



**CENTRAL INNOVATION HUB
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE**

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT, MARCH 2016

INNOVATION HUB

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE HUB STAFF TO THE CLERK OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

The Hub's first year of operations have been defined by our efforts to stand up a lean and high-performing organization to meet the challenges outlined in *Destination 2020* – that is, to work across the Public Service to apply new tools and approaches and help create the space for innovation to take root and thrive.

Key to meeting this goal has been our efforts to create the Hub team of public policy entrepreneurs – experts with specific skills and expertise in applying innovative methods to improve outcomes for citizens. Now that our core team is in place, we are increasingly focusing on deepening and broadening our impact.

Over the year, we have been partnering with federal departments and agencies to explore new ways of delivering programs and services – such as by applying design-thinking and behavioural insights to help solve policy challenges. We have also been exploring opportunities on the frontiers of public sector innovation, such as “open policy making”.

We have learned a number of lessons along the way, which we will detail in the report. Our main focus in the coming year will be to build up our core practice areas, expand our portfolio of projects and advisory services, and maintain our focus on delivery and execution.

We are looking forward to building on our early successes.

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OVERVIEW

This report focuses on the Hub's early innovation results and efforts taken in its first year to establish the organization and its areas of strategic focus.

In addition to promoting transparency, this document serves as a knowledge-sharing document for other public sector innovation labs and teams.

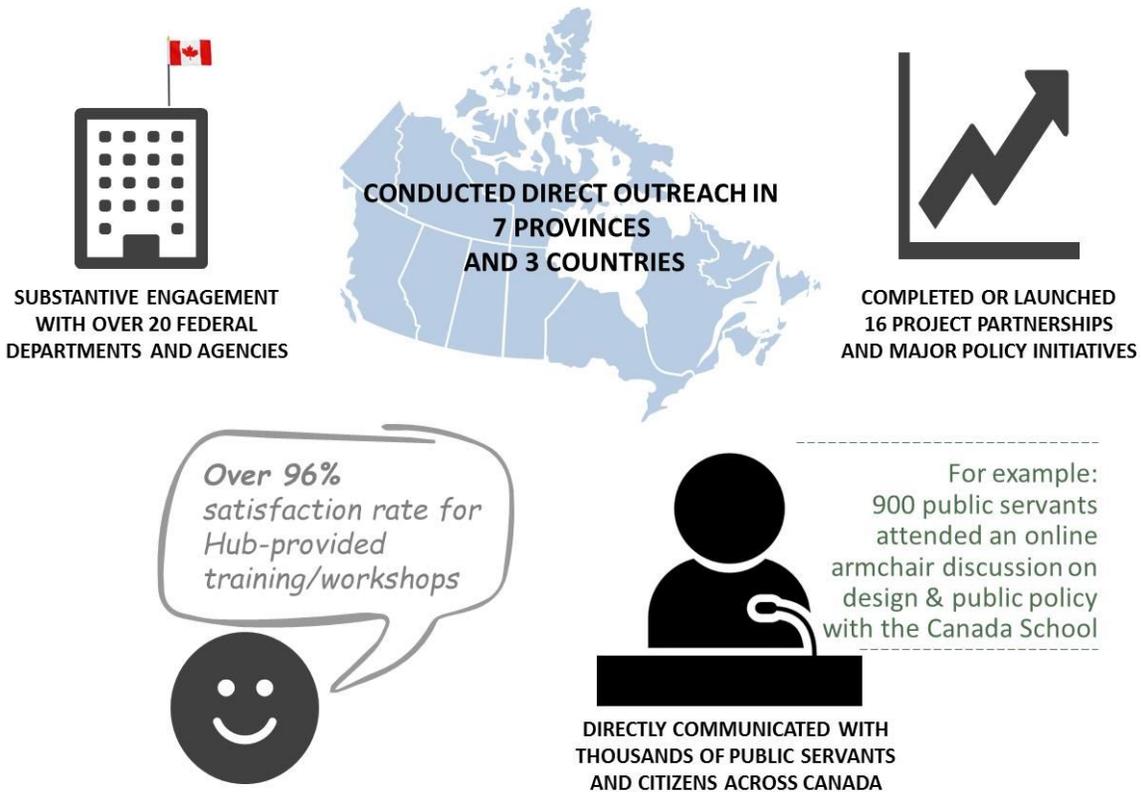
It also serves as a baseline document for future reports and will help inform the formal evaluation of the Hub (scheduled in 2019).

