Open

Newfoundland
Labrador

Open Government Initiative

Public Engagement Session
St. Anthony-Port aux Choix Region
September 9, 2014
Plum Point, NL

EE2013-G

An open government...

- Is transparent, accountable and responsive to the public (both citizens and stakeholder groups)
- Increases access to information/data
- Provides meaningful opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between/with government and the public
- Uses innovative activities, strategies and approaches to better connect people to their government
- Leads to enhanced knowledge-sharing, innovation, dialogue, trust and collaboration which in turn leads to better policies, decisions, programs and services

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What is the Open Government Initiative?

- A bold and ambitious Government-wide initiative launched by the Premier in March (with the OPE as 'lead-department')

- An initiative that will result in GNL's first ever Open Government Action Plan

- An effort that is underpinned by an extensive public engagement process

- An effort that will lead to enhanced data and information sharing, better engagement and collaboration

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Open Government Initiative

- Based on international standards/best practices
- In keeping with many other jurisdictions
- 4 pillars:
  - Open Information
  - Open Data
  - Dialogue
  - Collaboration

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Purpose of this session

- Information sharing
- Idea generation (brainstorming possible actions)

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The region in which I live is...

1. Labrador
2. St. Anthony - Port au Choix
3. Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour
4. Stephenville - Port aux Basque
5. Grand Falls - Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton
6. Gander - New-Wes-Valley
7. Clarenville – Bonavista
8. Burin Peninsula
9. Northeast Avalon
10. Other Avalon

100%

0% 0% 0% 0% 0% 0% 0% 0% 0%

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
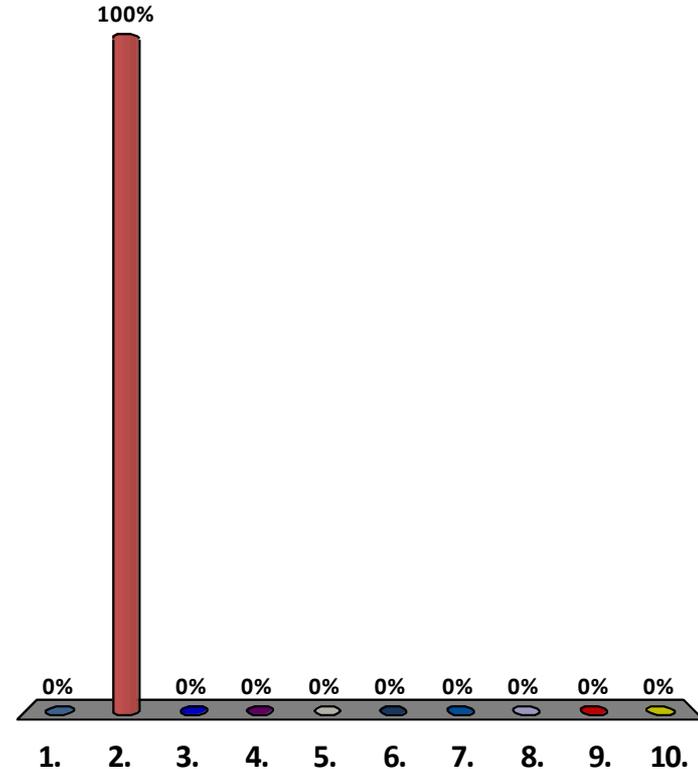
Today I am or am representing:

