

Experimentation Works (EW) Partnership Package Second Cohort | 2020-2021

Overview: This package has been developed for departments and agencies¹ that are considering a partnership or already partnering on Experimentation Works (EW) with TBS. This could be either as a *participating department* (running an experiment under EW) and/or as a *support department* (providing resources, such as expertise, to support the success of EW). All of the materials in this package will be published online as part of EW’s commitment to open-by-default.

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¹ Hereafter referred to simply as ‘departments’ for ease of reference.

Second Cohort Materials

EW2 Timelines and Milestones

Overview

EW2 is designed to run approximately two years including setup and post-experimentation reporting (as described below). Note that the experiments are only designed to run for a maximum of one calendar year.



EW PHASE	Key Milestones and Activities
PHASE I: SETUP (June 2019 to March 2020)	TBS engaging and solidifying partnerships, identifying expert support, launching call for proposals, focusing on developing and receiving quality proposals from a diverse range of areas, and finalizing which experiments will be featured as part of EW.
PHASE II: EXPERIMENT (Spring 2020 to Spring 2021)	TBS matching teams with experts and other onboarding logistics; Kick-off event and subsequent monthly learning and customized resources; implementation of department-run experiments (define, design, run, and evaluate) with support from TBS and EW experts. Plain-language results blogging on individual experiments; plain-language, high-level reporting (or blogging) on EW process as a whole.

Note that the staged schedule below is for your reference; all projects will differ in their exact timelines and will each require differing amounts of time for each stage. This schedule is designed to build in flexibility for all projects, with the aim of completing and reporting on final results by Spring 2021.

<p>March-June 2020</p>	<p>1. Project design</p> <p><u>Project development objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm/finalize design (problem, question, hypothesis, intervention, measurement, etc.) • Confirm practical elements of project (e.g. tech needed, authorities, partnerships). <p><u>Key deliverables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign MoU with TBS • Project proposal update (using the initial proposal submitted) • Project management plan (e.g. 1-3 pages) • Blog post (at least one throughout the year) • Project pre-registration on Experimentation Inventory (OpenGov) <p><u>Cohort engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in kick-off event March 2nd (90 Elgin) • Cohort calls (bi-weekly) • Learning events (monthly - optional)
<p>July-October 2020</p>	<p>2. Project implementation</p> <p><u>Project development objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement final project design • Collect data <p><u>Key deliverables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to project design and project management plan • Blog post (at least one throughout the year) <p><u>Cohort engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort calls (bi-weekly) • Learning events (monthly - optional)
<p>November 2020-</p>	<p>3. Data analysis</p>

<p>January 2021</p>	<p><u>Project development objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and analyze data <p><u>Key deliverables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical plan (e.g. 1-2 pages) • Raw data (if possible) • Blog post (at least one throughout the year) <p><u>Cohort engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort calls (bi-weekly) • Learning events (monthly - optional)
<p>PHASE III: RESULTS (February to April 2021)</p>	<p>EW2 project teams conduct a post-mortem (e.g. blog post) on their EW experiment(s) and publicly share what they learned, what changes they may be making based on the results of this experiment (e.g. follow-up experiment, invest in building more internal capacity) and impacts, if any, on decision-making.</p>

Roles and Responsibilities

Partnership by Design

Experimentation Works is a whole-of-government initiative that relies primarily on whole-of-government partnerships and talent sharing instead of a programmatic operating budget or a “pay to play” partnership model (e.g. taxing departments who want to participate). In addition to the critical project management resources that TBS provides (the vision, design and implementation team), the majority of the expert support for EW is made possible through agreements with departments (and individual experts within) that come alongside TBS to provide in-kind (and some financial) support to provide expert advice to departmental projects.

