

# Advisory Committee on Standards for Voting Technologies

## Committee Meeting

### Minutes

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 9:00am – 3:00pm  
Microsoft Teams Meeting

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#### Committee Attendees:

- Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Committee Chair
- Dr. Mkabi Walcott, Standards Council of Canada Representative
- Dr. Nicole Goodman, Academic Advisor
- Michael Crase, Political Party Appointee - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Dan Duncan, Political Party Appointee - Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Karla Webber-Gallagher, Political Party Appointee - New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Donald Eady, Political Party Appointee - New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Milton Chan, Political Party Appointee - Ontario Liberal Party
- Christine McMillan, Political Party Appointee - Ontario Liberal Party
- Craig Cantin, Political Party Appointee - Green Party of Ontario
- Fiona Mackintosh, Executive Director of the Advisory Committee
- Amanda Tieber, Research Coordinator for the Advisory Committee
- Marilyn Mills, Administrative Support for the Advisory Committee

#### Invitees:

- Matthew MacNeil, Director of Standards and Technology, CIO Strategy Council
  - Matthew Masterson, Former Election Security Advisor, CISA & Commissioner, United States Election Assistance Commission
  - Ryan Macias, Former Acting Director, Voting Systems Program, United States Election Assistance Commission
  - Dr. Aleksander Essex, Associate Professor of Software Engineering, Western University
  - Brock Ceci, Senior Policy Advisor, Elections Ontario
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#### Opening Remarks and Chair Comments

- The Chair, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, opened the meeting and introduced Dr. Aleksander Essex who will represent the Advisory Committee on the CIO Strategy Council's (CIO SC) Technical Committee and Expert Drafting Team.
- The December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were adopted.
- It was agreed that meeting recordings would take place only during presentations.

#### The Importance of Principles

- The Advisory Committee Academic Advisor, Dr. Nicole Goodman, gave a presentation on the importance of principles and provided historical context on the evolution of democratic principles in Canada.

- Mr. Kinglsey addressed the Advisory Committee to provide a briefing on the importance of principles, emphasizing that elections and the democratic norms under which they are run are fundamental in establishing the legitimacy of government.

### **Electoral Assistance Commission (EAC)-Establishing Principles for Standards**

- Former EAC Election Security Advisor, Matthew Masterson and former EAC Acting Director, Ryan Macias, presented on the development of principles, guidelines, and technical requirements for the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG).
- Discussion highlighted fundamental differences between the United States and Ontario in elections administration and the EAC representatives were asked for recommendations from the VVSG that may be relevant to the Canadian context.
- The EAC representatives noted that the core functions of a voting system remain the same despite the differences amongst the United States and Ontario in elections administration. Overall, principles and guidelines must be adaptable by election technology, remain technology agnostic and help facilitate the conduct of an election.

**[The Advisory Committee recessed at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.]**

### **Proposal for Principles**

- The Advisory Committee Executive Director, Fiona Mackintosh, and the Research Coordinator, Amanda Tieber, provided an environmental scan of core democratic voting principles from international standards on voting technologies and Canadian Electoral Management Bodies. Ms. Mackintosh and Ms. Tieber presented a list of proposed democratic principles developed from this research.

### **Open Discussion on Establishing Principles**

#### ***Meaningful Scrutiny***

- An Advisory Committee member proposed that ‘meaningful scrutiny’ be included in the principles as they feel the use of electronic poll books and voting technologies can limit the ability to meaningfully scrutinize the election process.
- An Advisory Committee member noted that, there is no precedent for ‘meaningful scrutiny’ as a principle on its own across Canada. For this reason, meaningful scrutiny should be situated in principles that it supports such as integrity and public confidence.

#### ***Transparency***

- An Advisory Committee member highlighted that the principle of transparency should directly reference political participants such as scrutineers.
- An Advisory Committee member suggested that the principle of ‘public confidence’ be adopted to assure voters that elections are open, transparent, understandable, and fair. Another Advisory Committee member supported this recommendation and referenced British Columbia explaining that their principles included ‘simplicity’. The Committee

member recommended that the Advisory Committee's principles maintain plain language that is understandable to the public.

### ***Public Confidence***

- Discussion revealed that the overarching goal of all the principles is to promote public confidence in the electoral process as a strategic outcome. For this reason, it is impractical to have an independent principle on public confidence.

### ***Verifiability***

- An Advisory Committee member proposed that 'verifiability' should not be an independent principle as it is historically embedded in the electoral process under other norms. Considering the example of the Council of Europe, verifiability is subsumed into another principle. The Advisory Committee member also referenced New Brunswick noting that verifiability is under the principle of 'integrity'. Lastly, verifiability should be a core technical principle as it will inform the work of the CIOSC Technical Committee.
- Discussion highlighted that 'meaningful scrutiny' can be subsumed into an independent principle of 'verifiability'. This was noted with the clarification that meaningful scrutiny could be subsumed under many of the proposed principles.

### ***Auditability***

- An Advisory Committee member expressed the concern that 'auditability' is not clearly articulated in the proposed principles.

### ***Closing Remark regarding Principles Discussion***

- The Chair informed the Advisory Committee that all feedback on the principles would be taken under advisement for another draft to be developed.

## **Introduction to the CIO Strategy Council**

- The CIOSC's Director of Standards and Technology, Matthew MacNeil, provided an introductory presentation on the scope and function of the CIO Strategy Council. Mr. MacNeil provided a brief overview of the standard development process and the establishment of the CIOSC Technical Committee and Expert Drafting Team.

## **Proposal for Committee Workplan**

- Ms. Mackintosh explained the timeline by which the CIOSC will develop the technical standards. The standards will be presented to the Advisory Committee for feedback at specific milestones.
- An Advisory Committee Member asked about the relationship between Elections Ontario, the ACSVT and the Technical Committee and the Strategy Council.

## **Closing Remarks**

- Ms. Mackintosh explained that the development of principles may be a long-term process citing the work of the EAC, where it took months to develop and finalize their principles. For

this reason, Ms. Mackintosh encouraged the Advisory Committee members to provide any additional feedback that will be considered in the second draft of the proposed principles.

- An Advisory Committee member suggested that the Committee reconvene every two elections to review the Standards and make recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer as voting technologies will evolve over time.
- Mr. Kingsley closed the meeting, noting the next Advisory Committee Meeting will take place on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at a location in Toronto.

**The meeting of the Advisory Committee adjourned at 3:00pm.**