

2026 AI Roundtable: Meeting 1

Attendees: Nicole McNeill, Sujit Jagdev, Scott Milne, Julia Lipman, Jeffrey Ma, Tammy Wells-Garrett, Stratos Kaloutas, Warren Ali, Fatima Khamitova, Nihar Dalmia, Dawn Hall, Chad Cogar, Sam Ip, Simon Hodgett.

Meeting notes summary:

- **AI Register for the Federal Public Service:** Dawn Hall presented on the newly published federal AI register, explaining its purpose, development process, and scope, with active discussion and feedback from the roundtable on transparency, governance, and sectoral practices.
 - **Register Purpose and Scope:** AI registers boost transparency and accountability as they provide standardized, searchable databases that document information about AI tools used by government organizations. Certain AI tools may not be included in a register, such as those relating to national security.
 - **Development and Future Updates:** The Government of Canada register was created as a minimum viable product by collating existing information and having it validated by the relevant government departments. Going forward, there will be an iterative process between gathering feedback on how the content and features of the register can be improved, and using such feedback to improve the register through regular updates.
 - **Broader impacts of the register:** The roundtable discussed how this register may be used by private sector organizations as an example of how their own AI registers should look. Additionally, the use case descriptions may be helpful for companies to reference as they develop and provide the government with complementary AI products and services in the future.
- **Discussion on Canada's Cloud Foundation:** Sujit Jagdev led a discussion on establishing a national-level open-source foundation that functions as a hub for open-source projects in Canada.
 - **Foundation Concept and Rationale:** The foundation would position itself as a non-profit, developer-centric platform for incubating open-source projects and providing public-interest technology services.
 - **Sector-Specific Initiatives:** The foundation could potentially be organized by sectors, such as agriculture and healthcare, to facilitate targeted collaboration and data sharing to make participation less daunting and more impactful for the stakeholders involved.
 - **Governance and Funding Models:** The roundtable also discussed governance structures, referencing the Apache Software Foundation, the need for a central manager, and potential funding models, including government support and organic growth through academic and industry collaboration. Simon Hodgett proposed a three-tier structure, with the foundation at top, followed by sector-specific groups, and lastly project-based initiatives, suggesting collaboration with existing organizations and academic researchers to maximize impact.

- **Canadian Sovereign Cloud and Technical Architecture:** Sujit Jagdev also presented a vision for a Canadian sovereign cloud, detailing technical components and explaining the strategic advantages of building a Canadian sovereign cloud, citing geographic stability, talent availability, and the need to reduce dependency on foreign hyperscalers like AWS and Microsoft.
- **Open-Source Software and target audience:** The proposed cloud architecture would leverage open-source technologies and offer Canadian companies, governments, and startups a domestic and more secure alternative to existing cloud services providers.
- **Roundtable Retrospective and Forward Planning:** Nicole McNeill facilitated a retrospective on the roundtable's first year and discussed key takeaways and suggestions for future meetings.
 - **MPAC Key Takeaways and Impact:** Nicole highlighted the development of selection criteria for choosing internally-driven AI projects, governance practices, and the importance of scalable, repeatable projects, while others noted the value of cross-sectoral insights and practical case studies.
 - **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** The roundtable emphasized the benefits of sharing experiences, challenges, and lessons learned, with suggestions to increase exchanges among organizations.
 - **Implementation and Lessons Learned:** The roundtable also discussed having more examples and lessons on AI implementation, particularly around reasoning, privacy, interpretability, and agentic models to inform future scaling and productivity improvements.
 - **Upcoming Initiatives and Outreach:** Nicole announced plans for an MPAC roadshow to share its story and lessons with municipalities.

Wrap-up and next steps:

- **Advance Distribution of Discussion Topics:** Going forward, the group will also try to share presentation materials in advance and dedicate time at each meeting for participants to share recent learnings.
- **Social Media Collaboration on AI Register:** Coordinate with Osler to create and share a social media post or content piece highlighting the Government of Canada AI register and its relevance for technology clients.