2015 - 2017
Strategic Plan
Progress Report

October 2014

iap²
international association
for public participation
CANADA

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Background

In the Spring of 2014 IAP2 Canada Board of Directors struck an internal committee to begin a process of developing its 2015 - 2017 Strategic Plan. The goal of this process was to explore what is possible and then understand, clarify and prioritize how the organization moves forward.

In May 2014 the strategic plan committee began implementing a three-phase planning process.

PHASE I (MAY - SEPTEMBER)

The first phase provided an opportunity for the IAP2 Canada Board of Directors, Board Committee members, Chapters, the membership, and stakeholders to provide input through an online discussion forum and individual interviews. The forum was open to all members of IAP2 Canada and the interviews were with select candidates from various chapters, employment backgrounds, and positions associated with IAP2 Canada.

A total of 13 individuals were invited to participate in the strategic planning process through interviews. Representation was sought from the general membership, Chapters, IAP2 Canada committees, non-members/stakeholders (e.g. C2S2, NCDD, Centre for Public Involvement), and former IAP2 Canada Board members.

Between July and September 2014 a total of 9 interviews were conducted and 10 responses were received through the online discussion forum. The strategic planning committee then engaged in a process of thematic data analysis and of key finding identification.

PHASE II (SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER)

The second phase consisted of sharing and soliciting feedback on the key findings and analysis gathered in Phase I with the IAP2 Canada Board. This took place at the face-to-face board meeting held on Sunday, September 28, 2014 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The IAP2 Canada Board reviewed the input received and confirmed three desired outcomes for the 2015 - 2017 Strategic Plan. The Board also committed to next steps in the planning process (see the section titled Next Steps for details).

PHASE III (NOVEMBER - DECEMBER)

The last consists of the development of the final version of IAP2 Canada's strategic plan for Board approval in November/December. The strategic planning committee will ensure the members, Chapters and key stakeholders receive comprehensive and plain language information about the entirety of the planning process and the approved 2015 - 2017 IAP2 Canada Strategic Plan.

Phase I Planning Results

The online discussion forum and interview questions were categorized into three themes about IAP2 Canada as an organization: current work, needs, and future opportunities. The results are presented under these three categories.

Note: A copy of the online discussion forum & interview questions are available in Appendix A. A copy of the raw data is available upon request.

CURRENT WORK

Respondents were complimentary of IAP2 Canada's current efforts. When asked what the Association does well, communication and programming ranked the highest. Specific examples such as, regular communication, the conference, support of chapter start-up, local programming/events, webinars were provided. Training and networking through partnerships were also mentioned, specifically the development of cross-Canada representation with new chapters, as well as member connections and collaboration with like organizations (e.g. C2D2, IAP2 USA and the Journal of Public Deliberation).

NEEDS

Respondents were asked to consider what IAP2 Canada needed to do differently to serve its members and stakeholders. The majority of feedback pointed to a need for the Association to be a source of expertise and knowledge, a place where members and stakeholders are able to access support and guidance for the practice, as well as resources and tools. Peer learning, access to research, collaboration with academic institutions, and the creation of resources such as practice and evaluation standards were identified as means of supporting members and stakeholders.

There was a call for more robust and rigorous training, including the development of a professional accreditation program. A need for more specialized training was also mentioned to address emerging trends in society, for example digital engagement.

Respondents also indicated a need for the Association to facilitate networking opportunities and demonstrate inclusion. This was described in three ways: 1) to connect with fellow practitioners, 2) to partner and collaborate with like-minded organizations nationally and internationally, and 3) to promote inclusive practice through the integration of First Nations into resources, partnerships and the Board.

Some of the respondents input referenced the operation aspects of the Association. Chapter funding model, volunteer management, improved communications tools, timing of webinars, incorporation of bilingualism, and inquiry responsiveness were highlighted as areas requiring attention to support member and stakeholder needs.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

When asked what services they wanted to receive from IAP2 Canada, respondents called for the Association to be an advocate for the practice of public participation. They saw an opportunity to provide a unified and strong voice for P2, protecting the interest and credibility of practice.

