

MEETING MINUTES REPORT – 2013-8
PROCÈS VERBAUX DE LA RÉUNION – 2013-8

MEETING RÉUNION	TEMPORARY HELP SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DES SAT		
PLACE ENDROIT	Place du Portage, Phase III, Tower C Boardroom 11C1 101	DATE DATE 5 December / Décembre 2013	TIME HEURE 1330 to 1600

MEETING AGENDA – ORDRE DU JOUR

1. Opening Remarks
2. Acceptance of minutes for September 24, 2013 THSAC meeting
3. Terms of Reference for THSAC
4. THS Update – RENEWAL
5. Implementation THS Utilization Reporting Update
6. Update THS Training – Learning Harmonization
7. Other Business
8. Round Table Questions
9. Next Meeting
10. Meeting Adjournment

MEETING ATTENDEES – PARTICIPANTS À LA RÉUNION

NAMES - NOMS	ORGANIZATION / PROJECT AND ROLE – ORGANISATION OU PROJET ET RÔLE	PRESENT
Richard Goodfellow	Acting Senior Director – Professional Services Procurement Directorate (PSPD), Acquisitions Branch (AB), PWGSC – CHAIRPERSON	✓
Dan Moorcroft	QMR Consulting & Professional Staffing	✓
Jeremy Ingle	Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services (ACSESS)	
Martin Chenier	ACSESS	✓
Eric Joannis	ACSESS	✓
Meredith Egan	ACSESS	
Paul Gagnon	Portage Personnel	✓
Brenda Harlow	Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)	✓
Caroline Carson	Health Canada	
Lucie Lambert	Library and Archives Canada	
Dominique Mongeon	Library and Archives Canada	
Roland Dimitriu	PWGSC Materiel Management	
Ray Paquette (Alternate for R. Dimitriu)	PWGSC Materiel Management	✓
John Penhale	PWGSC, Procurement Strategy and Performance Management Directorate	✓
Helen Seto	PWGSC, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises and Strategic Engagement	✓
Patricia Barcellos (Alternate for H. Seto)	PWGSC, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises and Strategic Engagement	✓
Claire Niedbala	PWGSC, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises and Strategic Engagement	✓
Rose Spirito	PWGSC, Procurement Strategies Division	✓
Mark Newman	PWGSC, A/THS Team Lead	✓
Stephanie Riley	PWGSC, THS Team	✓

Meeting Minutes

#1. Opening Remarks

- Round table introductions.
- Richard Goodfellow, Acting Senior Director, Professional Services Procurement Directorate was introduced as the Committee Chairperson.

- PWGSC provided an overview of the agenda for this meeting.

#2. Acceptance of minutes for September 24, 2013 THSAC meeting

- All in concurrence. The revised draft minutes for the THSAC meeting held on September 24, 2013 were accepted.

#3. Terms of Reference for THSAC

- Members reported that they were generally pleased with the draft Terms of Reference for the THS Advisory Committee dated November 28, 2013 that was distributed to the Committee on that date for review.
- The members agreed that the draft Terms of Reference should be revised such that all aspects of the THS Advisory Committee (e.g. purpose, scope, membership, etc.) are restricted to the provision of temporary help services to federal government departments in the National Capital Region, rather "in all regions of Canada." It was noted, however, that regional participation could be permitted on an as and when required basis to provide input (e.g. lessons learned).
- PWGSC mentioned that the development of a National Goods & Services Procurement Strategy for THS could result in the expansion of the purpose, scope and membership of the THS Advisory Committee at some point in the future, which would be subsequently reflected in a revised Terms of Reference.
- A member questioned whether par. 5.0 Definition of Temporary Help Services should be specific to the existing method of supply (e.g. THS contract maximums of \$400,000 and 48 consecutive weeks). PWGSC explained that it is important to have a definition that reflects the current THS method of supply for the NCR, and to remember that the Terms of Reference document is not static. If the definition of THS changes, a new edition of the Terms of Reference document will be issued with the new definition.
- Once the Terms of Reference document has been finalized, it was agreed that it would be distributed via the THS website.
- The finalized Terms of Reference will also be sent out with a call letter to solicit increased supplier and client participation on the THS Advisory Committee. In the interim, and given that client participation on the Committee is low, it was agreed that existing THSAC members will be asked if they can recommend any individuals to be contacted as potential new client representatives.
- Other topics were discussed at this point in the meeting, and highlights are recorded under item #8 Round-table Questions.

ACTION ITEM(S):

- THS will revise the draft Terms of Reference in response to the comments received at the THSAC meeting.
- The revised Terms of Reference will be sent to PWGSC management for review, including the Director General for the Services and Technology Acquisition Management Sector (STAMS) and the Assistant Deputy Minister for PWGSC.
- THS will post a link to the finalized Terms of Reference, once available, on its website.
- THS will send an e-mail to existing THSAC members to ask if they can recommend any individuals to be contacted as potential new client representatives.
- THS will send out the finalized Terms of Reference with a call letter to solicit increased supplier and client participation on the THS Advisory Committee.

