

National Guide to Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure Governance at a Glance October 2003

Introduction -- The National Guide to Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure (InfraGuide) has had a busy year, both in terms of organizational evolution and realizing project objectives. Given recent developments at the InfraGuide, this update will describe changes that have been made to the governance structure.

Background -- Canadian municipalities spend billions each and every year on their civil infrastructure but it never seems to be enough. Existing infrastructure is aging while demand grows for more and better roads, and improved water and sewer systems responding both to higher standards of safety, health and environmental protection as well as population growth. Part of the solution is to change the way we plan, design and manage infrastructure. The InfraGuide through identifying, documenting and sharing best practices hopes to help municipal governments meet their infrastructure needs within a fiscally responsible and environmentally sustainable framework, while preserving quality of life.

In 2001, the federal government, through its Infrastructure Canada Program (INFC) and the National Research Council (NRC), joined forces with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to create InfraGuide. InfraGuide is both a new, national network of people and a growing collection of published best practice documents for use by decision makers and technical personnel in the public and private sectors. Based on Canadian experience and research, the reports set out the best practices to support sustainable municipal infrastructure decisions and actions in six key areas: municipal roads and sidewalks, potable water, storm and wastewater, decision making and investment planning, environmental protocols and transit. The best practices are available on-line and in hard copy.

To date, nineteen best practices have been published with many more in the works. Clearly InfraGuide has demonstrated its ability to find and share best practices on a national basis through a bottom up process designed to share the responsibility and resultant success.

Shifting Governance -- Working from a position that the responsibility for solutions to infrastructure issues is shared; InfraGuide recognizes that the growth and endurance of its organization relies on collaboration and alliances in the infrastructure community. Grounded in a principle of collective experience and knowledge, the InfraGuide is evolving to become central to a national network of practitioners, researchers and municipal governments working to identify and communicate decision-making and investment planning tools, environmental protocols, innovative strategies for renewal and technical best practices for civil infrastructure.

To accommodate the evolution of the organization and support continually increasing network participation, we have recently adopted and are working towards implementation of a shared governance approach that builds on our past successes and is well suited to our current environment and context. Expected to be fully implemented in the next six months, the following is a broad overview of the elements of our structure:



- The InfraGuide **Governing Council** oversees the management and strategic aspects of our organization along with the integration of the national network. In addition, it functions to develop, implement and monitor the organization's mandate and objectives while ensuring that the InfraGuide remains flexible to changes in organizational realities and environmental context.
- The **Executive Committee** exercises the powers and performs the duties of the InfraGuide Governing Council when it is between meetings to ensure organizational continuity and the realization of decisions into action. The Executive Committee is further responsible for organizational membership, and managing the nomination and approval process for recruitment of council and standing committee members.
- The **Relationship Infrastructure Committee** provides consultation to the InfraGuide Governing Council on realizing the network advantage of our organization. It undertakes activities that target capacity development and joint value creation while also linking to broader policy processes, is responsible for participation in our organization's annual planning retreat, and actively seeks input from the Stakeholder Networks.
- The **Municipal Infrastructure Committee** provides consultation to the InfraGuide Governing Council that focuses on our organization's strategic technical aspects. It is responsible for participation in our organization's annual planning retreat, prioritizes the focus of best practice development while overseeing the implementation of the Guide's Priority Setting Framework, ensures the technical soundness of our organization's best practices and any associated literature, approves the membership and terms of reference for Technical Committees and Working Groups, and directs the release and publication of our organization's best practices.
- Working within the organization's operational structure and part of its Directorate, **Technical Committees** make use of **Working Groups** as required for the development of best practices. Technical Committees direct the development of technical best practices and associated literature as outlined in the InfraGuide's Best Practice Priority setting framework, participate with the Directorate in contractor selection for best practice development assignments, and develop and recommend terms of reference for Working Groups and Technical Committees.
- **Ad-hoc committees** are established in the implementation of our organization's yearly workplan and consequently reflect its strategic priorities. These committees deal with specific and assigned issues that fall outside the responsibilities of any standing committees. Depending on their assignments, ad-hoc committees may have extensive authority and responsibility.
- Nurtured by **Regional Contacts, Stakeholder Networks** are a forum for collaboration and the sharing of both information and expertise. These provide links to the broader infrastructure community and function to identify emerging infrastructure issues, provide consultation as required by the Relationship Infrastructure Committee and the organization's Directorate through Regional Contacts, contribute to the process of Stakeholder reviews, scan the environment and provide relevant information to challenge the adaptability of the organization, and provide access to a broadly diverse national constituency.