Any questions or feedback can be directed to:

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pco-bcp.gc.ca](mailto:innovation@pco-bcp.gc.ca)

EARLY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

In its first year of operation, the Central Innovation Hub has reached out across the country to support federal public servants in applying innovative approaches to policy development and implementation. Moving beyond its start-up phase, the Hub is expanding its reach and taking on a greater number of projects. Some of the Hub's **early results** include:



INTRODUCTION

The Role and Development of the Hub

The Central Innovation Hub was announced in *Destination 2020* (released in May 2014). The Hub was established to enhance knowledge of innovative policy approaches and instruments and directly support the development and implementation of innovative programs and services (e.g. in areas of big data, behavioural insights and social innovation).

Officially launched in February 2015, much of first months of the Hub's operations focused on establishing its business plan, office, and core staff. With these elements in place by the fall of 2015, the Hub's work has accelerated in terms of broadening its activities and outreach.

"The Hub will provide expertise and advice on emerging areas and will help change the way the Public Service does business. It will also support departments in applying new approaches...to complex policy and program challenges"

Destination 2020

The Hub's objectives are closely aligned with several of the Government's commitments and can serve as a key tool for advancing this agenda. For example, the Government has emphasized the importance of improving implementation through better linkages between policy advice, program design and delivery; more open and transparent policy-making; innovative policy tools and financing instruments; program experimentation; and evidence-based policy development.

Guiding Principles

In advancing these practice areas, the Hub is committed to a core set of principles:

- Embracing a user-centric approach: we do not seek recognition for the Hub itself, and instead seek to make meaningful contributions to improve outcomes for our clients and for Canadians.
- Emphasizing the importance of policy expertise and skills attainment in our work: we apply rigorous methodologies and develop strong evidence bases to support the work that we do, for both policy and project development; and
- Collaborating and building partnerships: we expand our impact by working collaboratively with others, both inside and outside government, by leveraging the skills, expertise, resources, and relationships required to move initiatives forward.

Examples of Successful Hub Partnerships

- Collaborative projects with the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Policy Innovation (DMCPI), including hosting an interdisciplinary team from four departments to tackle the "sharing economy".
- Building relationships with Canada School of Public Service for outreach and curriculum design to promote learning in innovation.
- Federal-provincial partnership with Ontario Behavioural Insights Unit to explore pilot projects in areas of shared jurisdiction.