Given this, continued success for EW depends wholly on the combined support of TBS and two types of partner departments:

- *The TBS EW Support Team* (providing overall project management support and whole-of-government direction, with expert advice built into the team for EW2),
- *Co-funders and partner departments* (in the form of direct talent sharing of experts or else financial contributions to help secure additional expertise); and
- *Support departments participating in EW* (by committing to support and champion their own departmental-led experiments. Note that this refers to departments whose projects were chosen as part of the call for proposals and selection process).

Who Does What? Envisioned Roles and Responsibilities for EW2

The following provides a high-level overview of EW2 roles and responsibilities:

TBS EW Support Team	<p>A cross-functional team at TBS will be dedicated to supporting all aspects of EW2 success including support for experimentation (learning events, online resources, expert-matching), system support (identifying and addressing any barriers), and broad outreach and communications (including ensuring that lessons learned are shared broadly).</p>
EW2 Cohort	<p>This term includes all EW2 working-level participants, as defined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experimentation design experts: Individuals with experimental design expertise from within and outside the GoC will provide expert support for EW design, project selection, designing and running experimental projects, and training purposes. - Departmental project teams: Respective teams of selected departmental projects will own and manage their experimentation projects, with support from TBS and experts.
EW1 Mentors	<p>TBS will solicit interest from EW1 Cohort project teams to become “EW Mentors” and provide advice to EW2 project leads based on their experience with the first cohort of EW.</p>
Co-funders and Partners	<p>EW will benefit from support from key departments and agencies providing funding and other forms of partnership (e.g. course development).</p>
ADM Support	<p>The ADM Committee on Experimentation, in partnership with the TBS EW Support Team, will provide enabling support and, where possible and necessary, address any barriers that arise.</p>

The following provides a more detailed overview for Partner Departments which may be involved with EW in one or both of the following ways: 1) as **Participating Departments** - committed to running an experiment; and/or 2) as **Support Departments** - supporting the success of EW by providing, for example, an expert. This detailed overview includes estimated time commitments to assist individuals and teams in resource planning.

Detailed overview: Participating Departments

The biggest time commitment from participating departments will be the time required to design, set-up, run and validate their own department-led experiment. The amount of time required to do this will vary according to factors including but not limited to: internal capacity and access to additional expertise, level of project readiness, level of departmental support to implement the project and project complexity.

This is work that any department running an experiment would have done anyway; however, participation in EW will provide these departments with access to additional expertise, resources and a network of interdepartmental colleagues and senior champions to support the journey.

In addition to what is described above, additional EW time commitments for departmental project leads *at the working level* will include:

- Regular check-ins with cohort (e.g. video calls);
- Regular meetings with expert(s) matched to the departmental project (e.g. 5-8h/month);
- A variety of in-person meetings throughout the 2020 calendar year (e.g. a kick-off meeting, monthly drop-in co-working sessions, one or more half-day or day-long learning workshops and a final summary meeting);
- Writing 3-5 blog posts describing the experiment, challenges and lessons learned, and a final, summary report that speaks to what changes may be or have been made based on the results of this experiment (e.g. follow-up experiment, invest in building more internal capacity) and impacts, if any, on decision-making.

Detailed overview: Support Departments

EW relies on expert support and advice in two main ways: support for specific departmental projects (Departmental Expert Support) and support for EW as-a-whole (Cohort Expert Support).

1. Departmental Expert Support

One of the central and most successful design elements of EW is the matching of one or more experts with departmental project teams with based on the design needs of the project and availability of expertise. This function works best when (to the degree possible) the experts(s) assigned to each project remain consistent so that the quality of the relationships, advice and shared understanding of the project can be strengthened over time.

Key requirements for this role include the following and can be estimated to add up to an *average² of several hours a week for the expert in question for the duration of the experimentation phase (January 2020 to January 2021)*:

- Being available for project consultation sessions and any related preparations or follow-up with your matched departmental experiment (e.g. regular meetings by phone or in-person);
- Participate regularly, when possible, in EW-wide calls and meetings (e.g. regular check-ins, monthly training/learning events); and
- Author at least one blog post documenting the EW experience from an 'expert' perspective.

