



Treasury Board of Canada
Secretariat

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor
du Canada

Canada

Experimentation Works

Improving evidence-based decision-making

Why Experiment?

Our Programs, Services & Operations

In 2017/18, the Government of Canada spent over **\$270 billion** on delivering programs and services to Canadians, employing over 500,000 public servants across the country.

Delivering Public Value

Canadians expect that their governments will be **efficient, effective and responsive**, making decisions based on sound evidence to ensure we obtain good value for money. Experimentation is a key tool to establish information about what works, ensuring that the activities of government can adapt to changing circumstances and deliver strong public value.

The Commitment to “What Works”

Becoming more experimental as a government is a cross-cutting commitment. It’s about getting better at getting better. To this end, the President of the Treasury Board was also tasked in his **mandate letter** with supporting more experimentation across the Government.

Experimentation Can...



Enable **innovation**, by “de-risking” the unknown and allowing government to try new things based on evidence of what can work.



As part of ongoing service delivery, allow government – through data-enabled testing – to **continuously improve**.



Enhance the government’s ongoing commitment to **evaluation**, deepening the expectations for impact analysis: using data and measurement in increasingly sophisticated ways, and adopting new technologies, to **know what is working and what is not**.

Providing direction and guidance: the 2016 Experimentation Direction to Deputy Heads

The screenshot shows the Government of Canada website header with the Canadian flag, the text 'Government of Canada' and 'Gouvernement du Canada', and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories: Jobs, Immigration, Travel, Business, Benefits, Health, Taxes, and More services. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home → Impact and Innovation Unit → Reports and resources. The main heading is 'Experimentation direction for Deputy Heads - December 2016'. Under 'Context', it states: 'This document reinforces the Government's commitment to devote a fixed percentage of program funds to experimenting with new approaches and measuring impact to instill a culture of measurement, evaluation and innovation in program and policy design and delivery. It provides context and directions for Deputy Heads on how to implement this commitment.' Under 'Definition', it states: 'For the purpose of implementing the President of the Treasury Board's mandate letter commitment to "work with [his] colleagues to ensure that they are devoting a fixed percentage of program funds to experimenting with new approaches to existing problems and measuring the impact of their programs", experimentation is defined as:'. A list of features for 'Testing new approaches to learn what works and what does not work using a rigorous method' includes: 'deliberate, thoughtful, and ethical experimental design;', 'comparisons between interventions and base cases to capture evidence (e.g., randomized controlled trials, A/B testing, counterfactual experiments, baseline performance data, pre- and post-tests);', and 'randomized assignment to test and control groups, whenever possible;'. At the bottom, it mentions 'ous impact measurement and causality assessment; and' and '* publication of positive, negative and neutral results.'

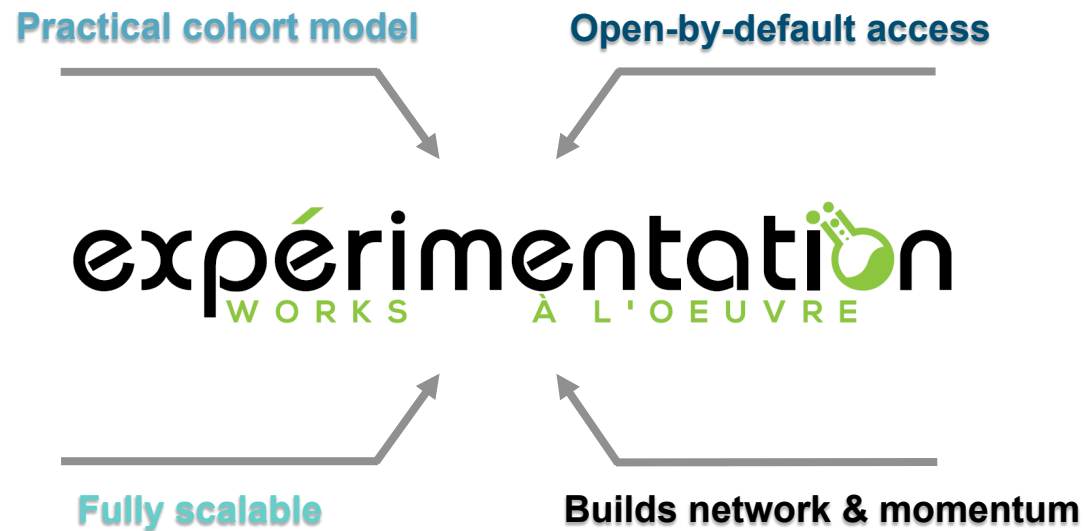
Conduct experiments to generate evidence around what works to inform policies and programs

