INTRODUCTION

When completing this form, use your own words and share your practice in a story format. Please do not include any derogatory comments. Use paragraphs and bullet points to organize your practice. This is not a business case but instead is intended to be informative for your peers, showing them the processes and outcomes of your practice. Be sure to focus on what you learned so that it is helpful to the reader. Click in the white boxes to type in your answers. The boxes will expand as you type.

Abstract:
What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan’s goals, objectives and highlights.)

Numerous municipal governments have pursued Open Data in an independent manner, but until now there has not been a single group of municipal government agencies within North America who have successfully collaborated to promote, pursue, endorse and launch Open Data at a regional scale. Through the medium of the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP), 14 municipalities have successfully navigated the political and administrative gauntlet to arrive at
a place where Open Data at a regional scale has moved from fiction to reality. Today, regional
data is now available at www.calgaryregionopendata.ca.

It has taken the partners involved in this initiative 8 years of failed attempts in promoting
regional data sharing, but finally these partners are celebrating the achievement of their vision.
Today, CRP member municipalities have an Open Data catalogue in which none of them were
required to make any financial commitment at the onset of the project and there is no annual
financial burden – one of the most significant barriers in the pursuit of Open Data. It is
because this barrier was removed, that partner municipalities have the ability to enjoy the
fruits and opportunities Open Data has to offer.

**Need:**
Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this
practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. “We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with…”, or
“We needed an annual forecasting tool because…”)

The partners in this initiative recognized each of them could achieve Open Data outcomes
individually but realized the significance of what could be achieved if a single regional Open
Data catalogue was available. It was the drive to achieve this collaborative and cooperative
regional vision that drove the pursuit of the Calgary Region Open Data Catalogue.

**CREATING YOUR PRACTICE**

**Research:**
How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with
stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g.
Web site, literature, “We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area…”).

The great thing about Open Data is that the Government of Canada, along with the Cities of
Nanaimo, Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa and Toronto have done amazing work in moving the
Open Data agenda forward. Because of their efforts and successes (and many others), there
were a number of models and systems already in place that the partnership could model. A
great example of this is version 2 of the Government of Canada Open Data License, as it was
developed in such a way that any municipality could make minor adjustments and easily
adopt. Where possible, much of this project was about taking the great parts of all other
individual municipal endeavours and combining them all into something that could really
work on a regional scale.
Process:
How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, or borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

The Calgary Regional Partnership has had a GIS Technical Committee for over 8 years which consists of individuals from CRP member municipalities. This committee of local GIS leaders has been struggling to find a way to share data between municipalities and with the public over this time frame with a number of successful failures. However, this group is persistent and resilient and each failure generated another idea until the culmination of failures and lessons learned turned into the Calgary Region Open Data Catalogue.

The requirements for the catalogue itself was created by reviewing the Open Data websites of municipalities who had already gone down the path of Open Data. By looking at what worked well and what didn’t work so well, the partners came up with requirements for a Regional Open Data catalogue. Thi committee then solicited proposals and the CRP, its municipal partners and a consultant proceeded to develop the Calgary Region Open Data Catalogue from scratch.

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GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

Authority:
Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

The authority to create and implement the Calgary Region Open Data Catalogue was somewhat convoluted. The first step was determining how it would be funded. Fortunately, the CRP, through its collaboration with its GIS Steering Committee and in-house GIS Coordinator, managed to find a way to fund this initiative through existing grant funding. This funding then had to be approved by the CRP Board of Directors, but despite this regional commitment, no local authority at the municipal level had yet to be obtained. Although the local authority was not in place, the partners continued to push forward with the initiative, confident that as the project moved along, that authority would naturally fall into place. This is exactly what happened and as the Open Data catalogue proceeded to be developed, municipality by municipality, the local authority came into place until at the time of launch the authority to participate at a local and regional level was in place.

Reporting:
How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?
Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

The CRP’s in-house GIS Coordinator prepared regular reports for the CRP Board of Directors and members of the GIS Technical Committee kept their respective municipalities informed on an as needed or as requested basis. This reporting process was rather informal yet effective.

**Consultation:**
Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

The only stakeholders consulted as part of this process were the participating partners. This included numerous stakeholders from the 14 member municipalities from a wide range of backgrounds and areas of accountability. This consultation took place informally within each municipality while the general results were reported back for consideration in building the system requirements.

### IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE

**Plan:**
Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

Once the working group received approval to go ahead with the project, we performed the following to implement the project:

- The partners performed research individually and reported this information back to the committee
- The partners collaboratively created a list of required features
- The Calgary Regional Partnership solicited proposals from 6 different organizations around the world
- The partners evaluated the proposals and chose a vendor
- The partners worked with the vendor to build a list of required features for the website
- The partners tested the site throughout the build process
- The partners and the CRP posted data to the Open Data catalogue

**Policy:**
What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?
Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

This varied by municipality. In some cases, new policies, guidelines or procedures needed to be developed. Of specific importance were processes around the review of data to ensure the release of datasets containing confidential or personal information does not occur.