² Time commitments will vary not only according to the attributes of individual projects and project teams but also according to 'peaks and valleys' of a project timeline. For example, experts providing support may have a week or two with little to no interaction required followed by a week with multiple interactions required in the same week as a team looks to finish a specific step in the experimentation process.

Individuals matched to specific projects as part of this category of expert support may also wish to participate in any of the following types of cohort expert support described below.

2. Cohort Expert Support

This second category of expert support describes ways that experts can support the EW2 Cohort as a whole. There is much more flexibility as to what this will look like on a case-by-case basis, depending on EW needs and the availability of the given expert. Examples of ways that experts could provide cohort-wide support include:

- Become a member of the expert review panel and provide an assessment of all EW project applications based on a set criteria
- Assist with EW design and development of supporting materials
- Design and deliver a training event focused on a particular step or element of the experimentation process
- Provide *additional* expert support on an as-needed basis to departmental consultation sessions as described in category 1; and
- Author at least one blog post documenting the EW experience and/or providing advice from an expert perspective.

Reference Materials

What is Experimentation Works (EW)?

Experimentation Works (EW) was designed in 2017 as a way to support and showcase experimentation in the open by matching pre-existing GOC talent in experimentation with departments eager to incorporate experimentation into their work. **Experimentation Works is a scalable initiative to build public service capacity in experimentation through a unique learning-by-doing model that supports and showcases a variety of experiments in the open.**

Led by a team within the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (the TBS EW Support Team), and supported by the whole-of-government [ADM Committee of Experimentation](#) (link internal to GOC), EW is a concrete response to the [2016 Deputy Head Direction](#) to “test new approaches to learn what works and what does not work using a rigorous method” and to build relevant capacity within departments.

Key features include:

Showcasing diverse examples of experimentation in the open	A practical cohort model that matches experts and central agency support with department-led experiments	Training modules and supportive resources to help guide the completion of each stage	Building an emerging network of experimentation practitioners
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How it works:



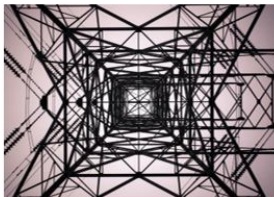
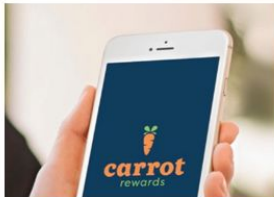
Identify	TBS engages broadly with potential partners inside and outside of the GOC in order to identify sources of expert support for EW.
Apply	Departments interested in running a proposed experiment through EW apply to the selection process (see p.9 of this document).
Select	Final project selection will be made by TBS based on advice from an expert panel. Projects will be assessed from a variety of perspectives (e.g. validity and feasibility of design, level of support for project), and from an overall desire to showcase a diversity of project types (see p.9 of this document).
Support	Departmental teams are matched with experts and benefit from ongoing training as well as insights gleaned from the overall cohort experience.

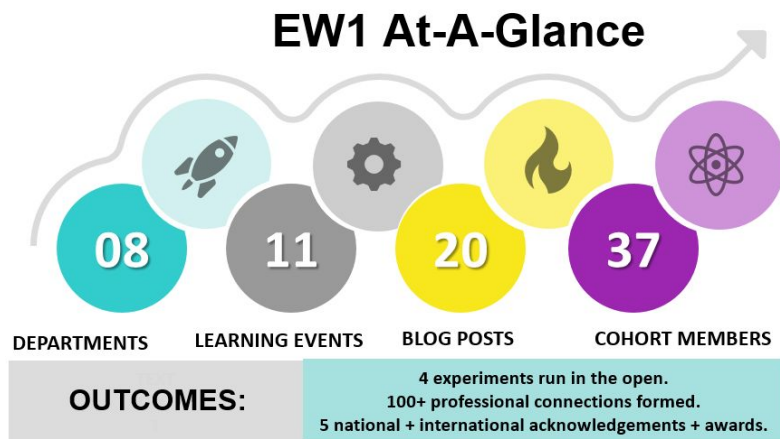
Experiment	With support from TBS and experts, departments define, design, run, and validate their experiments in order to inform departmental decision-making.
Share	Results will be shared broadly through regular blog posts throughout the process and a final impact /failure report at the end of the cohort.