1. Academic Institution
2. Business
3. Labour
4. Not-for profit
5. Interest/Advocacy/Advisory group
6. Citizen
7. Municipality
8. Government
9. Other
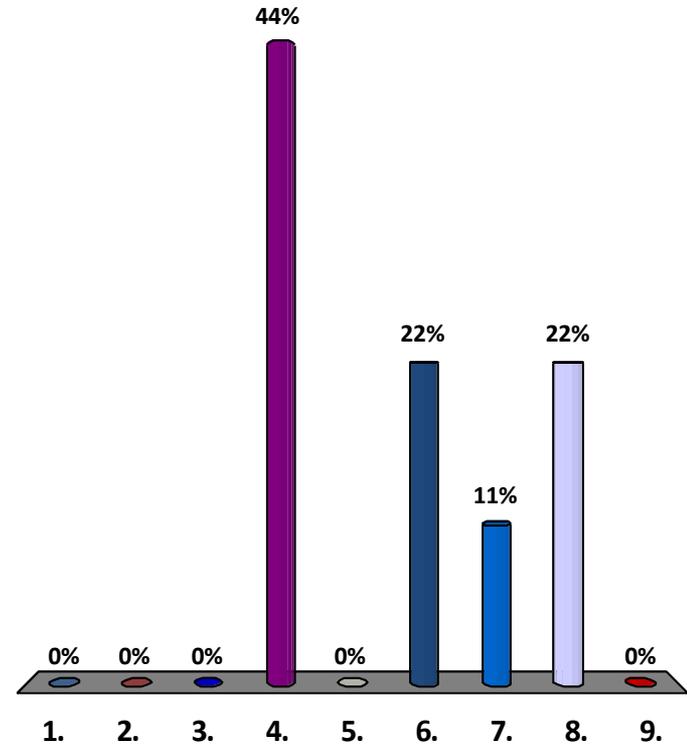
I previously provided input into the Open Government Initiative by:

(Select all that apply)

1. Attending an in-person session
2. Completing an online survey
3. Email submission
4. Mail submission
5. Social media
6. Telephone conversation
7. I have not provided input prior to today
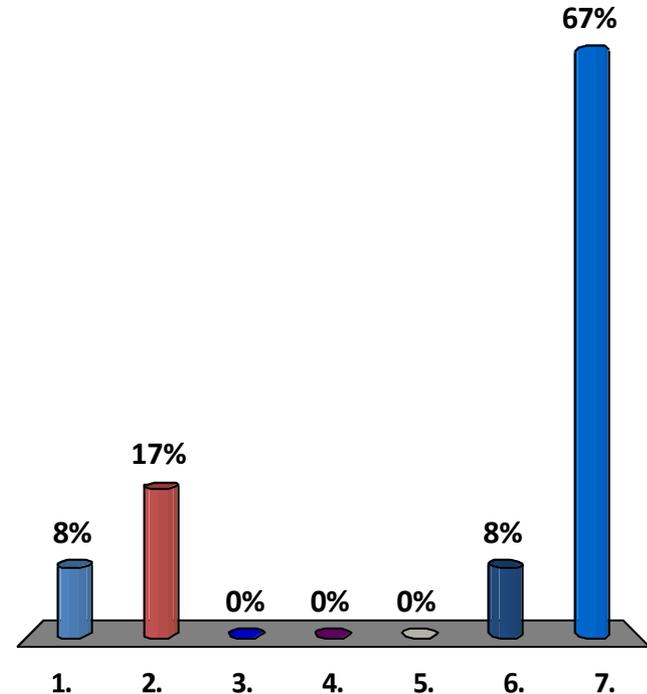
Public Engagement Process - Overview -

What we heard

Engagement Efforts

- 30 information and engagement sessions
- 400+ participants
- 30 online feedback forms collected
- 260+ questionnaires completed
- 1500 unique ideas, comments and suggestions about how to make GNL more open

Emerging Themes

- Accessibility/User friendliness
- Participation/Technology
- Collaboration Challenges
- Government Responsiveness

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Theme Discussion

Accessibility/User friendliness

Examples: What we heard

- "Sometimes we know the info/data is available, but we can't access it or find it"
- "Right now, you have to open like 60 different documents and search them all individually"
- "No central place to collect and store data"
- "Not every report has it available to pull out the specific data that the public are looking for"
- "Public accounts, estimates, budget speeches, etc. they are in pictures not data formats. Need to pull out every piece of data. It is not in an excel or usable format."

Key Ideas: Other Jurisdictions

- "One stop shop" for data/information
- Making data/information easier to use
- Getting public input re: what data/information is priority
- "Open by Default" approach

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# Accessibility/User friendliness

