

Social Security Tribunal of Canada and Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada

Action Plan on the findings and recommendations contained in Chapter 6 of the Report of the Auditor General of Canada

Introduction

The Fall 2015 Auditor General's report examined whether Employment and Social Development Canada assessed applications for Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) benefits in a consistent and timely manner. The audit also examined whether the Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC), decided disability appeals in a timely manner.

The Report notes that this is important because Canadians who have contributed to the *Canada Pension Plan* and cannot work because of a severe and prolonged disability may have to rely on the CPPD program as a source of income. The Department and Tribunal must manage the applications and appeals as efficiently as possible to ensure the timely provision of the benefit to applicants who are entitled to it.

The Auditor General recommended that the Social Security Tribunal supported by the ATSSC, should collect and accurately capture robust data to allow better monitoring of the CPPD program and accurate reporting of results. As well, the Auditor General recommended that the Tribunal, supported by the ATSSC should review its policies and practices to ensure that they adhere to the intent of the *Social Security Tribunal Regulations*, to ensure the most expeditious appeal decisions.

The Tribunal agreed with these two recommendations and will continue to address these issues as part of its 2016-2017 priorities.

Office of the Auditor General Recommendation	Response	Actions and Timelines
<p>6.57</p> <p>Employment and Social Development Canada and the Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, should collect and accurately capture robust data to allow better monitoring of the Canada Pension Plan Disability program and accurate reporting of results.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, will continue to <u>identify its statistical requirements</u> and <u>improve its case management system to collect better and more robust data that will ensure complete and accurate reporting of the Tribunal's workload and performance</u>. One of the challenges that needed to be overcome in meeting this requirement was the limited state of preparedness of the Tribunal's new case management system when the Tribunal opened its doors. Furthermore, the transfer, from the former tribunals, of a high volume of backlog cases and related data from the former tribunal's case management system also created significant difficulties since very few staff had the knowledge of the former systems. Since April 1 2013, eight releases of the Tribunal's case management system have enabled the Tribunal to develop operation dashboards and other performance reports. The Tribunal will continue to <u>enhance its case management system to ensure effective decision making and monitoring of performance standards</u>.</p>	<p>Related actions to be taken by the Tribunal further to the response to the OAG:</p> <p>The Tribunal, with the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC), will review current statistical and management reports to determine the improvements, or new reports, that are required to monitor and report on the service standards, to monitor member and operational performances and to manage the Tribunal's caseloads more efficiently.</p> <p>The ATSSC will continue to further develop the Tribunal's case management system to implement all monitoring and reporting requirements that the Tribunal will request.</p> <p>Timelines: Work ongoing since 2013-14 and to continue throughout 2016-17</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal and the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC).</p>
<p>6.101</p> <p>The Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, should review its policies and practices to ensure that they adhere to the intent of the <i>Social Security Tribunal Regulations</i>, to ensure the most expeditious appeal</p>	<p>Agreed. Since its first day of operations, and notwithstanding the numerous challenges resulting from the lack of preparedness it faced at inception, the Social Security Tribunal of Canada has processed and decided CPPD appeals, incoming and those inherited from the Office of the Commissioner of Review Tribunals, as efficiently and expeditiously as the circumstances allowed, while respecting the legislation, the regulations, and the rules of natural justice. The Tribunal expects its</p>	<p>1. With respect to developing practices and policies that respect the legislation and regulations and that adhere to their intent:</p> <p>The Tribunal developed a Framework of Tribunal instruments that guide parties and members in specific situations or at different stages of the Tribunal processes to ensure efficient management and to respect the legislation and regulations (and their intent). These instruments include: practice directions, directives, guidelines, operational processes etc.</p>

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<p>decisions.</p>	<p>Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) caseload to reach a steady state later this year. This will allow the Tribunal to <u>implement its service standards of completing 85 percent of CPPD appeals within five months of when both parties are ready to proceed.</u> Furthermore, the Tribunal, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, will continue to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develop practices and policies that respect the legislation and regulations and that adhere to their intent, 2. review and improve its operational processes, 3. implement quality control mechanisms for registry operations, 4. further develop its case management system and improve the quality of statistics, 5. improve its website to better inform parties and potential appellants of the Tribunal's processes and procedures, and 6. listen to its stakeholders to improve the quality of its services. 	<p>The Tribunal will continue to develop such instruments that are deemed important to improving the quality of decision-making and that ensure the effective and efficient management of the Tribunal's operations.</p> <p>Timelines: Ongoing throughout 2016-17 and beyond</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal, with the support of the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p> <p>2. With respect to reviewing and improving its operational processes:</p> <p>The Tribunal will continue to work with the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada to enhance the case management system to provide additional workflows for the efficient processing of appeals. This will also include a review and analysis of e-sharing of documents with Employment and Social Development Canada.</p> <p>Furthermore, an operational review will be conducted to determine if further operational improvements can be implemented in the Tribunal's Registry.</p> <p>Timelines: 2016-17</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal and the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p> <p>3. With respect to implementing quality control mechanisms for registry operations:</p> <p>As requested by the Tribunal, the ATSSC will conduct a review of the quality-control practices of other large-volume Tribunals and</p>

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		<p>Courts to identify efficient quality assurance practices that can be implemented in the Tribunal.</p> <p>The ATSSC will expand its current quality assurance practices to include a review of randomly selected files to ensure that the Tribunal's procedural directions and processes were followed and that all the information in the file is accurately captured and reported.</p> <p>Timelines: 2016-17 and ongoing</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal and the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p> <p>4. With respect to further developing its case management system and improve the quality of statistics:</p> <p>As per the Tribunal's requirements, the Administrative Tribunals Support Service Canada will continue to enhance the Tribunal's case management system by including additional workflows and expanding its capability for assigning cases. As well, it will review their reports and determine if modifications or new reports are required to improve the monitoring and reporting of service standards, to monitor member and operational performances and to manage the Tribunal's caseloads more efficiently. Refer to AG recommendation 6.57</p> <p>Timelines: 2016-17</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal and the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p> <p>5. With respect to improving its website to better inform parties and potential appellants of the Tribunal's processes and procedures:</p>

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		<p>The Tribunal, with the support of the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, will continue to review and improve the content of its website to provide better and more useful information to parties in simpler form and language.</p> <p>Timelines: 2016-17 and ongoing</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal, with the support of the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p> <p>6. With respect to listening to its stakeholders to improve the quality of its services:</p> <p>The Tribunal has been engaging with many stakeholders and specialized networks and will continue to maintain these contacts, exchanges and meetings to obtain the important feedback that helps the Tribunal determine how it is doing and how to improve its services. It is expected that by monitoring and reporting on its service standards the Tribunal will be able to identify further areas for improvements and may also refine them as required.</p> <p>Timelines: 2016-17 and beyond</p> <p>Responsibility: The Tribunal, with the support of the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.</p>