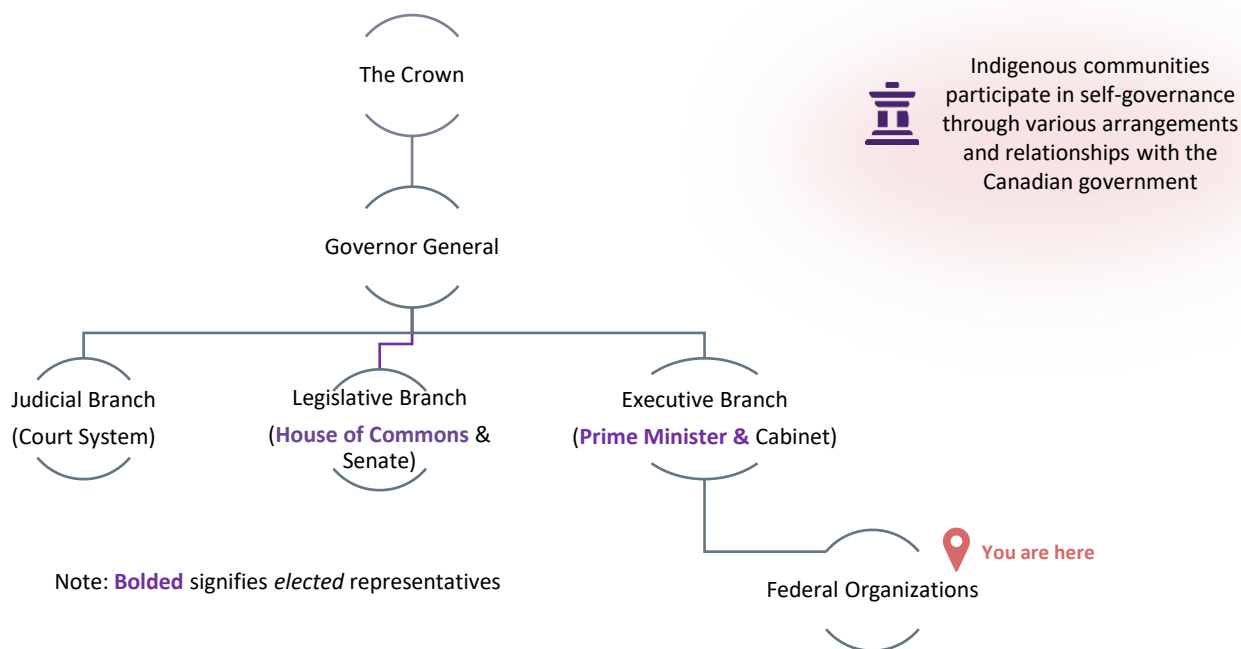


Decision-Making in the Federal Government: The Actors and Processes

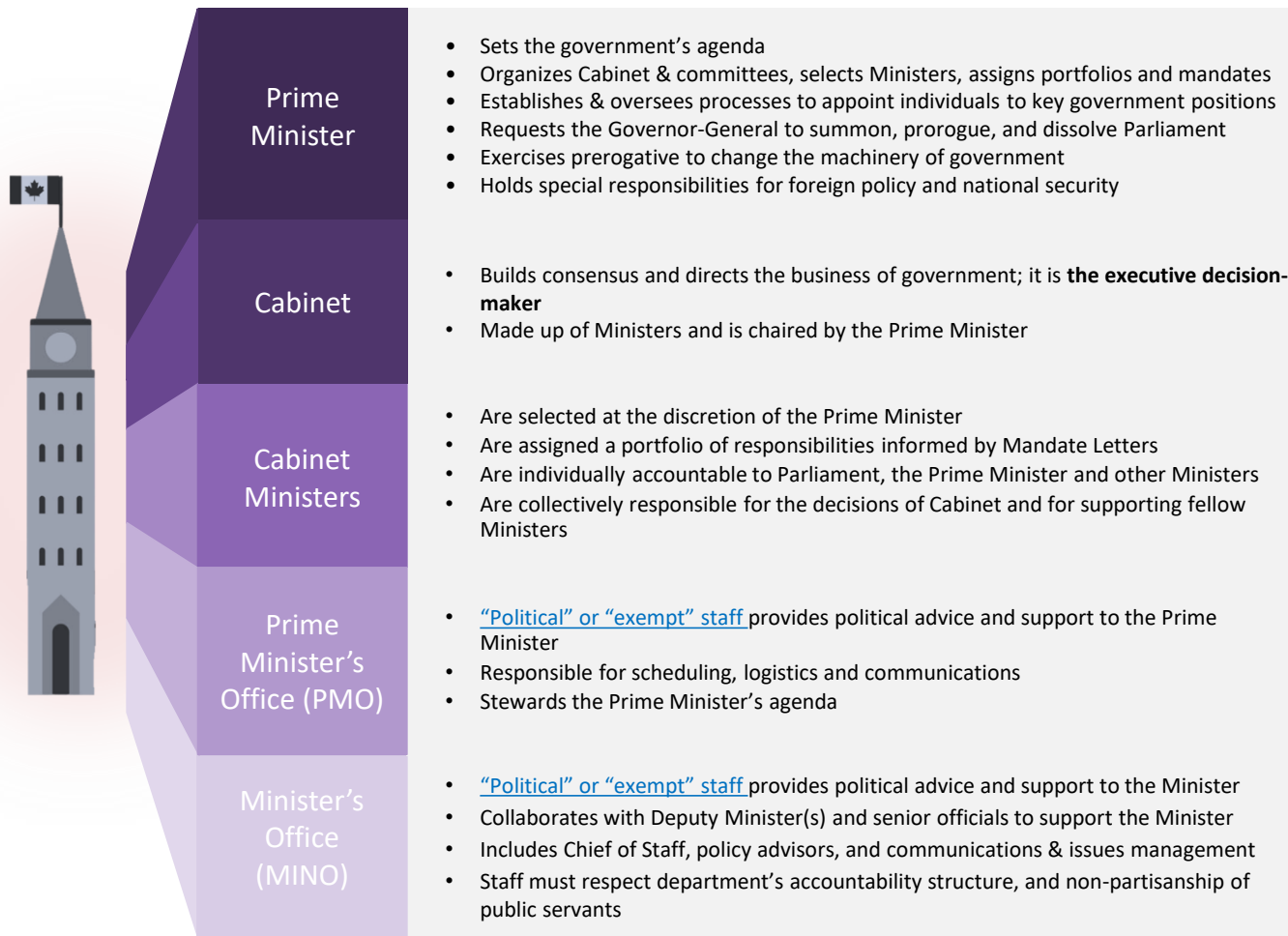
The purpose of this job aid is to provide learners with the tools to understand decision-making in the federal government as it pertains to its actors and processes

Our Governance

Governance decisions in Canada involve complex interactions between several major actors. This can be simply depicted below:



Political Actors



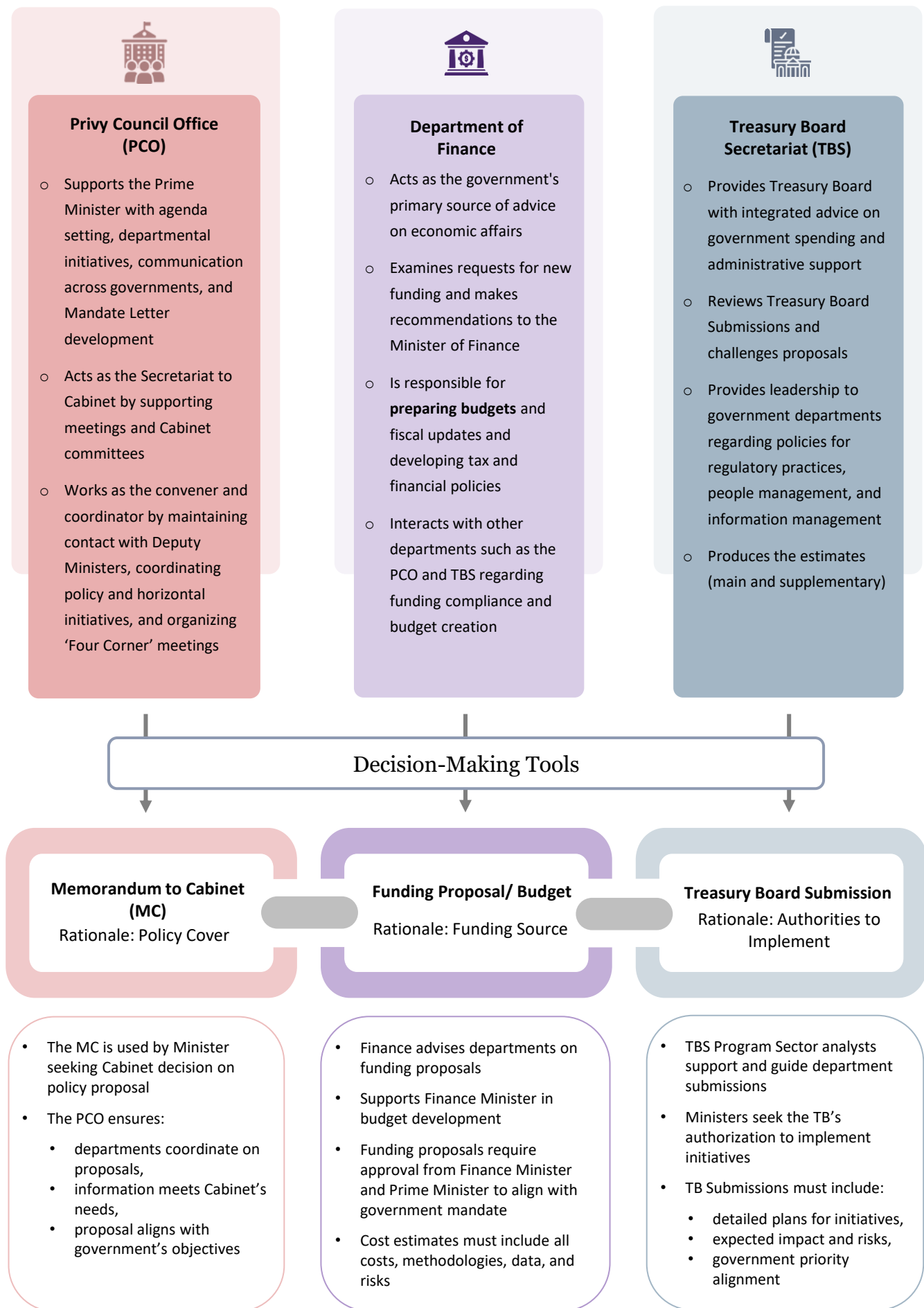
Note: While a Deputy minister is not a political actor, they play a crucial role in supporting political actors by providing guidance and non-partisan advice. They are accountable for policy advice, program delivery, interdepartmental coordination, and report directly to their Minister