Polling

Government should create a "one stop shop" website and app that would make it easier to access government information and data.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. I do not know
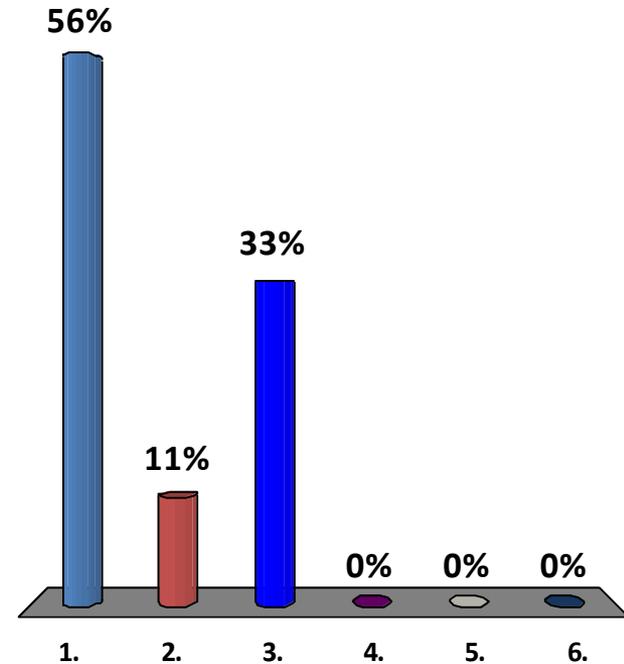
Government should develop an 'open by default' data and information policy that would improve access to government information and data.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. I do not know
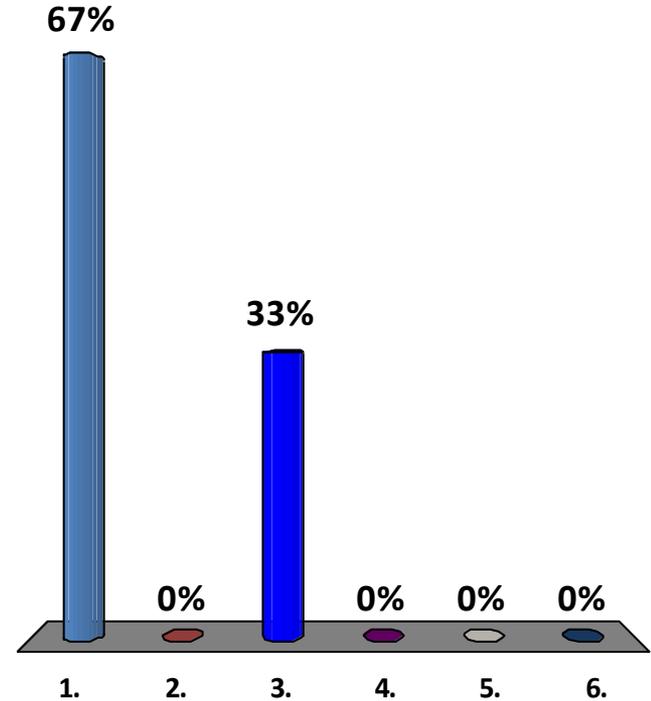
Do you have other ideas or suggestions about how government information and data could be more accessible and user friendly?

Discussion Question

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Theme Discussion

Participation/Technology

Examples: What we heard

- "The current [GNL] website is not designed to reach out to people"

- "We are asked to attend sessions but there's a feeling that the decision has already been made"

- "Most times I think that it is a done deal. It's more optics. It's disingenuous, not open enough and no follow up"

- "Public sessions are intimidating; will I be asked something?, how do I dress?, will I be smart enough?, etc..."

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Examples: What we heard

- "Locations are not always accessible. Public Sessions are not geared or accommodating to persons with disabilities. Logistics need to be accessible to individuals with disabilities (physical, hearing, seeing)"
- "Something to remember with online things such as social media is to keep in mind an older population who don't use such technologies"
- "Need something in place for seniors, those that are not tech savvy"
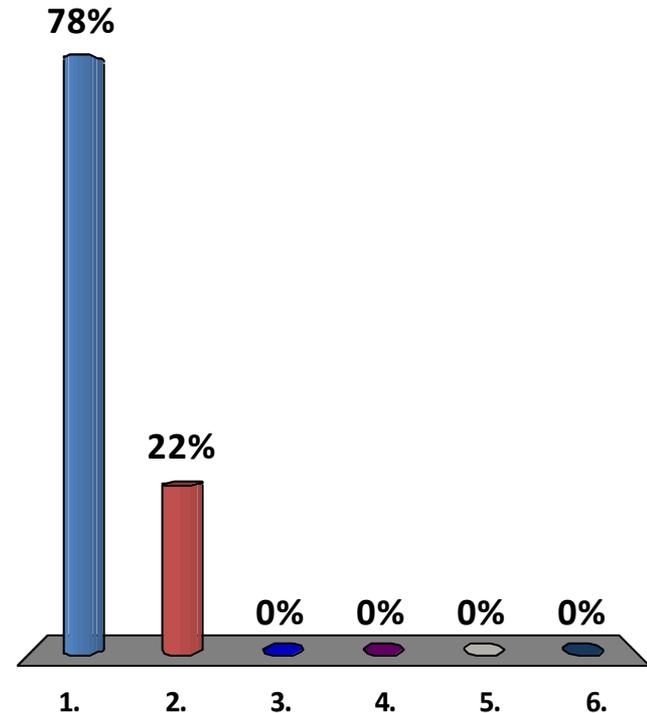
Key Ideas: Other Jurisdictions

