

A Seat at the Table: Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations in Canada

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Municipalities are involved in an increasing number of policy areas, but they remain largely absent from Canada's system of intergovernmental relations. This paper analyzes how other countries have made space for municipalities in their intergovernmental processes. It recommends four approaches to reforming Canada's intergovernmental infrastructure in order to include municipalities.

Read the full paper: <https://uoft.me/Intergovernmental>

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Approaches to reform:

Ensure municipalities have the capacity, voice, and structures to participate effectively in intergovernmental relations. This can be accomplished through investment in municipal staff and municipal associations, and new regional governance structures.

Increase municipal involvement in provincial policymaking. Potential models include a formal, institutionalized council for provincial-municipal relations, perhaps modelled on South Africa's extended cabinet or a set of intergovernmental councils focused on priority policy issues.

Eliminate unfunded mandates, through, for example, provincial legislation or provincial-municipal intergovernmental agreements that require consultation on the fiscal impacts of draft legislation or regulation and that allow any disagreements to be taken to court.

Strengthen trilateral relations. Potential models include new location-specific or policy-specific trilateral agreements, sector-specific trilateral intergovernmental councils, or a general trilateral council that could be achieved through reform of First Ministers' Meetings.