Networking in the context of developing formal partnerships and facilitating connections between members through professional development and knowledge sharing opportunities were also identified as important services.

Finally, providing a place for members and stakeholders to access knowledge, training, expertise and support were reiterated. By taking on this focus, respondents saw an opportunity to raise the credibility of the Association.

Analysis

The analysis section is an interpretation of the Phase I results and serves the purpose of identifying a strategic focus for IAP2 Canada.

The research results point to a shift in focus amongst respondents moving away from investing in building a functional organization to demonstrating leadership in the field of P2.

Although some input from the online discussion forum and interviews sought improvements to specific operational processes, the majority of comments suggested that the key operational requirements are in place and members and stakeholders are seeking a shift in the focus and contributions of IAP2 Canada.

Analysis of the results raised three primary themes that are highly connected.

| **1** | **2** | **3** |
| EXPERTISE | NETWORKING | ADVOCACY |

The relationship between the three themes is illustrated as a gradient. Expertise is the entry point whereby the Association supports the practice through the provision of resources and in some cases works to develop tools or standards that guide the practice. A focus on expertise promotes the Association as a knowledge source and a gathering place to learn and develop.

Networking is where learning and thinking come together. It is also the intermediary of all of the Associations work supporting the connection of expertise and credibility of the practice. Advocacy is the culmination of what the Association believes in, what it knows and who it connects with. It capitalizes on expertise and networking efforts to educate and work with members and stakeholders identifying P2 issues and priorities to support integration of the practice within multiple disciplines.

Phase II Planning Results

It is proposed that the 2015 - 2017 IAP2 Canada Strategic Plan shift focus from directives to outcomes. The term 'direction' connotes the management or guiding of operations, which was an important focus in the developmental stages of the organization.

However, as the Association matures, a more visionary focus will support growth and sustainability. By articulating desired outcomes the Association will provide an identity for people to connect with and a purpose to strive for.

Based on the analysis of data from Phase I, three desired outcomes have been identified and confirmed by the IAP2 Canada Board of Directors. Each is crafted to promote the memberhsip coming together, connecting to a purpose and clarifying how they can contribute to the Association's purpose.

Desired Outcome #1 – IAP2 Canada champions and protects the interests and credibility of the practice.

Desired Outcome #2 – IAP2 Canada is a connector that builds partnerships and promotes collboration.

Desired Outcome #3 – IAP2 Canada is a source and developer of knowledge and resources.

Desired Outcome #4 – IAP2 Canada is a strong, supportive, and sustainable organization.

Next Steps

The IAP2 Canada Board has identified the following next steps in the planning process:

STEP 1

Connect with Chapters to review the desired outcomes and explore opportunities to enhance collaboration and support in delivering the Association's strategic focus.

Timeline Mid to Late October 2014

STEP 2

Share the progress of the strategic plan and three desired outcomes with the general membership.

Timeline Late October to Early November 2014

STEP 3

Establish work teams within the Board of Directors to lead the three desired outcomes and prepare work plans for each strategic outcome including budget planning.

Timeline Mid-October to Late November 2014

STEP 4

Board review and approval of the 2015 - 2017 Strategic Plan.

Timeline Mid-November to Mid-December 2014

For more information about how the strategic plan is coming alive, keep an eye on **iap2canada.ca**.

Appendix A

Online Discussion Forum Questions

1. What is IAP2 Canada doing that is working really well?

2. What does IAP2 Canada need to do differently to effectively serve its members and stakeholders?

3. What services do you want to receive from IAP2 Canada and why?

Interview Questions

1. What is IAP2 Canada doing that is working really well?

2. What does IAP2 Canada need to do differently to effectively serve its members and stakeholders?

3. What services do you want to receive from IAP2 Canada and why?

4. Do you have any suggestions for potential partners that IAP2 should consider?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us or add?

6. Would you have any suggestions on who else we should be speaking with?