is included in Appendix C.

- Effective management and governance structures for overseeing the ongoing management of the records of a given GCE initiative may be weak or non-existent and, if they do exist, may not be integrated in the governance and management structures established for the GCE initiatives.
- The levels of commitment for addressing identified records issues may vary among those involved in leading and managing GCE initiatives.
- Those assigned responsibilities for the records in the various multi-jurisdictional organizations that are involved in a GCE initiative may not have coordinated their activities.
- Those responsible for records management may be at a distance organizationally from the governance and management structures established for the GCE initiative.
- Records management challenges across the entire framework may be seen as technical issues requiring IT solutions; this could lead to IT departments or their equivalents emerging as the locus of authority within the governance and management structure of the GCE initiative. This is a challenge in itself if the IT department lacks the required records expertise.
- Committees established to address management issues related to the conduct of what could be a multi-jurisdictional GCE initiative may not account for cross-jurisdictional records issues or issues impacting the entire GCE initiative.
- A comprehensive management process for identifying records management requirements, allocating resources, and planning, controlling and evaluating the steps involved in meeting the requirements may not be in place and, if they do exist, may not be integrated in the planning and management of the GCE initiative itself.
- Audit standards and evaluation criteria designed to assess the effectiveness of the records management framework for a given GCE initiative may not be adequate and may not be complementary or consistent with the measures and criteria for assessing the GCE initiative itself.

Example:

Plans for a consultation process involving workshops with stakeholders, town hall meetings and surveys took into the account the human and financial resources required to undertake the various facets of the consultation. Committees and steering groups were formed to implement the plans effectively and an accountability structure was put into place to monitor and measure the consultation process and results. Unfortunately, steps were not taken to hold someone accountable for the effective management of the records resulting from the consultation process. The results of the surveys were more or less cared for by a project manager or statistician, who, though capable of processing and analyzing data captured as a result of the surveys, had little understanding of how they should be managed as records. The other records resulting from the consultation processes, however, were treated in an ad hoc manner by those involved in designing and implementing the consultation processes. The management of the records generated by individuals and organizations at the community level varied with the individuals and organization. Decisions by individuals in the community concerning which of the emails sent during the consultation

process would be kept would be dependent on the individual. Similarly, decisions about what records would be captured and retained by community organizations would be dependent upon the individual organization and its policies. Given that the consultation process was seen as government-driven (i.e. information flowing into the government from the community), it followed that few in the community organizations saw the need to assign or assume responsibility for the records they generated during the process.

Strategies

- Identify how individual GCE initiatives are managed. Who is accountable to whom for their approval and for their management? How are they governed in terms of the structures for overseeing the initiatives? What do the management and governance structures look like in both the government organization and the community organization? Are they distinct or related in some way?
- Determine if governance and management structures exist centrally in the organization (government and/or community) to ensure that consistent approaches are adopted to the approval and management of GCE initiatives. Is an accountability framework for all GCE initiatives in place? What does the approval path for GCE initiatives look like and who is involved? How are the results of GCE initiatives assessed and who is involved?
- Identify elements of the governance and management structures required for the management of records. These elements should be integrated in the governance and management structures for GCE initiatives.
- Integrate recordkeeping governance and management elements in the terms of reference for GCE initiatives; for instance, a partnership agreement governing the conduct of a collaboration between a government organization and a community organization.

Example:

The records manager for the government organization leading the consultation process recognized the opportunity being presented by the fact that the initiative was still in the planning stages. In too many cases, the records management office was only involved (if at all) after the fact, when the GCE initiative was already underway or had been completed. The records manager researched the governance and management frameworks being planned for the consultation initiative, identified the relationships between the specific governance and management frameworks for the initiative and the broader governance and management frameworks being supported in the organization as a whole. For instance, the specific frameworks for managing the human and financial resources supporting the initiative were directly related to those supporting the management of such resources across the organization. Based on the principle that records are assets no different from human and financial resources, the records manager identified where recordkeeping considerations should be integrated in the frameworks supporting the initiative. As a result, the records manager's superior (Director of Information and Technology Management) was invited to sit on the Steering Committee overseeing the initiative while the records manager and one staff member were invited to serve on the team designing and conducting the consultation initiative itself. The records manager, working with the consultation process lead, discussed

the approach to governance and management with relevant individuals in the community organization with a view of assessing the extent to which the approach might be useful in the establishment of a relevant governance and management framework to oversee the community organization's participation in the initiative.

5.2.3 Issues and Strategies at the Level of People

Issues

- The knowledge and skills required to manage the quality, integrity, authenticity, and trustworthiness of records resulting from GCE initiatives, such that they can be made available to support the needs of current and future generations, may not be in place.
- The expertise required to facilitate information access, retrieval, and interpretation, as well as the ability of both government and community organizations to exploit the information resulting from GCE initiatives may be lacking.
- The expertise required to advise on the framework required to manage records may be lacking.
- The expertise required to establish a legal and ethical framework for the management of records and to speak to the security and trustworthiness of records, may be weak or non-existent.
- The available knowledge and skills may vary across the organizations participating in a GCE initiative; a government organization may support knowledge and skills that are not to the same level as those found in a participating community organization (and vice versa).
- The competencies (knowledge, skill, abilities) required to capture, retain and otherwise manage records of GCE initiatives in a manner that respects legal, security, and ethical considerations may not have been defined.
- The gap between the available competencies in both the government and community organizations and what is required may not have been analyzed and defined.
- Job descriptions (or equivalents) of those involved in conducting GCE initiatives may not account for the competencies required to manage records.
- Performance measurement standards for employees may not reflect recordkeeping competencies or they may vary in completeness across the organizations participating in GCE initiatives.
- Strong working relationships between records professionals (if they exist in the organization) and those leading and participating in citizen engagement initiatives may not be in place.

Example:

A municipal authority is participating in a formal partnership with a community group to develop a system of bus routes to support a new suburb being built at the edge of the city. The records management office supporting the authority is staffed with records professionals who offer records management advice to employees across the authority. They also manage the hardcopy records of the organization though these are largely

restricted to the administrative areas of the organization. Unfortunately, while their mandate extends across the organization, they have yet to reach the city planning department. Although staff in this area have expertise in managing geo-cartographic data and city plans, they know very little about what it means to establish and, above all, to retain effectively a documentary trail of their planning decisions. Furthermore, the community organization is a temporary entity established for the purposes of the collaboration. As a result, it has yet to establish its own records management rules and has not even thought about the records management expertise it might require. While a financial plan and funding agreement have been established as part of the terms of reference for the collaboration, a human resources plan for ensuring adequate records management expertise has yet to be established. The result could lead to the records being placed at risk of loss, damage, etc.