Decision-Making in the Federal Government

Public Service Actors and the Central Agencies

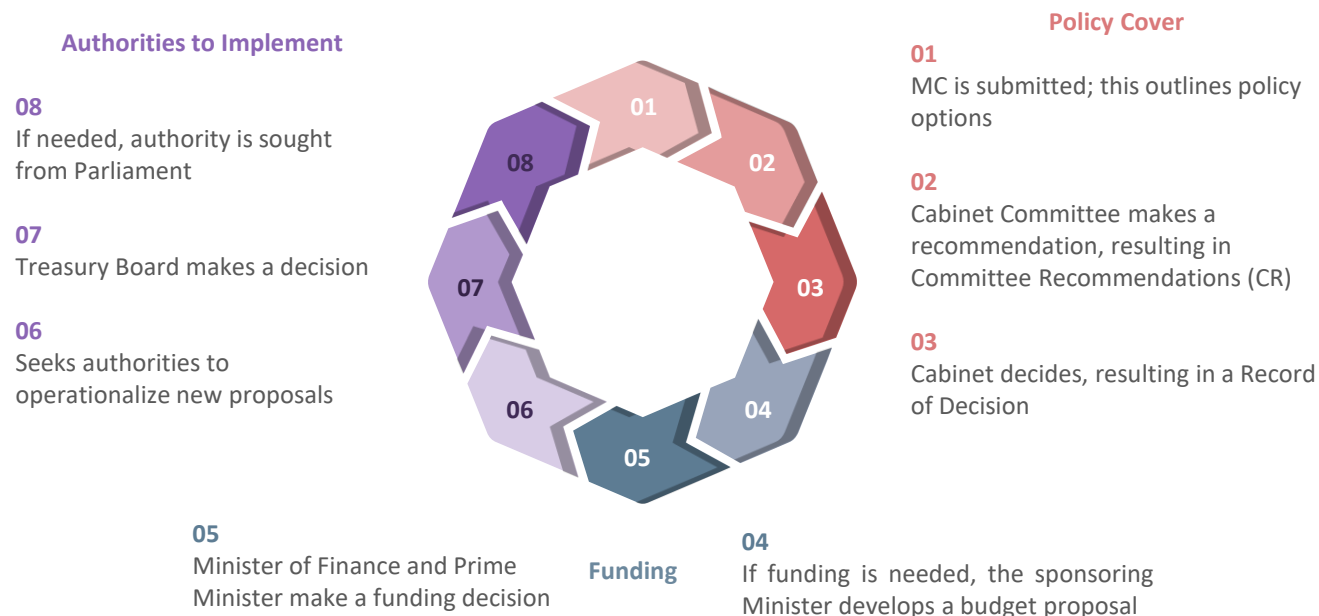
Public service actors advance the government agenda without compromising their non-partisan status needed to provide continuity and service to successive governments. The **role of the central agencies is to facilitate the formulation and implementation of coherent government policies and programs**