Gather baseline data through experimental rigour and build capacity to measure results and impact

Mainstream experimentation as a part of program, policy and service design across government

Our Unique Approach: Learning by Doing

In order to better understand the challenges we face in embedding experimentation, we launched Experimentation Works



The EW cohort should help build **skills** and **resources** for experimentation across the GoC by running experiments in **pre-identified areas of opportunity and need**

Experimentation Works (EW) – How It Works

EW features small-scale experiments in the GoC through a unique learning-by-doing model

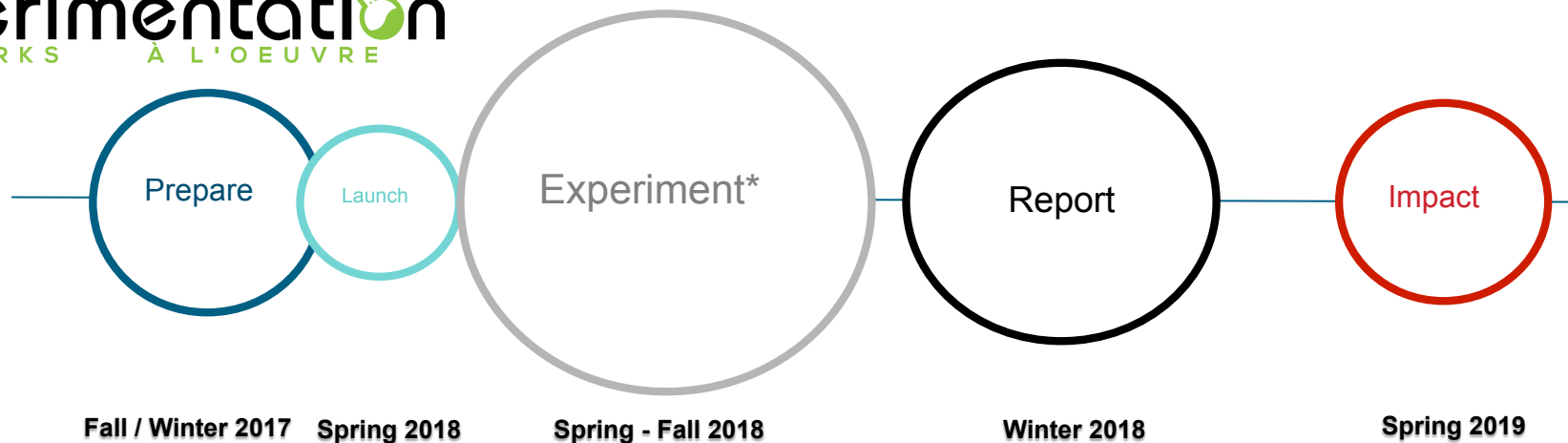
- Build public servants' **capacity** in experimentation by showcasing **3-5 small-scale experiments**
- Documenting and sharing experimentation **development, deployment, results, and initial impacts (if any)**
- Focus on a **variety of methodologies and policy areas** (policy design, delivery, and back office experimentation)

The players:

- **Partner departments** are conducting experiments in their policy and program area (Natural Resources, Heritage, Health).
- **Expert departments** lend experimentation experts to help support the project (Employment and Social Development, Revenue, Natural Resources, Immigration).

Treasury Board Secretariat's role is to help enable the experiments by removing barriers, convening partners, and documenting and publishing the process for others to learn from, hopefully leading them to scale what works.

expérimentation
WORKS À L'OEUVRE



*Depending on methodology, duration may vary

Experimentation Works: The Projects

The Problem: Low rates of incident reporting on product safety issues, despite expectation that much larger numbers are encountering safety issues which should be reported.

Health Canada - Consumer Product Safety Program

Building on a previously completed design thinking session, the Health Canada team is seeking to conduct an experiment on their incident reporting website to better understand if changes to the page can increase the number of Canadians that fill out the product safety report form.

