

Case study: Local Government System in Canada

Key facts: Form of Government: constitutional monarchy; parliamentary system: bicameral; state structure: federal; local government expenditure as % of government expenditure 2007/08: 31.9%.

Summary: Municipalities not recognized as separate order of government; provinces and territories have number of legislative Acts that govern local government within jurisdiction (Constitution Act 1867); 2 supra-regional authorities (in Québec), 143 regional authorities and 3,600+ local governments; local governments generally responsible for services within city or region.

Structure of Local Government: Names of local governments, such as city, village, town, urban or rural, reflect type of area rather than powers or responsibilities. Provincial and territorial ministers have powers to intervene if council not operating in interests of residents and may dismiss council.

Council Types: Multi-tier (3 provinces); single tier; disorganized territories or unincorporated areas.

Voting System: Councilors in single tier elected directly by first-past-the-post system. Members of upper-tier governments may be drawn from mayors of lower-tier councils.

Sources of Revenue: property taxes; some areas recently implemented initiatives: transfers of portion of provincial gas or fuel tax, transfer of portion of personal and corporate income tax, revenue sharing of traffic and other provincial fines. Most jurisdictions enable local governments to collect fees and issue licenses, and charge for development permits.