Strategies

- Identify the key players involved in leading and undertaking GCE initiatives in both government and community organizations. Using human resources management planning techniques,⁵² define the roles and responsibilities that need to be performed such that records resulting from GCE initiatives are captured and managed, recognizing that the nature of the roles and responsibilities will change with the type of GCE initiative.
- Integrate the roles and responsibilities in the job descriptions (or equivalents) for those involved in leading, managing and conducting GCE initiatives. Through the government organization, assess the extent to which the records management roles and responsibilities (adapted accordingly) can be integrated in the roles and responsibilities of those in the community organizations involved in leading or undertaking GCE initiatives with the government organization.
- Adapt existing records management competency models to GCE initiatives to help define the core competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) required to manage records in these initiatives.
- Identify the competency gap and develop strategies for filling the gap through:
 - recruitment or securing consulting support, and/or
 - the development and delivery of training and orientation sessions, with a view to extending specially adapted sessions to those in the community organization involved in leading GCE initiatives.
- Adapt existing records management performance measures to GCE initiatives to help define the performance measures required to measure the effectiveness of those

⁵² An example of a human resources planning and management guide where HR processes are systematically and clearly presented and where it should be possible to see how these processes could be adapted to address records management from an HR perspective can be found in, *Human Resources Management Guide for Information Technology Companies*, (Software Human Resources Council, Ottawa, 2004); An overview of HR planning and management processes and their relationship to recordkeeping can be found in, *Human Resources Management*, (Library and Archives Canada, 2011), accessed September 26, 2016 <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/government-information-resources/guidelines/generic-valuation-tools/Pages/human-resources-management.aspx#TOC5a>

involved in leading these initiatives.

- Identify the gap in existing performance measures and develop strategies for filling the gap; integrate these new measures in the performance measures established for the GCE initiatives.

Example:

The records manager takes some time to research who in the city planning area is responsible for the partnership and to identify what is covered in the terms of reference. She notes that the partnership is controversial, especially since some areas of the suburb will be disadvantaged as a result of whatever decisions emerge about the location of the bus routes. The need to capture records of the conduct of the partnership including the reasons why certain decisions were made about the bus routes is clear. She approaches the manager responsible for the partnership, outlines her concerns, and suggests that a section on records management support be included in the terms of reference (aligned with the existing and proposed sections on the management of financial and human resources). She also provides advice on the nature of the work involved in providing records management support to the partnership, the kinds of records management competencies that would be required to undertake the work, and if all or some of the competencies were already available among the staff supporting the partnership. Based on a quick analysis, and recognizing that such analysis does not account for the community organization participating in the partnership, she proposes how specific gaps could be filled either through the secondment of existing staff or through contracts. The manager supports this approach and agrees to contact his counterpart in the community organization to walk through the exercise of confirming the work involved, the competencies, and how any gaps can be filled. He also agrees to review how the lessons learned from managing the human, financial and information resources in the partnership could be applied in the establishment of future partnerships.

5.2.4 Issues and Strategies at the Level of Standards and Practices

Issues

- There may be a lack of guidance concerning what constitutes a ‘record’ especially in a digital environment, and especially within the context of law and policy.
- Criteria may not be in place to help those involved in leading and managing GCE initiatives to decide what information needs to be created, received, collected, etc.
- Standards, practices, and technologies may not be in place that would otherwise enable the effective management of records as ‘records’ from their point of creation, to their use, to their retention and finally to their disposition (deleted/destroyed or transferred to an archives).
- Inconsistent approaches to the organization and classification of multiple forms of records and data resulting from GCE initiatives that involve multiple jurisdictions could impede access and retrieval.
- Relating records to one another in order to provide the context essential to understanding the records may be difficult if the workflow supporting the conduct of a

GCE initiative and from which records are generated is fragmented across multiple organizations.

- Keeping track of the correct versions of records and data could present a challenge if version control procedures and standards are absent.
- Information access could be impeded if records of GCE initiatives are scattered across hard drives, individual and shared server devices, paper-based file drawers, and other discrete systems and databases.
- The retention and ongoing preservation of the integrity of digital records and data may be impeded because retention specifications have yet to be established and applied and, if they are applied, they may be ad hoc, inconsistent, and based on criteria that have no real authority (i.e. the retention periods may be set by users or others involved in the GCE initiative who have no real knowledge about what is involved in making such decisions).
- A process for the identification/development of authoritative recordkeeping standards and practices to support the management of GCE initiatives may not be in place.
- Processes for the effective implementation, maintenance, and review (including coordination across potentially multiple jurisdictions and organizations) of a GCE initiative may not be in place.

Example:

A government organization wants to involve a few key stakeholders as well as a few representatives of community organizations and industry groups in the planning and design of the consultation process that will be used to support the drafting of the proposed legislation for regulating telecommunications. The goal is to ensure that the consultation process is relevant and effective given the number of diverse interests that need to be considered. The government representatives recognize the importance of documenting the decisions being made but have yet to determine what it means to establish such a documentary trail. What records need to be created and captured? Where and by whom should they be managed? What standards and procedures should they rely on? Do they need to worry about the records generated in the community organizations and industry groups? Do they need to be concerned about capturing the complete documentary record (evidence) of a consultation planning and design process that involves multiple organizations representing multiple jurisdictions? If so (because the process is highly sensitive), then how should they go about it? In answering these questions, they determine that although they feel that they can rely on their organization's own records management standards and procedures, they quickly find out that those involved in the consultation design process have adopted their own often unique approaches to managing records. Some, such as the newly formed public interest groups, are based on non-standard, ad hoc approaches while others, such as the well-established industry organization, are based on their own in-house developed standards and practices. This means that each organization has established its own unique classification scheme, retention specifications, records storage facilities, and security and access controls. Bringing together the complete story

(should this be required) and enabling information access across the participating organizations will be a challenge.

Strategies

- Use standards and guides produced by authoritative organizations, such as the International Standards Organization (ISO) as well as organizations responsible for setting standards and practices in other jurisdictions, such as national/state/provincial archives, records management associations, etc., to identify/define standards for the management of records in GCE initiatives, recognizing that such standards and practices may need adaptation to account for the manner in which GCE initiatives are designed and managed by the government organization and/or by participating records-generating community organizations.
- Review existing standards and practices for the management of GCE initiatives and identify gaps; determine how and where proposed standards and practices could fill the gaps.
- Identify, develop, and/or adapt standards and practices that address issues such as rules for documenting decisions and actions associated with GCE initiatives, capturing records resulting from GCE initiatives, organizing and classifying records, retaining and protecting records, and facilitating access.
- Integrate existing records management standards and practices with those used to support the conduct of GCE initiatives, recognizing that the integration could extend to related standards and practices supported in participating records-generating community organizations.

Example:

The records manager was pleased that the questions were being raised by those responsible for the consultation initiative. In too many cases, the issues connected with managing records are rarely identified in initiatives such as this and, if they are, they are often raised after the fact, when integrating potential solutions into the design of initiatives that are already underway can be difficult and costly. In this case, the questions are being raised at the planning and design stages where there is a better chance for success. The records manager quickly recognizes that there are two types of issue: some are related to policy, such as defining what records need to be captured and why (i.e. defining a documentary trail that accounts for the variations in recordkeeping configurations while respecting the legal, business, and archival requirements for capturing and maintaining the 'story' of the process); other issues relate to the standards and procedures that need to be in place in all participating organizations to ensure that the policies can be respected. The records manager researched the records management standards, practices and procedures employed in the participating organizations, established a suite of standards and practices that would enable effective recordkeeping across the organizations in a manner that respected the policy decisions, identified gaps between what was in place and what ought to be in place, and developed a strategy for how the gap could be closed within the context of the project plan for the consultation initiative (i.e. in a manner that respects the scale and temporal nature of the process). The records manager shared the proposed strategy with

those planning and designing the consultation process (which includes representatives from the participating community organizations) and integrated elements of the strategy in the overall plan for the initiative.

