



Highlights



Audit of Infrastructure Canada

October 2009

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent agency reporting to Parliament, mandated to safeguard the integrity of the public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service. In addition, the PSC recruits qualified Canadians from across the country.

Why did the PSC conduct this audit?

Infrastructure Canada was established as a department in 2002. It is responsible for federal efforts to enhance Canada's public infrastructure through strategic investments, key partnerships, sound policies and research.

We selected Infrastructure Canada for audit based on a large volume of staffing transactions relative to the size of the department and because it had a high percentage of casual workers who became employees through non-advertised staffing processes.

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether the department had an appropriate framework, systems and practices in place to manage its staffing activities and to determine whether its appointments and appointment processes complied with the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), the instrument of delegation signed with the Public Service Commission (PSC), and other governing authorities.

What did the PSC find?

The audit covered the period of January 1, 2006 to August 30, 2008. We found that Infrastructure Canada did not include human resources (HR) planning, including a staffing strategy, as an integral part of its business planning process. For those years that the department had an approved HR plan, they were general and lacked specific direction for the management team and HR professionals.

The department's monitoring of staffing performance needs to be strengthened. Infrastructure Canada had a Human Resources Committee that was responsible for reviewing staffing activities, but was doing so with incorrect staffing data and without a strategically aligned HR plan. The department had not been performing monitoring, as required by the PSC, of certain types of appointments.

Infrastructure Canada used non-advertised appointment processes for expediency in order to address their HR needs. They were unable to demonstrate how the use of this type of process was linked to the department's HR plan, departmental criteria for non-advertised appointment processes or the PSEA's appointment values. In some cases, this resulted in limited access to the department's employment opportunities.

We examined a sample of 45 appointments. For 22 appointments, merit was demonstrated. This means that the assessments demonstrated that the individuals appointed met the essential qualifications and other identified criteria and requirements for the position. In 15 cases, we found that merit was not demonstrated as the tools and methods used to assess the candidates' qualifications did not evaluate all of the position requirements. For the other eight cases, we found merit was not met as the person appointed to the position failed to meet one or more of the essential qualifications.

The Deputy Head of Infrastructure Canada accepted the findings and is committed to addressing the issues raised in the audit.

What action is the PSC taking?

We have referred appointment files in which issues have been found, to either Infrastructure Canada's Deputy Head to investigate and take appropriate action, as required, or to our Investigations Directorate to determine if an investigation is warranted. The PSC will monitor these files to ensure that corrective action is properly carried out.

The PSC has placed conditions on the delegation of staffing authorities at Infrastructure Canada. In addition to standard annual reporting requirements to the PSC, the Deputy Head of Infrastructure Canada will also be required to formally report to the PSC on a semi-annual basis. Further, the Deputy Head must provide copies of all staffing-related presentations to Infrastructure Canada's HR committee, as well as the related committee minutes.

