



# Federal Council Handbook 6.0.1

## Green Party of Canada

Approved by Federal Council on August 28th, 2024.

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## **Preface**

This Handbook is a set of rules and protocols created by Federal Council to govern its own internal procedures.

References to “Article #” are to the GPC constitution and references to “Bylaw #” are to the GPC Bylaws. Any provision of this Handbook that is inconsistent with the Constitution or Bylaws is null and void to the extent of the inconsistency.

The Governance Committee retains the authority to make minor edits to the Handbook to align with FC decisions that affect it or to correct grammar or spelling errors. FC must be notified about any of these edits.

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## **Introduction**

When the Party membership is not assembled in a General Meeting, Federal Council is the highest decision-making body of the Green Party of Canada (except where other authorities are specified by the Constitution and Bylaws). However, it is not the highest authority in the GPC. The highest authority is the Constitution, followed by the Bylaws (Article 2). Council follows these and ensures that they are followed by the rest of the Party. Next are decisions of the membership in General Meeting. Council ensures that these decisions are carried out (Article 6.4). Federal Council makes decisions and rules that are binding on itself and the entire Party unless and until it rescinds or replaces them, or they are invalidated by a higher authority. In principle, Federal Council cannot make valid decisions or rules which are in conflict with the Constitution, the Bylaws, or GM decisions (Article 6.2).

Federal Council and its committees are responsible for setting high-level strategic goals; for **oversight** of operations, plans, budgets and results; and for coordinating, with the input of members, staff and the Executive Director, the planning, implementation and reporting on annual and multi-year plans and budgets. Day-to-day operations are delegated to the ED.

# **1. Governing Principles**

As a Unit of the GPC, Federal Council must “strive to uphold the highest standards of transparent, accountable and collaborative governance” (Bylaw 2.7.1). Like the GPC as a whole, Federal Council operates in accordance with the six principles of the Global Greens.

## **1.1. Global Greens Principles**

- 1.1.1. Non-Violence
- 1.1.2. Respect for Diversity
- 1.1.3. Social Justice
- 1.1.4. Participatory Democracy
- 1.1.5. Sustainability
- 1.1.6. Ecological Wisdom

## **1.2. Striving for Consensus**

- 1.2.1. Federal Council strives for consensus in its decision-making, only resorting to majority votes when consensus cannot be reached.
- 1.2.2. Council deliberation will be **collaborative**, actively seeking to understand alternative points of view and working to find agreement whenever possible.

## **1.3. FC as a Collective Body**

- 1.3.1. The interest of the Party as a whole is paramount in all deliberation and decision-making, even as individual perspectives are recognized and appreciated. Similarly, group/regional perspectives are subordinate to the interests of the Party.
- 1.3.2. Federal Council has authority as a Unit of the Party. An individual member of Federal Council has no individual authority. All Councillors have equal rights and responsibilities, except as specified in this Handbook and other rules.
- 1.3.3. Once a decision has been made, Councillors must not contest that decision publicly (outside of the Party). This does not preclude reexamining decisions internally.
- 1.3.4. No Councillor can speak on Council's behalf without authorization.

- 1.3.5. In their capacity as Councillors, they must not misrepresent or assume the outcome of any Council decisions in public communications.

#### **1.4. Acting Proactively**

- 1.4.1. FC strives to be proactive and not reactive in its deliberations and decision-making, anticipating and proactively addressing potential challenges rather than merely responding to urgent situations.
- 1.4.2. FC exercises discernment in planning, avoiding excessive fixation on details or day-to-day operations, which may hinder progress. Operational discussions at FC meetings should be linked to significant strategic implications.
- 1.4.3. FC strikes an appropriate balance between long-term strategic thinking and short-term decision-making.

#### **1.5. Bilingualism**

- 1.5.1. In line with Article 4.1.7, FC operates as bilingually as possible and is committed to making it more and more possible as time goes on.
- 1.5.2. Councillors have the right to express themselves in the official language of their choice.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1. Conduct**

- 2.1.1. Councillors are required to uphold the Federal Council Code of Conduct.

### **2.2. Councillors as GPC Members**

- 2.2.1. After their election, Councillors have particular obligations to the membership, but of course remain members of the GPC and therefore maintain all the rights of regular members, keeping in mind that they hold an additional position of authority. This may include submitting policy proposals, volunteering on non-Council committees, etc.
  - 2.2.1.1. Councillors who are in positions of oversight or administration for internal elections and other processes may be required to remain neutral in such processes. These requirements will be listed in the rules for the process in question (e.g. Leadership Contest Rules, FC Election Rules).

### **2.3. Media Inquiries**

- 2.3.1. Individual Councillors may be approached by media for comments on a particular issue. To ensure that the request goes to the most appropriate person(s), that the response upholds existing Council decisions, and that public communications from the Central Party are coordinated, media requests must be forwarded to Party comms staff at [media@greenparty.ca](mailto:media@greenparty.ca).

### **2.4. Conflict of Interest**

- 2.4.1. Councillors must abide by the GPC Conflict of Interest Policy [to be created], as mandated by Bylaw 10.6.

### **2.5. Executive Council (Exec)**

- 2.5.1. The Executive Council consists of the Leader, the Chair, the Anglophone Vice-Chair, the Francophone Vice-Chair, and the Fund

Representative as voting members, and the Executive Director as a non-voting member (Bylaw 2.6.1).

- 2.5.2. The Executive Council assists the Chair in planning agendas for Federal Council meetings.
- 2.5.3. The Executive Council may make interim decisions on urgent matters between Federal Council meetings, which must be ratified at the following FC meeting. The Executive Council must notify FC forthwith if it has taken a decision on FC's behalf, and explain the urgency.
- 2.5.4. Members of Federal Council are entitled to observe all Executive Council meetings, including in-camera sessions.
- 2.5.5. Executive Council minutes must be made available to Federal Council.
- 2.5.6. The Executive Council is responsible for appointing members to the International Secretariat (Bylaw 12).
- 2.5.7. Generally, the procedural rules from this Handbook that apply to Federal Council meetings apply to Executive Council meetings as well. This does not include the notice requirements for meetings and agendas.