See the attached City of Airdrie documentation as an example.

**When:**
When did your municipality begin to use the practice? Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

The partners began moving through their local practices and began submitting Open Data to the test catalogue in the spring of 2014. This continued as the testing of the catalogue proceeded though the summer of 2014 when the soft launch took place. The Calgary Regional Open Data Catalogue was officially launched to the public on GIS Day (November 18, 2014) and the partners have been adding data to the catalogue ever since.

**Who:**
Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?

The Regional GIS Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance of the website, but each of the participating municipal members is responsible for contributing and maintaining their own data.

**RESOURCES REQUIRED**

**Budget:**
How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent $XX per year)?

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?

As stated above, the CRP pays for and maintains the site, so there were no capital or operational costs required of any of the participating municipal members. In addition, we have all saved valuable time.
**Staff:**
What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. “It took X staff member(s) X months on this” or “This is part of normal staff duties.”)

Each member of the CRP GIS Technical Committee met regularly as part of a regular routine and the needs and outcomes associated with this collaborative project were addressed at each of these meetings. This was time in which the partners had already committed to the CRP and no additional time was required from each participant beyond these meetings.

**Infrastructure:**
What “capital costs” (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

The Calgary Region Open Data Catalogue is a hosted solution that is developed to meet the specific requirements outlined by the GIS Technical Committee. Aside from the development of the solution itself, no additional infrastructure was required.

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**EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE**

**Formal:**
If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

Tell us who was involved.

The evaluation process is rather informal and consists of monitoring data download statistics and the number of data sets each municipality has posted to the catalogue.

**Informal:**
If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

The evaluation process is rather informal and consists of monitoring data download statistics and the number of data sets each municipality has posted to the catalogue. In addition, a number of rave reviews from users over the past few months have been received from a wide range of users (i.e. students, consultants, general public, etc.).

**Performance measures:**
Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)
Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on…)
examples include:
- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures
- results
- follow up

The primary measures of performance are the number of times a data set is downloaded, how
many times the catalogue is accessed and addition of data sets by each participant.

Changes:
(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or
would like to make, to your practice as a result. (e.g. “After implementing this practice, we
decided that it would be better if…”)

-or-

(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

The regional Open Data catalogue has definitely met most of our expectations. After using the
site for about 6 months, we’ve all agreed that having access to more robust, detailed user
statistics would be beneficial. If we can gather information about what is being downloaded
and how often, it will allow us to make better decisions on the type of data we make available.

LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED

Benefits:
What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (e.g. Preparation of Council agenda
packages now requires less time, etc.)

There are quite a few benefits to the municipal participants of this site, such as:
- municipal staff have more time to spend on other activities because they don’t have to spend
time on laborious data requests
- we’re enabling more government transparency by sharing municipal data with the public
- participating on the site is free because we’re all members of the Calgary Regional Partnership
- we have autonomy and can share as much or as little data as we want

Key Lessons:
What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:
- designing;
- obtaining approval;
implementing; and
evaluating your practice?

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated benefits. (e.g. “We realized that we needed to spend more time…”)

One of the greatest lessons learned was underestimating how long it will take for a regional initiative to receive local endorsement. With a partnership of the scale identified herein, this time needs to be accounted more effectively for future initiatives.

Another lesson learned was sometimes you just need to push forward without knowing all the risks. If the partners in this project had waited until all risks were identified and addressed before proceeding, this initiative would never have achieved the successes it has to date.

**Advice to Municipal Peers:**
What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

Despite the invisible barriers in the pursuit of Open Data, you have to pursue it to find out which barriers are real and which are manufactured.

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## PRACTICE UPDATES

**New Information:**
There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:

- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.

Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

N/A

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## OTHER INFORMATION

**Suggestions:**
Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

N/A

**Documents & Attachments:**
Please list any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

* Note: Most documents can be electronically attached to your practice in the MEnet database. If only a paper version of your document is available, please send it with your completed Practice Collection Form. We will scan it and attach it.

- Regional Open Data License Agreement

**Nominations:**
Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail menet@gov.ab.ca and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

N/A

**COMMENTS**
Have we missed something; anything you’d like to add to the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not mentioned?

This project was originally a collaborative effort between the following organizations:
- City of Airdrie
- Town of Banff
- Town of Canmore
- City of Chestermere
- Town of Cochrane
- Town of Okotoks
- Town of Strathmore
- Calgary Regional Partnership
However, in addition to the above 7 organizations participating on the Calgary Region Open Data site, there are now 4 more participating municipalities that have added data since the website launched:

- Town of Black Diamond
- Town of Irricana
- Town of Nanton
- Town of Turner Valley

Lastly, 2 more CRP members are expected to participate within the year:

- Town of High River
- Townsite of Redwood Meadows

*Thank you for your contribution to the Municipal Excellence network. Please return this form as soon as you are able.*