Consumer products and cosmetics

Information on incident reporting, recalls and alerts, cosmetic information, product safety education and consumer product requirements.

Services and information

- [Report an unsafe product](#)
Report a consumer product or cosmetic that you feel is unsafe.
- [Use consumer products safely](#)
Safety information for toys, household products, nursery products, cosmetics, and second-hand products.
- [Recalls and safety alerts](#)
Search the latest recall information on consumer products and cosmetics.
- [Subscribe to consumer product safety news](#)
Receive new information on recalls and consultations.

Cosmetic or Consumer Product Incident Report - Form for Consumer

Protected when completed and received by Health Canada. Treasury Board Secretariat Government Security Policy.

Report - Section 1

* Report Type (required)
New

Product Type
Select Product Type

Who is reporting - Section 2

Relationship to injured / involved person
Select Relationship to injured / involved person

* Name (first name and last name) (required)
Name

Address (number and street)
Address

City
City

Postal Code
Postal Code

Country
Select Country

* Email (Email OR Telephone is required), both are preferred
email@example.com

* Telephone (including area code) (Telephone OR Email is required), both are preferred
Telephone

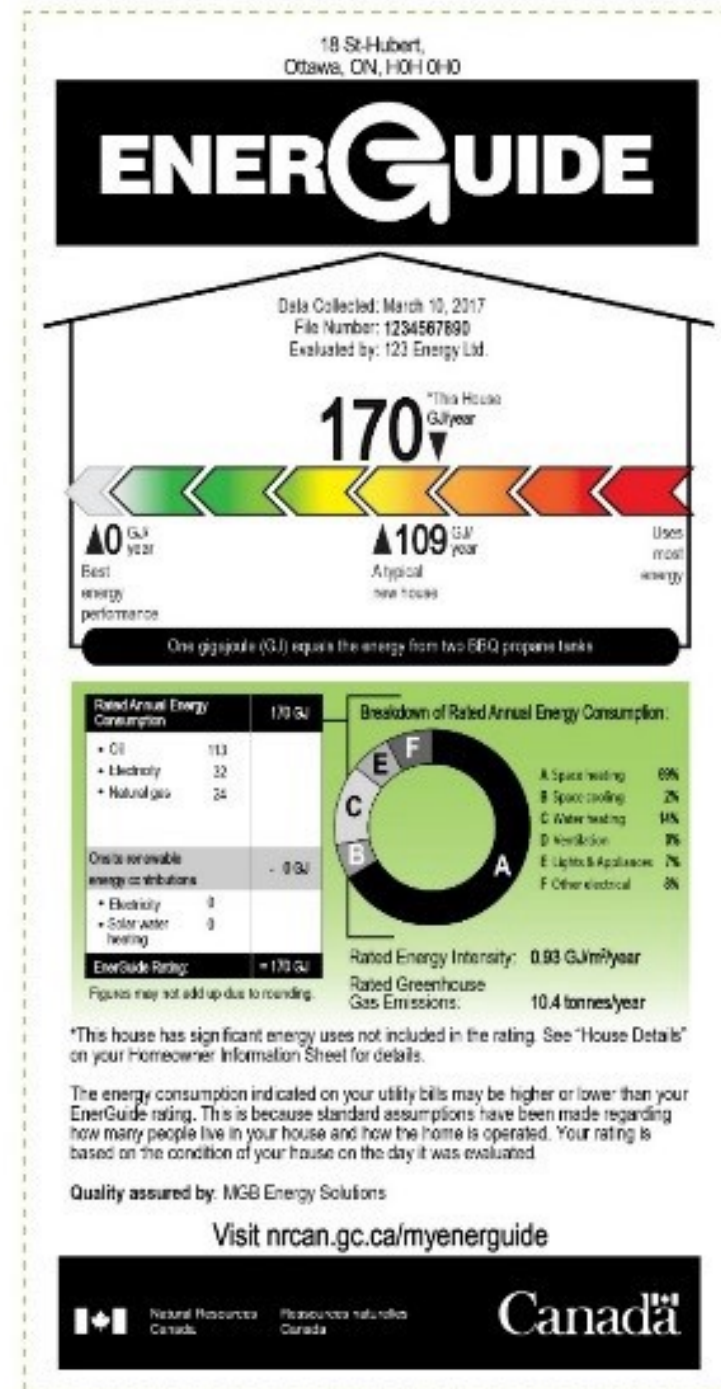
Fax (including area code)
Fax Number

Experimentation Works: Projects

The Problem: Desire to optimize consumer behaviour when it comes to energy efficient choices, yet concern that current labelling is not well designed to maximize behaviour change

