

Advisory Committee on Standards for Voting Technologies

Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2023, 9:00am – 2:25pm

Microsoft Teams

Committee Attendees:

- Dr. Mkabi Walcott, CEO Appointee
- Michael Crase, Political Party Appointee – Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Dan Duncan, Political Party Appointee – Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
- Donald Eady, Political Party Appointee – New Democratic Party of Ontario
- Karla Webber-Gallagher, 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
- Mike Stockfish, Assistant Executive Director of the Advisory Committee
- Shikha Devgun, Project Manager for the Advisory Committee
- Amanda Tieber, Research Coordinator for the Advisory Committee
- Jennifer MacLean, Administrative Assistant for the Advisory Committee

Guests:

- Julia Hancock, Senior Project Manager, Digital Governance Standards Institute (DGSI)
- Helen Hayes, Ph.D. Candidate, McGill University

Opening Remarks and CEO Appointee Comments

- In the Chair's absence, the CEO Appointee, Dr. Walcott, acted as Chair and outlined the agenda and objectives for the meeting.
- The March 7th, 2023, meeting minutes were adopted.

Technical Briefing on Product Standards

- The DGSI Senior Project Manager, Julia Hancock, presented the Product Standards and gave an overview of the process to date, meetings, number of comments, and engagements. She also informed members that their organization has rebranded from its former name, CIO Strategy Council, to the Digital Governance Standards Institute.
- DGSI presented a technical briefing on Draft Standard 119-1: Vote Tabulators.
- Several Advisory Committee members recommended the addition of a few new definitions to improve readability of the document. Further, references made to ISO documents and other technical documentation should be explained in plain language.

- A member raised the security of the paper ballots and other members agreed that the box that stores the ballots, although separate from the tabulator, is still part of the functionality of the tabulator and so its security should be adequately addressed in the product standards.
- The Executive Director confirmed that the interface between the tabulator and the box in which the ballots are being stored prior to close of the polls will be noted to be tracked.
- Advisory Committee members also suggested:
 - adding language capabilities to section 4.1.4.4; and
 - that contact information for the vendor should be included on the plate fixed to the tabulator (section 4.1.4.5).
- The Executive Director noted that these will be tracked and discussed for how they fit into the product and the management standards.
- An Advisory Committee member asked if there is a way to revisit once the management standard is done. The Acting Chair confirmed the timing is aligned for that to happen.
- An Advisory Committee member asked about the accessibility items on page 18 and who had advocated for individuals with disabilities and ensuring accessibility for them. The DGSI Senior Project Manager confirmed that they have been working with the Centre of Accessibility Design at OCADU. They have reviewed the standards for accessibility purposes, clause by clause, ensuring it can be as accessible as possible.
- An Advisory Committee member suggested that key concerns discussed by the Committee, specifically with respect to preserving the detail of reporting, be included in all three standard documents, to ensure there are no gaps and that the ACSVT Committee's concerns are taken seriously.
- The Acting Chair noted that the focus as we review the drafts at this meeting is on the product standards for the voting tabulators and for the e-poll books system. The other non-product related issues will be addressed in the management system standards. In addition, there will be an opportunity to provide other recommendations to the Chief Electoral Officer.
- The Acting Chair also noted that some recommendations may not fit into all three standards (product standards, management standards, and report) and so discussion will be required on where recommendations are best placed in relation to the scope of the specific standard. The Acting Chair reminded members that the product and management standards are different in scope, applying to the vendors vs. the election administrators, respectively.
- The Acting Chair concluded that the summary of these comments will be shared to the committee as we move forward with the discussions on the management system standard when it's provided to all on May 15th. Therefore, members can cross reference the discussions around these standards and the management standard. In addition, the public review period is still open, and the committee members still have an opportunity to directly provide comments through the political parties to DGSI.

[The Committee recessed at 1:00 p.m. and reconvened at 1:35 p.m.]

- The DGSI Senior Project Manager presented the Summary of content discussions on 119-2: Electronic Poll Books.

- An Advisory Committee member asked whether the invariant data should be carefully defined and possibly included in the management standards of what the invariant data might be.
- The DGS Senior Project Manager clarified that the invariant data will be looked at closely in the management standard.
- An Advisory Committee member asked if the power goes down in an area due to, as an example, a big storm, what would be the back-up? The Research Coordinator confirmed that the laptop would continue to operate. When/if the laptop battery dies, the contingency plan would be paper backups as stated in the management standard.
- An Advisory Committee member raised that designing e-poll books to have a 4-hour battery life may not be enough.
- The DGS Senior Project Manager noted to confirm with vendors the maximum hours can the battery lasts.
- An Advisory Committee member asked if somebody opts to vote by mail, or if they voted at an advanced poll, does it specify in the management standard that they should not be voting in person. The Assistant Executive Director confirmed that in the current process in Ontario the voter would be indicated as struck off when their ballots have been sent and approved.
- An Advisory Committee member recommended adding clearer statements about scrutineers having timely access to data, including who has voted and when.
- The Executive Director noted that these will be tracked and discussed on how they fit into the product and management standards.
- The Executive Director noted that a reminder will be sent by email regarding public consultation dates for member reference.

Update: Recommendations on Management Standards and Administrative Tasks

- The Executive Director outlined that all the comments discussed today will be reviewed in relation to the management standards to ensure all are captured in the product.
- The Executive Director reiterated that at the March 7th meeting, members approved three categories for organizing the recommendations – usability and accessibility, security and integrity, and the organizational capacity/infrastructure. Committee Administrators developed a draft of these recommendations for the management standard based on the feedback. Feedback from today’s discussion will also be included. Therefore, on May 29th, a full technical briefing, a high-level overview, and open a roundtable discussion will be provided. A special virtual half-day meeting will be added in June to provide a final review of the management standards.
- The Executive Director announced the Research Coordinator’s promotion – moving to be the Executive Assistant to the Chief Electoral Officer, starting on May 1st.

Closing Remarks

- The Acting Chair reminded members that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on May 29th and that a virtual half-day meeting will be held on June 29th to provide a final review and approval of the management standards for the purpose of the document being shared with the DGS Technical Committee for its input. An email will be sent out to confirm availability.

[The meeting of the Advisory Committee adjourned at 2:25 p.m.]