Audit of Project Management at the Public Health Agency of Canada

Final Report – March 2026
Prepared by the Office of Audit and Evaluation
Public Health Agency of Canada

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List of acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
CPMO	Corporate Project Management Office
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
PMF	Project Management Framework
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat

Executive summary

Engagement objective

The objective of this audit was to assess whether the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) had developed and implemented an effective project management framework that is working as intended to promote effective and efficient project management.

Engagement scope

The scope of the audit encompassed the PHAC Project Management Framework (PMF) and projects that were worth more than $250K. These projects fall under the Corporate Project Management Office's (CPMO) umbrella of responsibility for review and tracking requirements. Projects with less than a $250K budget were managed by the branches and were excluded, as they were not subject to CPMO review and not tracked centrally as required by the PMF. The audit reviewed processes in place during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 fiscal years, including projects initiated in previous fiscal years.

Additionally, due to the ongoing Audit of Governance and Strategic Planning of IT, which will review the effectiveness of all IT governance processes, including those that apply to IT projects, this audit examined specific elements of project governance such as costing, documentation consistency, capacity, and risk management.

What we found

We found that PHAC's Project Management Framework (PMF) is aligned with the Treasury Board *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes* and provides appropriate governance, gating, and oversight mechanisms for projects worth over $250K. The PMF establishes clear roles, project life cycle stages, and reporting expectations that are consistent with Treasury Board requirements.

However, we identified the following areas where improvements are needed to enhance the effective and efficient application of the PMF across PHAC:

- Documentation presented to governance committees met PMF requirements; however, we found that project teams often lacked clarity on what was expected of them as projects were being initiated, resulting in inconsistent use of standard templates or application of project management principles. These issues reflect broader challenges in the understanding of project management processes, particularly among staff who must navigate the PMF without formal project management experience.

- PHAC does not have a formal process to track project interdependencies, a portfolio-level risk view of risk, capacity, nor smaller branch-managed project activities, meaning those worth less than $250K. All of these are required by the Directive and the PMF. These gaps limit PHAC’s ability to identify systemic risks, recurring issues, and potential efficiencies that could be gained across its project portfolio.

- Finally, we found that costing tools and systems were lacking sufficient detail and accuracy to capture project cost information. These deficiencies can negatively affect timely decision making, reduce accountability, and increase the financial risks of budget overrun and in forecasting future expenditures.

Introduction

Effective project management is crucial in ensuring that government initiatives are delivered on time, within budget, and within desired quality standards. It provides a structured approach that helps to identify risks early, ensures resource optimization, and aligns projects with strategic goals, thus enhancing accountability and transparency in public sector operations.

Project management within the Government of Canada is guided by the Treasury Board's *Policy on the Planning and Management of Investments* and the *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes*. The Policy defines the responsibilities of deputy heads as they relate to establishing project governance. The Directive describes the responsibilities of a department's senior designated official for project management, including the development of a departmental project management framework, and it establishes expectations for projects to be effectively planned, implemented, monitored, controlled, and closed, in order to realize anticipated benefits. The Directive also outlines the responsibilities of project sponsors, and sets expectations for project leadership, governance, gating, and performance measurement.

Within the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is the senior designated official for project management, and is supported by PHAC's Corporate Project Management Office (CPMO). The current CPMO operational model, as defined by the PMO Global Institute, is a mix of supportive (low control level) and controlling (moderate control level) PMO models. CPMO is moving from a PMO model that is supportive, and building towards a PMO model with a manageable and mature control level within organizational practices.

An Audit of Project Management at PHAC was identified as part of the 2024-2025 Risk-based Audit Plan because project management is a key element in ensuring positive outcomes across PHAC, including productive resource use, risk management, alignment with strategic priorities, and saving time and money. Previous related audits include the Audit of Project Management at Health Canada (2025) and the Audit of the Monitoring of Internal Control Over Financial Management at PHAC (2024).

The audit examined all corporately governed projects that were active during the scope period. There were 12 projects across six branches, 6 of which were IT projects and 6 of which were real property projects, totalling $436 million altogether. Of these projects, there are 2 IT projects and 2 are real property projects with a total life cycle cost of $412 million

(95% of the budget). Since these 4 projects are considered very large in dollar terms, as per the PMF, they are subject to additional TBS oversight.

Evolving Project Management Landscape

Outside of the scope period of this audit, a number of changes have been made to the project management processes within PHAC. In May 2025, the threshold for branch-governed projects was increased from $250K to $1 million. This change was intended to align project oversight thresholds with other existing governance mechanisms, reduce the administrative burden on smaller projects, and provide greater flexibility for branches. Additionally, this change included CPMO serving as the central repository for all project artifacts, regardless of project size, and has introduced new quarterly dashboards for small projects.

Criterion 1 – Policy and Framework

Context

PHAC's Project Management Framework (PMF) provides guidance on project definition, management, governance, and oversight for all projects throughout PHAC, while also establishing a common approach to project management. All PHAC projects must be compliant with the PMF, regardless of size.