5.2.5 Issues and Strategies at the Level of Technology

Issues

- Technologies used in GCE initiatives, such as email, interactive web-based services, blogs, wikis, conferencing and networking technologies, file sharing, collaborative editing, syndication and notification technologies, instant messaging, and digital repositories, may not support the capability to capture, retain, preserve, and otherwise manage records of GCE initiatives as ‘records.’
- Recordkeeping considerations may not have been reflected during the project planning processes leading to the procurement and implementation of technologies designed to enable the conduct and management of GCE initiatives.
- Functional requirements for the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives may not have been incorporated in the functional requirements for systems and technologies enabling the conduct and management of GCE initiatives.
- The multiple formats of documents and the multiple types of technologies, all of which may be managed in multiple ways by multiple organizations residing in multiple jurisdictions, may undermine information exchange and the ability to exploit information generated as a result of a given GCE initiative.
- Access to records resulting from a GCE initiative could be impeded if the workflow supporting the initiative is fragmented across the organizations participating in the GCE initiative, or if personal rather than organizational approaches are taken to transmit and exchange information.
- The additional costs of adding technologies to address recordkeeping issues could be prohibitive, especially if they have not been factored in at the stage when new systems and technologies are being planned or existing systems and technologies are being modified.

Example:

The decision by the government organization to publish information about the steps it takes to process and approve building development proposals was seen as an excellent way to demonstrate government openness and transparency. It was also seen as a straightforward exercise. Based on content prepared by the Building and Properties Branch, the Communications Branch simply packaged the message and made it available on the government’s web site, sent it by email to a list of interested individuals and groups, and released it as a press statement. However, very soon after broadcasting the information, the government received requests that the information be made available through social media, that it be communicated through the organization’s blog, that teleconferences and other virtual and physical meetings be held to hear more about the information being broadcast. Some individuals went so far as to make formal access to information requests based on

their concern that not all of the information connected with the message was being released. Upper management in the government organization, concerned about the increased profile resulting from what was originally supposed to be an innocuous 'inform' initiative, is demanding that a complete documentary record of the initiative be assembled to enable the government organization to account for its actions and decisions. In complying with this requirement, the Building and Properties Branch and the Communications Branch recognized that they needed to work together to assemble the records that each had generated as a result of developing the content of the message on the one hand and delivering it on the other. Unfortunately, the Communications Branch had little experience in capturing the multiplicity of records generated by diverse technologies supporting such a wide variety of communications channels. The inability to relate the records of the Communications Branch with those of operational areas of the organization, such as the Buildings and Properties Branch, further complicated the situation. Bringing together the complete story of this seemingly straightforward 'inform' initiative would be a challenge. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that even if the story could be brought together, there was no central repository or means for capturing the records documenting the story and maintaining them through time.

Strategies

- Incorporate recordkeeping considerations in every stage of the technology procurement process for GCE initiatives as well as, on a broader front, the systems and technology project life cycle: from planning, to requirements definition, to design, to testing, to procurement and implementation, to maintenance, and to review.
- Use existing standards and tools developed in other jurisdictions, including the International Standards Organization (ISO), to identify functional requirements for systems and technologies for the management of records in GCE initiatives, recognizing that such requirements may need adaptation to account for the often complex manner in which GCE initiatives are undertaken and how they are designed and managed by the government organization and/or by participating records-generating community organizations.
- Integrate these functional requirements at the "requirements definition" stage of the technology procurement process and/or the systems and technology project life cycle such that they guide the procurement of technologies that will respect recordkeeping considerations even as they address the overall requirements of the GCE initiative.
- With the support of the government organization, assess the extent to which the requirements can be extended to guide the procurement of technologies to support the needs of participating community organizations.
- Research and identify technologies that offer the potential to respond to the requirements and offer recommendations concerning how the technologies should be assessed, procured, and implemented within the context of the organizations' information technology plans and strategies.

Example:

The records manager for the government organization recognized that short, medium and long term strategies would be needed to address the issue. Over the short term, and working with representatives from the Information Technology (IT) Branch of the Ministry of Public Works as well as the lead for the 'inform' initiative, the records manager for the Ministry facilitated the identification of the records that would be needed to provide an adequate and complete documentary trail for the initiative. Armed with the specifications for the documentary trail, the records manager worked with the IT Branch to identify the records being held in each of the Communications Branch and the Buildings and Properties Branch. Some were in hardcopy form but most were in digital form and formats and according to classification schemes that varied dramatically across both Branches. The records manager developed a briefing paper that outlined the short term 'band-aid' steps that would be required to apply a consistent approach to the classification of the records (understanding that the classification scheme would need to be at a high level), to convert selected highly significant digital records to standard form, to store the records in an accessible, secure, and safe manner, to assign retention periods that were consistent and respected the requirements for continued access and preservation, and to assign responsibility for the records through time. A table detailing the costs was included along with the message that the costs could have been minimized if steps had been taken to identifying recordkeeping requirements at the planning and design stages of the initiative. Medium to longer term strategies were also proposed that focused on:

- The identification of generic recordkeeping requirements that could be integrated in the functional and other requirements supporting the procurement of technologies to support GCE initiatives.*
- The establishment of testbeds to assess technologies that could have the potential to enhance both the effectiveness of GCE initiatives and the ability to capture and maintain records resulting from the initiatives.*
- The establishment of an accountability framework, within the context of the accountability framework established for GCE initiatives, that would define the approval process for the procurement of technologies supporting interoperability and the proper management of records.*
- The adaptation of established organization-wide records management standards, practices, and technologies, such as the use of the Ministry's electronic document and records management system, to the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives and other joint initiatives between the Communications Branch and the Building and Properties Branch.*

5.2.6 Issues and Strategies at the Level of Awareness

Issues

- The level of understanding of the opportunities for exploiting the information in records and data (a catalyst that can help stimulate greater concern about the management of the source records) may be limited and inconsistent across the different organizations participating in a given GCE initiative.

- There may be little shared understanding of the importance of records in documenting GCE initiatives (i.e. the role of records in providing evidence that a given GCE initiative was undertaken, how it was undertaken, the results, etc.)
- There may be little shared understanding of basic records concepts as they relate to GCE initiatives nor an appreciation of what it means to manage the creation, use, retention, and disposition of records.
- There may be little shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all of those involved in managing and administering GCE initiatives.

Example:

A community organization representing the interests of a region of the province is collaborating with the Water Resources Management Directorate of the Ministry of the Environment to develop a chapter of the water resources management plan for the region. A small secretariat, sponsored by both the government and the community organization, resides in the office of the Directorate. It is staffed by representatives from both the government and the community organization. While the need to capture certain financial records and ‘records of decision’ is clear, neither the government nor the community organization have thought about their responsibilities for identifying and capturing records that would otherwise document the conduct of the collaboration. Both see the collaboration as a short term initiative with a specific objective: the development of a chapter of the water resources management plan. Furthermore, even if a documentary trail could be defined for the collaboration, neither the government nor the community organization understand the challenges of managing through time the digital records generated by the collaboration. They are unaware of the policies, standards, practices, and technologies that would otherwise enable them to manage the records throughout their life cycle.

Strategies

- Identify the key players leading or involved in GCE initiatives in the government organization. Recognizing that GCE initiatives are typically initiated and led by government organizations, it will be through the government organization that contacts will eventually be made with relevant community organizations.
- Determine the knowledge gap, if any, regarding recordkeeping in order to address the issues, recognizing that the target audience could range from those leading GCE initiatives, to those setting policies, to those in upper management who are overseeing the initiatives.
- Design, develop, and deliver awareness setting sessions to close the knowledge gap with respect to the relationship between records and GCE initiatives. With the cooperation of the government organization, determine if, when, and how such awareness sessions and tools should be extended to relevant community organizations.
- Where possible, integrate all or parts of the awareness setting sessions and tools with existing awareness setting sessions and tools being delivered to those involved in planning, organizing and implementing GCE initiatives, with a focus on leads and managers.

