Employment and Social Development Canada | Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

Launch Expose and Explain in your Organization

The **HOW-TO** Guide

exposeandexplain

Blueprint2020

This publication is available for download at
canada.ca/publicentre-ESDC.

It is also available upon request in multiple formats (large print, Braille, audio cassette, audio CD, e-text diskette, e-text CD, or DAISY), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232).
By teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105.

PAPER
Cat. No.: Em4-8/2016E
ISBN: 978-0-660-05193-2

PDF
Cat. No.: Em4-8/2016E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-05192-5

ESDC
Cat. No.: CA-622-04-16E

Background:

Expose and Explain is an Employment and Social Development Canada Blueprint 2020 initiative that gives employees a platform to question processes, administrative or operational policies or rules that they believe could be improved, updated, changed or replaced. The goal of this initiative is finding ways for an organization to work smarter and do better; it also empowers employees to identify and shape business process improvements. It emerged from our portfolio's Blueprint 2020 engagement process that took place during the summer and fall of 2013.

Expose and Explain was piloted November 21, 2014, through January 30, 2015, with the Western Canada and Territories Region and three branches (the Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch, the Learning Branch and the Labour Program's Policy, Dispute Resolution and International Affairs Branch). Employees are invited to make a submission on a process or procedure that they believe could be improved, updated, changed or replaced. Each submission must respect the guiding principles. The initiative is led by the Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch in close collaboration with all branches and regions in the portfolio.

Employees are invited to make a submission on a process or procedure that they believe could be improved, updated, changed or replaced. Each submission must respect the guiding principles. The initiative is lead out of the Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch in close collaboration with all branches and regions within the portfolio.

How can I implement an Expose and Explain initiative within my organization?

Organize an Expose and Explain activity in 10 easy steps
STEP 1: Develop your idea
If an initiative like this has not emerged from your Blueprint 2020 consultations, you need to spend some time working on the idea and building support with your senior management. Considerations: You may want to find some partners in your department to explore the idea, and you'll need your senior management's support to move an initiative like this forward. You should have a member of the senior executive team as your champion.
STEP 2: Green light
Obtain buy-in and approval from your senior management/executive board or committee. Considerations: You may want to propose a pilot as a way to test the waters before launching the initiative across your department.
STEP 3: Build your Tiger Team
Assemble a project team—we suggest that you use a multi-disciplinary Tiger Team format which works best for these types of initiatives. You will need to collaborate with colleagues in different areas of the organization such as communications, graphic design, corporate web, etc. Better to make those connections early in the game!

Considerations: At ESDC, the communications branch led this initiative so many of the key players listed above were already working as part of the same team. If an initiative like this is being led by another group—human resources, policy, Blueprint 2020 team—you will need to make sure to incorporate all these disciplines in the team.

STEP 4: Creation of a Working Group

The creation of a working group is crucial for the success of this initiative and goes beyond the Tiger Team. This group consists of all the people that are critical for the ongoing functioning of the initiative and making sure submissions from employees are answered. All branches and regions need to identify a senior employee who will:

- assign questions to the subject matter experts in their branch/region to request a response
- be available to participate in meetings on the overall initiative
- be the point of contact for all communications and reporting requirements
- provide updates to their branch or regional executive committee on the status of the initiative to ensure that all areas of the organization are informed and engaged in the process.

Considerations: Ensure that the identified representative has the level of expertise and knowledge required to understand the submissions and to determine who is most appropriate to respond in his or her branch/region or if a submission should actually be assigned to another area.

STEP 5: Branding

Create your branding including a look that will be used on all web and communications products.

Considerations: This is where your Tiger Team is really important. You need to draw on a lot of different expertise in the organization to ensure the initiative is successful.

STEP 6: Web portal development

You need to think about how employees will submit questions and ideas. This could mean working with your corporate web team to develop a web portal—this could be on your intranet or on another available platform. Ideally, one person (or a small team) should manage the intake of questions and ensure they are assigned to the appropriate area of the organization for a response to be prepared.

Considerations: You need to take a lot of factors into consideration when deciding how you will manage the intake of submissions and their responses. Tech-savvy team members are critical in helping you decide what platform will work best. Above all else, keep it simple.