## **2.6. Chair of Federal Council**

- 2.6.1. The Chair is, broadly speaking, the "facilitator" or "coordinator" of Federal Council as a whole.
- 2.6.2. The Chair is empowered to ensure the integrity of FC processes.
- 2.6.3. The Chair is expected to schedule FC and Executive Council meetings, and generally expected to chair those meetings, although the chair of any meeting is officially confirmed only at that meeting (see Council Green Rules).
- 2.6.4. The Chair works with the ED to oversee progress toward the goals of the strategic plan or its equivalent (e.g. a list of annual priorities), and to ensure the implementation of FC decisions.
- 2.6.5. The Chair has no individual decision-making authority independent of FC.
- 2.6.6. The Chair may only vote to break a tie (Bylaw 2.4.5).



- 2.6.7. The Chair may be called upon to represent Federal Council or the Party publicly, preferably in coordination with the ED and communications staff. In this capacity, the Chair must not misrepresent or assume the outcome of any Council decisions in public communications.
- 2.6.8. The Chair shall make an official report on Federal Council's activities to members at General Meetings, including the status of directive motions from the previous GM.
- 2.6.9. The Chair has primary responsibility for overseeing email votes.

## **2.7. Anglophone Vice-Chair and Francophone Vice-Chair**

- 2.7.1. The Vice-Chairs support the Chair in their responsibilities and are equal voting members of Federal Council and the Executive Council.
- 2.7.2. Vice-Chair may be called upon to perform the usual duties of the Chair if the Chair is unavailable, is incapacitated or exceptionally makes that request.

## **2.8. Fund Representative**

- 2.8.1. The Fund Representative is an equal voting member of Federal Council and the Executive Council, and is the primary link between those bodies and the GPC Fund Board. The Fund Representative represents Federal Council at Fund Board meetings (Bylaw 2.6.6).
- 2.8.2. The Fund Representative ensures:
  - 2.8.2.1. that Council is informed as to the actions which FC or FC members must take in order to comply with the GPC Fund Bylaws, including the annual Fund AGM and the election of Fund Directors;
  - 2.8.2.2. that Council is informed of any contractual, legal or financial action undertaken by the Fund on behalf of the GPC;
  - 2.8.2.3. that the Board is informed of any matters from Council that the Board should know about for the proper functioning and coordinating of the bodies;

- 2.8.2.4. that the Board is informed of any matters that could lead to liabilities for the Board;

## **2.9. Leader role on Federal Council**

- 2.9.1. The Leader is the principal spokesperson of the Party with specific duties assigned by Parliament, Canadian law and the GPC Constitution (see Bylaw 2.6.3).
- 2.9.2. On Federal Council, the Leader's role is to:
  - 2.9.2.1. Report to FC on the political landscape, Caucus, Shadow Cabinet, key issues and opportunities, media opportunities and provide inspiration and vision for GPC growth;
  - 2.9.2.2. Participate as an equal voting member of FC and the Executive Council;
  - 2.9.2.3. Inform FC of the expected impact of any FC or staff action on the Leader's activities.

## **2.10. Deputy Leader(s) role on Federal Council**

- 2.10.1. The Leader may appoint up to two Deputy Leaders, who take office as soon as the Leader notifies Federal Council of their appointment. If a Leader resigns or otherwise leaves office, any Deputy Leaders appointed by that Leader cease to be Deputy Leaders as well.
- 2.10.2. Deputy Leaders automatically become non-voting members of Federal Council for the duration of their appointment.

## **2.11. Provincial Representatives and Territories Representative**

- 2.11.1. Provincial and territorial representatives bring regional experience and perspectives to FC. They contribute as equal voting members of FC in making responsible decisions regarding the governance of the Party.
- 2.11.2. Provincial and territorial representatives report to, and receive input from, their regional members and EDAs on a regular basis. Further details on this point can be found in section 7.

## **2.12. Youth Representatives**

- 2.12.1. The Youth Representatives represent the Young Greens of Canada (YGC) on Federal Council and bring youth experience and perspectives to its discussions. They contribute as equal voting members of FC in making responsible decisions regarding the governance of the Party.
- 2.12.2. The two Youth Representatives are selected by the YGC Council in accordance with Article 7.3.14 and YGC Bylaw 3.5.

## **2.13. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Representatives**

- 2.13.1. TBD

## **2.14. Other Non-Voting Positions**

- 2.14.1. Bylaw 2.4.7 enables Federal Council to create non-voting positions and appoint people to those positions.
- 2.14.2. A description of the position including its term, any specific duties, and eligibility requirements, must be approved by FC.
- 2.14.3. A person must agree to serve in the position, and appointments must be made by Federal Council motion. The motion to appoint must specify the length of the term.
- 2.14.4. Non-voting Councillors appointed in this way may be removed by Federal Council motion. This process does not fall under Bylaw 2.1.6.
- 2.14.5. Non-voting members of Council do not factor in quorum calculations, but they are entitled to attend and participate in Council and Committee of the Whole meetings, including in-camera sessions.

## **2.15. Term Lengths**

- 2.15.1. The term of any Councillor whose position is listed in Bylaw 2.1.5.3 shall end at the conclusion of the regular Council elections in the next odd-numbered year following their election, unless prior to that date, their successor is elected.

- 2.15.2. The term of any Councillor whose position is listed in Bylaw 2.1.5.4 shall end at the conclusion of the regular elections in the next even-numbered year following their election, unless prior to that date, their successor is elected.
- 2.15.3. The term of any appointed Councillor (other than an Interim Leader) shall end at the conclusion of the next set of regular Council elections following their appointment, unless prior to that date, their successor is elected.
- 2.15.4. If a Councillor's term ends and a successor has not been elected, the position becomes vacant.
- 2.15.5. The Leader serves a term pursuant to Bylaw 2.1.5.5, and an Interim Leader serves a term pursuant to Bylaw 2.1.8.