Example:

The records manager in the Ministry recognizes the risk to both the government and the community organization of not having records in place to document the conduct of the collaboration. He identifies and defines the risks, meets with the government manager responsible for the Government's role in the collaboration, explains the risks, and seeks the support of the manager to refine the way the risks are expressed and to develop a plan for minimizing the risks. Both the records manager and the manager responsible for the collaboration recognize that before any concrete steps can be taken to address the risks, all of the players involved in and overseeing the collaboration need to be briefed on the relationship between the risks and the records being generated as a result of the collaboration (i.e. why are records important; how are they related to the identified risks; what needs to be done to capture and manage them, especially when many are in digital form; what are their responsibilities, etc.). With the support of the manager, the records manager meets with the head of the Secretariat and the lead from the community organization and briefs them on the risks and the role of records, as well as secures their support to conduct awareness setting sessions for those involved in and overseeing the collaboration. The goal would be to bring everyone onto the same page with respect to the risks and the role records play in minimizing the risks. The enhanced and shared understanding of the risks and recordkeeping implications resulting from the awareness sessions would pave the way for the development and implementation of concrete plans for enhancing the management of records that would have a greater potential for acceptance.

An additional issue that may present itself within the context of GCE initiatives is the absence of **partnerships** between records professionals (if they exist in the organization) and those leading and participating in the initiatives. Partnerships are excellent vehicles for ensuring that information about recordkeeping can be communicated and exchanged effectively, initiatives for integrating recordkeeping in GCE initiatives can be launched and subsequently managed, and the effectiveness of recordkeeping practices can be monitored. The absence of partnerships can undermine the achievement of these objectives.

If the issues and strategies described above are not addressed, then the framework required for the effective and relevant management of records resulting from a given GCE initiative may be weak. It follows that any weaknesses in the framework could lead to weaknesses not only in the integrity, authenticity, and continued usability of the records, but also in the effectiveness of the GCE initiatives themselves. Trust in the records and trust in the integrity of the GCE initiatives could be eroded as a consequence.

Assuming that a framework is weak or that 'trust' and 'integrity' could be eroded is one thing, but it is quite another to know concretely that these conditions exist and that the consequences for the integrity of given GCE initiatives are real. Without adequate measures to assess the quality and integrity of the records management framework and of the records themselves, and without effective and relevant methods for conducting recordkeeping

assessments, any observations about the records resulting from GCE initiatives will be speculation at best. The absence of standards and procedures for assessing the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives can be a highly significant impediment to the identification of recordkeeping issues and their outcomes. How can a certain recordkeeping condition be tagged as an issue if there is nothing against which it can be measured?

As previously mentioned, the issues and strategies described in this section are organized according to the components of the records management framework. They are in the form of a checklist that can be used to assess the extent to which the components have been addressed for any given GCE initiative. The next section rearranges the elements of the checklist into a suggested a plan for moving forward to systematically address the incorporation of recordkeeping considerations into the design of GCE initiatives.

6. A Suggested Plan

The purpose of this section is to explain how the strategies described in the previous section can be turned into a plan to address the recordkeeping issues associated with GCE initiatives, especially in situations where records management may be an established program, but poorly positioned to have a substantial influence over the management of the records resulting from GCE initiatives. It is hoped that the steps outlined below will serve as a useful roadmap for moving forward in a manner that is relevant and effective.

Step 1: Do your homework: become familiar with what is going on with regards to GCE in your organization.

- How is GCE defined in your organization; what is the scope, the objectives, etc. of these types of engagements?
- What GCE initiatives are currently underway and what are their types with regards to the IAP2 Spectrum?
- Which policies and procedures control GCE initiatives?
- What standards and practices are employed to support GCE initiatives?
- What is the approval process for GCE initiatives and who is involved?
- Who is involved in planning, managing, and conducting GCE initiatives?
- How are GCE initiatives monitored, evaluated, and measured?

Step2: Based on an understanding of the GCE landscape, identify what you perceive to be the records-related issues from a ‘business’ perspective (i.e. implications for the successful achievement of GCE initiatives).

Step 3: Identify ‘all-things-considered’ strategies that you feel would be relevant and applicable to address the business-driven records issues you have identified.

Step 4: Identify the individual(s) in the GCE space who will be most concerned about the issues (especially if they surface issues such as risk, lost opportunities, increased costs, etc.) and thus most interested in the strategies. These individuals could exist in both the government organization and those community organizations involved in GCE initiatives, though the focus should be on the government organization given that most GCE initiatives are initiated and led by the government. Note that they need not be at the management level, although this would be a preferred target audience. Allies could be those leading GCE initiatives, those managing the resources allocated to support GCE initiatives, and/or those involved in developing policies and procedures, including the application of standards for GCE initiatives. In a government organization, they could reside in policy or legal affairs areas, communications, and the operational program areas involved in planning, designing and implementing GCE initiatives.

Step 5: Arrange an informal meeting with the individual(s) to discuss your perception of the issues and their implications for GCE initiatives. Confirm the issues and implications with the individual(s) and discuss your perception about possible strategies. The goal is to establish a strong, positive relationship with the individual(s) and to identify a way of positioning the

records issues within the context of the issues and challenges being faced in the GCE initiatives being planned or undertaken in the organization.

Step 6: Within the context of a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the individual(s) and as supported by the individual(s), prepare a brief or discussion paper (or equivalent document) that can be brought forward to higher levels of the organization for review and approval. The document would articulate the issues and propose general strategies for moving forward. Once approved, it would provide a roadmap that would address the records issues as well as terms of reference for the partnership with the individual(s) and others who may be involved in leading and managing GCE initiatives, developing policies and standards, administering resources, etc.

Among other things, the document should recommend policy statements (standalone or ideally incorporated in policies controlling GCE engagements) that touch on at least the following:

- Basic principles related to creating and managing records resulting from GCE initiatives;
- The roles and responsibilities of those involved in GCE initiatives as they relate to the creation, capture and management of records. The goal is to establish an accountability framework that is integrated seamlessly into the accountability framework established for GCE initiatives;
- High level requirements for the creation and management of records resulting from GCE initiatives; and
- A plan for assessing the policy statements.

The document should also recommend a pilot project to test various approaches to managing records in GCE initiatives.

- Identify an engagement type where the records issues and their implications are most pronounced and where the implementation of strategies for the management of records would secure substantial benefits;
- Incorporate records solutions in the planning, design, execution and review of GCE initiatives with the goal of avoiding 'band aid' approaches;
- Consider the establishment of a technology testbed within the context of the pilot project to assess the potential of various technologies for supporting GCE initiatives while also addressing recordkeeping requirements; and
- Enable all participants, including records professionals, to understand more clearly what it means to account for recordkeeping considerations in GCE initiatives.

These steps may seem somewhat basic and even modest, but they are fundamental to the establishment of an ongoing, productive working relationship with those who are generating records of GCE initiatives. Skipping through or by-passing these steps in an effort to impose recordkeeping standards, rules, and technologies will lead to failure and undermine the ability of a records management program to position itself to make a difference with respect to the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives. Conversely, the process leading to the establishment of successful partnerships with those involved in managing and conducting GCE

initiatives can serve as a useful model that could be extended to other areas of a given organization. The outcome could be in the form of a records management program that is truly enterprise-wide in that it is able to demonstrate its relevance and effectiveness across all sectors of a given organization.