STEP 7: Information management

You may receive high volumes of questions and ideas through this initiative, and you need to ensure an efficient information management system such as a database.

Considerations: This is the one area where you may want to consider a dedicated resource, at least at the initial launch of the initiative.

STEP 8: Promotion and Launch

Using internal communication tools such as employee newsletters, blogs and corporate messages, promote the initiative in a bid to raise its profile across your department and encourage employees to participate.

Considerations: Your working group, executives and manager community all have a role to play in promoting the initiative. Don't forget them in your plans.

STEP 9: Recognition

You never know what could emerge from an initiative like this. Someone could submit an idea that has potential for other government departments. Something could emerge that changes a cumbersome process in your own branch. You need to think about how to celebrate the wins—be they big or small.

Considerations: Your colleagues in your human resources and communications branches can assist with ideas for recognition.

STEP 10: Monitor and report to senior management

Senior management is a key partner in the continued success of an initiative like Expose and Explain. They need to be aware of successes as well as of areas for improvement. Regular quarterly updates to your department's senior executive committee or board should be part of your standard operating procedures.

Considerations: You will need to include metrics in these updates, flag areas for improvement and how you propose to address them.

Examples of supporting communications products:

A. Frequently asked questions
B. Guiding principles
C. Governance process
D. Internal newsletter article
E. Key messages for managers
F. Submission template
G. Tip sheet for branches and regions

For more information: **http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Expose_and_Explain_in_a_Box**

ANNEX A

Frequently asked questions

What is Expose and Explain?

Expose and Explain is a Blueprint 2020 initiative that gives employees a platform to question processes, administrative or operational policies or rules that they believe could be improved, updated, changed or replaced. The goal of this initiative is finding ways for our organization to work smarter and do better; it also empowers employees to identify and shape business process improvements. For more information, contact the Expose and Explain team.

Where did this idea come from?

Expose and Explain emerged from our portfolio's Blueprint 2020 engagement process that took place during the summer and fall of 2013. Expose and Explain was piloted November 21, 2014 through January 30, 2015 with the Western Canada and Territories Region and three branches (Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch, Learning and the Labour Program's Policy, Dispute Resolution and International Affairs Branch).

Example from the pilot

Expose:
Since working for ESDC's Learning Branch I found that time management during meetings is a bit more difficult, as boardrooms at 200 Montcalm are not equipped with clocks. While many meeting hosts and presenters bring in their own clocks (wrist watch, cell phone, etc.), I believe it would still improve overall time management during meetings if boardrooms would be equipped with large wall mounted clocks, that are visible to all attendees. Budget permitting, I suggest purchasing radio-controlled clocks, as they adjust automatically and always show the correct time.

Answer:
We thank you for your suggestion to have clocks available in meeting rooms as a means of improving overall time management of meetings.

We are pleased to report that wall mounted clocks have since been installed in all boardroom facilities in Tower II of 200 Montcalm.

Thank you again for contributing to a more effective work environment.

Why are we doing this?

This initiative will play a key role in our goal of becoming a higher-performing organization. We should look at the work we are doing and ask ourselves whether what we are doing adds value or could be done in a better way. If something is not working, why not change it if we can? Innovating means doing things differently, and questioning the status quo is part of being a high-performing organization.

How will it work?

Employees are invited to make a submission on a process or procedure that they believe could be improved, updated, changed or replaced. Each submission must respect the guiding principles.

PASRB will manage the overall process, and work with branches and regions to follow up and respond.

What happens to my submission?

You will get an email from the Expose and Explain team acknowledging receipt of your submission. Once the responsible branch or region has provided a response, you may receive a phone call, a meeting request or an email from us. Not every idea will turn into a change, but we guarantee that you will hear back from us and get concrete and honest answers.

Can you guarantee quick turnaround time?

We can guarantee that you'll hear from us quickly and that we will follow up with you for updates. We want to ensure that ideas, especially complex ones, are given the thought they merit, so some submissions may take a little more time than others.

How will the results be communicated to staff?

PASRB will translate and post the submissions on the intranet and post the approved response once received from the relevant branch or region.

What is happening with Service Canada's Voice of our Employees initiative?