Decision-Making in the Federal Government

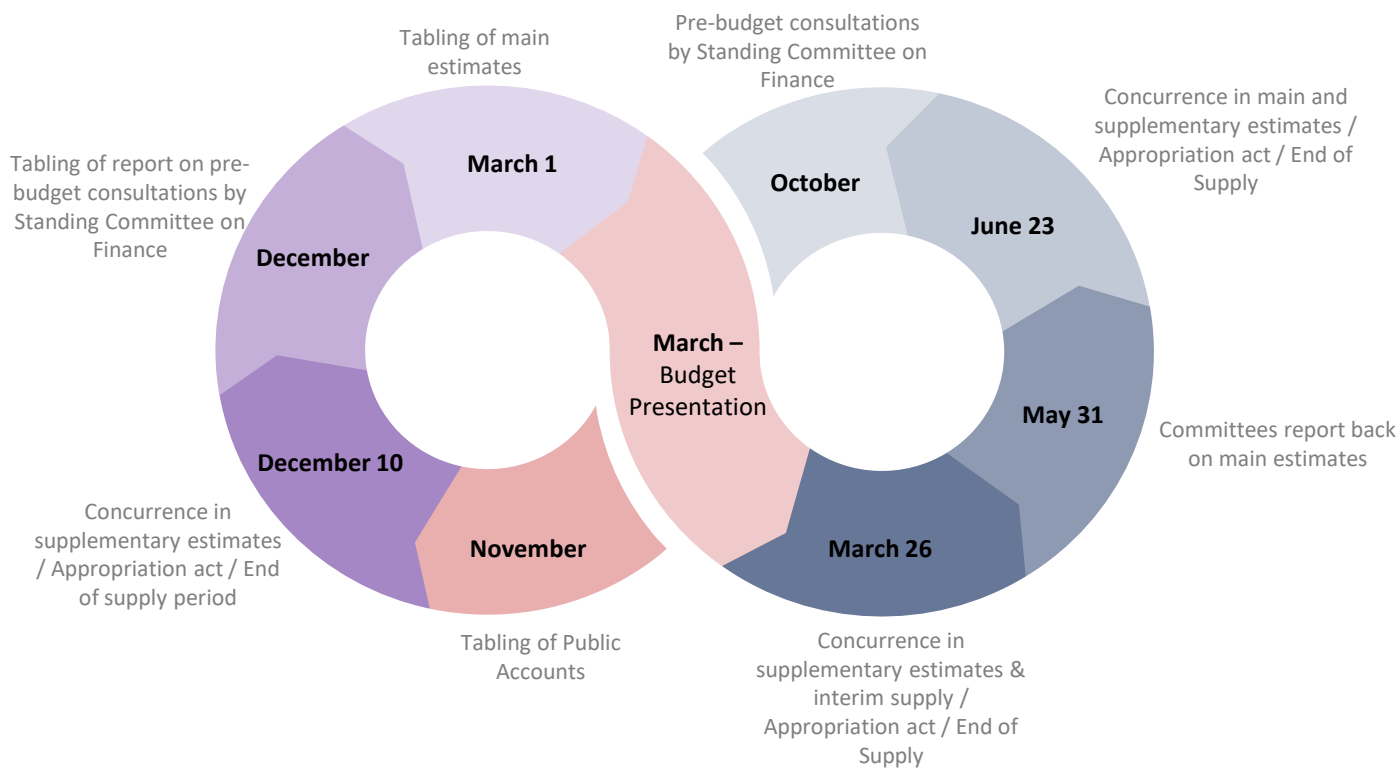
The Policy Cycle

Executive decision-making can feature three phases, each involving a distinct decision point, as seen below:



Expenditure Management Cycle

The **Expenditure Management Cycle** for government expenditures establishes events leading up to the tabling of documents and processes related to the government's Budget and expenditure plan



Budget: outlines the government's revenue projections and spending obligations

Estimates: identify the planned spending and spending authorities for each federal organization

Are divided into votes approved by Parliament authorizing funding requests

Public Accounts: provide audited financial statements and represents the major GoC accountability report



Decision-Making in the Federal Government

The Colour of Money

The **Colour of Money** refers to the different categories of funding provided by Parliament to federal organizations included in the [main estimates](#) and the specific uses on which they may be spent. There are two categories of spending authorities, statutory authorities and voted authorities



Main Estimates



Statutory Authorities

- Are derived from respective acts and legislations
- Are non-lapsing funds reviewed by a standing committee on a cyclical basis without regular parliamentary scrutiny

The Library of Parliament provides a more detailed description of [statutory expenditures](#)



Voted Authorities

The various forms of [Voted Authorities](#) represent limits to expenditures

Vote 1: Operating expenditures

- Used to fund day-to-day operating costs such as salaries and utilities or either a “capital expenditures” vote

Vote 5: Capital expenditures

- Used for capital expenditures that have a continuing use (e.g., acquisition of real property, infrastructure, machinery or equipment, construction or developing assets etc.)

Vote 10: Grants and contributions

- Payments made for which no goods or services are received. No requirement to make a payment, nor any right of the recipient to the funds

Key Takeaways

- The decision-making process can be influenced by numerous factors, including the government agenda, international environment, unexpected events, and domestic and social context
- Authorities for decisions vary, with some decisions made within departments and others requiring approval from Cabinet and/or Parliament
- Each actor has defined policies and roles, which must be considered when interacting with the decision-making system to maintain accountability
- Communication with all stakeholders is crucial for effective and efficient decision-making