EW1 Highlights (2018-2019)

A first cohort of Experimentation Works (EW1) launched in April 2018 and included 4 experimental projects from 3 departments (Canadian Heritage, Health Canada and Natural Resources Canada). These departments were supported by 10 experimentation experts from 5 departments (Canada Revenue Agency; Employment and Social Development Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; National Research Council; and Natural Resources Canada).

The experimental projects — meant to be designed, implemented and reported on within a calendar year — were proposed to TBS by teams looking for rigorous answers to specific questions within defined areas. After a selection process was completed, teams were matched with experimentation experts who provided technical expertise throughout the process.

EW1 Projects At-A-Glance (2018-2019)			
			
<p>Multiculturalism Initiative (PCH)</p> <p>What is the user experience of youth participating in a new micro-grant initiative to promote multiculturalism?</p>	<p>Consumer Incident Reporting (HC)</p> <p>Does improved user experience increase the number of product safety issues reported to Health Canada?</p>	<p>EnerGuide Labelling (NRCan)</p> <p>Which <u>EnerGuide</u> label designs are the most effective in conveying information about energy efficiency to home owners?</p>	<p>Energy Efficient Homes (NRCan)</p> <p>How effective are different messages at nudging home owners to complete a home energy evaluation?</p>
PROGRAM DESIGN	CONTENT DESIGN	VISUAL DESIGN	MESSAGE DESIGN
Before / After Design	A / B Testing	Randomized Controlled Trial	Randomized Controlled Trial



The EW1 cohort benefited from a collaborative environment involving 100+ individuals from across the federal government. From informal interactions between project teams and experts to learning events and blog posts, there were multiple occasions to present findings, discuss challenges, and share lessons and insights on experimentation in a public

sector context. Over 20 blog posts were published by EW projects teams as well as experts documenting their challenges, lessons and insights in real time. In addition, 11 EW learning events were provided on a wide range of experimentation-related topics.

While the TBS EW Support Team oversaw the projects and provided guidance to project teams, project ownership and responsibility stayed with individual teams. More information on each project can be found on the [EW blog](#). The TBS team also put together a retrospective of the 2018-19 experience, published on Medium in July 2019 as two separate documents: the EW1 [Failure Report](#) and the EW1 [Impact Report](#).

About the Application and Selection Process

The Application Process

A call for proposal form is currently available for departments to consider. This application form provides a list of questions for applicants to complete about their proposed experiment as well as additional information about their project and work environment. In addition to being available to meet with teams and answer questions, TBS will host a number of in-person workshops to assist departments interested in submitting a strong application form.

The call for proposals asks questions related to various criteria (see below) that will enable the success of the experiments and ensure a range of projects are selected. In addition to proposal summary, project details, some practical considerations (e.g. resourcing, management support), the criteria will include the following four elements:

- **Clarity.** Are the problem, question, and design options sufficiently clear in order to understand what is proposed?
- **Feasibility.** Is the proposed design sufficiently appropriate in order to answer the proposed research question? Can the proposed design be reasonably implemented as part of the current cohort?
- **Readiness.** Does the project team have the necessary project management expertise / resources to initiate and implement the proposed project (knowing they would receive expert support, should they require it)?
- **Relevance/usefulness of evidence for decision-making.** Is the project relevant from a decision-making point of view? (i.e. will the evidence generated be valuable to inform decisions?)