Expose and Explain is the Department's platform for submitting ideas and questions, but we know that many employees are using Voice of our Employees (VoE) as a forum to communicate with each other. Before making a decision on the future of VoE, we will evaluate its usefulness by talking to employees.

Guiding principles

We invite you to talk to your colleagues and managers about your expose, as they may have a solution or another idea. Or perhaps they will want to contribute and submit an idea or question with you. The goal is to initiate dialogue and collaboration.

All questions and answers with the author's name will be posted on this portal; we invite you to consult these before submitting your idea, since the information may already be available.

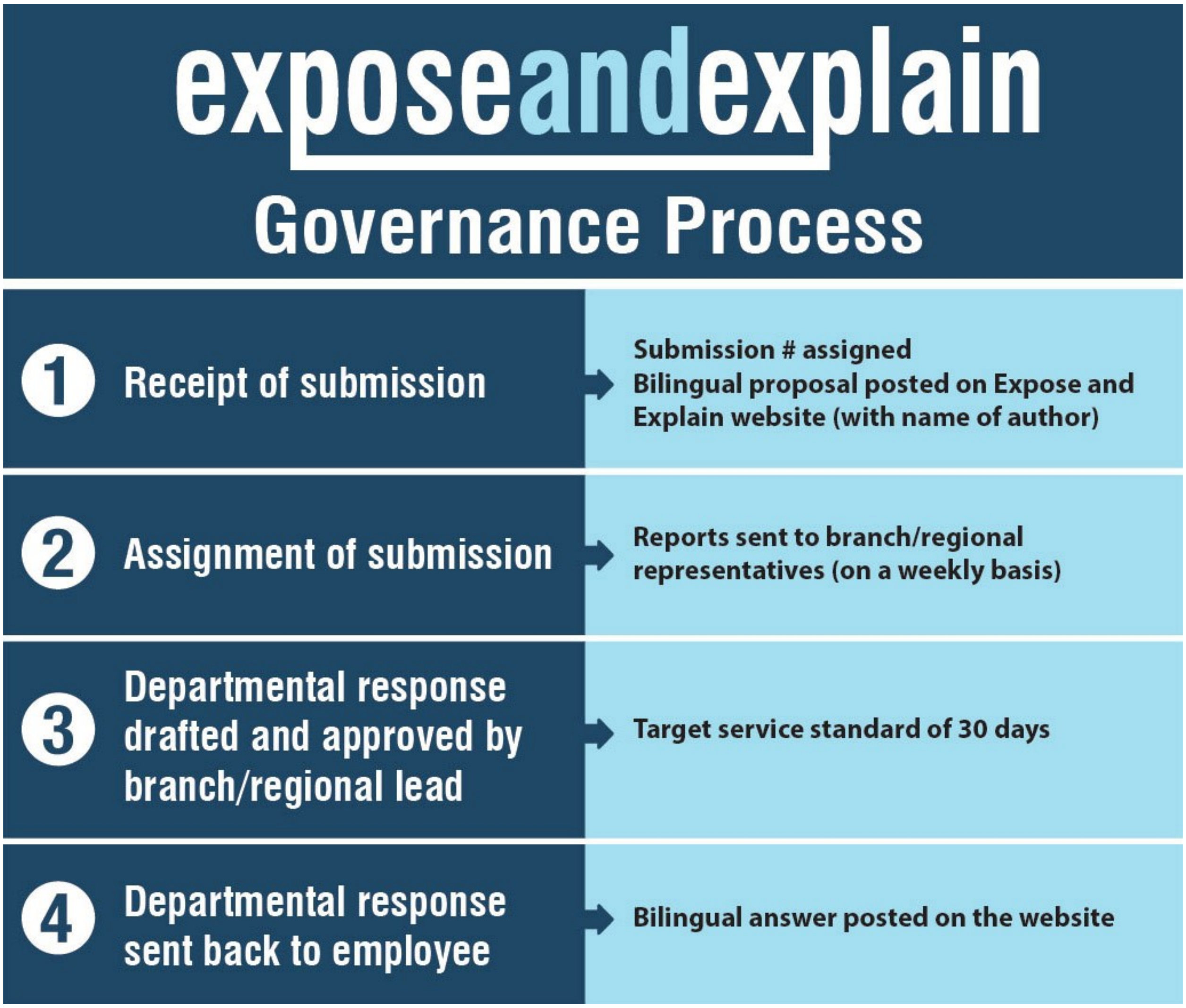
As you prepare your submission, please keep in mind that comments may be subject to the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

We look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback.