## **2.16. Resignation Procedure**

- 2.16.1. Resignations must be submitted in writing to the Chair or to the full Council, or stated verbally in a Council meeting (and recorded in the minutes). An effective date may be specified, but if not, the resignation is effective as soon as it is received. Once the resignation is effective, the position is vacant (i.e. the vacancy has occurred, for the purposes of Bylaw 2.1.7 or 2.1.8 and section 2.17 of this Handbook).
- 2.16.2. If a Councillor makes a public statement (on social media, in the media, etc.) that they have resigned, that statement will be considered an official resignation, with immediate effect.
- 2.16.3. Since Youth Representatives are on Federal Council *ex officio*, they must resign as YGC Co-Chairs in accordance with YGC rules in order to leave FC. Vacancies in these positions are also the responsibility of YGC Council to fill.

## **2.17. Council Vacancies**

- 2.17.1. In principle, FC prefers to fill council vacancies via by-elections because it is a more democratic process than appointments. By-elections should be held as soon as possible when vacancies

occur. If by-elections are not feasible, vacancies are filled by appointment.

- 2.17.2. Appointment Process TBD (will go in its own document, which can then be referred to)

## **2.18. Orientation and Training**

- 2.18.1. After a Council election, an orientation session for new Councillors will be held covering topics including but not limited to an overview of the strategic plan (or its equivalent, such as annual priorities) and its current status, an explanation of the governance structure, including the role and responsibilities of Federal Council (strategic oversight vs. operations), a role description for a Federal Councillor, how FC interacts with the Fund Board/Leader/ED, the Party's financial status, budgeting process, and fiscal responsibilities of Council, review of Council procedures, legal obligations, conflicts of interest, clarification of the expectations for Councillor engagement, including meeting attendance, and committee involvement. Continuing Councillors are also welcome at these sessions.
- 2.18.2. FC also invests in regular orientation and training for Councillors as circumstances warrant.
  - 2.18.2.1. Federal Councillors will receive annual training on the Transparency and Confidentiality policy (Bylaw 10.7).
- 2.18.3. In particular, FC strives to ensure that its standing Committees have adequate collective skills and expertise, and will pay particular attention to effective onboarding and continual training for such work.
- 2.18.4. Costs for governance training, or other training as deemed appropriate, will be determined in consultation with the Finance Committee for inclusion in the GPC's annual budget.

## **2.19. FC Self-Evaluation**

- 2.19.1. FC will evaluate its performance and procedures on an annual basis. The Governance Committee and HR Committee are jointly responsible for this process.

### **3. Meetings**

#### **3.1. Purpose of FC Meetings**

- 3.1.1. Federal Council meetings are the final step in the decision-making process. Issues should generally be considered by committees or small groups before coming to Council. Federal Council is not the place where an issue should first appear for deliberation except in urgent or particular cases.
- 3.1.2. Particular care must be taken to ensure that motions are clear, unambiguous, and express either an action that FC is taking or an instruction to be carried out in line with the strategic goals, objectives, and mission of the GPC.
- 3.1.3. Deliberation in Council meetings should concern only those issues which fall within FC jurisdiction to decide or monitor.

#### **3.2. Preparation for Meetings**

- 3.2.1. Agendas are sent in advance to give people time to prepare, so Councillors are expected to take the time to review agendas and relevant materials.
- 3.2.2. Matters of fact relevant to issues under discussion should be investigated and settled before meetings, to the extent possible.

#### **3.3. Attendance**

- 3.3.1. Attendance is expected of every Councillor at every Council meeting. Pursuant to Bylaw 2.1.6.4, if an elected Councillor (other than the Leader) fails to attend three consecutive Council meetings without explanation they will be removed from Council.
  - 3.3.1.1. The Chair will track FC meeting attendance and request explanations from Councillors who have missed two consecutive meetings.
  - 3.3.1.2. If, after this inquiry, a Councillor then misses a third consecutive meeting, the following regular meeting will include an agenda item stating that Councillor's removal with a list of consecutive meetings missed.

- 3.3.1.3. The Councillor in question will be removed from Council unless they provide a written explanation for their absences and FC votes to reinstate them to office.
- 3.3.2. Councillors are expected to send regrets in advance (as much as possible) if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- 3.3.3. All members of Federal Council are entitled to attend all meetings, including in-camera sessions. Councillors may voluntarily withdraw or recuse themselves from certain discussions or may be removed by a Council motion if it is determined that the Councillor is in a conflict of interest.
- 3.3.4. Guests may be invited to participate in Federal Council meetings to contribute to the discussion on particular Council business. Councillors may suggest inviting someone to make a presentation or to participate in the discussion on a particular item. Guest participation in Federal Council meetings will be voted on at the start of the meeting, as part of the agenda approval.

### **3.4. Frequency of Meetings**

- 3.4.1. Bylaw 2.4.1 requires Federal Council to meet at least four times a year. However, in practice it meets monthly.
- 3.4.2. Generally, a Committee of the Whole meeting is held at the beginning of the month, an Executive Council meeting in the middle, and a Federal Council meeting at the end.
- 3.4.3. Subject to the availability of resources, Federal Council will meet in person at least once per Council term.

### **3.5. Notice and Calling of Meetings**

- 3.5.1. Written notice of FC meetings must be provided to all Councillors, including non-voting Councillors, at least two weeks in advance.
  - 3.5.1.1. In case of emergency, the notice requirement can be waived. 2/3 of voting Councillors then in office must approve such a waiver by email before the proposed time of the emergency meeting.



- 3.5.1.2. If at the end of a Council meeting, FC decides that another meeting is called for within two weeks to conclude that meeting's business, the second meeting is not subject to the notice requirement.
- 3.5.2. Meetings may be scheduled by a Council decision, or called by the Chair individually, or called by any group consisting of 1/3 of the voting members of Council (Bylaw 2.4.8).
  - 3.5.2.1. If a meeting is called by a 1/3 group, the list of Councillors calling the meeting must be included in the meeting notice.
- 3.5.3. A meeting may only be cancelled if 2/3 of voting Councillors approve the cancellation by email vote.

### **3.6. Length of Meetings**

- 3.6.1. Federal Council Meetings have a time limit of two hours, not including breaks. The length of any meeting may be extended once by up to 30 minutes, by Council motion.
- 3.6.2. If the meeting is going to run out of time with agenda items unfinished, the Chair may propose a course of action for dealing with those items, such as:
  - 3.6.2.1. Scheduling another meeting sooner than usual,
  - 3.6.2.2. Holding an email vote if not much more discussion is required,
  - 3.6.2.3. Referring the matter to the Executive Council on an interim basis,
  - 3.6.2.4. Carrying the item(s) over to next month's agenda.
- 3.6.3. The Chair must offer to take a break after approximately one hour of a meeting. The break must occur if any Councillor wishes to take it and must be at least 5 minutes in length.