- "Open Policy-Making"
- Online Platforms for Engagement (including apps)

# Participation/Technology

Polling

Government should use innovative engagement tools/approaches to increase opportunities for public input

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. I do not know

Government should create a tool (app) that serves as a one-stop-shop for engagement (lists and reports on all opportunities; allows citizens to provide input, etc.).

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. I do not know
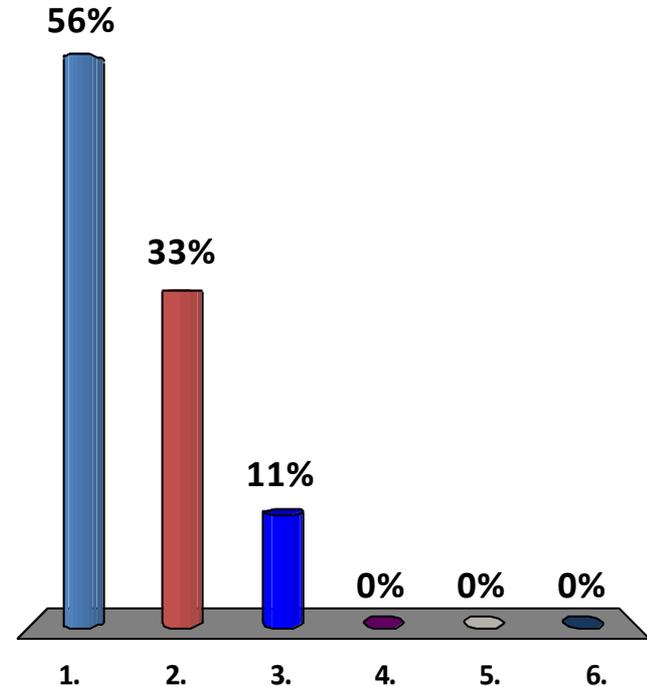
Do you have other ideas or suggestions about how government can do a better job of engaging the public?

Discussion Question

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Theme Discussion

Collaboration Challenges

Examples: What we heard

- "Access to bureaucrats is very limited"
- "Clarification of roles in the collaboration is needed upfront"
- "Determining where like-minded entities with a lot in common exist and building bridges"
- "Providing money doesn't equal a partnership"
- "Manage and clarify the expectations of such collaborations or partnerships"

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Have you been part of a group that has had collaborative relationships with the GNL?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure
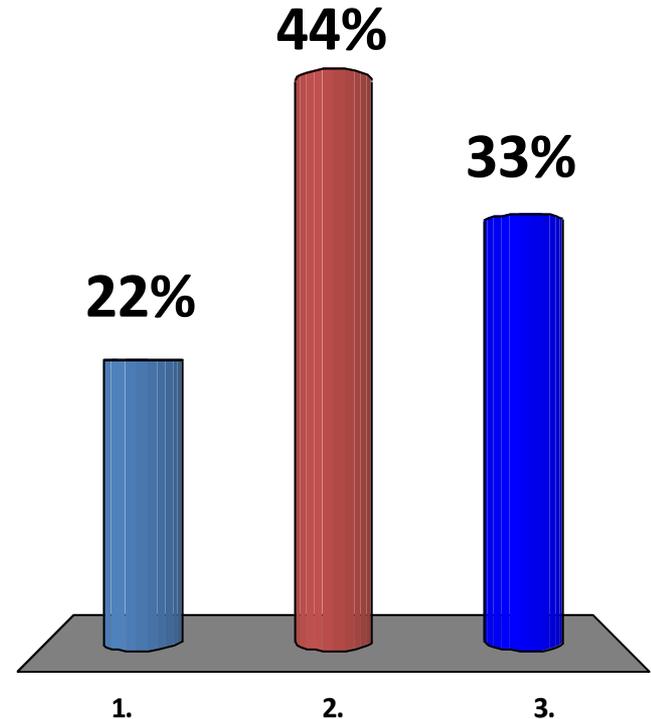
Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how government can be a better partner when collaborating with external groups?