- **Be respectful**
    - Your submission **must:**
        - respect privacy and that of others;
        - not contain profanity or discriminate against others. Your submission must respect others and respect all government policies.
- **Be accountable**
    - Your submission **must**:
        - be aimed at improving operations and contributing to a higher-performing organization. be concise, coherent and intelligible.

It takes time to review, assess and take action on questions. We will do our best to ensure that this process moves as quickly as possible, but we also want to make sure that complex submissions are given the thought they require. Please note that responses will be provided in the same official language that was used in the original comment or question.

Governance process



ANNEX D

Internal Newsletter article

Expose and Explain: Doing Better Every Day

Blueprint 2020 INITIATIVE

Banner: Blueprint 2020 Expose and Explain

Like 13

Do you use processes that are clunky and time consuming? Do you come across rules that simply don't make sense to you? Do you have a great idea to improve an administrative or operational process or policy? Then we invite you to put forward a submission through the Expose and Explain Portal!

We are pleased to extend this initiative and give employees a platform to expose an issue and propose ideas in any area of the organization.

We are kicking-off with a topic that speaks to everyone: human resources! You may have suggestions on how we can better manage performance and talent within the Department; facilitate employee learning and development; streamline staffing or classification processes, etc. This is your opportunity to highlight potential process improvements - we want to hear from you!

Through Expose and Explain, we want to find ways for our organization to do better by identifying process bottlenecks and stopping inefficiencies. Employees should be part of the solution. You can help shape business process improvements for our organization so we can all work smarter.

For more information about Expose and Explain visit our Intranet page here, or contact our Expose and Explain Team.

interSection

Articles

- Regional Tour: W-T "Hearts of Diversity" Quilt
- Coming Soon: Phoenix Training
- Now Hiring: Census Jobs!
- Armchair Discussion: Creating Positive Spaces
- Aboriginal Student Work: Focus on A Service Canada student
- February 15 is National Flag of Canada Day
- Launch of New Video series: Dementia and Caregiving
- New Expose and Explain theme! Spotlight on Technology
- Mark your calendar: February 8-12 is Security Awareness Week
- Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Black History Month

View Past Articles

Rules of engagement

Submit an Article

ANNEX E

Key messages for managers

CONTEXT

- Through the Blueprint2020 engagement process, we have heard from employees throughout the department about how to work smarter, make our workplace better, and our processes more efficient.
- One thing that came to light consistently was that employees at all levels of the organization have great ideas and they should have the capacity to influence and bring about change.
- It is in that vein that the Expose and Explain initiative was piloted from November 2014 to January 2015 with three branches (Learning Branch, Labour Program, Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch) and one Region (Western-Territories Region). Over 130 submissions were received, involving input from 12 branches on issues regarding HR practices, IITB capabilities and service delivery improvements.
- Building on the success and lessons learned from the pilot, the department-wide launch of the initiative now gives all employees across the portfolio a platform to question processes, policies or rules that they believe could be improved / replaced, or to seek clarification on a practice that they simply do not understand.
- Expose and Explain provides a mechanism for any employee to contribute to ESDC's leadership in putting forward and implementing innovate ideas, as well as an opportunity for management to increase employee engagement in their respective teams.
- It is a key ESDC Blueprint 2020 initiative designed to engage employees on ways the organization can become more nimble and agile.
- Expose and Explain will address some of the questions raised on Voice of the Employee (VoE), but it is a different and distinct platform. Prior to making any decision on the future of VoE, we will evaluate its need by talking to employees and engaging in discussions on its usefulness. However, there are a number of questions and suggestions submitted to Voice of the Employee that would make excellent exposes, so we are strongly encouraging you to submit them through the Expose and Explain process.