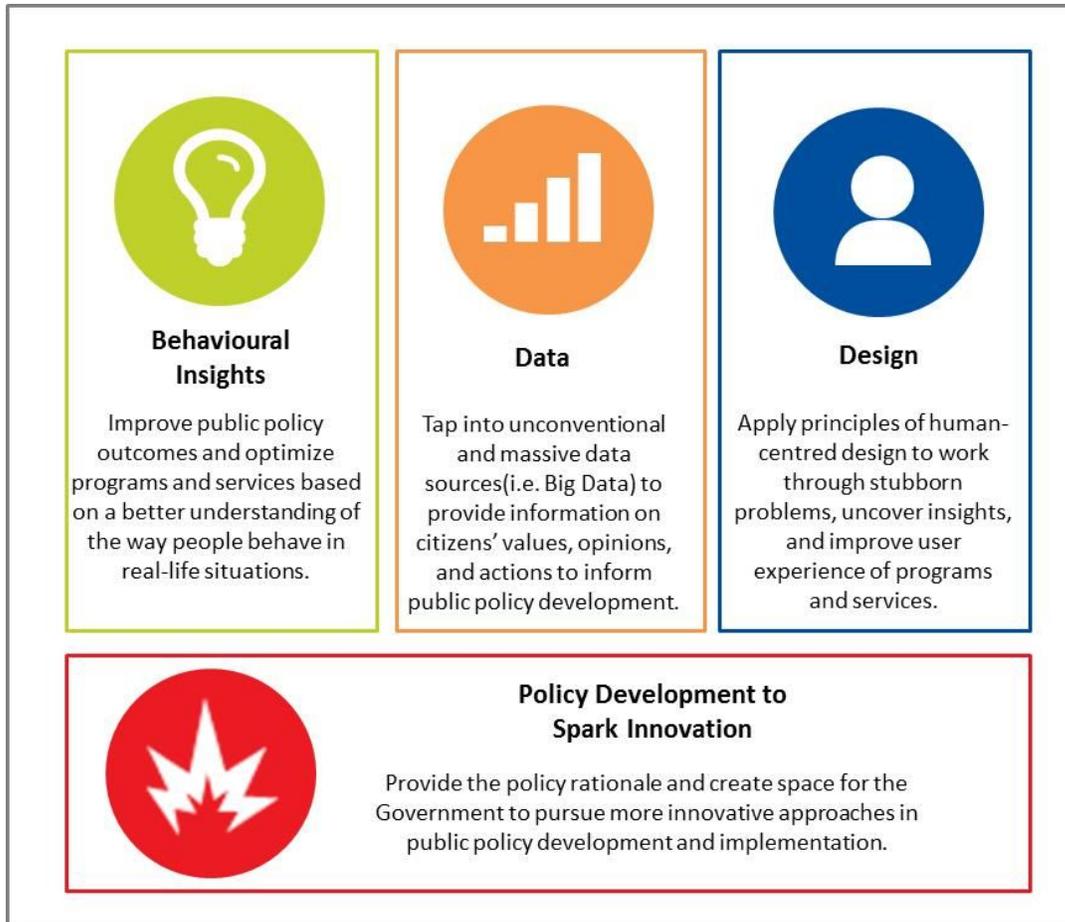
Through the experience gained in its engagement and project work, the Hub is continually refining and targeting its approach. While remaining a small organization, in the coming year the Hub will focus on deepening and broadening its activities and outreach in areas where it can have the greatest impact.

ESTABLISHING CORE PRACTICE AREAS

Main Business Lines, 2015-2016

Based on increasing demand for expertise and assistance in specific areas, the skills of the Hub's core team, and an assessment of which areas of innovation could yield the most significant impact, the Hub chose to focus its efforts across three current practice areas: behavioural insights, data and design. Cutting across these core areas was a significant amount of foundational policy work to enable innovation at a systems level (see Annex A for detailed outcomes and goals in these areas).

The Innovation Hub's Core Practice Areas



Executed through its practice areas, the Hub has oriented its work to incorporate three horizontal objectives to act as:



A **resource** – providing easy access to information on best practices and new tools, approaches, and techniques;



A **connector** – establishing networks and partnerships between project leads and resources to accelerate departmental work; and,



An **innovation catalyst** – working with departments to identify and support projects with potential for large scale impact and assess and document results in order to draw system-wide benefits from lessons learned.

PRACTICE AREA BRIEFS



BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

What is “Behavioural Insights”?

The field of behavioural insights recognizes that context and other factors shape the decisions people make. In making public policy, this implies designing programs and services in ways that are likely to improve outcomes for citizens based on how they behave in real-life situations.

Without constraining peoples’ choices, applying behavioural insights has been shown to increase the likelihood that people will make decisions that **lead to healthier, happier, and more sustainable outcomes**, often achieved in a cost-effective way for service providers.

What Behavioural Insights Work has the Hub done?

We consult with departments to **design and test tailored approaches to improve program outcomes**. These services are provided at no cost in collaboration with academic experts.

We are currently in an exploratory phase on 15 projects where the suitability for potential trials is being determined. We are working with 11 Government of Canada departments and one province to explore these projects.

Service Process: Three Steps to Running a Behavioural Insights Project

UNDERSTAND



Work with Government of Canada departments to understand their objectives, identify which specific behaviours they want to encourage, and what barriers may be standing in the way.

DESIGN



Look to other jurisdictions, research the academic literature, and confer with our academic partners to design multiple evidence-based solutions to achieve the desired objectives.

TEST



Use experimental techniques (like randomized controlled trials) to generate evidence to evaluate the solution. Our expertise allows us to produce measurements of the effectiveness of each solution and how it compares to existing approaches. Our final recommendations are data-driven and estimate what can be expected once implemented.

