



National Defence

Deputy Minister

National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K2

Défense nationale

Sous-ministre

Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Ottawa, (Ontario)
K1A 0K2

JAN 3 1 2022

Mr. Tom Kmiec
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Kmiec,

As agreed upon in the Government Response to the 14th Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled *Report 5, Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence, of the Spring 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, National Defence submits its update on Recommendation 8.

Sincerely,

 Bill Matthews

Enclosures: 1

**Response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts'
Report 5, Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence, of the spring 2016 Reports of the
Auditor General of Canada**

Recommendation 8

That National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with an interim report, by 30 June 2017, on its first release of its military personnel management tool called Guardian, and a final report, no later than 31 January 2022, outlining the type of reliable and up-to-date information that it has on Army Reserve soldiers' pre-deployment preparedness.

Background

In Chapter 5, *Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence*, of the Auditor General's spring 2016 report, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence ensure that it has up to date information on whether Army Reserve soldiers are prepared for deployment, including civilian qualifications held by Army Reserve soldiers.

National Defence agreed with the recommendation, and its 2016 Management Action Plan identified specific actions and initiatives conducted through the Military Personnel Management Capability Transformation project, including the release of a new military personnel management tool, *Guardian*, which will maintain up-to-date information on Reserve Force personnel readiness, including civilian qualifications. National Defence reported that the information within this system would also be available to managers and commanders to support operational decision-making. National Defence committed to releasing *Guardian* in May 2017.

In its last update to the Committee in June 2017, National Defence reported that *Guardian's* release had been delayed due to the unanticipated complexity of the redesign of and technical support for PeopleSoft 9.1, which is the basis for *Guardian*. National Defence noted that it was testing *Guardian's* functionality to ensure that it will meet all requirements, with a planned release date in November 2017.

In that update, National Defence committed to provide the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a final update, by January 31, 2022, outlining the outcomes of the system, including: 1) the progress made regarding the release of its military personnel management tool, *Guardian*; and 2) the status of the Civilian Qualification Data Bank.

Final Update on National Defence's military personnel management tool, *Guardian*

On June 26, 2018, National Defence launched *Guardian*, which is the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) national Human Resource (HR) system of record responsible for the effective management, development, and compensation of CAF members. The launch of *Guardian* has been successfully completed, with the system having achieved its Full Operational Capability on March 11, 2019. As part of the software development cycle, *Guardian* is subject to periodic updates and maintenance to address functionality and potential changes in policy or business processes.

Guardian replaced the 18-year-old Human Resources Management System (HRMS) with an improved web-based human resources application for military personnel. This system is now

central to a network of applications and databases that incorporates personnel readiness and availability data.

Since 2018, *Guardian* has resulted in substantial benefits in three areas: 1) workforce development; 2) workforce administration; and, 3) benefits administration. These areas within *Guardian* offer CAF commanders and leaders a modern, flexible, and integrated workforce management system that provides accurate, reliable, responsive, and trustworthy information with respect to military personnel records, career development, pay, and access to benefits and services.

Workforce Development

Through *Guardian*, the CAF is able to effectively record and manage the specific skills required for members to attain various competencies, as well as the administration of training details, which contribute to positive career development and a skilled workforce.

For example, when selecting and assigning CAF members to designated taskings, postings, and deployments (domestically and internationally), National Defence has a responsibility to ensure that all members undergo required personnel readiness verification (PRV) screening. PRV screening is the process by which the readiness of a CAF member is confirmed in terms of qualifications; physical and mental health; and domestic factors, such as Next of Kin Identification, Emergency Contact(s) Notification, Family Care Plan Declaration, Military Family Resource Centre registration, and the status of a Will or Will certificate. *Guardian* records all information regarding a member's readiness status and is able to generate a PRV Status Report, which provides CAF leadership with a member's detailed information on whether a member maintains general qualifications for deployment (including administrative requirements like training courses), and whether a member maintains or requires specific, enhanced qualifications for deployment (including mission-specific immunizations or psychological fitness).

The *Guardian's* ability to capture consolidated, reliable, and up-to-date data found in PRV Status Reports is a critical function for supporting managers' and commanders' operational decision-making. Additionally, the information provided in *Guardian* ensures that members meet the necessary military requirements of employability and deployability, while also identifying the deficiencies that would constrain a member's ability to deploy. Through this function, *Guardian* has played an important role in tracking the level of skill across the CAF, and in capturing data related to the CAF's overall readiness.

Workforce Administration

As the national military HR system of record, *Guardian* creates one merged and continuous service record for CAF members. The *Guardian* collects and manages crucial administrative data on CAF members related to their position, trade, as well as personal information. Effective management of this administrative data ensures the CAF maintains a high degree of readiness, and that career milestones are properly recorded.

For example, job data includes the CAF member's initial information on hire, the member's rank history, position occupied, work locations, competencies and qualifications, terms of service, and more. Career Managers can also use *Guardian* to record and manage the postings of members, including assignments to home and host units, as well as record CAF member's physical fitness level and medical categories relative to their employment.

As part of its efforts to increase the effectiveness of workforce administration and support timely operational decision-making, in its 2016 Management Action Plan, National Defence noted that *Guardian* would allow members and supervisors to personally access and update their administrative information within the system. While the timeline for delivering a self-service functionality to the CAF is not yet available, National Defence has proposed a self-service phased strategy for *Guardian* in an effort to provide all active CAF members with access to view and modify certain self-service transactions in *Guardian*, including: personal information, benefits, learning and professional development, eProfile self-service applications, and leave transactions and balances.

Benefits Administration

Guardian also records and manages CAF members' entitlement to various benefit programs, notably annual and other leave credits and usage. By capturing all leave, benefits, and entitlement information in one system, National Defence is able to ensure timely and accurate payment to CAF members. This helps the organization deliver on its promise of improving CAF members' overall service experience.

Civilian Qualification Data Bank

In its 2016 Management Action Plan, National Defence identified the potential benefit of having civilian qualifications added to *Guardian*. As such, National Defence considered the inclusion of a Civilian Qualification Data Bank as a possible system capability which allows all military personnel (including Reserve soldiers) to add in their Personnel Record civilian qualifications. This would be an additional functionality for managers and commanders to use when assessing if a member is appropriately prepared to meet specified personal, professional, and operational demands.

Following an assessment, National Defence decided to reduce *Guardian's* project scope, which resulted in the removal of a Civilian Qualification Data Bank functionality. This decision was due predominately to the complexities associated with some HR policies and processes that needed to be brought over from the previous HR system, along with the significant increase in projected cost. Treasury Board Secretariat approved the reduction in *Guardian's* project scope in June 2017.

While *Guardian* does not provide a specific Data Bank to record civilian qualifications, *Guardian* does allow authorized users to record the following civilian information about CAF members: professional membership; self-declared language ability – in addition to second language test results and foreign language test results; licenses and certifications; and level of education attained, along with the area of study.

Conclusion

This update fulfills all commitments related to recommendation 8 in Chapter 5, *Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence*, of the Auditor General's spring 2016 report, thereby concluding this update to the Committee.