**Follow-up Responses to the House of Commons Standing Committee on
Government Operations and Estimates (OGGO)
Minister of Digital Government
November 25, 2020**

1. **Status of Equipment for ATI Requests (OCIO/SSC)**

(CPC) Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, Madam Minister. On October 4, your colleague from the Treasury Board, Jean-Yves Duclos, appeared before us and told us that many federal employees could not work remotely because they did not have computers. This is currently having an impact on processing of access to information requests. Actually, a small percentage of requests are being handled by departments. Do you have a solution for this issue?

Minister of Digital Government: Thanks for that question. We have continued to make equipment available. I have to say that this was an unexpected emergency. We've quickly doubled secure remote access capacity. We enabled Microsoft Teams for secure conversations for up to 187,000 public servants. We tripled teleconference capacity. Wi-Fi calling was activated for 183,000. As you know, the full public service is hundreds of thousands of people, and so—

(CPC) Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Excuse me, Madam Minister, but here is my question: given that the Supreme Court has declared that the Access to Information Act is quasi-constitutional legislation—it is a priority for Canada— is it currently one of your priorities to find a solution so that people can do their jobs, in that area in particular?

Minister of Digital Government: Absolutely, it's for providing the equipment so that they can do their jobs, whatever their jobs may be in serving Canadians. I can ask Paul Glover to give you more detail, if you would like, on where we are now in terms of having the tools, equipment and network—

(CPC) Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Ms. Murray. Perhaps you could send me a report on it.

Response

Shared Services Canada's (SSC) role has been to work with our GC partners to ensure they have the infrastructure they need to continue delivering online services to Canadians. In addition to increased network capacity, our GC partners are taking action to limit non-critical network usage and reduce non-critical activities. Departments are responsible for determining how to organise the work to meet their business objectives and obligations. SSC has also provided equipment (e.g., laptops and tablets) to departments to enable public servants to remain productive while working from home.

The ATIP Division at SSC was able to adapt quickly to the realities of working from home on a full-time basis. The majority of ATIP employees were already set up with VPN access in the event of a building closure, ePost was already in place as a mechanism for responding to requests, 90% of responsive records were provided in an electronic format from program areas, and an e-signature pilot was already underway. Additional accomplishments during the early stages of COVID-19 included the following:

- adapted all processes in order to continue to respond to requests from the Canadian public
- found solutions for consultations with other government departments, third parties and external third parties
- provided guidance to other institutions on the implementation of ePost
- participated in various collaborative working groups in order to address the current COVID-19 realities

2. Specifics on sole-sourced contract by SSC (SSC)

(CPC) Mr. Dane Lloyd: These companies have approached me. They're very frustrated because there are so many sole-source contracts—very large contracts—going to these American companies, and they feel that they don't even have the opportunity to bid. I recently learned that Shared Services issued a sole-source contract for a service. Global Affairs issued a competitive bid for the same service, and Global Affairs got the service for 40% cheaper. Can you address why Global Affairs is getting the same software that Shared Services Canada is getting for 40% cheaper when they go with a competitive bid as opposed to a sole-source contract?

Mr. Paul Glover (SSC): Mr. Chair, the member's question is more than a little vague without specifics, but I can tell you that we use standard procurement processes. We go to the street to make sure that our processes are competitive. We use pre-qualified vendors to make sure that we are getting the best deal possible. We also, on some of our larger deals, engage some of the specialists—the Gartners of this world, the Deloittes, the Accentures—who are experts at ensuring value for money to make sure that, when we go toe to toe with negotiating some of these big contracts, we get the best advice possible. **With specifics, I would be more than happy to follow up and respond in writing.**

Response

Without specifics on the particular sole source contract, it is difficult to comment.

Note that for all the Shared Services Canada (SSC) funded contracts, SSC executed procurement processes for a total of $1.3 billion in fiscal year 2019–2020. Of these:
- Our total spend was 87% in competitive procurement, amounting to a total of roughly $1.13 billion.
- Our total spend was 13% in non-competitive procurement, amounting to a total spend of roughly $170 million.