Postscript:

- To permit regional participation on the Committee on an as and when required basis, the following sentence was added to par. 7.1 (THS Interest Groups) of the draft Terms of Reference:
"On an as and when required basis, and at the discretion of the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson, additional non-member stakeholders may participate at committee and/or working group meetings as guests to represent their views, and/or to provide insights and/or expertise."
- On December 6, 2013, an e-mail was sent to existing THSAC members to ask if they can recommend any individuals to be contacted as potential new client representatives. Recommendations provided will be discussed at the next THSAC meeting.
- The revised Terms of Reference was sent for review to the Director General for STAMS in December

2013.

#4. THS Update - RENEWAL

Q2 Quarterly Refresh

- PWGSC reported that 7 bids were received during the Q2 refresh solicitation period that closed on **October 24, 2013**, with an evaluation period from October 25 to December 31, 2013.
- Four of the bids were for THS Standing Offers (SOs) and three were for Supply Arrangements (SAs).
- All four SO bids were found compliant, and two of the three SA bids were found compliant.

Q3 Renewal Solicitations

- Open to THS industry October 25, 2013 to **January 3, 2014**.
- Published and accessible via the Buy and Sell Tenders website at the addresses provided below.
SO: <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-ZN-002-26501>
SA: <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tender-notice/PW-ZN-004-26502>

Postscript:

- The closing date for the Q3 Renewal Solicitation was extended to **January 10, 2014**.

#5. Implementation THS Utilization Reporting Update

- An updated summary of THS quarterly utilization report data including Q2 for fiscal year 2013 - 2014 (FY 13/14) was presented.
- Based upon December 5, 2013 THS quarterly utilization data for Q2 of FY 13/14, SO usage was 68.5% and SA usage was 31.5%.
- At the previous THSAC meeting, a trend from THS SO to SA usage was indicated as being evident prior to Q1 of FY 13/14, with an apparent spike in SO usage in Q1 of FY 13/14.
- PWGSC pointed out that the percentage of SO versus SA usage for FY 11/12 (i.e. 65% versus 35%), was not significantly different than that for the following periods:
Q2 of FY 12/13 (63% vs. 37%);
Q1 of FY 13/14 (67.9% vs. 32.1%); and
Q2 of FY 13/14 (68.5% vs. 31.5%).
- Despite a higher usage of the SA measured for Q3 (44%) and Q4 (44.2%) of FY 12/13, it appears that SO usage did not “spike” in Q1 of FY 13/14 as previously thought.
- Pertaining to the usage of the SO versus the SA, the observations below were noted.
- According to a supplier member, there is no difference in time or effort required for a federal government client to use the THS SO versus the THS SA to acquire a resource. The member suggested that this message should be communicated to THS users.
- A client member responded by stating that the SO is straight forward to use because only mandatory criteria are used to evaluate proposed resources.
- PWGSC commented that clients often have a higher level of financial delegation under the SO than under the SA, which could contribute to the greater use of the SO relative to the SA.
- The Chair added that recent strategic reviews and budget cuts have had a greater impact on lower level Office Support (Stream 1) and Administrative (Stream 2) positions, thus increasing the demand for the SO as means to hire Stream 1 and 2 THS resources.
- A supplier member mentioned that it had been recommended in the past that the THS SO only apply to Stream 1 and 2 classifications, and that the THS SA only apply to Stream 3, 4, and 5 classifications.
- A client member commented that they would not want to be locked into the use of the SO or SA on the basis of the classification stream under which a resource requirement falls.
- Another supplier member suggested that the SA should be recommended for Stream 3, 4, and 5 classifications.
- Some of the issues raised above could be addressed as PWGSC prepares for consultations for the development of a National Goods & Services Procurement Strategy for THS.

#6. Update THS Training – Learning Harmonization

- The development of the e-learning THS training module is ongoing.
- A member suggested that the training module include lessons learned. Lessons learned will be addressed by the inclusion of questions for trainees in the module.
- Concern was expressed regarding which government department(s) would participate in piloting the e-learning THS training module, which is expected to start in 2014. See action item below.
- PWGSC reported that the deactivation of non-active THS client user accounts is complete.
- Note that deactivated inactive THS client user accounts can be reactivated for federal government employees who later identify a need to be an active THS user. For example, this occurs when an employee returns to the office after having been on extended leave, and discovers that their THS user account was deactivated during their absence.
- Purging the list of THS client user accounts will ensure that the full launch of the e-learning THS training module is directed to active THS users only. All active client users will be required to take the training.

ACTION ITEM(S):

- The THSAC members will agree upon the government department(s) to pilot the THS online training module to ensure that the pilot is effective.