Other Behavioural Insights Service Offerings

While the Hub emphasizes the importance of running trials backed by rigorous evaluation methods, we recognize that not all opportunities lend themselves to this approach. To provide diverse knowledge products and advisory services, the Hub team also offers support to clients by providing:

- **Resources and Guides**, such as jurisdictional scans, translating findings from various existing behavioural research publications in a given policy area, or documenting the types of programs and services that are best suited to applying behavioural insights in a public sector context.
- **Policy papers** to provide strategic advice to Government in this area.
- **Consultation and business advisory services** to help departments apply substantially proven concepts and interventions in this field, where running new trials may be unnecessary.



DATA

The Hub's Focus in Data

The Hub has taken some initial steps to integrate the analysis of unconventional and massive data sources – or “big data” – as a tool to help build a better evidence base for policy advice and to strengthen programming and service delivery.

Driven by an improvement in computational power, advanced statistical methods are making big data an increasingly useable and relevant evidence base to inform the development of public policy.

For example, looking at the issue of public health, studies have found that risky behaviours like smoking and drug abuse can be predicted from Facebook “likes”; angry tweets correlate with increased risk of cardiovascular disease; and Google search terms such as “fever”, “cold” and “cough” can help predict flu cases.

An Emerging Practice Area

The Hub has undertaken some foundational work in this area and is now exploring potential applications for projects in areas like toy safety.

It is also looking to develop training opportunities for Government of Canada employees to enhance their data analytics capabilities.

Case Study: Targeting unsafe toys by harvesting online product reviews

In partnership with Health Canada, the Hub is exploring the use data from online retailers to provide early warning signals to help identify potentially unsafe toys.

Analyzing an unconventional data source – online customer reviews of poorly rated toys for key words related to safety (e.g. choke, hazard, dangerous, broken) – has demonstrated potential to complement Health Canada’s formal toy recall process by helping to identify unsafe toys before they are reported by the public through formal processes.



DESIGN

What Defines Design in a Public Policy Context?

A core tenet of the field of design is to place the **end-user** at the centre of any process or initiative that directly affects them.

In a public policy context – rather than considering the needs of factory workers in an industrial design project, or athletes in the design of new shoes – this means **placing citizens (users) at the centre of the development and implementation of public policies, programs, and services that affect their lives.**

The design field relies on structured approaches and methodologies to explore, prototype and test new ideas. Doing so requires committed teams of skilled design practitioners and open program and policy managers who seek to engage in active partnerships with citizens, rather than seeing themselves as detached service providers.

“Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones”.

- Herbert A. Simon, *the Sciences of the Artificial*, 1969

Our Methodology

With hundreds of permutations of design methods that could be applied to any given policy challenge, our approach involves intensive tailoring and customization to determine what processes are likely to produce the most relevant user insights. These could include undertaking ethnographical research in a client service centre, deploying mobile applications to take photos of how products are used in the home, or building and testing prototypes of public-facing websites to enhance user-friendliness.

The main criteria that drive our project selection flow from the willingness of the program partner to explore new ideas and engage directly with the public. We also seek out projects where implementing a design-oriented change could result in **significant improvements in the lives of citizens.**

Case Study: Eco-Energy (see more on [GCPedia](#))



The Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE) at Natural Resources Canada is exploring new ways to engage with Canadians and partners to realize the benefits of energy efficiency, like saving money on energy bills and protecting the environment. In fall 2015, the OEE and PCO Innovation Hub teamed up with colleagues from NRCan's Innovation & Energy Technology and Science & Policy Integration Sectors to **design solutions for energy efficiency in the home.**

The team used a **photo application** called D-Scout to gather fact-based insights about how people use energy in the home. This was followed by an intensive **deep-dive** process to understand how to tailor incentives to differentiated energy needs that were identified through the development of **user personas**. The top-12 ideas are being explored within NRCan's policy development process.



POLICY DEVELOPMENT TO SPARK INNOVATION

Overview

In addition to advancing its core practice areas, the Hub has undertaken a significant amount of policy development work to create space for innovation in Government. This has involved a mix of:

- Strategic policy advice to senior officials, such as preparing transition documents, as well as strategic advice in areas such as open policy making and digital engagement;
- Developing publications and communications products, such as a published piece from the former Clerk of the Privy Council in *Policy Options* on public sector innovation, as well as contributing material for numerous *speeches*; and
- Launching special initiatives at a systems level, such as a Federal-Provincial-Territorial public sector innovation conference, and through partnerships with the Deputy Minister's Committee on Policy Innovation on projects like the launch of a government-wide App Challenge.