### **3.7. Agenda**

- 3.7.1. The draft agenda for any Federal Council meeting is to be prepared by the Chair in conjunction with Executive Council.
- 3.7.2. Any Councillor may submit items to be considered for inclusion on the next agenda by sending them to the Executive Council. Topics

may also arise at Committee of the Whole meetings, or at Council meetings for the following meeting.

- 3.7.2.1. Any document presented to Federal Council meetings must list its authors and dates. It must also be accompanied by an explanation of why it is being brought to FC, and proposed motion(s) if applicable.
- 3.7.2.2. Documents should be submitted in advance so that members of Federal Council have adequate time to review them.
- 3.7.3. A preliminary agenda must be circulated for comment ten days ahead of a scheduled meeting. The final draft agenda and relevant supporting documents must be circulated seven days ahead.
- 3.7.4. Agendas for Council meetings must be approved by Council at the start of each meeting.

### **3.8. Reports**

- 3.8.1. Brief oral reports will be made at regular Council meetings by the Leader, the Deputy Leader(s), the Chair, the Fund Representative, the Youth Reps, and the Executive Director. Written reports may also be submitted before the meeting depending on the volume of information being presented.
- 3.8.2. Brief oral reports will be made by the Chairs of any committees that have been active since the previous FC meeting. If Council wishes to have further details, it may request that a written report be submitted before the next council meeting.

### **3.9. Quorum**

- 3.9.1. Quorum is required to start Council meetings and to conduct any official business (i.e. pass motions).
- 3.9.2. The quorum at Federal Council meetings is a simple majority (50%+1) of voting Councillors then in office (Bylaw 2.4.2). The Chair counts toward quorum. The ED and other non-voting members of FC do not.
- 3.9.3. If quorum is lost, no further business can be conducted.

### **3.10. Rules of Procedure**

- 3.10.1. Federal Council and Executive Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the [Council Green Rules](#), which is an adaptation of the regular Green Rules of Procedure for General Meetings.
- 3.10.2. There is a two-minute limit for speakers in an FC meeting (unless otherwise determined). The meeting's timekeeper can warn people when their time is almost up, and in an online meeting, the Chair, Co-Chair, or timekeeper can mute them if they continue speaking more than 30 seconds beyond the allocated time.

### **3.11. In-Camera Procedure**

- 3.11.1. Federal Council may enter an in-camera session to discuss personnel or legal matters, political strategy, or otherwise sensitive topics. The reason for going in camera must be specified in the motion.
- 3.11.2. All members of FC (including non-voting members) are automatically allowed to be present in these sessions. If someone who is not a member of Council is to be included in an in-camera discussion, this must be specified in the motion to go in camera.
- 3.11.3. If consensus is not reached on a motion to go in camera and a majority vote is held, the threshold required to go in camera is 75% of Councillors present and voting (Bylaw 10.3).
- 3.11.4. The motion to end an in-camera session is public, and is to include a report on the general topic discussed, or the public outcome of a decision that had to be made in camera, etc. (i.e. "To end the in-camera session, with the report that..." or "with no report" if unfinished.)
- 3.11.5. The content of in-camera discussions remains confidential to FC. The outcomes of such discussions can be made public by FC decision.

### **3.12. Minutes and Recordings**

- 3.12.1. The minutes of a Council meeting must include the general topics of discussion, the exact text of motions, the outcomes of motions (including reasons for objection if requested), and any agreed action items.
- 3.12.2. The minutes must also indicate which Councillors are present or absent, whether absent Councillors sent regrets in advance, and note when Councillors join or leave the meeting partway through.
- 3.12.3. The flow of conversation and each person's contributions do not need to be recorded in the minutes. However, they may include points that seem important to the recorder, or things that a Councillor requests be recorded.
- 3.12.4. Minutes of Council meetings are to be stored in the [Federal Council Shared Drive](#) to ensure Councillors can easily access them and minutes are stored in-line with digital security best practices.
- 3.12.5. Minutes are subject to approval at the following regular Council meeting.
- 3.12.6. Federal Council is required to make audio and video recordings of open portions of its meetings by Bylaw 10.1.12. These recordings are to be made available to GPC members. FC also records its in-camera sessions; in-camera recordings are available only to Councillors.

### **3.13. Email Vote Procedure**

- 3.13.1. Any Councillor may propose a motion for approval by email. The email vote process shall be overseen by the Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs.
- 3.13.2. In order to be approved by email, motions require the support of a majority (50%+1) of voting Councillors then in office.
- 3.13.3. Council will have 72 hours to approve or reject a motion proposed by email. They may simply reply to the email thread indicating whether they support, oppose, or abstain from the motion. After this period has elapsed, the Chair or a Vice-Chair will notify Council whether the motion has been approved or rejected.

- 3.13.4. If a majority of voting Councillors does not respond within 72 hours, the motion is not approved. If three Councillors object to making the decision by email, the motion must be considered in a meeting instead.
- 3.13.5. The procedure in this section, i.e. the 72-hour voting period, does not apply to votes on waiving notice for Council meetings or on the cancellation of Council meetings.

## **4. Committees**

Federal Council is empowered by Bylaw 2.5 to create committees. These committees exist to support Council in its work, and operate according to Council's directions and to their Terms of Reference. Smaller groups can work in more detail on particular questions, so not all of Council has to get in the weeds of every issue. Ideally, items that come before Council for approval will have been discussed and fine-tuned at the Committee level beforehand.

### **4.1. Committee Authority**

- 4.1.1. A Committee has no authority beyond making recommendations to Federal Council, unless specific authority has been explicitly delegated to it by Council.
- 4.1.2. Committees have no authority to direct the ED or staff, but they can collaborate with staff on projects within the scope of rules approved by Council and the ED (such as the ToR of the Committee).
- 4.1.3. A Committee (through its Chair or designate) may request that an item/motion be added to a Council meeting agenda.