Natural Resources Canada – Office of Energy Efficiency

Project 1- EnerGuide Label for Homes
 The Office of Energy Efficiency is working on an experiment to better understand if the EnerGuide label effectively conveys energy efficiency information to homeowners, and what alternative designs for labelling might do a better job



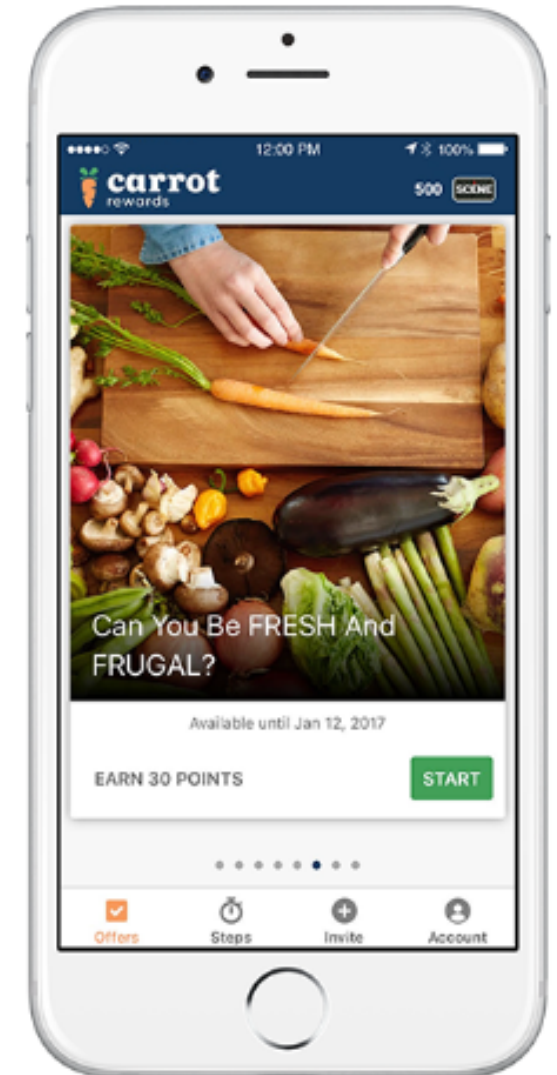
Experimentation Works: Projects

The Problem: We know that the act of getting your home assessed for energy efficiency is a key trigger for making energy efficient upgrades and achieving cost savings for homeowners, but many people don't take advantage of such services.

Natural Resources Canada – Office of Energy Efficiency

Project 2 - Nudging Homeowners Towards a Home Energy Evaluation.
The Office of Energy Efficiency has developed an experiment designed to better understand how interventions such as message framing influence homeowners to take action towards getting a home energy evaluation.

Both experiments led by NRCan make use of the **Carrot Rewards** App, which gives users loyalty program points (e.g., air miles) for completing small tasks or answering questions.

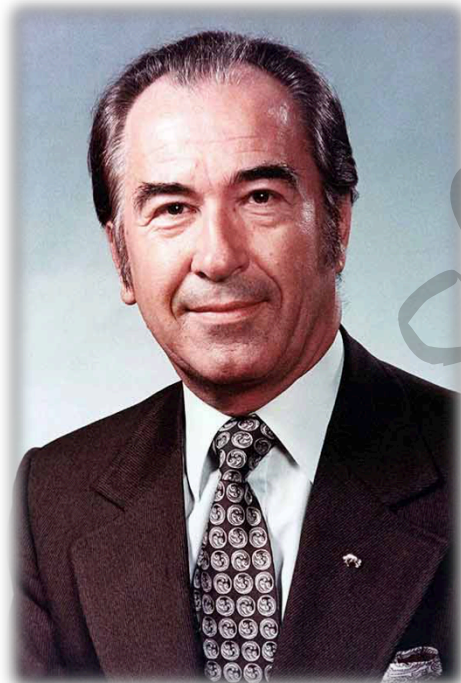


Experimentation Works: The Projects

The Problem: (pre-experimental) A new type of micro-grant was recently introduced but it is still unclear how the grant is working on-the-ground, which may need to be further tested upon discovery