Discussion Question

Theme Discussion

Government Responsiveness

Examples: What we heard

- "There needs to be a balance struck. 'Engaging just to engage' or 'engaging to look good' is not a good way to engage"

- "Engagement should only take place if the process will influence the decision at hand, and ensure that participants feel respected and heard"

Examples: What we heard

- "Timely reporting and follow-up needs to be a priority, preferably within a matter of weeks"

- "No acknowledgement from government that your opinions were received or of any value. If you pay money to consult with the public then it would be nice to get some form of acknowledgement that what you had to say was heard"

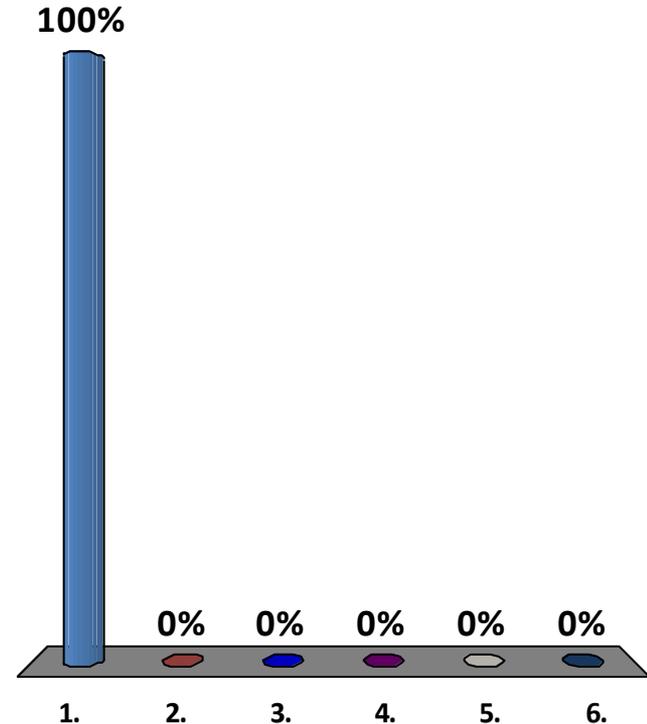# Key Ideas: Other Jurisdictions

- Pilot projects to improve communication
- Obtain/use (with permission) contact information to keep people up to date re: how their input affected decisions)
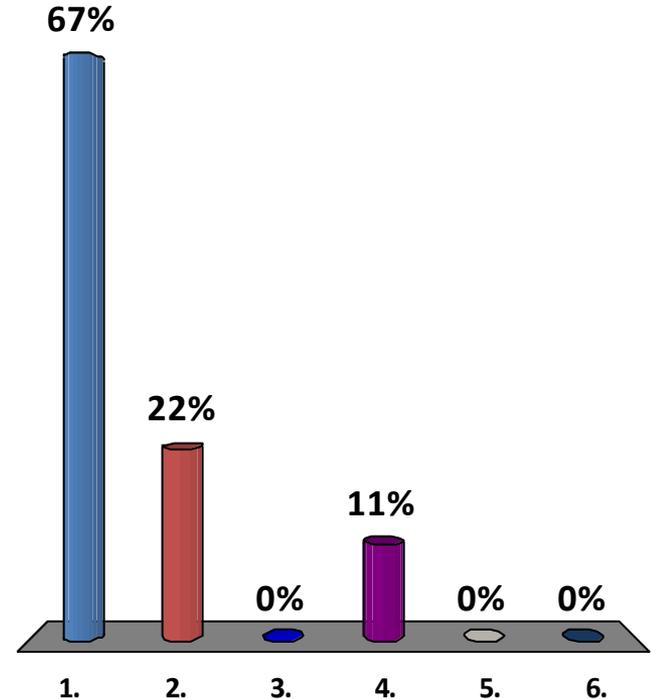
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Government Responsiveness

Polling

Government should obtain/use contact information (with permission) to keep citizens up to date on engagement events and results.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Unsure
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. I do not know

Do you have other ideas or suggestions about how government could be more responsive or proactive when it comes to informing citizens of the outcomes of a public engagement activity or process?