The network products competitive procurement process for the Global Affairs Canada, Lester B. Pearson Building Retrofit Project, was in fact, conducted by SSC. In regards to this procurement, and other SSC procurement processes, suppliers' financial bid strategies and pricing are their prerogative. A supplier may choose to be more competitively priced based on a number of factors such as product availability, a supplier's year end, high level of competition, value or quantity of a product being ordered, etc.

SSC is committed to achieving the best value, most secure and most reliable information technology products and services for the Government of Canada and Canadians.

3. **Percentage of government IT equipment and software purchased by SSC (SSC)**

(CPC) Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, gentlemen. How much IT equipment and software is purchased for the whole of government through Shared Services? I think it used to be all, but over the years I think there have been some adjustments to that. Would you be able to let me know?

Mr. Paul Glover (SSC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the member's question. The short answer is that we would have to follow up in writing.

Response

Shared Services Canada procures IT related goods and services for both SSC and on behalf of other Government departments (OGDs). Procurements can either be funded internally by SSC or by the OGDs.

In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, 82% of the total volume of procurements awarded and 59% of the total value of procurements awarded (for both SSC and OGD funded) were related to IT Equipment and Software.
- Specifically for SSC funded procurements, 67% of the volume and 48% of the value were related to IT Equipment and Software
- For OGD funded procurements awarded by SSC, 88% of the volume and 86% of the value were related to IT Equipment and Software.

For Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Q1 and Q2, 78% of the total volume of procurements awarded and 74% of the total value of procurements awarded (for both SSC and OGD funded) were related to IT Equipment and Software.
- Specifically for SSC funded procurements, 63% of the volume and 57% of the value were related to IT Equipment and Software
- For OGD funded procurements awarded by SSC, 83% of the volume and 94% of the value were related to IT Equipment and Software.

	SSC Funded - IT Equipment and Software		OGD Funded - IT Equipment and Software		Total - IT Equipment and Software	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
FY 19/20	1903	$624,791,993.76	6519	$452,700,350.40	8422	$1,077,492,344.16
Percentage of Overall Awards - FY 19/20	67%	48%	88%	86%	82%	59%
FY 20/21 (Q1 and Q2)	563	$144,866,715.46	1832	$207,157,444.71	2395	$352,024,160.17
Percentage of Overall Awards - FY 20/21 (Q1 and Q2)	63%	57%	83%	94%	78%	74%

Note: This excludes all services including, IT related services, Maintenance services, and other administrative and support services.

4. Vendors for Government of Canada voice services (VOIP) (SSC)

(BQ) Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you. We're setting up voice over Internet systems right now. At one of my former school boards, I saw how complex it can be to set up systems like that and standardize them across a network. So I know that it won't get done overnight. Be that as it may, which companies specifically have you approached to set up these voice over Internet networks?

Mr. Marc Brouillard (TBS): I will ask Mr. Glover to answer that question. In particular, he will be able to tell you about the collaborative tools we have introduced, and how we've greatly accelerated their implementation over the past few months.

Mr. Paul Glover (SSC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the member's question. We will be happy to reply in writing with the fullest number of qualified vendors we are using. We take a number of approaches, from what we call "workload migration factories" to some procurement vehicles for new, off-the-shelf tools that departments can use to provide that. Ultimately, when it comes to voice, as you were expounding, voice over Internet, VoIP, we are working with companies like Telus and Bell for the technologies that they have. **We will provide you a full list in writing.**

Response

The following companies have contracts with Shared Services Canada to put voice systems in place:

- Bell Canada
- Mitel Networks Corporation
- Connex Telecommunications Corporation
- TELUS Communications Company
- IBM Canada Ltd

5. List of vendors for ITSM tools used by other departments (SSC)

(BQ) Mrs. Julie Vignola: Thank you. With respect to the organizational tools for IT service management, exactly which ones are currently being used? Which departments use them, in particular?