The Hub helped organize the first Federal-Provincial-Territorial Clerks and Cabinet Secretaries conference dedicated to policy innovation, which took place in September 2015 in Toronto. The conference offered an important opportunity to assess the application of policy innovation to the public sector. It also successfully raised awareness of new tools and strategies by showcasing policy innovation examples from across the country.

FEDERAL PROVINCIAL TERRITORIAL POLICY INNOVATION CONFERENCE

As a tangible conference outcome, Clerks and Cabinet Secretaries are establishing a virtual network of leaders and practitioners across jurisdictions. The network will catalyze policy innovation across the country through information sharing and collaboration to scale successful projects, pool resources and risks, and encourage more open intergovernmental relations. The Hub will lead on the network's development on the federal side.



In collaboration with the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Policy Innovation (DMCPI), Shared Services Canada (SSC), and the Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada Blueprint 2020 team, the Hub hosted a government-wide challenge for public servants to pitch ideas for new mobile applications to help solve a policy, program, or service challenge.

Launched in late June, the challenge generated over 500 ideas by the end of July – leveraging new technologies for public good. The top ten ideas – determined through an open crowdsourcing processes – were chosen for prototyping and were subsequently presented to DMCPI on October 8.

The winning three prototypes – Capture.Canada, a photo-sharing application collecting Canada's history and natural environment, MyVac, a service app providing veterans' mobile access to their services and CanBorder, a mobile application for Canadian border services, including the declaration form – will now move onto the final stage of the challenge for full app development and planned launch sometime in 2016.

Digital Citizen Engagement

The Hub has been exploring opportunities and providing advice on how the Government could engage citizens in policy development, including deepening expertise in the following areas:

- 1. Analytics**, where through anonymized data, the Government could make greater use of data created by use of federal government websites, through social media, and through data collected through program delivery channels;
- 2. Direct digital platform** engagement, where the Government could design processes (including with partners) to incorporate citizen participation in structured exercises designed to solicit feedback and input through a standard digital platform (e.g. currently exploring the potential for a common consultations platform).
- 3. Enhanced face-to-face** citizen engagement, where the Government could convene sessions among citizens (e.g. based on particular expertise, experiences, or geography) and elected or public officials, with optional live-casting or post-event social media engagement.

The Hub values gaining insights and participation from citizens in policy and program design – and sees the spectrum outlined above as applying to areas ranging from being a discrete function, a mandated commitment, a core element of the existing policy making and implementation process, or finally as a contributing part of a much larger open policy making process.

Flowing from commitments in Ministers' mandate letters, the Hub is working with the Privy Council Office and with the Treasury Board Secretariat to examine how central agencies could support and encourage engagement across the all areas of policy development, government operations and communications to support policy making, implementation and delivery on government priorities.

Case Study: Innovative approaches and partnerships to incent fitness

Working across its practice areas, the Hub has partnered with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) on a number of innovative projects to help incent fitness and positive health outcomes for Canadians in a systematic way. For example:

- Early results from a PHAC-led pilot study involving 75,000 members at 15 YMCAs across Canada indicate that those who receive a loyalty point incentive to attend the gym more regularly are over 50% more active than a control group that does not receive points. This project showed promise in terms of its potential for being scaled-up.
- Building on these findings, the Hub is working with PHAC on the [Carrot Rewards](#) App, a free interactive online and mobile application that seeks to build on the idea that loyalty points can change behaviour. The App will serve as a platform to easily communicate, reward and monitor outcomes.

In partnership with the Government of British Columbia, along with private sector and non-governmental organizations, the Carrot Rewards app will establish a platform to encourage Canadians to increase their awareness and knowledge about the risk of preventable chronic diseases. Recognizing the value of the platform, the Hub is supporting the expansion of the program to other policy areas and encouraging its adoption as it demonstrates the potential use of online platforms to influence positive behaviour change.

