

Key Questions to Ask to Hold Government Accountable

General

Concerning all of the laws, guidelines, policies and rulings referred to below, the following general questions should be asked: Have the rules been followed? Is there an independent entity that enforces the rules? If not, why not?

Concerning all situations / government initiatives, the following questions should be asked: Who pays the costs in the situation / initiative? Who benefits from the situation / initiative?

Concerning all situations / government initiatives, the following questions should also be asked: Is the government partnering with a private organization in the situation / initiative, or is a private organization now undertaking an initiative that used to be undertaken by a government organization? Do all the laws, guidelines, policies and rulings referred to below apply to both the government organization and the private organization? If not, why not?

Transparency

Does an access-to-information law, guideline or policy, or a court ruling apply to the situation?

Does an open-meetings law, guideline or policy, or a court ruling apply to the situation?

Has all information about how the decision was made been disclosed (including who was involved, what meetings took place, where meetings took place, when meetings took place)?

Citizen Participation / Democratic Process

Does a citizen participation law, guideline or policy, or a court ruling apply to the situation?

Does a disclosure system exist for tracking who is lobbying whom in the situation?

Has the decision-making process followed democratic principles, or has the public been shut out of the process, the decision made quickly or with little public notice?

Is there a right-of-appeal to the decision that has been made?

Money-in Politics

Does a donor-disclosure law, guideline or policy, or court ruling apply to the situation?

Does a contracting-out law, guideline or policy, or court ruling apply to the situation?

Have the identities of all donors to the public officials involved disclosed?

Are any of the donors connected to the situation in any way?

How much is each stakeholder spending to influence the government's decision?

Conflict of Interest

Does a conflict-of-interest law, guideline or policy, or court ruling apply to the situation? (NOTE: if the public official is a lawyer and member of the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC), the LSUC conflict-of-interest rules apply to the public official).

Is there a conflict-of-interest in the situation?