7. Conclusion

GCE initiatives can have a significant impact on the lives of citizens, whether they concern a local park or a national agenda. By their nature, they close the gap between citizens and their governments and, as a result, raise the stakes concerning the ability of governments to maintain the high level of trust that citizens expect to share with their governments. The stakes are even higher in governments where openness, transparency and accountability are being promoted by highly visible and increasingly significant open government initiatives. GCE initiatives are also increasing in complexity; the introduction and application of new technologies, such as social media tools, stimulate new and innovative ways for governments and citizens to interact.

Records, when well managed, are a powerful tool that underpins the achievement of the goals and objectives of GCE initiatives. Their power comes from their evidential qualities, their capacity for use and re-use, their versatility in being able to serve multiple purposes, and their role in providing an authoritative historical context – to tell a story. They are valuable organizational assets and thus deserve to be managed as such. Weaknesses in the management of these valued assets, however, will place the integrity and success of GCE initiatives at risk. Just as weaknesses in the management of other important assets, such as human and financial resources, will undermine the integrity of GCE initiatives, so too will weaknesses in the management of the records resulting from those initiatives. Unlike weaknesses in government processes and activities underway solely within the walls of a government organization, such weaknesses will also be very visible given the exposure that comes with the close government-citizen interactions that typify many GCE initiatives. The risk is not just a failed GCE initiative; it is a failed GCE initiative that could seriously erode the government-citizen trust relationship.

The records issues facing the management of GCE initiatives, from those that ‘inform’ to those that ‘empower’ are significant but not insurmountable. This primer is intended as a guide to help in addressing those issues. As well as providing an understanding of the concepts and issues associated with managing records resulting from GCE initiatives, the primer sets out suggestions to guide the development of strategies for addressing the issues. It is hoped that those involved in managing, supporting and participating in GCE initiatives will benefit from what the primer has to offer and, by fostering the effective management of records as assets, will strengthen the quality and integrity of GCE initiatives and ultimately the government-citizen trust relationship.

Managing Records of Citizen Engagement Initiatives: A Primer

References

The following references provide guidance on the management of records in a digital environment. While only a few address directly the role of records management in open government, the others provide general records management guidance that, with adjustments, could be tailored to address the recordkeeping issues identified in GCE initiatives.

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Thurston, Anne. 2012. "Trustworthy Records and Open Data." *The Journal of Community Informatics* 8 (2). <http://ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/951> .

Yu, Harlan, and David G. Robinson. 2012. "The New Ambiguity of 'Open Government'." *UCLA Law Review Disclosure* 59: 178–208. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2012489.

General Records Management Guidance

The National Archives (UK)

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/>

State Records Authority of New South Wales

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/recordkeeping>

National Archives of Australia

<http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/>

Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/government-information-resources/information-management/Pages/information-management.aspx>

National Archives and Records Administration

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/>

Queensland State Archives

<http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Recordkeeping/DigitalContinuity/Pages/Default.aspx>

International Records Management Trust

<http://www.irmt.org>

International Standards Organization (ISO)

Of the international records management standards and Technical Reports published by ISO's Technical Sub-Committee TC 46/SC 11 - Archives/Records Management, the following are considered relevant to the management of records in GCE initiatives:

- ISO 15489-1:2016 Information and documentation -- Records management -- Part 1: General http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=31908&commid=48856
- ISO/TR 15489-2:2001 Information and documentation -- Records management -- Part 2: Guidelines http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=35845&commid=48856
- ISO/TR 26122:2008 Information and documentation -- Work process analysis for records http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=43391&commid=48856

- ISO 30300:2011 Information and documentation -- Management systems for records -- Fundamentals and vocabulary
http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=53732&co mmid=48856
- ISO 30301:2011 Information and documentation -- Management systems for records – Requirements
http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=53733&co mmid=48856
- ISO 30302:2015 Information and documentation -- Management systems for records -- Guidelines for implementation
http://www.iso.org/iso/home/store/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=54673&co mmid=48856

GCE Toolkits and Guides

The toolkits and guides listed below are neither exhaustive nor are they the ‘best of breed’. They are illustrative of the kinds of toolkits and guides being used in the GCE community. As well as providing examples of the kinds of procedures that guide GCE initiatives, the toolkits and guides can serve as the basis for identifying where and how recordkeeping requirements could be incorporated.

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Alberta Association of Municipal District and Counties, *Citizen Engagement Toolkit*, 2015
https://www.auma.ca/sites/default/files/Advocacy/Programs_Initiatives/citizen_engagement/final_auma_aamdc_cet_2015.pdf

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<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41696.html>

_____, *Civic Engagement at the City of Victoria*, (City of Victoria, 2012)
http://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Communications/Documents/Civic_Engagment.pdf

_____, *People and Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making*, (Involve, 2005) <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/People-and-Participation.pdf>

Lukensmeyer, Carolyn J and Torres Lars Hasselbad. *Public Deliberation: A Manager’s Guide to Citizen Engagement*, (IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2006)
<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/LukensmeyerReport.pdf>

Sheedy, Amanda. *Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation*, (Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2008) http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf

_____, *Guidelines on Citizens’ Engagement for Development Management and Public Governance*, (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2011)

Appendix A – Recordkeeping Concepts

The concepts described below are intended to place the concept of ‘record’, as described in Section 3, within a broader context that relates the concept back to important ‘building block’ concepts, such as ‘data’ and ‘information’. It also expands on the concept of the ‘records management framework’ in order to underline the role of the business process in the creation of records and the importance of the individual components of the framework in ensuring their effective management and use through time.

Data are the representation of facts, concepts and instructions in a formalized manner suitable for communication, interpretation or processing by human or automated means.⁵³

- data can be in multiple physical forms including paper (e.g. alpha-numeric characters on a page are data);
- 'formalized manner' means some form of codification, such as a character set;
- 'human' means the ability to communicate, interpret or process through our own faculties without machine intervention or the use of 'automated means'. For instance, when we read the English characters on a page we can give meaning to them. It is more difficult with Japanese characters because we don't know the meaning of the characters; regardless, the Latin and Japanese characters are both data because they are both recorded information that is there to enable 'meaning' for those who know and can use the character sets.
- hexadecimal, ASCII, etc. are examples of coding schemes that can only be communicated, interpreted or processed by 'automated means'.
- a datum is the single smallest unit of recorded information capable of 'representing a fact, concept or figure, in a manner suitable for communication, interpretation and processing by human or automated means'; an example is a single letter of the alphabet such as the letter B.

Information is the meaning given to the data⁵⁴ – i.e. the representation of the facts, figures and concepts. The key word is 'meaning'. Information is not something that is recorded. It is the 'meaning' humans give to the codes that have been developed through the ages. Latin and Japanese characters are an example, but so too are the hexadecimal character sets developed to enable data to be communicated, interpreted and processed albeit by 'automated means'. Information can be derived from either 'data' or 'records' (i.e. that special form of data or recorded information as described below). The key concept is that 'information' is not something tangible – it is what is going on inside a person's mind. This is why some Information Management professionals have called their programs “Recorded Information Management”

⁵³ Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. US Department of Defense 2005.

http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/d/3600.html

⁵⁴ The Free Dictionary, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/information>

because technically they are not in the business of managing what goes on inside peoples' minds; that's the job of communications specialists (e.g.: marketing, media, etc.). A Recorded Information specialist's business is to manage the integrity of the data and records from which the information (the meaning) is derived. The 'meaning' that people ascribe to the recorded information is relative. Information Management professionals are not in the 'meaning' management business, but rather in the recorded information management business.