The Selection Process

Project proposals will be reviewed and assessed by an expert panel on experimentation. The final decision will be made by the TBS Experimentation team, with the support of the ADM Committee on Experimentation, based on the criteria provided. Given EW's focus on building capacity in experimentation and showcasing a variety of experimental (and pre-experimental) projects, ensuring a diversity of projects will be a strong consideration in the final project selection.

Experimentation Works Commitment to Open by Default

From the inception of its design in 2017, Experimentation Works has always been guided by an unwavering commitment to working in the open.

What do we mean by open?

The primary way that EW operates in the open is by a commitment to share EW design, documentation, lessons learned and outcomes both within and outside government:

- EW experiments will be *documented along the way*³ through updates to the ADM Committee on Experimentation as well as updates on GoC platforms (e.g. GCpedia) to allow all interested GoC employees to better understand all of the needed steps to design and implement an experiment.
- Useful excerpts of the EW design, process, insights and results will be made accessible to the public (e.g. Medium blog) so that citizens, other levels of government, and international partners can follow EW progress.

³ Experimentation teams from participating departments will be responsible for documenting their experiments through, for example, 3-5 blog posts. The TBS support team will work closely with all participating departments to facilitate sharing of drafts among the cohort and provide any helpful feedback and support. TBS will also document the overarching process for sharing across the GOC and publicly.

- New for the second cohort of EW (2019-2021), all EW teams will be required to pre-register their experimental design to foster greater learning and awareness. This will be hosted on a public-facing Government of Canada Experimentation Inventory.

Why is this important?

A default to working in the open is a practical way to achieve EW goals:

- The [2016 Deputy Head Experimentation Directive](#) is explicit about the level of openness that is expected from departmental experimentation efforts: “*Departments are expected to share the results of their experiments, positive, negative or neutral/null, as broadly as possible, with a strong default to public release.*”
- Broadly sharing the documentation and results of EW is aligned with EW’s goal to strengthen ties with external experts and other levels and types of government and increase federal government experimentation capacity.
- An open by default approach to EW is also aligned with a variety of themes linked to public sector reform, such as a more accountable, collaborative, networked, transparent, agile, innovative and effective federal government.

EW MOU Process

The TBS EW Support team will ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed between TBS and each participating department to ensure a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities on all sides.

MOUs with “Participant Departments” (i.e. departments that will be running an experiment under EW) will be signed starting in February 2020, once the final project selection has been made. MOUs with “Support Departments” (i.e. departments that will be supporting the success of EW) may be signed as early as Fall 2019.

EW FAQs

Q1: What is EW?

A: Experimentation Works (EW) is about building federal public service capacity in experimentation mindset and practice through learning by doing. By showcasing and supporting department-led experiments from start to finish through EW, TBS seeks to show the value and process of experimentation, while generating new examples of federal experiments. TBS is also committed to sharing the process, outcomes and lessons learned as broadly as possible.

Q2: Why is TBS doing this?

A: As indicated in the [Deputy Head Directive on Experimentation](#), policy and program experimentation is seen as a key tool to help support evidence-based decision making and improve outcomes for Canadians. By cultivating a cohort of public servants familiar with experimentation and by connecting this cohort with access to experts and helpful resources, TBS sees EW as a concrete way to help build the experimentation capacity in the federal government. By working in the open, TBS sees EW as a unique way of demonstrating how and where an experiment can take place.

Q3: Who can participate in EW?

A: EW is designed to be open to any interested departments. Departments interested in running a proposed experiment through EW can apply to the call for proposals process or set up a chat with the TBS EW Support Team (find more information [on this GCpedia page](#) - link internal to GOC). Departments interested in partnering with TBS to support the work of EW (such as providing financial support or the loan of experts) should get in touch using the same link above.

Q4: Why would a department or a team be interested in being part of EW?