BUILDING THE HUB'S CONNECTIONS AND EXPERTISE

In its first year of operations, the Hub has sought to expand its networks, within Canada and internationally, as well as across the Government of Canada. In particular, the Hub has focused on:

- Building working relationships with departmentally-based innovation labs and teams where there is shared interest in a particular file, and where the Hub can add value;
- Putting in place an external Advisory Committee – a group of experts who will be able to provide advice and guidance to support the various projects undertaken by the Hub; and
- Conducting outreach and engagement with international and Canadian partner institutions focused on innovation in the public sector.

While establishing the core team over the course of the year, the Hub has also invested in building relationships with universities and other organizations to promote temporary hires with specific skillsets (e.g. behavioural economics, industrial design, and statistics).

These “visiting innovators” are provided an opportunity to work directly on public policy challenges while gaining valuable experience in the Government of Canada. This approach is designed offer opportunities for federal departments to “pick up” new hires with the in-demand skillsets increasingly required by the Government’s policy profession.

We have also benefited from flexible hiring for dedicated project support through *micro-assignments* – temporary deployments of public servants who can lend their expertise to a defined project and gain valuable experience and profile – an example of this approach is the work of the Sharing Economy team, sponsored by the Hub.

Examples of Micro-Assignments at the Hub

- Project lead on implementing Federal-Provincial-Territorial Innovation conference;
- Librarian support on developing self-learning public sector innovation website;
- Hosting four staff to pursue policy advice on the Sharing Economy;
- Graphic design support for first-ever Behavioural Economics conference for the public sector in Canada.

Finally, the Hub has launched a “scholar-in-residence” program with the recent appointment of Dr. Dilip Soman. Dr. Soman, from the Rotman School at the University of Toronto, is an expert in the field of behavioural economics and will work primarily with the Hub’s behavioural insights team to design tools and projects to assist departmental clients.

Examples of the Hub’s Outreach and Engagement Activities

- Outreach to Government of Canada Federal Councils (Ontario, Atlantic, B.C. regions).
- Panel presentation at 67th Institute of the Public Service of Canada Annual Conference on innovation in the public sector (Halifax).
- Represented the Government of Canada at the 2015 Indigenous Innovation Summit (Winnipeg).
- Participation in UBC’s Public Sector Design Challenge (Vancouver).
- International engagement and network-building with leading public sector innovation organizations (e.g. Labworks initiative in the UK; Immersion in Public Design initiative in France).
- Expert panel presentation at World Bank’s Global Insights Initiative on behavioural insights (Washington, D.C.).

ASSESSMENT AGAINST 2015-2016 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Following its official launch in February 2015, the Hub made specific commitments to the Clerk in mid-2015, outlining a set of strategic objectives to meet in the year. Taking a scorecard approach, those commitments are assessed in the table below.

Objective	Status	Assessment
Establish the Hub as the Government's recognized <i>focal point on policy innovation</i> , offering a range of services and products to departments and agencies.	Partially achieved	The Hub has established itself as a centre of expertise for the Government in public sector innovation, especially in its core practice areas. However, there is a diversity of innovative practices underway across the Government, which is a positive development and negates the need to be known as " <i>the</i> " only focal point for Government.
Identify and drive a limited number of " <i>innovation projects</i> " with departments, testing and showcasing the value of new tools and approaches.	Achieved	The Hub has completed four pilot projects in applying new tools of design-thinking (2) and behavioural insights (2). Now that the Hub's core team is in place, many more projects are currently in exploratory phases in behavioural insights (15), data (3); and design (3+).
Build productive <i>relationships and exchanges</i> with other organizations in the innovation space, in Canada and internationally.	Achieved	The Hub conducted outreach with international innovation-oriented organizations, as well as with other governments and academic institutions in Canada. It has also established its first scholar-in-residence, bringing in Dr. Dilip Soman (expert in behavioural insights, U of T).
Finalize remaining elements for <i>standing up the Hub</i> , including the creation of an Advisory Council and a performance management strategy.	On track	The Hub's core team was put in place in the fall of 2015. A proposal for a Hub Advisory Committee has been completed, and a project to establish a performance measurement strategy was launched in partnership with PCO's audit and evaluation unit in December 2015. Both are planned to be in place before the end of 2015-16.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE: 2016-2017

