

## Chapter 15

# Central Services—Using Consultants

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

By October 2018, the Ministry of Central Services had implemented the final outstanding recommendation from our 2014 audit of processes for using consultants. The Ministry formally evaluated consultants' performance. In addition, it improved the standard wording of its contracts (template) to indicate that an evaluation of consultant performance will be completed.

Formally evaluating the performance of consultants will assist the Ministry in making future contracting decisions.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry uses the services of consultants to obtain expertise and human resource capacity for specific periods of time or in relation to specific projects. The Ministry signed 48 contracts worth \$14.2 million for consultants between April 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018.

Our *2014 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 30 concluded that the Ministry of Central Services' processes for the use of consultants, in effect at that time, were not effective. We made five recommendations. In 2016, we concluded that, by August 2016, the Ministry had implemented three, partially implemented one, and that one was no longer relevant.<sup>1</sup>

This follow-up describes management's actions on the one outstanding recommendation.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Ministry management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To complete our follow-up audit, we reviewed the Ministry's most recent template for consultant contracts. We also tested a sample of new and completed contracts to assess if the Ministry formally assessed its consultants.

### 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at October 31, 2018, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

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<sup>1</sup> 2016 Report—Volume 2, Chapter 33, Central Services—Use of Consultants.



### 3.1 Consultant Performance Evaluated

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***We recommended that the Ministry of Central Services improve its agreements with consultants to include:***

- ***Services to be provided, in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of consultant performance***
- ***Provisions for monitoring and evaluation***
- ***Dispute resolution***

*(2014 Report – Volume 2; p. 163, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2015)*

**Status** – Implemented<sup>2</sup>

In January 2017, the Ministry implemented a new template for consultant contracts. The new template includes a clause for evaluating consultant performance.

For eight contracts we examined, each contained a clause for conducting consultant performance evaluations. For five completed contracts we tested, the Ministry had evaluated the consultant's performance by the end of the contract assessing if the consultant had met the Ministry's needs.

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<sup>2</sup> Our 2016 Report-Volume 2, Chapter 33 had previously reported the Ministry had sufficiently updated its consultant contract template to include service details and dispute resolution processes.

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