Heritage Canada - Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism

The Paul Yuzyk Award program allows young Canadians to apply for micro-grants of \$250, \$500 or \$1,000 to support community projects that advanced diversity and inclusion. The team is seeking to use qualitative research approaches to better understand the impact of the grant and the potential for scalability.



Paul Yuzyk Youth Initiative for Multiculturalism

From: [Canadian Heritage](#)

Canada's diversity is a strength and a source of great pride. Young leaders play a critical role in shaping our country's future and fostering a stronger, more prosperous Canada.

Have you seen or felt the impact of racism and discrimination in your community? Do you have a great idea to help build a more inclusive Canada? This is your opportunity to make a positive difference in your community.

Through the Paul Yuzyk Youth Initiative for Multiculturalism, you can receive a \$250, \$500 or \$1,000 grant to fund a youth-led project that promotes diversity and inclusion, while addressing racism and discrimination in local communities.

This initiative honours the legacy of the [late Senator Paul Yuzyk](#), a champion for multiculturalism in Canada.

Who can apply

Canadian citizens or permanent residents, between the ages of 18 to 24 years, are eligible to apply. An applicant who receives funding from Canadian Heritage can work as an individual, in a team, or with a mentor, a school, or an incorporated not-for-profit organization to complete the proposed project.

This initiative is not open to employees, immediate family members of employees or persons living under the same roof as an employee of Canadian Heritage.

Experimentation in Government: Lessons to-date



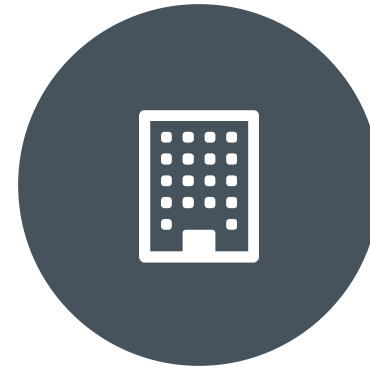
Data

We need a better understanding of our programs before we can even begin to experiment



Tools

We do not always have the tools needed to properly test our ideas



Structures

Experimenting with new approaches can create barriers within the bureaucracy



Partners

Internal and external actors can be important partners in experimenting

Experimentation Works: The Model



Learning-by-Doing

EW is a relatively untested model of policy development for us – instead of having a central agency issue a policy and guidance, we are first testing the basic actions we wish to see more of in government, side-by-side with departments, to better understand the reality on-the-ground. We are in the process of rigorously evaluating it so that we can better understand if and how it is adding value.



Limits of the model

We have faced several challenges in implementing this model, including the difficulty in identifying “experimentation-ready”, matching the right experts with the right projects, and ensuring that enough data from the “messy middle” is captured so that we can derive generalizable experimentation lessons for the rest of government.



Always Open

EW is “open by default” which lets us share the model and learnings across departments, jurisdictions and internationally. Working with our “Global Experimentation Teams” network, we have shared the EW approach with other governments, some of whom have expressed great interest in the EW concept. As well, we have integrated promising approaches from our international partners in our own thinking regarding future iterations of EW.

Experimentation Works: Follow Along!

Medium

EW is being run in a very “open” way, which includes blogging - in public - about our work, progress, success and failures.

Please follow our journey at:

https://medium.com/@exp_works

You can also contact the Experimentation team directly:

Director:

Myra Latendresse-Drapeau,
Myra.Latendresse-Drapeau@tbs-sct.gc.ca

Generic Address

zzexper@tbs-sct.gc.ca

Applause from you and 3 others



Experimentation Works (EW)

Initiative to build public servants' capacity in experimentation. Follow journey on Trello

<https://goo.gl/g4xu2s> & en français https://medium.com/@exp_oeuvre

May 1 · 3 min read

The need for Experimentation Works