PROCESS

- Questions will be triaged and assigned to responsible branch who will determine whether to explain, update, replace or remove the existing policy. Depending on the nature of a submission, the employee may receive a quick email, a follow-up call from a DG or from an expert, or may be invited to further explore the idea with others. As a result, processes may change significantly, slightly or not all. And maybe a good idea will grow into a great change.
- Process to answer questions may change slightly, depending on the nature of a submission. You may receive a quick email with an answer from your branch or regional lead, a follow-up call from a DG or from an expert, or you may even be invited to further explore your idea with subject matter experts within the organization.

CALL TO ACTION

- This is your chance to share your views on how we can make tangible improvements both within the branch and across the Department.

- If you have an idea or a question, we encourage you to talk to your colleagues and managers about it. Maybe they have a solution you had not thought of.

- Or come together as a group to discuss and submit as a group. You can spark creative ideas and innovation within your own team.

- A good idea can grow into a great change. All it takes is the effort to fill out the submission form and press the “send” button!

ANNEX F

Submission template

exposeandexplain

Blueprint2020 INITIATIVE

Here's your chance to make a difference!

Do you:

- have a question about why an administrative policy is the way it is?
- use a process that doesn't seem efficient?
- have a great idea about how to change something?

Submission form

Before making a submission, take a look at our guiding principles for tips! Also, we ask that you respect the character limit since lengthy submissions could delay your response time. Rest assured that we will come back to you if we need more information to process your submission!

Also, remember that questions and answers with the authors name will be published on the Expose and Explain portal!

* Mandatory fields

esdc-blueprint20 English Identification

Name:*

Email address (yourname@domain.com):*

Phone number (999-999-9999):*

Region:*

Select a region

Branch:*

Select a branch

Submission

Theme:*

Select a theme

Submission (2000-character limit: approximately 300 words):*

If you are using acronyms in your submission, please write out the full words as well.

This will help readers and will result in a more accurate translation into the other official language.

Proposed solution (2000-character limit: approximately 300 words):*

Submit Clear

ANNEX G

Tip sheet for branches and regions

* How to Prepare Effective and Engaging Answers *

A) Write your answer in plain language

1. **Start with the most important information**—present the information logically and refer to key elements of the submission.
2. **Use everyday language**. If you must use technical terms, jargon or acronyms, introduce or explain the terms the first time you use them.
3. **Use the active voice and avoid the passive voice**, unless it is appropriate. In the active voice, the subject in the sentence is the **doer**; in the passive voice, the subject is the **receiver** of the action. For example, instead of "It was decided to cancel the program" try "The committee cancelled the program." The active voice is straightforward, easier to understand and less wordy.
4. Speaking of wordiness. . . **Avoid unnecessary words**.
5. **Use strong, active verbs**. For example, instead of "He was responsible for writing the report" try "He wrote the report." The result is a stronger sentence.
6. **Write directly to the reader.** Use "I," "you" and "we."
7. **Don't be afraid to cut out unnecessary information**. Ask yourself what your reader **needs** to know. For example, if you are writing a message about a new policy, explain how it will affect your readers, rather than writing about its history. Unnecessary details only increase the chances that your message will not be read or understood!
8. **Use short, simple sentences and point form where possible**. For example, instead of "The high cost of operating a child care centre may prove to be a disincentive to employers contemplating supporting employee child care needs…" (ooof!) try "Employers may not offer a child care centre to their employees because it costs too much to run." Simpler and to the point!
9. **Use examples to clarify complicated issues**.
10. **Leave time to edit**. It's also a good idea to ask a colleague to look over your document. A fresh set of eyes can spot text that's unclear or unnecessary.

B) Engage with the employee (requestor) before drafting the response (if required).

C) Use standard opening and closing remarks.

Opening examples:

- Thank you for your question and recommended solution.
- Thank you for your Expose and Explain submission.
- Thank you for your idea regarding…
- Thank you for your submission, we are continuously striving to improve our processes and we appreciate your feedback.
- Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention.
- Thank you for sharing a possible solution that we will look into.

- Thank you for your submission and for your proactive contributions towards enhancing our processes.

Closing examples:

- Thank you again for your submission.
- Thank you for contributing to a more effective work environment.
- Thank you for your idea for improvement.
- Thank you very much for your input and we are looking forward to staying in touch and reconnecting to advance our project.
- This issue is very important to us and we thank you for taking the time to raise it with us.
- We appreciate that you have brought your experience to our attention. As a result…