Internal Governance Platform for the Green Party of Canada

The Green Party of Canada (GPC) is guided by the Global Greens Charter and informed by the Global Greens' Statutes and Rulebook. The Constitution and Bylaws provide for a Federal Council (including staff), two deputy leaders and a Leader informed by the (Shadow) Cabinet, a Young Greens Council, the Provincial Greens and an Ombudsman.

In presenting proposals for change in the governance of the party, we are guided by the will of the party. Any change in the governance of the party requires full discussion amongst party members in their EDAs, amongst various vetting authorities within the party, and in general assembly before being adopted by the membership at large.

The impetus for our proposals is that, in general, the governance of the party is poorly supporting the needs of the members. We call for a fresh approach. We hope that these proposals will stimulate that discussion and lead to better results both in our own management and in our electoral performance.

The GPC vision, values, mandate, mission and Party structure are an expression of the vision and values of the membership. Members channel their political energies via their respective Electoral District Association (EDA), which is also the focal point for candidate support by GPC HQ. The EDA is therefore central to the effective functioning of the Party.

Federal Council is the governing body of the party. Experience of the functioning of this body reveals a body in need of renewal. A monthly committee that meets in person perhaps once a year is unlikely to function well; if it was constituted with a stronger sense of what responsibility means, it would be vastly improved.

Based on independent polling data early on in the 2019 election, the issues central to the GPC resonated well with Canadians; however, the outcome was disappointing. While some factors are outside Party control,[1] the Party could have done better in areas well within its control. In-camera sessions of the Federal Council meant members were not apprised of key policy discussions leading up to the final election platform nor given sufficient opportunity to influence the Vision document (which also came late in the campaign, making it a challenge for messaging at the EDA level).   Early missteps by the Leader, self-inflicted wounds from HQ and finally unfair national media attention all played a role in the disappointing outcome. This was further reinforced by weak EDA capacity to select strong candidates and support the conduct of a relevant, effective and efficient campaign (e.g., fundraising and member outreach).

To improve the next electoral outcome for the GPC, organizational reinforcement is essential in the following three areas: Democratization; EDA Development; and Accountability and Transparency.

   I.   **Democratization: Refresh leadership and policy articulation/development**

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[1] Canada's "first past the post" electoral system. Democratic Audit

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The Party needs to broaden and deepen democratization of the Party both nationally and locally.

At the national level:

- At our general assemblies (the real governing body of the GPC), full disclosure is required of the actions and decisions of the Federal Council, of the Executive committee and of the GPC fund. Such actions and decisions will be subject to approval by motion by the members.
- General Assemblies require full reports on the conduct of all committees of council and of caucuses of the party.
- A leadership contest will be held automatically no later than nine months after the leader has served for two elections.
- The Deputy Leaders and members of Shadow Cabinet will be elected directly by the members.
- We will use a Canada-wide consultation process with members and relevant stakeholders to produce key party documents, including a long-term Strategic Plan and an Annual Plan, to guide the decisions and resourcing of the Federal Council.
- We will reduce the filtering of proposed policy resolutions by Federal Council, Shadow Cabinet and the Leader:
  - Any policy resolution sponsored by at least 25 GPC members in good standing will be eligible for submission to a pre-convention online vote.
  - All policy resolutions receiving a stipulated minimum level of member support in that online vote will be debated and voted upon at convention.
- The Leader will be campaign for and defend all policies adopted by members; and the Party electoral platform may not contradict any policy duly adopted by members. If the Leader is unable in good conscience to defend member-approved policies, then the Leader's obligation is to resign and to allow another member who agrees with member-approved policies to assume the role of Leader.
- The number of nominations required to run for election to federal council will be increased to 20 (from 5) for nominations to regional members, and to 50 (from 20) for nominations to executive positions.
- We will abrogate the Carver Plan (Policy Governance Model), replacing it with a parliamentary style governance model.
- We will require more democratic processes for election to the board of the GPC Fund.
- We will require that no Federal Councillor serve more than 2 consecutive terms, and that no Federal Councillor be related by marriage or family to any other Federal Councillor.

At the local level:

- The Leader, Shadow Cabinet, Federal Council and staff will assist the EDAs to conduct collaborative strategic and annual planning processes with members; and build the capacity of EDAs to support "bottom-up" development of new policies for the GPC.

II.   EDA Renewal: Broadening and deepening the base

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Recognizing that the grassroots is where we earn the trust of voters, and, as is done by other national party machines, <u>well in advance </u>of any election, GPC HQ will:

- Revisit and strengthen the template for the EDA constitution (and by-laws). Clarifying the mandate, roles and responsibilities and providing guidance on how to manage meetings.
- Strengthen the capacity of the EDA Executive to deliver on their mandate
- Support collaborative activities such as EDA planning and reporting and membership outreach.
- Develop guidance on "best practices" in key areas (e.g., fundraising, expansion of membership and selection of equity-seeking candidates).
- Ensure candidates have pithy briefs[2] for each policy issue in the platform.

III.   Accountability and transparency: Share and communicate better

There is a need to open up our decisions and better communicate our accomplishments and challenges. If Dimitri is elected leader, GPC HQ will:

- Render all decisions of an ombudsperson for the party public and binding on the leader, the Executive director, the Federal Council and the shadow cabinet.
- To the greatest possible degree, facilitate observation of the meetings of the Federal Council by party members.
- Ensure that all Federal Council meetings are announced more than 48 hours in advance; that agendas be published; and that full minutes and supporting documentation be provided. Minutes, to be provided within a week, should include recording of any subjects referred to *in camera* sessions, with the results of those proceedings.
- Post the outcomes of GPC HQ assessments, evaluations, policy proposals, plans and reports[3] on the GPC website.
- Encourage EDAs to post their plans, reports, agendas and minutes of meetings, and audits on their websites.
- Post the Federal Organizational Effectiveness Action Plan and annual reports on progress towards the recommendations, based on an assessment[4] of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the GPC.
- Require that financial statements of the health of the party (income and expenses, assets and liabilities) be published quarterly for all members to see, no later than one month after the end of each quarter.

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[2] [Waste and Plastic (2019)](#)

[3] see the [Year End Report](#) done by the Australians

[4] based on the [Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment](#). See also [MOPAN Methodology (DIgest)](#)