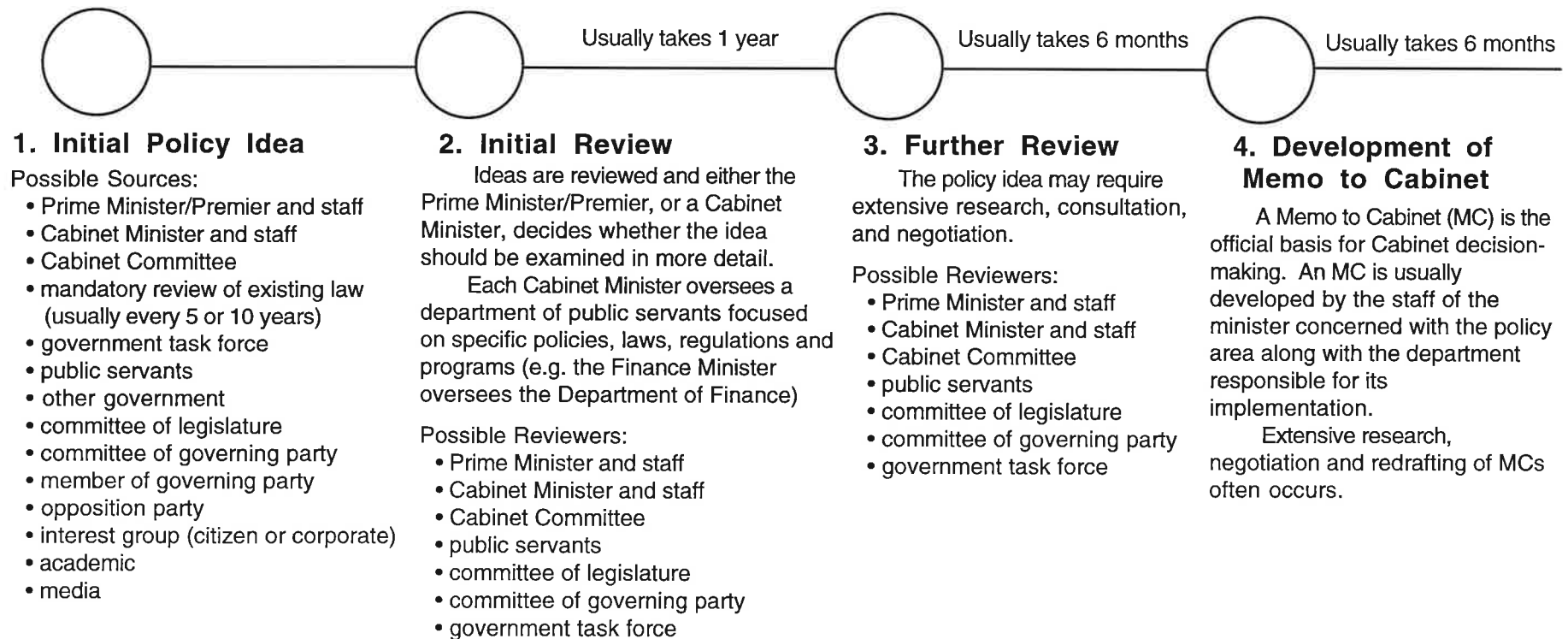


# Federal, Provincial & Territorial Government Policy Development Process

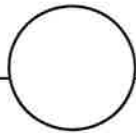
The flow chart set out below describes the policy development process generally followed by the federal government and provincial and territorial governments. Of course, different governments do things differently, but the flow chart is generally accurate concerning the usual steps in the policy-making process.

The chart highlights many different possible sources of initial policy ideas, and policy reviewers, and these sources often change depending on the policy being developed. The other main thing that changes is the speed at which each policy idea passes through the process. Generally, a policy development process lasts 2-3 years. However, if a government is responding to what it views as a crisis (e.g. the attacks in New York on Sept. 11, 2001), or if the government wants something changed quickly (e.g. increasing the pay of Cabinet ministers), then an initial idea can be reviewed and become law within a month or two.

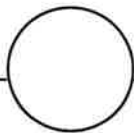


**NOTE: Winning the Next Election** - A key influence throughout the policy process is whether action on the policy idea, or no action on the policy idea, threatens the chances of the political party in power winning the next election. If the governing party can win the next election without acting on the policy idea, then it is likely the government will not do anything. If action is needed to win the election, however, then the government will likely act on the policy idea.

# Government Policy Development Process cont . . .



Usually takes 3 months



Usually takes 2 months

## 5. Approval of Memo to Cabinet

The final version of the Memo to Cabinet (MC) is signed by the minister responsible for the law, regulation, policy or program and sent to Cabinet, where it is usually passed on to a Cabinet committee to be reviewed.

A Cabinet committee issues an official report - any decisions it contains must go to full Cabinet to be finalized.

Full Cabinet approves Cabinet committee recommendations (this is generally a straightforward process with minimal discussion -- efforts to reach consensus are made, but a lack of unanimity won't necessarily block a decision).

Cabinet's decision is written up as a Record of Decision, an agreement of sorts that is not legally binding.

## 6. Implementation of Memo to Cabinet

If the Memo to Cabinet (MC) proposes a regulation, policy or guideline, or a program that is already authorized by an existing law or regulation, then the MC can be implemented without being reviewed by federal Parliament (the House of Commons and Senate) or a provincial or territorial legislature.

Most day-to-day government decisions are made under existing laws by public servants, not politicians, and generally only major decisions need to be approved by Cabinet, or need a new law.

**OR**

## Legislative Process Begins

If the Memo to Cabinet (MC) proposes a new law or requires a new law to be implemented, the proposals of the MC will be turned into a draft law (also known as draft "legislation") and introduced by the minister responsible in the federal Parliament, or a provincial or territorial legislature, for review and approval.

**SEE** piece entitled *Federal, Provincial & Territorial Government Legislative Process* for details about how draft laws are reviewed.

**NOTE: Lobbyists** - Throughout the policy development process lobbyists (people who represent or work for interest groups, both citizen groups and corporate groups) attempt to influence the process by preparing and releasing reports and/or surveys of Canadians, by urging Canadians to write letters to politicians, through ads in the media, by meeting with politicians, and/or by holding public events or protests.

It is very important for lobbyists to influence the policy development process because once a Memo to Cabinet is approved by Cabinet, it is very unlikely further changes will be made to a law, regulation, policy, guideline or program.

Lobbyists are required to register and disclose who and what and how they are trying to influence government in Ontario and British Columbia, and if they are lobbying the federal government.

**NOTE: Media** - The media also plays a key role in the policy development process. If the media ignore a policy idea, it makes it easier for the government to ignore it also. If the media pay attention, it makes it easier for lobbyists to push the government to do something about the policy idea.