TAC Committee Activities: A Brief Guide

TAC committees address many different topics, but they use a common set of tools. This guide explains the *what, who* and *when* of committee activities.

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1. Committee meetings

What: Committee meetings may be held online or in person. Their agendas include verbal reports from subcommittees and working groups, invited presentations, roundtable updates from members, and group discussion of conference sessions, technical projects and emerging issues.

Who: Each committee's Executive is responsible for chairing meetings, for creating meeting agendas and minutes, and for scheduling meetings (except as part of the Spring and Fall Technical Meetings, which are scheduled by TAC staff). Electronic meeting invitations are sent to committee members by TAC staff, who also provide an online meeting platform as required. Committee membership is open to employees of TAC member organizations, and to individual members of TAC.

When: All committees hold online meetings during TAC's Spring Technical Meetings, which take place during the month of April. They also meet in person during TAC's Fall Technical Meetings, which take place over one weekend just before the annual TAC

Conference & Exhibition. Many committees also meet online at other times, as they wish.

2. Committee reports to councils

What: At council meetings, each committee reports on its activities and identifies any emerging issues, using a PowerPoint slide deck template that is available from TAC staff. Committees can also suggest that council agendas include presentations or discussions on particular topics.

Who: Committee reports are provided by a committee's Chair or their delegate.

When: Committees report to their parent councils during TAC's Spring and Fall Technical Meetings. Councils report annually to the Board of Directors, including on the work of their respective committees, during the fall Board meeting.

3. Subcommittees, working groups & user groups

What: Committees can create subcommittees or working groups to deal with particular topics. *Subcommittees* are more formal, with an executive structure and longer life. In contrast, *working groups* are less formal and may have fluid leadership and a shorter life. A *user group* is a working group that focuses on practitioner experiences with a specific application such as analytical or design software.

Who: Subcommittees and working groups schedule and organize their own meetings. Subcommittee and working group membership is open to employees of TAC member organizations, and to individual members of TAC; members do not need to be members of the parent committee.

When: Subcommittees and working groups can meet anytime, including during TAC's Spring and/or Fall Technical Meetings (assuming sufficient notice and facility capacity).

4. Conference sessions

What: There are three kinds of sessions at TAC Conferences. *Presentation sessions* include two to four presentations, each followed by questions and discussion. *Panel discussions* are more flexible, but involve multiple panelists in a combination of presentations and moderated, interactive discussion. *Workshops* can take many forms, but typically offer interactive or experiential learning opportunities for participants.

Who: Conference sessions are organized by committee members who suggest session topics, review submitted abstracts as well as draft papers and presentations, invite panel session and workshop speakers, and act as session moderators. TAC staff prepare and issue the call for topics and the call for submissions, and coordinate volunteer reviewers.

When: The TAC Conference & Exhibition occurs each fall, typically in the last half of September. Session planning begins about a year in advance.

5. Volunteer projects

What: Volunteer projects are collaborative, time-limited efforts leading to a volunteer project report. They may involve research, literature reviews, surveys, workshops and other activities. Volunteer project deliverables may be disseminated in their original form via the TAC Library catalogue (in which case the intellectual property rights remain with the authors). They may also be adapted and published by TAC as either a report or a briefing (depending on length), and disseminated via TAC's online publication catalogue (in which case the intellectual property rights remain with TAC).

Who: Committee, subcommittee or working group members develop a written volunteer project proposal, ideally contacting TAC staff early in that process to discuss scope, timelines and tools. The proposal is approved by the committee (and ideally

by the parent council, to raise awareness and invite a broad range of perspectives). The project is conducted by volunteers, and the committee reviews and approves the volunteer project report before dissemination. The parent council may also review and approve the report, and must do so if the report is to be issued as a TAC publication. TAC staff are available to help volunteers with literature scans and online questionnaire development and hosting.

When: Volunteer projects can be conducted anytime. They typically take six months to several years to complete.

6. Pooled-fund projects

What: Pooled-fund projects are major collaborative efforts managed by TAC staff, conducted by consultants, and funded by voluntary contributions of TAC member organizations and other partners. Deliverables are typically published by TAC and disseminated via TAC's online publication catalogue and Bookstore.

Who: Members of a committee typically develop a written pooled-fund project proposal, ideally contacting TAC staff early in that process to discuss scope, timelines and costs. The project proposal is then considered and approved by the committee, and then is considered and approved by the committee's parent council and TAC's Board of Directors before funds can be sought. The committee receives an informational presentation at the end of a pooled-fund project, and a project steering committee may direct its consultant to solicit input from the originating committee on technical issues, but otherwise the committee has no formal role in a project after its initial approval of the project proposal.

When: Depending on project size and the level of interest of potential funders, pooled-fund projects typically require one to two years to gather sufficient funding commitments, and then another one to four years for project conduct and publication of deliverables.

7. Lunch-and-learns

What: Lunch-and-learns are informal online events for committee members that typically feature an invited speaker(s) followed by discussion. They are about one hour long, and the initiating committee may choose to invite other committees with a shared interest in the topic.

Who: Committee members organize their own lunch-and-learns. TAC staff members send Outlook invitations to committee members, and provide an online event platform (e.g. Zoom, Teams).

When: Lunch-and-learns can be held at any time.

8. TAC Technical Achievement Awards

What: Committees nominate volunteers to serve on panels that review applications for TAC Technical Achievement Awards.

Who: Several TAC committees (currently the Climate Change Integrated Committee, Small Municipalities Integrated Committee, and Active Transportation Integrated Committee) have dedicated awards for which that committee nominates all the volunteers needed to review award applications. Other committees contribute up to three volunteers each to serve on a collaborative review panel established by the parent council.

When: Committees are asked to nominate review panel volunteers in November each year.

9. TAC learning program suggestions

What: Committees are invited to suggest topics and presenters for TAC learning program events. _Webinars_ are organized and hosted by TAC staff, and are delivered live with free, on-demand event recordings available from the TAC website. _Online training courses_ have a cost to registrants, focus on skill and knowledge development, are either synchronous (live) or asynchronous (on-demand), and are delivered by subject matter experts through TAC's online training platform. _In-person training courses_ have a cost to registrants, focus on skill and knowledge development, and are delivered live by subject matter experts in physical locations across Canada.

When: TAC staff welcome suggestions at any time.

Who: Suggestions can come from individuals, subcommittees or working groups, but have greater weight when they are endorsed by an entire committee.

10. TAC publications currency evaluation

What: Committees are periodically asked to review a list of TAC publications within their technical scope, and to assess each publication's currency.

When: At the request of TAC staff (typically every three to four years), but input from committees is welcome anytime.

Who: Committees may invite members to provide individual assessments, or may ask a group of volunteers to provide a collective assessment.

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