The Central Innovation Hub strives to be a centre of expertise in Government in using modern, evidence-based methodologies to solve problems facing the public sector. In the coming year, we will be looking to strengthen some key areas of our service offerings by:

- 1. Expanding our portfolio** of projects and advisory services in our core practice areas;
- 2. Disseminating project results and lessons learned** to build the evidence base for new tools and approaches and support more innovative program and policy development in Government;
- 3. Creating a solid repertoire of resources** (e.g., toolkits, training materials, backgrounders, videos, cards, info-graphics) across each of the Hub's practice areas;
- 4. Establishing more concretely the data analytics** practice area, including resources, training, projects and networks; and
- 5. Exploring the potential of new areas in public sector innovation**, including "open policy" development and digital engagement with citizens.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: RESULTS AND PRIORITIES BY PRACTICE AREA

Area	Current Impact (2015-2016)	Medium-Term Aims (1-2 years)
Behavioural Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided expert advice to departments in applying behavioural insights in policy, program delivery and communications materials. • Delivered numerous presentations and workshops, online and in-person, on behavioural insights and rigorous testing methodology, and represented Canada at international events. • Launched and completed two projects in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada to encourage healthy behaviour and promote volunteerism. • Currently in exploratory phase for 15 potential projects across 11 departments • Established connections with leading public practitioners at the White House and the World Bank • Established working academic partnerships with University of Toronto (Rotman) and Queen's University (Smith) enabling access to leading experts. • Supported the launch and operations of the Behavioural Economics Community of Practice, an interdepartmental network of behavioural insights researchers and practitioners. • Hosted first-ever behavioural insights conference in March 2016 for all three orders of government as well as academics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete 2-5 randomized controlled trials across government to improve policy outcomes and program delivery. • Continue to provide expert advice on behavioural insights: what it is and how it can be used appropriately and effectively. • Further promote an evidence-based approach to the application of behavioural insights, which includes a rigorous approach to evaluations of interventions. • Be a resource for departments and other innovation labs interested in obtaining expert advice, and help broker connections to behavioural teams in other jurisdictions (in Canada and internationally).
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory work to determine potential for applying advanced data analytics techniques to solve policy challenges and survey of data analytics projects from G20 governments. • Stemming from design work in partnership with Health Canada, exploring potential to harvest data from Amazon reviews and boost Health Canada's presence on Google in relation to promoting toy safety, and search Twitter conversations for perspectives on natural health products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue initial projects, undertake new projects, and capture lessons learned to help solidify this emerging Hub practice area. • Develop recommendations for data training protocols and resources to support the Government of Canada in building data analysis capacity and enhancing recruitment efforts.

Design

- Provided resources and short-term advisory services to departments to improve design elements of numerous programs.
- Conducted numerous presentations, both online and in-person, on design and public policy, reaching thousands of public servants.
- Completed two major human-centred design projects in areas of home energy efficiency and toy safety.
- Launched two major design projects to redesign user experience elements of Old Age Security and Veterans' disability programs, with a number of other projects in early exploratory phases.
- Established academic partnerships to explore design and public policy cases with OCAD University, Carleton, and UBC.
- Continue to undertake demonstration projects to transfer expertise and help departments improve user experience in various areas.
- As more projects conclude, continue to post results on GCPedia to build case study library to make methods and lessons learned widely available.
- Work with partners (e.g. Canada School of Public Service, Universities, Colleges) to mainstream design-thinking into training for public servants.
- Manage staffing needs through student hires and internships.