Discussion Question

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Do you have any additional ideas re: possible actions that the GNL should consider when developing its first Open Government Action Plan?

Discussion Question

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Theme Team

Report Back

Idea/Suggestions: Accessibility/User friendliness

- Update GNL website regularly and give notification of changes
- Accessibility for individuals particularly seniors who do not use the internet
- A contact person who can assist in getting the info/training
- Better promotion of timelines/events outside of government website
- Make data clear, searchable (by region), timely and immediate

Idea/Suggestions: Participation/Technology

- Better understanding of the geography of the province when engaging
- Having more smaller sessions as opposed to a larger regional one
- Go back to old ways newspaper, TV, posters, etc.
- Lack to trust, not sure if input is used
- Provide more information on the policy
- Target groups (youth, council, etc) differently (celebrities)

Idea/Suggestions: Collaboration Challenges

- More stable funding
- Government should be more visible in the regions (decision making)
- Timing of collaboration
- Not just a partner on paper

Idea/Suggestions: Government Responsiveness

- Don't do strategies if you are not going to follow through
- Be less secretive, provide an open and welcoming environment
- Better promotion of what is happening
- Timely follow-up, quicker response times
- Be more aware internally and inter-provincially

I was given enough notice to participate in today's session.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

44%

33%

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11% 11%

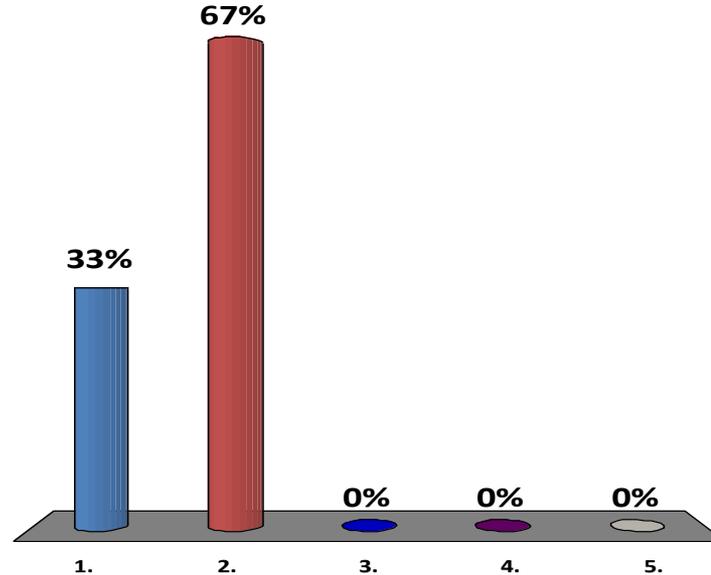1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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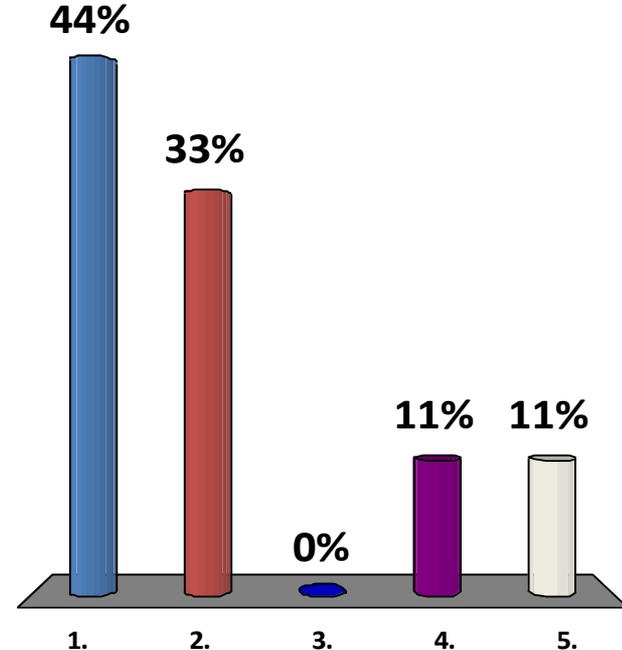
I found today's session (select all that apply)

