

## Chapter 26 SaskBuilds and Procurement—Securing the Data Centre

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement (formerly the Ministry of Central Services) provides IT services to its clients—government ministries and other government agencies. The Ministry utilizes a data centre, operated by a service provider, to deliver these IT services. The data centre houses computer network equipment and servers that support client systems and data. Firewalls are in place to prevent unwanted access to the data centre.

As of December 2020, the Ministry was still working with its service provider to properly configure its data centre firewalls to restrict inappropriate access to the data centre. Inadequate firewall configuration increases the risk of a security breach.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement provides IT services to government ministries and agencies using a data centre. Since 2010, the Ministry outsourced the data centre to a service provider.<sup>1</sup>

See **Section 4.0** for a listing of the ministries and agencies (i.e., clients) using the data centre to house their IT systems and data at December 2020.

#### 2.1 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our follow-up audit of management's actions on the one outstanding recommendation related to configuring the data centre firewalls we made in our *2019 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 14.

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 of SaskBuilds and Procurement's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

We assessed the configuration of the data centre's firewalls and reviewed the Ministry's process to update firewall rules.

### 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 December 31, 2020, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

<sup>1</sup> The former Information Technology Office implemented an IT data centre for government ministries in May 2005. In December 2010, the Information Technology Office outsourced the data centre to a service provider. Effective May 2012, the former Information Technology Office became part of the Ministry of Central Services. The Ministry of Central Services became the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement in November 2020.



### 3.1 Updating of Firewall Configuration Ongoing

***We recommended the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement (formerly the Ministry of Central Services) work with its service provider to configure its data centre firewalls to restrict inappropriate access. (2019 Report – Volume 1, p. 219, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement February 26, 2020)***

**Status**—Partially Implemented

The Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement has not completed updating its data centre’s firewall rules.

By December 2020, the Ministry updated a number of its data centre’s firewall rules. For example, the Ministry removed a number of obsolete and risky firewall rules. It focused on reviewing and updating the firewalls rules it thought posed the greatest risk to client data and systems.

The Ministry continues to work with its service provider, and clients, to review the remaining firewall rules and update the rules, where needed. It plans to implement new monitoring software that will allow it to manage firewall rules more efficiently.

Having appropriately defined firewall rules helps prevent unwanted access to the data centre (e.g., security breach).<sup>2</sup>

## 4.0 LIST OF CLIENTS AS OF DECEMBER 2020

**Ministries:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Ministry of Advanced Education  | Ministry of Government Relations                  |
| Ministry of Agriculture   | Ministry of Highways                              |
| Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement<br>(formerly the Ministry of Central Services) | Ministry of Immigration and Career Training       |
| Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety                                   | Ministry of Justice and Attorney General          |
| Ministry of Education   | Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety |
| Ministry of Energy and Resources  | Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport              |
| Ministry of Environment   | Ministry of Social Services                       |
| Ministry of Finance   | Executive Council                                 |
|   | Public Service Commission                         |
|   | Ministry of Trade and Export Development          |

**Agencies:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission        | Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission          |
| Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan | Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority   |
| Global Transportation Hub Authority                      | Saskatchewan Housing Corporation           |
| Public Guardian and Trustee of Saskatchewan              | Saskatchewan Municipal Board               |
|  | SaskBuilds Corporation                     |
|  | Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan |
|  | Water Security Agency                      |

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry uses a risk-based approach to maintain the security of its data centre network, and has implemented a number of other changes (e.g., endpoint protection) in addition to updating firewall rules to help reduce its overall risk of a network security breach.