### **4.2. Types of Committees**

- 4.2.1. Standing committees have recurring tasks and general areas of responsibility. These committees have a perpetual term and exist until disbanded by FC.
- 4.2.2. Ad-hoc committees are created to accomplish a certain task or set of tasks. These committees have a defined term and cease operating once their task is completed.

### **4.3. Establishment of Committees**

- 4.3.1. In order to be officially created, a committee must have its Terms of Reference approved by Federal Council. The Terms of Reference document must include:
  - 4.3.1.1. Name of Committee
  - 4.3.1.2. Term (date that the committee will be disbanded if it is an ad-hoc committee)

- 4.3.1.3. Scope (purpose/responsibilities of the committee)
- 4.3.1.4. Authority (makes recommendations to FC or has specific delegated authority)
- 4.3.1.5. Membership (upper and lower limits to number/type of members, etc., not naming individuals)
- 4.3.1.6. Governance (frequency of meetings, role of Chair, quorum, etc.)
- 4.3.1.7. Reporting (who reports to FC, how often)
- 4.3.2. A Committee may recommend changes to its Terms of Reference, but such changes are only effective upon approval by Federal Council.

#### **4.4. Committee Membership**

- 4.4.1. Official voting committee members are appointed by Federal Council. Any Party member may serve on a Council committee.
- 4.4.2. Councillors are required to serve on at least one of the standing FC committees.
- 4.4.3. The composition of standing committees is to be confirmed by Federal Council at the start of each Council term to remove Councillors whose terms have ended (unless they wish to remain on a committee and Council approves), and to distribute new Councillors among the committees.
- 4.4.4. The Chair, the Leader, and the ED are non-voting members of all FC committees *ex officio*. They do not factor into quorum calculations but are provided with notice of meetings.
  - 4.4.4.1. If the Chair or Leader is appointed to a specific committee by FC motion, they become a regular voting member of that committee.
- 4.4.5. All Councillors are entitled to attend all committee meetings as observers. This includes in-camera sessions of all committees. All committee meetings, including in-camera sessions, are to be recorded and such recordings are to be made available to FC, unless otherwise specified in the ToR of that committee.

- 4.4.6. If invited by the Committee, any Party member may attend and participate in a committee meeting, without necessarily being an official committee member. Only official committee members appointed by FC have the right to vote.
- 4.4.7. If a committee member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings (including scheduled meetings which fail to reach quorum) without explanation, they will be removed from the committee automatically.

#### **4.5. Committee Chair(s)**

- 4.5.1. Each Committee has a Chair or two Co-Chairs, appointed by motion by the committee at its first meeting, at the first meeting of a Council term, or as needed.
- 4.5.2. If there is one Chair, that person must be a Councillor. If there are Co-Chairs, one of them must be a Councillor.
- 4.5.3. Committee Chairs are generally expected to:
  - 4.5.3.1. Call Committee meetings and draft agendas for those meetings,
  - 4.5.3.2. Chair Committee meetings,
  - 4.5.3.3. Generally oversee the Committee's business, including reminding Committee members to complete action items, etc., and
  - 4.5.3.4. Report to Federal Council on the Committee's activities, including bringing Committee recommendations to FC for discussion and approval.

#### **4.6. Committee of the Whole (CoW) 🐄🐄**

- 4.6.1. The Committee of the Whole (CoW) is a standing committee composed of all Councillors. It is not required to have a ToR and is instead created by this Handbook.
- 4.6.2. CoW meetings may be called under the same procedure as Council meetings but require only one week's notice.
- 4.6.3. At least four Councillors must be in attendance to hold a CoW meeting.



- 4.6.4. CoW meetings are to be chaired by all Councillors on a rotating basis. At a monthly Council meeting, the Chair of the following CoW meeting should be confirmed. A Councillor must not chair two CoW meetings within a six-month period.
- 4.6.5. The Chair for an upcoming CoW meeting will take suggestions for agenda items during and immediately after a Council meeting, and circulate a draft agenda and any necessary documents for review five days before the CoW meeting.
- 4.6.6. Committee of the Whole meetings are held in order to discuss issues in a less formal setting and without making any official decisions.
- 4.6.7. GPC members may observe Committee of the Whole meetings in the same way as Federal Council meetings.
- 4.6.8. Committee of the Whole meetings have a maximum length of two hours. If the CoW business is concluded and there is time left in the meeting, observers may be invited to ask questions to the Councillors who wish to stay behind and answer them.

#### **4.7. Non-FC Committees**

- 4.7.1. Not all Party committees are Council committees. Some are created by the GPC Constitution and Bylaws, e.g. the Ombuds and Appeals Committee or the Safe Spaces Committee. The YGC Council also has its own committees.

#### **4.8. Non-Committee Group Tasks**

- 4.8.1. It is not always necessary to create an ad-hoc committee to complete a certain task. If the situation calls for it, FC may simply assign an action item to a named group of people. FC may also pass a motion “to authorize” a group of people to take some action on FC’s behalf.

## **5. Relationship Between FC and the ED/Staff**

### **5.1. Executive Director Role on Federal Council**

5.1.1. The Executive Director (ED) is FC's connection to Green Party operations, and is accountable to Federal Council acting as a body (not to any individual Councillor). Federal Council instructs the ED through a job description, a strategic plan, and other directions deemed necessary by Council. On Federal Council, the ED's role includes:

- 5.1.1.1. Reporting to FC on Party operations and the FC-approved Strategic Plan (objectives), and the vision and mission of the GPC;
- 5.1.1.2. Preparing materials as necessary or requested for FC meetings;
- 5.1.1.3. Operating with prudence and in accordance with ethical standards, including those established through the Federal Council Handbook, policies, and procedures;
- 5.1.1.4. Informing FC or the Executive Council of the expected strategic and operational impact of any FC decision on the Party's operations;
- 5.1.1.5. Participating in discussions as a non-voting member of FC and the Executive Council; and
- 5.1.1.6. Working with the Chair and Executive Council to ensure reasonable administrative support is provided to FC.

### **5.2. Delegation to the ED**

5.2.1. Federal Council delegates to the Executive Director the responsibility for the day-to-day operations and business decisions of the GPC. The Executive Director has responsibilities defined in various documents, including this FC Handbook. GPC national office staff report to, and are accountable to, the ED. If Federal Council provides direction or requests information on GPC operations, it will do so through the ED, who may further delegate.