#7. Other Business

Number of Invited Suppliers for a THS Supply Arrangement (SA) Request for Services (RFS)

- Prior to the meeting, questions were raised by a supplier member regarding the increase to the minimum number of invited suppliers required for a THS SA RFS from 3 to 7. The feedback below was presented.
- **When:** The change was introduced in the 2012 renewal RFSA EN578-060502/D, which was dated March 26, 2012, closed on May 8, 2012, and led to awarding THS SAs effective from July 9, 2012 to July 8, 2015.
- **Who Decided:** The change was discussed at THSAC meetings, but not recorded in the record of decisions.
- **Why and Justification:** To increase competitiveness. The change was also made when ceiling rates were eliminated under the SA and SO. Prior to the change, a minimum of 3 invited suppliers were required for a RFS (1 lowest rate, 1 random and 1 user choice). Without ceiling rates, supplier SA pricing was no longer required, and it was necessary to establish a new means of identifying suppliers to be invited for a RFS, which ended up being a minimum of 5 random and 2 user choice, for a total of 7.

Canadian Industrial Security Directorate (CISD) Security Clearances

- A supplier member expressed concern regarding the slow turnaround time for CISD to respond to security clearance requests. He commented that this is a systemic issue impacting many methods of supply.
- The Chair reported that the Director General for STAMS is looking into the matter. According to the Chair, senior PWGSC management is aware of the problem (which is very costly to industry), and working to determine the next steps to alleviate the CISD backlog. The Chair noted that there is nothing to report at this time.
- The following specific concerns were raised: i) The time taken for CISD to respond to security clearance verification requests for resources (made by federal government clients); and ii) Significant delays for companies to receive Designated Organization Screenings (DOSs) from CISD. According to a supplier member, in one case it took a year and a half for CISD to issue DOSs for seven companies.
- When a THS firm requests a security clearance for a resource, supplier members questioned why a duplicate of a security clearance already on file for the resource and valid for a number of years cannot be provided to the THS firm. Apparently, a new security clearance must be issued, thus causing a duplication of effort and associated delays.
- For resource security clearances held with PWGSC, a member questioned why suppliers and clients don't have access to the corresponding CISD database. If they did, they could obtain and verify security clearances for resources directly (self-serve approach). It was noted that DND and the RCMP have their own applicable security clearances.
- Supplier members requested that PWGSC provide a CISD contact with whom they could follow up regarding this matter.
- PWGSC reported that the same issue was tabled at the Informatics Professional Services Advisory Committee (IPSAAC).

ACTION ITEM(S):

- PWGSC will consult with IPSAC regarding security clearance request delays, and provide an update at the next THSAC meeting.

#8. Round-table Questions

- A discussion took place concerning the value of participating on the THS Advisory Committee. To increase the value of participation, particularly for suppliers, it was agreed that up to 3 key issues affecting the THS industry would be tabled at future THSAC meetings. The intent would be to make meetings more practical and to discuss actual examples of problems encountered.
- Some issues affecting the THS industry were touched on, including the following: i) Suppliers offering Stream 5 professional services at hourly rates below market rates, bringing into question the qualifications of proposed resources; ii) The large number of companies issued THS Standing Offers and/or awarded THS Supply Arrangements.
- A supplier member reported that the hourly rate at which an Advanced Auditor was recently proposed by a competitor was so low, that he questioned the validity of the claim that the resource had a minimum of ten years experience as required.
- PWGSC reported that the Assessment Framework for the use of THS by clients is currently focused on the activities of 3 government departments (PWGSC, DND, and Health Canada), and is expected to be completed by April 2014. Key objectives of the assessments include identifying the improper use of the THS On-line tool, and monitoring and controlling the use of the tool.
- The Chair mentioned that other steps were taken recently by PWGSC to improve the integrity of government procurement including the PWGSC Code of Conduct for Procurement and the PWGSC Vendor Performance Corrective Measure Policy. He stated that audits have been conducted in the past, some of which have resulted in corrective measures made at a global level (e.g. making it mandatory for THS suppliers to provide proof of education). When PWGSC has been made aware of breaches to legal terms and conditions, appropriate actions have been taken.
- According to a supplier member, if a simple front end audit of suppliers were conducted (e.g. organization security clearance, resource language qualifications), he estimated that approximately two thirds of THS supplier SOs or SAs would be set aside.

ACTION ITEM(S):

- Starting with the next THSAC meeting, THS will include up to 3 key issues affecting the THS industry on the agenda for each meeting.

#9. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 (Postponed; see postscript below)
Time: 1330 to 1600 (Registration at Commissionaires Desk from 1300 to 1330)
Location: Place du Portage, Phase III, Tower C, Boardroom **PDP 12C1 101A**

Postscript:

- PWGSC postponed the next meeting to **Tuesday February 25, 2014** (same Time and Location) due to scheduling conflicts.

#10. Meeting Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 1545.