Mr. Paul Glover (SSC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the member's questions. In response, we are in the process of rolling out a new ITSM tool that we hope will be the enterprise tool for service management, service desk. Again, there is a plethora of different systems in different departments. **Rather than attempting to take time with the list of all the different systems in all the departments, we'll come back with the enterprise tool we are rolling out and the list by department.**

Response

On August 28, 2019, SSC awarded the ITSM contract to BMC Software Canada Inc. to supply, implement and support a complete enterprise class ITSM tool solution.

- The contract term is for three years firm and 8 additional one-year option periods.
- Contract end date: August 27, 2022 (3 years later)
- Possibility to extend until August 27, 2030
- Contract value at award: $32,407,509.56 (CAD)
- The BMC software is called Remedy.

There are a number of different Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) tools used by departments and agencies. The table below presents the ITSM tool used by each.

Department / Agency	ITSM Tool*
Agriculture and Agri Foods Canada	Axios Assyst
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	BMC Trackit
Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions	BMC Trackit
Canada Revenue Agency	BMC Remedy
Canada School of Public Service	OS Ticket
Canadian Border Services Agency	BMC Remedy
Canadian Food Inspection Agency	Axios Assyst
Canadian Heritage	BMC Remedy
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	BMC Remedy
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission	Axios Assyst
Canadian Space Agency	BMC Remedy
Correctional Service Canada	Axios Assyst
Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	BMC Remedy
Department of Finance	Marvel
Department of National Defence	Axios Assyst and BMC Remedy
Employment and Social Development Canada	BMC Remedy
Environment and Climate Change Canada	HP Service Manager

Department / Agency	ITSM Tool*
Federal Economic Development Agency	HEAT
Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada	SM7
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Axios Assyst
Global Affairs Canada	BMC Remedy
Health Canada	HP open view
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada	Footprints
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	BMC Remedy
Indigenous Services Canada	BMC Remedy
Infrastructure Canada	Cherwell
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada	HEAT
Department of Justice Canada	BMC Remedy
Library and Archives Canada	Microsoft SCCM
National Research Council Canada	Axios Assyst
Parks Canada	JIRA
Privy Council Office	OTRS ITSM
Public Safety Canada	Software Config Management System
Public Service Commission of Canada	BMC Remedy
Public Services and Procurement Canada	BMC Remedy
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	CA - Broadcom
Statistics Canada	HEAT
Transport Canada	BMC Remedy
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Cherwell
Veterans Affairs Canada	Axios Assyst
Western Economic Diversification Canada	BMC Remedy

6. Evaluation of BCPs government wide (OCIO)

(NDP) Mr. Matthew Green: Yes, thank you. You'll appreciate that the reason we're so terse is that we have six minutes and then it stops, and so the longer you talk, the less time we have to ask further follow-up questions. That answer suffices. Would it be possible to know what the pandemic has revealed about the technological capacity of our government services? What are the specific limitations that our technological capacity has been exposed to during COVID?

Minister of Digital Government: I'd like Marc Brouillard, CIO, to tackle that, because he can also talk about what things were imagined before and answer your question about planning for disasters.

Mr. Marc Brouillard (TBS): The way the government plans for these types of disasters is through our business continuity planning exercises. These are done at the departmental level through the identification of critical services. They aren't necessarily related to or require foreknowledge of what the event will be. The fact that we have a snowstorm, a flood or a pandemic that keeps people from being in the office, all will have the same results—

(NDP) Mr. Matthew Green: I have a quick supplementary on that. Is there an audit of the departments? Are you actively going out and seeking who is doing this and who is not? Is it like a fire drill? Perhaps some departments are lax, and if so, when is that revealed?

Mr. Marc Brouillard (TBS): We evaluate which departments have identified critical services and whether they have business continuity plans and have tested those plans.

(NDP) Mr. Matthew Green What's the pass or fail on that?

Mr. Marc Brouillard (TBS): I don't have the exact numbers. We can get you that information.