- 5.2.2. Federal Council will work with the ED to establish a strategic plan, and direct the ED to develop plans and achieve certain results and outcomes.
- 5.2.3. The ED may use reasonable discretion in determining methods to achieve FC-required results in line with the strategic plan and objectives.
- 5.2.4. Federal Council will respect and support the ED's choices subject to the FC Handbook, policies / procedures, and agreed strategic expectations.
- 5.2.5. Decisions of FC are binding upon the ED, but instructions from individual FC members are not, unless FC has specifically authorized an individual to instruct the ED on behalf of FC.
- 5.2.6. The ED will accommodate reasonable requests for assistance or information from committees or members of Federal Council acting in their capacity as FC members (defining "reasonable" requires collaboration and trust, but includes an analysis if the request would require unreasonable staff time or disrupt the essential operations of the GPC).

### **5.3. Evaluation of the Executive Director**

- 5.3.1. Federal Council will formally evaluate the ED before the conclusion of the probationary period and annually thereafter. The evaluation will be based on progress made by the GPC towards Strategic Objectives and other commitments delegated to the ED. Federal Council will consider the leadership role that the ED displayed in achieving the GPC performance and outcomes.
- 5.3.2. The ED's performance will be formally assessed by considering the health and performance of the GPC through formal ED reports to FC, a review by the HR Committee using a 360 degree process, and reports and formal progress against agreed strategic objectives in the GPC Strategic Plan. The HR Committee will discuss performance review data with the ED, discuss any extenuating factors which may have affected goals achievement or

limitations, and compose a performance report jointly with the ED before reporting to Federal Council.

#### **5.4. Relationship Between FC and Non-ED Staff**

- 5.4.1. Councillors do not exercise, or attempt to exercise, individual authority over staff members.
- 5.4.2. In general, all operational direction to staff must flow through the Executive Director to maintain clear and effective lines of authority and communication.
- 5.4.3. Staff will interact and work with Federal Council. In some situations, direct interaction is appropriate, valuable and necessary, such as in FC Committees, providing IT or support to FC meetings, or for specific projects or initiatives. Staff involvement in initiatives or projects will be outlined in the Terms of Reference for a Committee, and/or in staff job descriptions, or agreed upon by the Executive Director. Councillors are expected to collaborate with these staff members within the defined scope of the project or committee. In situations outside of this, Councillors must keep the Executive Director informed about the nature and content of communications.
- 5.4.4. Any concerns regarding staff, operational issues, or potential conflicts should be directed to or discussed with the Executive Director for appropriate handling. Councillors do not express judgment of the performance of individual members of staff publicly.

## **6. Relationship Between FC and Other Entities**

### **6.1. GPC Fund and GPC Fund Board**

- 6.1.1. Pursuant to Article 12 of the GPC Constitution, the Green Party of Canada Fund is the not-for-profit corporation which serves as the Chief Agent as well as the sole and exclusive agent for the financial operations of the Green Party of Canada as per the Canada Elections Act.
- 6.1.2. Pursuant to the Green Party of Canada Fund Certificate of Continuance, the purpose of the corporation is:
  - 6.1.2.1. To hold assets for the benefit of the membership of the Green Party of Canada,
  - 6.1.2.2. To support the operations of the Green Party of Canada, and
  - 6.1.2.3. To carry out the duties of Chief Agent of the Green Party of Canada as set out in the Elections Act (Canada).
- 6.1.3. The voting members of Federal Council are also, automatically, the members of the GPC Fund as a corporation.
- 6.1.4. The activities of the GPC Fund are governed by the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, the GPC Fund Bylaws, the GPC Fund Certificate of Continuance, the Canada Elections Act, Article 12 of the GPC Constitution, and decisions of Fund Members.
- 6.1.5. The Fund Board of Directors performs certain legal duties of the party, and through the Executive Director carries out Council decisions.
- 6.1.6. The Fund Board provides legal and financial input to FC decisions and may refuse a directive from FC in the following situations:
  - 6.1.6.1. The instruction is improper or illegal.
  - 6.1.6.2. The instruction in some way impairs the GPC Fund as a going concern.
- 6.1.7. If the Fund Board refuses a directive from FC it must explain this refusal in writing, including how it falls under 6.1.6.1 and/or 6.1.6.2.

- 6.1.8. The Fund holds contracts, including those with the Executive Director and Leader, and maintains oversight of all other employee contracts through the Executive Director and HR policies.
- 6.1.9. In their capacity as Fund Members, Councillors attend the Annual General Meeting of the Fund to:
  - 6.1.9.1. Elect GPC Fund Board Directors,
  - 6.1.9.2. Receive the audited financial results of the GPC Fund for the previous fiscal year,
  - 6.1.9.3. Appoint an auditor, and
  - 6.1.9.4. Vote on any other properly raised business.
- 6.1.10. As Fund members, Councillors have all the rights of members of a Not-for-profit corporation provided for in the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to submit member proposals for a vote by GPC Fund members at a Fund AGM (e.g. for a change to the GPC Fund's By-law), or to requisition a Special General Meeting of the GPC Fund, to address specific business. As these rights are statutory (i.e. defined in an Act), they cannot be abrogated in any way. This includes the right to ask for a vote for the removal of a specific Fund Director, or for the removal of the entire Fund Board, although such actions should be taken in coordination with the Fund (Co-)President(s) and/or the GPC's legal counsel to ensure that legal claims do not arise from the impugned Director(s). The Fund Board will ensure that any coordination is done in a way that avoids conflicts of interest.

## **6.2. Young Greens of Canada (YGC) and YGC Council**

- 6.2.1. The Young Greens of Canada is a Unit of the Party comprising all GPC members under the age of 30. It operates according to the [YGC Bylaws](#) and its governing body is the [YGC Council](#).
- 6.2.2. FC is connected to the YGC primarily through the Youth Representatives, who are also the Co-Chairs of YGC/YGC Council.

- 6.2.3. Federal Councillors are encouraged to keep in touch with their counterparts on the YGC Council (e.g. YGC Quebec Rep and FC Quebec Rep, etc.).