1. Informative
2. Uninformative
3. A good use of my time
4. A waste of my time
5. Engaging
6. Unengaging
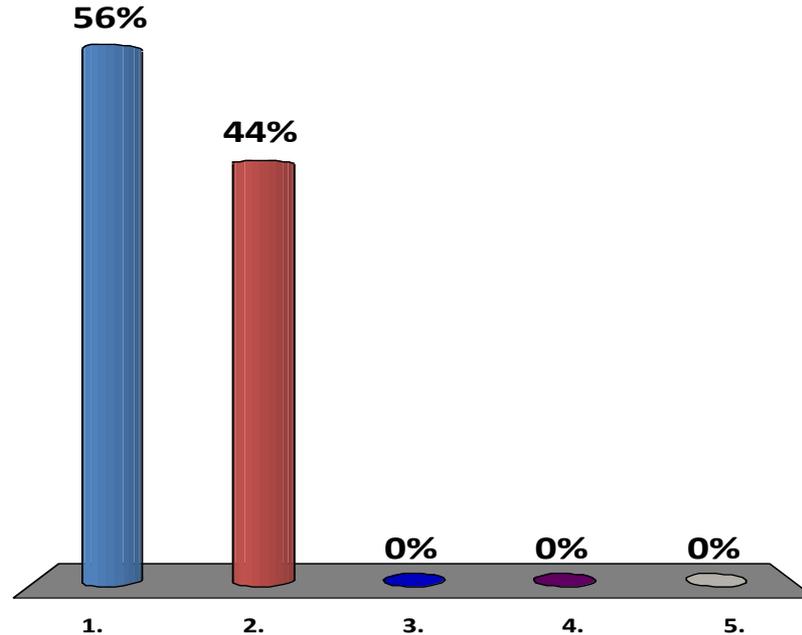7. Relevant
8. Irrelevant
9. Other

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
21%	0%	24%	3%	28%	3%	17%	0%	3%
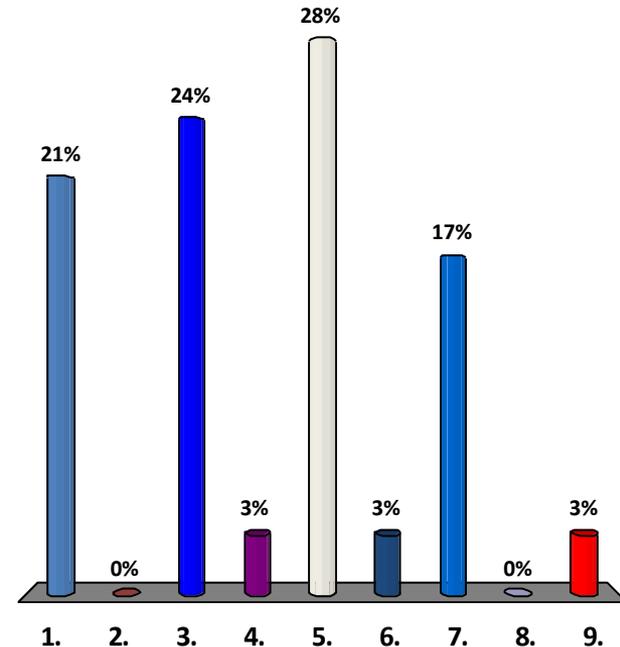
I liked the format of today's session.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I had an opportunity to have my say today.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Open Government Commitment

- Comprehensive Public Engagement (ongoing)
- Online tools; social media; feedback forms (ongoing)
- Face to face meetings and other interactive dialogue sessions (ongoing)
- Input received posted, in a timely manner (ongoing)
- Determine themes and prepare and release a "what we heard" document (fall)

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Open Government Commitment

- Release a Draft Action Plan with a request for additional public input (fall)
- Release a final Action Plan (late fall/early winter)

open.gov.nl.ca

Twitter	E-Mail	Telephone
@OPE_GovNL	OPE@gov.nl.ca	709.729.7072
		Toll-Free: 1.877.895.8891

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