Response

The Policy on Government Security (PGS) sets out the mandatory requirements for the management of departmental and enterprise-wide security, enabling trusted Program and Service delivery to Canadians, including government-wide direction on Business Continuity Management (BCM) roles and responsibilities. As outlined in the PGS and the Directive on Security Management (DSM), departments are responsible for the identification, planning, recovery and restoration of their critical services, internal operations, information technology (IT) applications and related infrastructure through the completion of the following underpinning activities:
1. Business continuity management practices;
2. Departmental business impact analysis (BIA);
3. Business continuity plans (BCPs), measures, and arrangements;
4. Awareness and training;
5. Updating, testing and exercising; and
6. Monitoring and corrective actions.

On March 5th, 2020, Treasury Board Secretariat asked Chief Security Officers to identify their individual department's critical services in support of the Government of Canada's Response

Plan to COVID-19. They also identified if BCPs were in place, and if they had been tested against absenteeism scenarios of 10, 30 and 50%.

As of November, 249 Critical Services were identified across 49 of the 107 departments and agencies subject to the PGS, including additional exceptional support measures to individuals and businesses announced in recent months. 88% of the identified Critical Services have a BCP and 68% of those have been tested using the absenteeism scenarios as noted above.

As set out in the Directive on Security Management (DSM), federal institutions must conduct regular testing of BCPs to ensure an acceptable state of preparedness, in accordance with departmental practices. Testing provides the opportunity to validate plans, identify deficiencies, and exercise BCM teams. Pursuant to the Directive, federal institutions should develop and implement a testing program to continuously validate its plans and related state of preparedness, reinforcing the departmental BCM practices.

A successful BCP test is one that provides a department with the information it needs to assess the effectiveness of their plans, identifies the opportunity for improvements as well as any gaps. A regular testing cycle ensures BCPs are constantly being reviewed. While TBS, through the Management Accountability Framework process assesses whether BCPs have been tested, regular testing and maintenance of BCPs is, in and of itself, a success indicator of departmental BCM practices. As a result, TBS does not collect the results of the individual departmental tests.

As part of its ongoing policy oversight function, TBS, collaborating with Public Safety Canada, continues to work with departments and agencies to ensure that BCM requirements are well understood, including the necessity to establish and test business continuity plans for critical services.

Shared Services Canada (SSC) plays an important role in ensuring critical services for Canadians remain operational during emergency events. Given the unprecedented threats posed by COVID-19, SSC is taking action to support the critical services of other departments in addition to general preparedness activities. In addition, several of SSC's Government of Canada (GC) partners are first responders or lead agencies with a primary role during a disruptive event. SSC's support of their efforts is imperative.

SSC's Client Executive teams quickly worked with our partner and client departmental Chief Information Officers (CIOs) to identify critical requirements to allow them to continue to deliver their services and to support new priority benefits programs.

In parallel, SSC worked with the GC Office of the Chief Information Officer to leverage forums such as CIO Council and biweekly meetings with GC CIOs to get a whole-of-government perspective and set technology strategies and approaches.

Given the importance of ensuring the GC workforce could work remotely, SSC developed a prioritization methodology and "fast-tracked" important COVID requests, including enabling service delivery simultaneously to the administrative process for obtaining partner funding approvals.

With the support of our GC CIOs, SSC has enabled:
- 300,000 GC employees to work from home to support and provide services and programs to Canadians;

- More than five million teleconference minutes per day;
- A secure remote access (SRA) capacity of almost 284,000 employees, more than doubling the number of public servants that can work remotely and securely;
- A new WebEx service with 100% increase in capacity and 40,000 WebEx accounts;
- A 50% increase of enterprise internet bandwidth for the entire government, allowing the GC to stay connected with Canadians; and
- 40 GC departments to use Microsoft Teams with more than 187,000 active users across the GC.

Because of this collaboration, in Summer 2020, SSC achieved their highest ever customer satisfaction results from our GC CIOs—3.91 out of five for work from January to June 2020. In a special COVID-19 portion of the questionnaire, SSC received an overall average rating of 4.20.

SSC is continuing to work tirelessly to make sure the Government of Canada can be effective and productive, and that Canadians continue to receive the critical support and services they depend on.