Cross-Cutting Policy Work

Policy Development to Spark Innovation

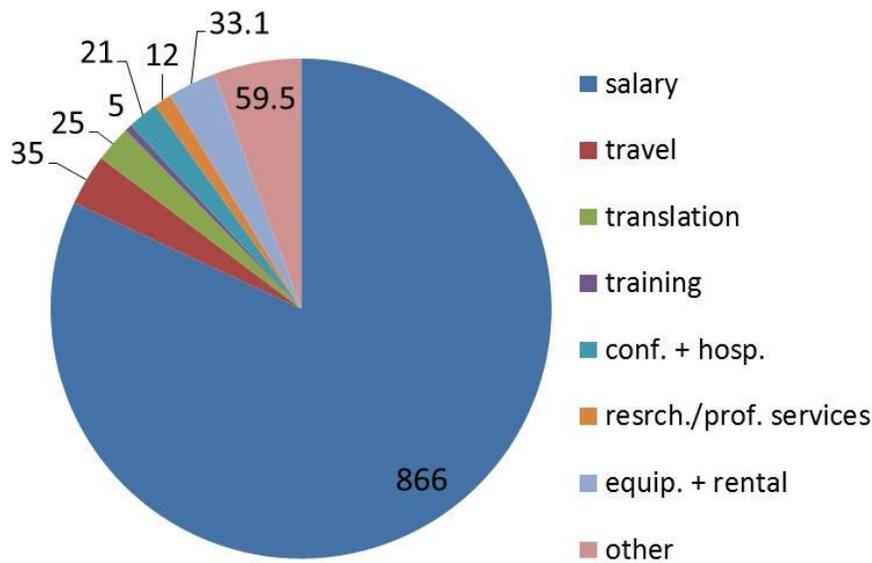
- Provided transition advice and were primary authors for strategic briefs on public sector innovation, global trends, digital engagement, and the sharing economy.
- Prepared draft for the Clerk's article in *Policy Options* and crafted approach for initiative on Strengthening of the Policy Community.
- Partnered with Deputy Ministers' Committee on Policy Innovation (DMCPI) to: publish a policy innovation Playbook; launch Government-wide mobile APP Challenge; provide advice on the Sharing Economy; and explore more innovative uses of Grants and Contributions funding instruments.
- Provided strategic research and advice to inform the development of an approach to more effectively engage citizens through digital and online platforms.
- Organized the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Clerks and Cabinet Secretaries conference on Policy Innovation, and are supporting and managing ongoing collaboration in this area.
- Provided advice to senior managers and staff, including on establishing a framework for more open and innovative policy making.
- Provide continued support to the Clerk and to Privy Council Office on public sector innovation as required (e.g. policy support for speeches and communications, provide input into Cabinet processes, various briefing materials).
- Continue to work in partnership with DMCPI on co-sponsored initiatives as required and as capabilities allow.
- Exploratory work on new frontiers of innovative instruments (e.g. innovative finance, "open policy", and digital engagement).
- Work with departments to capture lessons learned in applying open policy making & engagement techniques and provide advice on what systems-wide Government of Canada supports may be necessary in this area.

ANNEX B: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

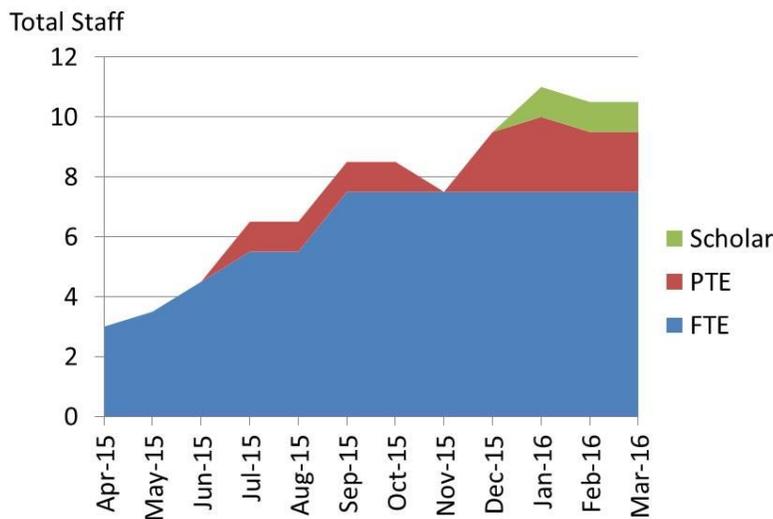
The financial and human resource allocations of the Hub are outlined below¹:

Budget and Staff, 2015-2016 (estimate as of Feb 1, 2016)

Budget (\$ thousands)



**Total Staff
(not including micro-assignments)**



¹ Based on projected figures for fiscal year 2015-2016 (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016). Figures presented were compiled on February 1st 2016 and may be subject to slight variations before fiscal year close on March 31st 2016.