A: EW is designed to benefit participating departments and teams in a range of ways, including:

- Access to a cohort of other public servants focused on the experimentation process;
- Access to a range of learning materials, events and dedicated expert advice;
- Documentation support from TBS to help record parts of the experiments that otherwise might not be documented; these materials can be reused as lessons-learned and communication materials for future experiments;
- Exposure to senior management, including but not limited to, at the ADM Committee on Experimentation;
- Help navigating potential barriers that may create challenges (e.g. corporate level, central agency level); and
- Providing an opportunity for departments to demonstrate a tangible commitment to experimentation (i.e. participation in EW) when completing whole-of-government reporting exercises linked to experimentation, such as DPs and MAF.

Q5: How many experiments will be selected?

A: The final number of projects selected will depend on the quality, type and diversity of projects that are proposed as well as the number and type of experts that EW2 will have access to.

Q6: How will EW manage the diverse needs of each experiment?

A: In terms of capacity, the TBS EW Support Team is dedicated to supporting varying levels of capacity through means such as custom-built or curated training events and resources, additional access to expertise to the degree possible, and additional supports such as access to EW1 mentors (see p.7).

In terms of differing timelines, the experiment phase (Phase II) has been purposely designed to last one year (from January 2020 to January 2021) to allow each experimentation team a sufficient window of time to design and setup their experiment (as this itself can easily take

months) as well as room for possibilities such as multiple phases of an experiment that is more complex. No two experiments are expected to look the same but EW has been designed to feature a variety of experiments that should be able to be completed in this time-frame.

Q7: What if a departmental experiment is completed before one year?

A: While the experimentation phase is designed to run up to one year (January 2020 to January 2021), teams that complete their experiment and validate their results earlier than this do not necessarily need to continue attending some optional EW meetings, such as weekly project update calls. However, all groups will still be required to participate in the reporting-in-the-open exercises (e.g. blog posts documenting the experimentation journey) and ensure departmental representation at signature events (e.g. learning and sharing events, EW2 Wrap-up event).

Q8: What is the governance for this? What will be TBS's role and its level of involvement?

A: EW has been designed to balance the importance of senior-level engagement and leadership in experimentation, in line with the ADM Committee on Experimentation, with the value of empowering agile and open-by-default principles at the working level.

The overall role of TBS is not to “approve” or “challenge” the work of departments, but rather to support the overarching initiative and individual department needs (see below). The overall role of departments is to manage their own department-led experiments using internal governance and approval structures (see below), while participating in the broader network of EW sharing, learning, and reporting.

Additional details:

On ADM-level engagement and governance: Implicated ADMs will be engaged on EW through the ADM Committee on Experimentation as well as through individual ADM level discussions between TBS and all potential and confirmed partnering departments. Broad roles and responsibilities will be communicated and validated at this level through this present EW Partnerships Package as well as through the MOU signed between TBS and each participating department. The ADM Committee on Experimentation will continue to act as an interdepartmental ADM-level forum through which EW updates and needs can be brought for discussion and action.

On interactions within the cohort: Once broad guidelines and expectations have been set, the design of EW is to allow for unhindered flow of information between the working-level team in TBS supporting EW and all participating departments, as well as from the EW cohort and their fellow government colleagues (e.g. via blog updates).

On the role of TBS: With input from experts and departments, TBS will design and facilitate logistics for EW, connect departments to experts and resources (as available), help document

the process, and assist in unlocking or clarifying any barriers, real or perceived, related to TBS mandate areas.

On internal governance within departments: Individual EW experiments will be subject to each department's internal governance and approvals process to ensure that the right oversight, frameworks and governance are in place.

Q9: What is the governance/approvals process for communicating updates (e.g. blog posts) on EW experiments?

A: As part of its commitment to open by default, TBS is committed to ensuring that EW progress and results are accessible across the GOC and to the public (e.g. via a Medium blog, open data portal on Canada.ca, etc.). TBS will ensure that public communications focus on documenting higher-level challenges and lessons learned with a level of detail that is appropriate for public release but still insightful. With respect to approvals, TBS will ensure that participating departments approve any content that describes the work of their own department before it is posted publicly.