Records are a special form of recorded information. Technically, they are 'data' (recorded information); however, their purpose dictates that great care needs to be taken in how the data that make up a record are brought together and managed. This is because the fundamental role of records is to document decisions, actions, and activities or, in other words, to tell the 'story'. Based on their role in telling the 'story', records are capable of serving multiple business purposes when they are complete and well managed.

- Records can serve as evidence. For instance, they can be used to demonstrate that in the context of a partnership between a given government organization and a community organization, both organizations respected the terms of their 'collaboration.'
- Records enable organizations to hold themselves accountable pursuant to various laws. For instance, in an 'inform' engagement, where sensitive information was disseminated to the public, citizens can make a formal request under the Access to Information Law for records documenting the process by which the disseminated information was produced.
- Records support the attainment of individual rights and entitlements. For instance, in an 'empower' engagement, the records documenting the government's willingness to accept the recommendations of a given community organization concerning the disposition of specific crown lands could be used to hold the government organization to account for the actions it takes in response to the recommendations.
- Records are the source of valuable data and information that can be analyzed to support purposes beyond those that led to the creation of the records. For instance, as the result of a 'consultation,' the data from completed survey forms when merged with data from census records and other related sources could be used to perform analyses that would not have been possible using the survey data alone.

A **framework** is required to ensure that records remain authentic, reliable, accurate and accessible for the length of time that they are required to support the business and accountability requirements of the organization and/or the cultural requirements of an archives. Such a framework should be based on the principle that records are valued assets that are little different from other valued assets such as human and financial resources. It follows that the components of such a framework should be based on the components that form the frameworks used to support the management of other valued assets such as human resources and financial resources. A model that might be useful in illustrating the attributes of such a

framework as they pertain to the management of electronic records is the model developed by the members of the Electronic Records Committee of the International Council on Archives⁵⁵.

The model is based on two integrated perspectives with the first being the **business perspective** (see figure 1). The reference point for this perspective is not the organizational structure, but rather the business processes used to support the delivery of information products to various clients (e.g.: citizen applying for a license; a company filing its corporate taxes; a policy officer developing a briefing note for senior management; etc.). The individual can be an external client (a business or customer) or an internal client (managers and staff within the organization).

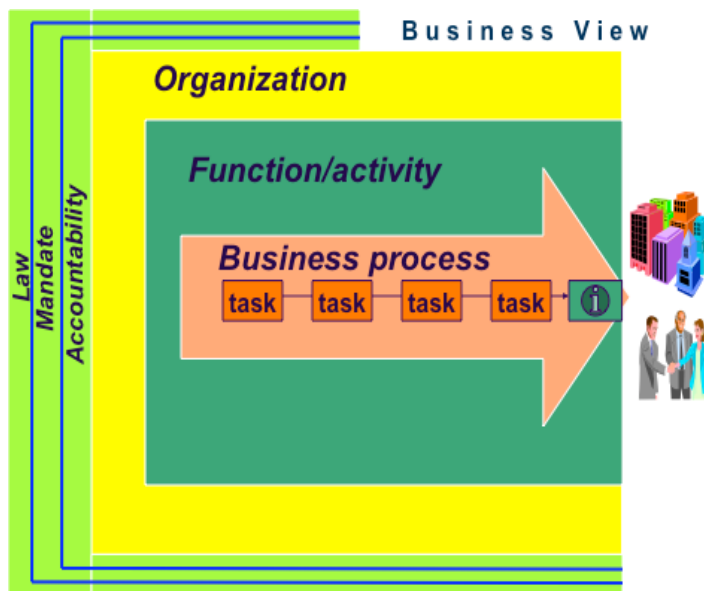


Figure 1: The Business Perspective

A given **business process**, which comprises a set of related **tasks**, supports the requirements of a given **function** (i.e. **what** the organization does as distinct from **how** it does it) which is managed by accountable individuals located inside the **organization**. The organizational structure is nothing more than a management and accountability framework for the function and the business process. All of this (i.e. the organization, the functions, and the processes) are situated within an **accountability** framework which itself is derived from a **mandate(s)** and an enabling **law(s)** or some other authority. Business processes can be highly structured (e.g. the processing of license applications) or less well-structured (i.e. developing a policy, conducting a collaborative research project, etc.). Ultimately their design depends on the nature of the function being supported.

This business-driven model of a recordkeeping framework is intended to provide a comprehensive and holistic view of what is required to manage records. For any given business process or for the organization as a whole, it can be used as a template to map the requirements and standards being employed to support recordkeeping, define their interrelationships, and assess their qualities all within the context of a given business process, function, and/or enterprise. It can also be used to help ensure that digital records are

⁵⁵ The core elements of the model, which were developed by the Committee on Electronic Records of the International Council on Archives (ICA), were used as one of the foundations of the "Study Guide 8 - Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective" published by the ICA, Paris, 1997 http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA%20Study%20%20guide_eng_0.pdf

addressed in the same context as all other forms of records that have been generated within a given function, process, or enterprise⁵⁶.

It is important to note that there may be a disconnect between the work process supported by an operational unit within an organization and the process supported by a communications unit within the same organization that is responsible for making information products available through the web site or portal. If the full story (i.e. the documentary trail) is to be supported, then the processes of both the operational unit and, in this example, the communications unit need to be accounted for and related to one another. If a comprehensive documentary trail is to be defined for the overall work process associated with, for instance, initiating, drafting, approving and posting a policy, then the status of the tasks or steps within the work process in terms of their significance in contributing to the documentary trail must be defined. Note that the focus of attention on 'significance' is on the tasks or steps, not on the records. The status of the records will emerge from an understanding of the status of the tasks or steps. Some will be highly significant and others not so significant. Significance is determined first and foremost from the perspective of the organization (i.e. the business) based on qualifiers or criteria that focus on the role of the tasks in supporting the objectives of the business function supported by the work process. The documentary trail created as a result of this analysis (i.e. identifying the information objects generated from those tasks that are assessed as having 'business' significance) is a reflection of the relationship between the process and its role in support of the organization. For example, an email approving a draft policy is significant as an accountability tool; the data set generated as a result of a research project supporting the policy development effort could be both an accountability instrument and a source of valuable information for future use. Collectively, all of the information objects (records) forming the documentary trail provide evidence of how a given policy was developed and disseminated.

This 'business perspective' of the model illustrates the means by which organizations carry out their mandated responsibilities (i.e. their business). It is organization-neutral in that it can be applied to any type of organization, from government entities to the academic sector, to the private sector.

⁵⁶ This very important point is evident in the nature of many of the standards available today. While technical standards such as format standards are specific to the realm of digital records, the ISO 15489 standard and the ISO 30300 series of standards are media independent. Even the OAIS standard and MoReq2010 are crafted in a way that while their focus is on records in electronic form they do not exclude (and rather they include) other forms of records as well.

The **records management framework perspective** (figure 2) is aligned with and ideally integrated with the 'business perspective' and uses the same reference point – i.e. the delivery of information products to internal and/or external clients. In this perspective, however, the individual tasks themselves generate information 'products' (i.e. records) of their own such as: the records resulting from the processing of a license application; the records resulting from a company filing its corporate taxes; the records resulting in the development of a policy or the conduct of a research project; or, the records resulting from a government-community collaboration or other type of engagement.