### **6.3. Caucus**

- 6.3.1. Caucus is defined as the Members of Parliament representing the Green Party of Canada.
- 6.3.2. Communication with Caucus flows through the Leader.

### **6.4. Shadow Cabinet**

- 6.4.1. Shadow Cabinet is responsible for creating election platforms and the policy process. FC essentially has no role in the realm of public/political policy.
- 6.4.2. FC is connected to Shadow Cabinet through the Leader.

### **6.5. Quebec Wing (AQPVC)**

- 6.5.1. TBD

### **6.6. Indigenous Peoples Advisory Circle (IPAC)**

- 6.6.1. TBD

### **6.7. Global Greens**

- 6.7.1. The Green Party of Canada is a member of the Federation of Green Parties of the Americas (FPVA - Federación de Partidos Verdes de las Américas) and thereby a member of the Global Greens; our membership in the Global Greens is dependent on our membership in the FPVA.
- 6.7.2. The GPC entity responsible for maintaining connections to the FPVA and Global Greens is the International Secretariat, which is appointed by the Executive Council (Bylaw 12). The International Secretariat is also responsible for relations with the Global Young Greens, of which the YGC is a member organization.

### **6.8. Elections Canada**

- 6.8.1. The Canada Elections Act requires that a registered political party maintain and provide the names of at least three 'officers' in addition to the Leader. The Party must report any new appointment of an officer to the Chief Electoral Officer. Officers must provide signed consent and their residential addresses to Elections Canada.
- 6.8.2. The Party Officers of the GPC for the purposes of reporting to Elections Canada shall be the incumbents of the following positions on FC:
  - 6.8.2.1. Chair (or interim),
  - 6.8.2.2. Francophone Vice-Chair (or interim), and
  - 6.8.2.3. Anglophone Vice-Chair (or interim),
  - 6.8.2.4. Other FC members who agree, upon request, to be a Party Officer to ensure that the GPC has at least 4 Party Officers at all times, and never goes below the requirement of 3.
  - 6.8.2.5. If, for any reason, one or more of the above positions are vacant, then FC will choose an Officer from among the elected members of FC. Officer vacancies must be filled within 30 days.



## **7. Relationship Between FC and GPC Members**

### **7.1. Access to Meetings**

- 7.1.1. GPC members have access to Federal Council and committee meetings (except for in-camera sessions) as live observers via Zoom, or as observers of the recordings of these meetings.
- 7.1.2. Members can access the schedule of upcoming meetings via the calendar on the Party website, or can ask to be added to the observers list if they wish to be notified by email.
- 7.1.3. Members also have access to the minutes of open sessions of Federal Council and its committees.

### **7.2. Periodic Reports**

- 7.2.1. Council delivers a report regarding its activities and the activities of its committees over the previous year at the Annual General Meeting.
  - 7.2.1.1. This report is prepared by the Chair and the Committee Chairs.
  - 7.2.1.2. This report must include information on the GPC's compliance to each operative clause of Bylaw 10 (Bylaw 10.8).

### **7.3. Communication with Regional Representatives**

- 7.3.1. Further to Section 2.11 above, regional representatives are strongly encouraged to establish and maintain some level of contact with the members of their respective regions.
- 7.3.2. This can be done in a variety of ways (newsletters, social events, town halls, etc.), and will naturally differ according to the engagement strategy for the region, the number of members in a given region, the level of activity in the region's EDAs, time and place constraints and other factors.
- 7.3.3. Care must be taken to not inundate members with too much communication, misrepresent Council decisions, damage the reputation of individual Councillors, staff members, or the Party as

a whole, or be indiscreet with regards to the contents of in-camera sessions.

#### **7.4. Emails Directed to or from Federal Council**

- 7.4.1. It is possible for members to contact Federal Council directly, although Federal Council as such is under no obligation to respond to the messages that are addressed to it.
- 7.4.2. Reception is acknowledged by the Chair once the author's membership status has been confirmed, but the issue(s) raised in the message is added to the draft agenda of the following meeting if 3 or more Councillors consider the issue sufficiently important and/or urgent. Such messages may also be redirected to staff, or to the appropriate committee if it is felt that the matter is serious enough but would be more effectively dealt with at a different level.
- 7.4.3. In addition to regular reporting, FC may communicate directly with members via email on an as-needed basis. FC as a whole, or any individual member of FC, may send a direct email message to the GPC membership using the following steps.
  - 7.4.3.1. A proposed email message may be written by any member of FC and introduced for discussion at an FC meeting or via email. FC will review the message, taking into consideration the volume of emails members receive from the GPC and the agreed communications strategy of the GPC. Once a proposed email message has been considered by FC, FC may vote to approve its distribution, either at an FC meeting or via the email vote procedure. Any motion to approve an email message for distribution will state:
    - 7.4.3.1.1. the date that the email message is to be sent;
    - 7.4.3.1.2. the intended recipients of the message;
    - 7.4.3.1.3. whether the content of the email message is to be included in an existing GPC email newsletter, or sent as a standalone message; and

7.4.3.1.4. whether the email message will require staff resources for translation or editing.

7.4.3.2. Email messages approved for distribution shall be distributed using the GPC's standard communications format.

## **7.5. Informal Discussions, Chats, Conversations**

7.5.1. Councillors are welcome to discuss any public business with members. However, care must be taken to not misrepresent Council decisions, damage the reputation of individuals or the Party as a whole, or be indiscreet with regards to the contents of any in-camera sessions.

## **7.6. Complaints**

7.6.1. Members may attempt to file complaints with Federal Council or with individual Councillors. However, Federal Council is not the appropriate recipient of formal complaints. It may eventually fall to FC to make a final decision on complaints, but it does not take in or investigate complaints.

7.6.2. If a member has a complaint related to the Members' Code of Conduct, they should be directed to the Conduct Committee.

7.6.3. If a member has a complaint related to Party staff, they should be directed to the Executive Director.

## **7.7. Information Available to Members**

7.7.1. Bylaw 10 requires that certain documents be made available to the general membership of the Party, those directly relevant to FC being:

7.7.1.1. "Agendas of open sessions of Federal Council at least five days prior to the meetings and agendas of its committees;

7.7.1.2. Agendas and minutes of open sessions of meetings of Federal Council;

7.7.1.3. Minutes of open sessions of Federal Council and its committees within seven days of the meetings;

- 7.7.1.4. Recordings of open sessions of Federal Council and its committees;
- 7.7.1.5. Terms of reference and handbooks;
- 7.7.1.6. Federal Council motions and resolutions.”
- 7.7.2. Additionally, a list of active Council committees and their members must be maintained on the Party website.