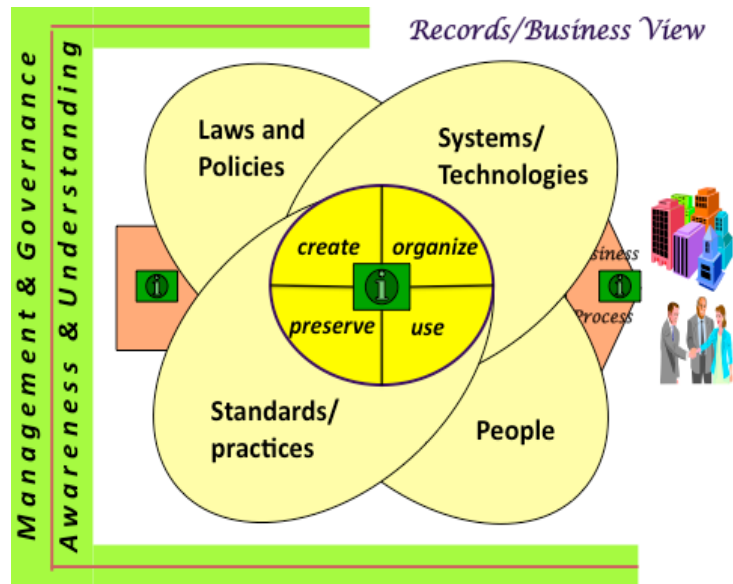


Figure 2: Records Management Framework

In executing these tasks, four activities are carried out, namely:

- 1) Activities undertaken to bring records into existence to support decision-making, business delivery, and to meet accountability requirements. These activities include: create, generate, collect, capture, and receive. The label given to this set of activities is “**create**”.
- 2) Activities undertaken to ensure that records can be used and preserved. These activities include identify, describe, and classify. The label given to this set of activities is “**organize**”.
- 3) Activities undertaken *with* records to support decision making, program delivery, and to meet accountability requirements. These activities include: transmit, exchange, access, retrieve, disseminate, and share. The label given to this set of activities is “**use**”.
- 4) Activities undertaken *to* records to ensure that they are authentic, reliable, available, and usable for as long as required to support decision making, program delivery, and to meet accountability requirements. These activities include: retain, protect, store, migrate, and dispose. The label given to this set of activities is “**preserve**”.

The components of the framework for managing records are little different from those established for the management of other valued assets within a given organization, such as human resources and financial resources. All are based on asset management principles and all are dedicated to supporting the effective management of the objectives, goals, and functions of

the organization. In the case of records management, the components of the framework are as follows:

- **Laws and policies** that assign accountability for the activities associated with the capture and management of records;
- **Standards and practices** that enable the management of records as 'records';
- **Systems and technologies** that support the capability to capture, organize, retain, make available and otherwise manage records throughout their life cycle;
- **People** who have the required knowledge and abilities to plan, design, implement and maintain the framework for managing records;
- A **management and governance structure** that allocates and controls the resources for managing records; and
- A level of **awareness** among all of those involved in creating, capturing and managing records about the importance of records and their responsibility for their proper management.

If the objective of authentic, reliable, accessible records, well-managed through time, is to be achieved then all of the components of the framework must be in place. If one or several of the components are weak or missing entirely, then the whole of the recordkeeping environment will be placed at risk. For example, the implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) system without a policy or a set of standards will fail; a policy without standards or systems to support its implementation will be a policy without influence. If people are unaware of and/or fail to understand the importance of the recordkeeping framework to their business, then efforts to develop recordkeeping policies, standards, and systems will be in vain. Each component of the framework must reflect a certain level of quality and integrity and all must be working in harmony if all of the activities performed on records (create, organize, use, and preserve) are to be managed effectively.

Appendix B – Checklist of Strategies

The strategies listed below are verbatim from Section 4. The list is intended to provide an easy-to-access checklist of the strategies that may be employed to address identified weaknesses in the individual components of a given records management framework.

Strategies at the Level of Policy

- Use sources, such as policies developed in other jurisdictions, to identify/express policy requirements that relate to the management of records in GCE initiatives undertaken by the government organization, recognizing that such policy requirements may need adaptation to account for the manner in which GCE initiatives are designed and managed, as well as the role played by participating records-generating community organizations.
- Review existing policies governing the management of GCE initiatives and identify gaps. Use the components of the records management framework and the five records contexts as a checklist to assess where policy is required. Determine how and where proposed records management policy statements (i.e. records management requirements expressed as policy statements) could fill the gaps.
- As a minimum, use the policy statements to define the accountability framework for the management of records within the context of the overall accountability framework for the management of GCE initiatives.
- If possible, collaborate with GCE leaders to integrate records management policy statements with policies for the management of GCE initiatives, recognizing that the integration could extend to related policies supported in relevant community organizations.

Strategies at the Level of Governance and Management

- Identify how individual GCE initiatives are managed? Who is accountable to whom for their approval and for their management? How are they governed in terms of the structures for overseeing the initiatives? What do the management and governance structures look like in both the government organization and the community organization? Are they distinct or related in some way?
- Determine if governance and management structures exist centrally in the organization (government and/or community) to ensure that consistent approaches are adopted to the approval and management of GCE initiatives. Is an accountability framework for all GCE initiatives in place? What does the approval path for GCE initiatives look like and who is involved? How are the results of GCE initiatives assessed and who is involved?
- Identify elements of the governance and management structures required for the management of records. These elements should be integrated in the governance and management structures for GCE initiatives.
- Integrate recordkeeping governance and management elements in the terms of reference for GCE initiatives; for instance, a partnership agreement governing the conduct of a collaboration between a government organization and a community

organization.

Strategies at the Level of People

- Identify the key players involved in leading and undertaking GCE initiatives in both government and community organizations. Using human resources management planning techniques⁵⁷, define the roles and responsibilities that need to be performed such that records resulting from GCE initiatives are captured and managed, recognizing that the nature of the roles and responsibilities will change with the type of GCE initiative.
- Integrate the roles and responsibilities in the job descriptions (or equivalents) for those involved in leading, managing and conducting GCE initiatives. Through the government organization, assess the extent to which the records management roles and responsibilities (adapted accordingly) can be integrated in the roles and responsibilities of those in the community organizations involved in leading or undertaking GCE initiatives with the government organization.
- Adapt existing records management competency models to GCE initiatives to help define the core competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) required to manage records in these initiatives.
- Identify the competency gap and develop strategies for filling the gap through:
 - recruitment or securing consulting support, and/or
 - the development and delivery of training and orientation sessions, with a view to extending specially adapted sessions to those in the community organization involved in leading GCE initiatives.
- Adapt existing records management performance measures to GCE initiatives to help define the performance measures required to measure the effectiveness of those involved in leading these initiatives.
- Identify the gap in existing performance measures and develop strategies for filling the gap; integrate these new measures in the performance measures established for the GCE initiatives.

Strategies at the Level of Standards and Practices

- Use standards and guides produced by authoritative organizations, such as the International Standards Organization (ISO) as well as organizations responsible for setting standards and practices in other jurisdictions, such as national/state/provincial archives, records management associations, etc., to identify/define standards for the management of records in GCE initiatives, recognizing that such standards and practices may need adaptation to account for the manner in which GCE initiatives are designed

⁵⁷ An example of a human resources planning and management guide where HR processes are systematically and clearly presented and where it should be possible to see how these processes could be adapted to address records management from an HR perspective can be found in, *Human Resources Management Guide for Information Technology Companies*, (Software Human Resources Council, Ottawa, 2004); An overview of HR planning and management processes and their relationship to recordkeeping can be found in, *Human Resources Management*, (Library and Archives Canada, 2011) <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/government-information-resources/guidelines/generic-valuation-tools/Pages/human-resources-management.aspx#TOC5a>

and managed by the government organization and/or by participating records-generating community organizations.

- Review existing standards and practices for the management of GCE initiatives and identify gaps; determine how and where proposed standards and practices could fill the gaps.
- Identify, develop, and/or adapt standards and practices that address issues such as rules for documenting decisions and actions associated with GCE initiatives, capturing records resulting from GCE initiatives, organizing and classifying records, retaining and protecting records, and facilitating access.
- Integrate existing records management standards and practices with those used to support the conduct of GCE initiatives, recognizing that the integration could extend to related standards and practices supported in participating records-generating community organizations.

Strategies at the Level of Technology

- Incorporate recordkeeping considerations in every stage of the technology procurement process for GCE initiatives as well as, on a broader front, the systems and technology project life cycle: from planning, to requirements definition, to design, to testing, to procurement and implementation, to maintenance, and to review.
- Use existing standards and tools developed in other jurisdictions, including the International Standards Organization (ISO), to identify functional requirements for systems and technologies for the management of records in GCE initiatives, recognizing that such requirements may need adaptation to account for the often complex manner in which GCE initiatives are undertaken and how they are designed and managed by the government organization and/or by participating records-generating community organizations.
- Integrate these functional requirements at the “requirements definition” stage of the technology procurement process and/or the systems and technology project life cycle such that they guide the procurement of technologies that will respect recordkeeping considerations even as they address the overall requirements of the GCE initiative.
- With the support of the government organization, assess the extent to which the requirements can be extended to guide the procurement of technologies to support the needs of participating community organizations.
- Research and identify technologies that offer the potential to respond to the requirements and offer recommendations concerning how the technologies should be assessed, procured, and implemented within the context of the organizations’ information technology plans and strategies.

Strategies at the Level of Awareness

- Identify the key players leading or involved in GCE initiatives in the government organization. Recognizing that GCE initiatives are typically initiated and led by government organizations, it will be through the government organization that contacts will eventually be made with relevant community organizations.

- Determine the knowledge gap, if any, regarding recordkeeping in order to address the issues, recognizing that the target audience could range from those leading GCE initiatives, to those setting policies, to those in upper management who are overseeing the initiatives.
- Design, develop, and deliver awareness setting sessions to close the knowledge gap with respect to the relationship between records and GCE initiatives. With the cooperation of the government organization, determine if, when, and how such awareness sessions and tools should be extended to relevant community organizations.
- Where possible, integrate all or parts of the awareness setting sessions and tools with existing awareness setting sessions and tools being delivered to those involved in planning, organizing and implementing GCE initiatives, with a focus on leads and managers.

Appendix C – Sample Records Management Policy

The following is an example of a template that may be useful in developing policies on the management of records in government organizations (including records resulting from GCE initiatives). The template is based on the structure used by the Canadian federal government's Treasury Board Secretariat in the development of its information policies. It is based on the principle that a policy on the management of records resulting from GCE initiatives need not stand on its own. It may be integrated in an overall policy on the management of the records of a given organization (i.e. whole-of-government, individual department, ministry, etc.) and, where possible, components of that policy should be reflected in the information and other related policies supported by the organization including those that guide GCE initiatives.

1. **Effective Date** (of the policy)

2. **Application** (organizational units covered by the policy)

3. **Context**

Records are critical to the delivery of the programs and services of the Government/Department/Ministry. When well managed, authentic and reliable records document government activities and help the Government/Department/Ministry provide evidence of its decisions and actions. They enable the Government/Department/Ministry to hold itself accountable pursuant to laws and policies as well as to its clients, stakeholders and partners. They also support management oversight, such as the conduct of audits, reviews and management reporting.

Records that are complete, accurate, authentic and reliable also serve as an important source of information that can be used in support of decision-making, the analysis of trends, and the conduct of both program-specific and government-wide functions and activities. They can be invaluable in capturing the corporate memory of those staff that are leaving the Government/Department/Ministry and in orienting new staff that have just been recruited.

All employees are responsible for documenting their activities and decisions and for applying records management principles, standards and practices in the performance of their duties.

[Senior officials responsible for Departments/Ministries] are accountable to the head of the Government for the effective and well-coordinated management of records throughout their Departments/Ministries.

This policy is issued under the authority of the [xxx Act].

The [central or lead organization(s) in the government] has the authority to issue directions and standards concerning records management roles and responsibilities to support this policy.

4. Definitions

Definitions to be used in the interpretation of this policy, as listed in this section, would conform with government-wide or international standards, legislation, etc.

5. Policy Statement

The objective of this policy is to achieve the efficient and effective management of government records to support program and service delivery; foster informed decision making; facilitate accountability and collaboration; and preserve and ensure access to government records for the benefit of present and future generations.

The expected results of the achievement of the objective are that:

- Government programs and services provide convenient access to relevant, reliable, comprehensive and timely information contained in the records under their control.
- Government records are managed as valuable assets to support the outcomes of programs and services, as well as operational needs and accountabilities.
- Governance structures, mechanisms and resources are in place to ensure the continuous and effective management of government records.

6. Policy Requirements

Heads of Departments/Ministries are responsible for:

- Ensuring that programs and services integrate records management requirements into development, implementation, evaluation and reporting activities.
- Ensuring that decisions and decision-making processes are documented to account for and support the continuity of operations, permit the reconstruction of the evolution of policies and programs, and allow for independent evaluation, audit and review.
- Ensuring that records are shared within and across Departments/Ministries to the greatest extent possible, while respecting security and privacy requirements.
- Ensuring the continued relevance, authenticity, and quality of government records

for as long as they are required to meet operational needs and accountabilities.

- Designating a senior official to represent the head of the Department/Ministry for the purposes of the policy.
- Establishing, measuring and reporting on a Department/Ministry-wide program or strategy for the improvement of the management of government records.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1 Within Departments/Ministries

Heads of Departments/Ministries are responsible for monitoring adherence to this policy within their Departments/Ministries, consistent with the provisions of the Government's internal audit and evaluation policies and practices. They are responsible for ensuring that appropriate remedial action is taken to address any deficiencies within their Departments/Ministries.

7.2 Government-Wide

The [lead government organization] will monitor compliance with all aspects of this policy and the achievement of expected results based on Department/Ministry-level reports, results of audits, evaluations and studies, in addition to working directly with Departments/Ministries.

The [lead government organization] will review this policy, its associated directions and standards, and their effectiveness at the five-year mark of implementation of the policy (or earlier for certain directives and standards).

7.3 Consequences

Consequences of non-compliance can include informal follow-ups and requests from the [lead government organization], external audits or formal direction on corrective measures.

8. Responsibilities of Central Authorities

The roles and responsibilities of central authorities identified in the policy such as government Departments/Ministries having government-wide responsibilities and/or government committees would be included here. Their roles can range from facilitating implementation of the policy, to reviewing and evaluating Department/Ministry compliance, to reviewing the effectiveness of the policy itself.