## **Acronyms & Abbreviations**

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AQPVC	Quebec Wing (Aile québécoise du Parti vert du Canada)
Board	GPC Fund Board
Council	Federal Council
CoW	Committee of the Whole
DL	Deputy Leader
ED	Executive Director
EDA	Electoral District Association
Exec	Executive Council
FC	Federal Council
FPVA	Federación de Partidos Verdes de las Américas
the Fund	Green Party of Canada Fund
GM	General Meeting
GPC	Green Party of Canada
IPAC	Indigenous Peoples Advisory Circle
MP	Member of Parliament
the Party	Green Party of Canada
SC	Shadow Cabinet
ToR	Terms of Reference
YGC	Young Greens of Canada

# **Resources**

## **Important Documents**

[Global Greens Charter](#)

[GPC Constitution and Bylaws](#)

[Council Green Rules](#)

[FC Code of Conduct](#)

[Transparency and Confidentiality Policy](#)

[Fund Bylaws & Certificate of Continuance](#) (linked at the bottom of that page)

[Members' Code of Conduct](#) (several provisions invalidated by Article 13 & Bylaw 13)

[YGC Bylaws](#)

[Previous FC meeting minutes and agendas](#) (link for Councillors)

## **Important Emails**

Federal Council: [council@greenparty.ca](mailto:council@greenparty.ca)

Executive Council: [executive@greenparty.ca](mailto:executive@greenparty.ca)

YGC Council: [ygc@greenparty.ca](mailto:ygc@greenparty.ca)

GPC Fund Board: [board@greenparty.ca](mailto:board@greenparty.ca)

International Secretariat: [international@greenparty.ca](mailto:international@greenparty.ca)

Staff inboxes:

For tech help: [tech@greenparty.ca](mailto:tech@greenparty.ca)

For governance support: [councilsupport@greenparty.ca](mailto:councilsupport@greenparty.ca)

For inquiries or suggestions/errors related to the GPC website(s):  
[website@greenparty.ca](mailto:website@greenparty.ca)

[Member-wide email] EDA or mobilizing inquiries: [support@greenparty.ca](mailto:support@greenparty.ca)

[Member-wide email] For any changes or inquiries around donations/membership:  
[admin@greenparty.ca](mailto:admin@greenparty.ca)

FC Committees:

Governance: [governance.committee@greenparty.ca](mailto:governance.committee@greenparty.ca)

Human Resources: [hr.committee@greenparty.ca](mailto:hr.committee@greenparty.ca)

Finance: [finance.committee@greenparty.ca](mailto:finance.committee@greenparty.ca)

Strategic Planning: [spc@greenparty.ca](mailto:spc@greenparty.ca)

General Meeting: [gmc@greenparty.ca](mailto:gmc@greenparty.ca)

Policy Development Process: [pdpc@greenparty.ca](mailto:pdpc@greenparty.ca)

# Handbook Revision Control Log

## Handbook Revision Control Log

Revision Level	Revision #	Revision Date	Description of Change	Amended By
Draft	First draft	2003	Initiation	
Draft	1.01	2009.06	Reformat into current template	Jeremy Stiles, Francine Courtenay
Draft	1.03	2010.02.14	Add historical documentation	Joe Foster
Working	2.00	2010.04.01	Add documents from the web; update job descriptions	Joe Foster
Working	2.01	2010.06.01	Review and formatting	Kim Melton
Working	2.02	2010.07.05	Add Governance section to References; incorporate comments from Councillors.	Joe Foster
Working	2.03	2010.07.28	Review comments in consultation with J. Foster and clean up formatting.	D. Lawlor
Working	2.04	2011.02.28	Draft introducing Executive Council	John Streicker
Working	2.05	2011.05.28	Introduced changes outlined at 2011 Federal Council face to face and new Executive Council roles.	John Streicker
Working	2.06	2011.08.09	Minor Clarifications (in consultation with Chair)	Joe Foster Paul Kompass
Working	2.07	2013.04.18	Transposed into current Template format/cleanup	J. Foster/S. Vassallo
Working	3.0	2018.12.15	Replaced contents of Handbook with governance documents from Council orientation package	K. Storey
Working	3.1	2019.01.29	Edited grammar and language. Added clause for president remuneration and Leader-ED relationship	K. Storey Bev Eert
Working	4.0	2019.03.30	Finalized updates with current material.	Governance Committee

Approved	4.1	2019.06.02	Updated to reflect amendments made at a meeting of Federal Council, June 1-2, 2019.	Federal Council
Approved	4.2	2020.04.26	Updated by Governance Committee. Addition of Code of Conduct Commissioners added by motion of Federal Council, April 26, 2020.	Governance Committee
Approved	4.3	2020.05.31	Updated by Federal Council based on recommendations made by the Governance Committee on May 31, 2020.	Federal Council
Approved	5.0	2020.07.26	Replaced entirety of <i>Section IV. Federal Council Governance Principles</i> with new content on July 26, 2020 as recommended by the Governance Committee.	Federal Council
Approved	5.1	2021.08.18	Updated to reflect motions passed at a meeting of Federal Council, December 15, 2020, as recommended by the Governance Committee.	Governance Committee
Working	6.0	2022-2024	Major overhaul to clarify provisions, reflect current practice, accord with current Constitution & Bylaws, etc.	Stuart Hunter, et al. (special shoutouts to Ian Soutar and Robin Dick)
Approved	6.0	2024-03-27		Federal Council
Working	6.0.1	2024-08-16	Minor edits to reflect constitutional and bylaw amendments adopted in 2024 (notably the changing of President title to Chair in English)	Stuart Hunter
Approved	6.0.1	2024-08-28		Federal Council

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This document supersedes previous motions, rules and procedures governing Federal Council and is intended solely for use by the employees and members of, and persons contracted to, the Green Party of Canada.