During the scope period of this audit, the Framework stated that all projects with a life cycle cost equal to, or greater than $250K were subject to CPMO oversight and formal governance. Projects are categorized into 4 categories based on the estimated life cycle cost, and the Project Complexity and Risk Assessment (PCRA) for projects over $1M. The categories are as follows:

Project Category	Estimated Life Cycle Cost	PCRA	Level of Formal Governance
Small	Less than $250K	n/a	Branch governed – Not subject to enterprise oversight
Medium	Between $250K and $1M	n/a	3-gate model
Large (no TBS oversight)	Over $1M	PCRA score of 1 or 2	5-gate model
Large (TBS oversight)	Over $1M	PCRA score of 3 or 4	TBS
	Over $5M	Any PCRA score	

What we expected to find

We expected to find a comprehensive project management framework that was aligned with the *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes* and reflected guidance from the TBS Guide for Project Management Frameworks and the TBS Guide to Project Gating.

Why it matters

A project management framework establishes processes and offers guidance to ensure projects are delivered effectively. Formal project management tools and practices provide direction to meet Treasury Board requirements and promote consistent project delivery across PHAC.

Key findings

Alignment with Treasury Board requirements

We found that the Public Health Agency of Canada's Project Management Framework is aligned with the Treasury Board's *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes*. The Directive requires departments to establish a documented and organization-wide framework anchored in professional best practices.

PHAC's PMF fulfills this requirement by setting out consistent processes, governance structures, and defined accountabilities for the Deputy Head, senior designated officials, and project sponsors. It embeds a structured project life cycle with formal gating, oversight by enterprise-level committees, and standardized documentation to support informed decision making.

The Framework also incorporates mandatory elements of the Directive, including the use of the Organizational Project Management Capacity Assessment (OPCMA) and Project Complexity and Risk Assessment (PCRA) tools, as well as processes for performance measurement and benefits realization.

Gating Documentation

We found that all sampled projects had the required gating documentation on file, demonstrating that key project management artifacts, such as business cases, project charters, costing tools, and benefits realization plans, were prepared and retained in accordance with the Framework.

At the time of the audit, only projects above $250K, meaning medium and large projects, were subject to oversight by the Corporate Project Management Office (CPMO). As such, no small projects were included in the audit sample, and CPMO oversight did not yet extend to projects below the $250K threshold. As of May 2025, CPMO has served as a central artifact repository all projects, regardless of the estimated life cycle cost.

Guidance and Documentation

While all sampled projects maintained the required documentation, there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and consistency of the documentation process. Clearer and more accessible guidance at a project's outset would help streamline efforts and reduce duplication.

While standard templates and guidance are available through the CPMO's SharePoint site, we found that documentation requirements at key points in the project life cycle were not always well understood by project teams. Project team members indicated that they had experienced confusion regarding documentation and gating expectations, particularly during the initiation phase. Additionally, several projects used non-standard templates, suggesting allowances for deviations or uncertainty about how to apply the templates. As a result, documentation practices were inconsistently applied between projects, leading to additional time spent revising materials to meet governance committees' expectations and reducing overall efficiency in the approval process.

Project Interdependencies

We found that PHAC does not have a formal process to identify, document, or monitor project interdependencies. Although the Treasury Board's *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes* requires the "coordinated management of related projects to reduce risk, contribute to shared outcomes, and realize efficiencies", PHAC's Project Management Framework (PMF) does not explicitly outline mechanisms or accountabilities for tracking such interdependencies across PHAC's project portfolio.

In particular, for information technology (IT) projects, the management of technical interdependencies presents additional challenges. There have been attempts to manage and identify these interdependencies via stand-alone ad hoc IT committees, IT planning meetings, and notes added to bi-monthly dashboards; however, interviews indicated that overlapping roles and responsibilities between CPMO and the Digital Transformation Branch (DTB) continue to contribute to confusion regarding ownership and coordination of these interdependencies. During the course of the audit we found that one sampled project had experienced significant delays due to depending on the progress of another project, highlighting the operational impacts of the current gap.

Conclusion and Impact

Overall, we found that the Project Management Framework (PMF) aligns with Treasury Board requirements, but its implementation has not yet been consistent across PHAC. The audit found that documentation practices vary between projects, guidance is not always clearly understood or easily accessible to project teams, and interdependencies between related projects are often managed on an ad hoc basis.

These factors limit the overall effectiveness of the PMF. Inconsistent application of established processes reduces PHAC’s ability to ensure that projects are managed and monitored in a standardized manner. Unclear or inaccessible guidance increases the administrative burden on project teams and can result in duplicated effort or delays in meeting governance committee requirements. Additionally, the absence of a coordinated approach to managing project interdependencies increases the risk of inefficiency, missed opportunities for collaboration, and inconsistent oversight across the project portfolio.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1 (medium priority)

The VP of the Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Management Branch (CFOCMB) should improve support for project managers, ensure that essential project documents are clear, and templates should be easily accessible, in order to promote consistent oversight and efficient project delivery.

Criterion 2 – Risk Management

Context

The TBS *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes* requires departments to establish effective risk management practices throughout the project life cycle. As per the Directive, departments are expected to identify, assess, and mitigate risks regularly, in order to safeguard project objectives and ensure successful delivery. This includes ongoing risk monitoring and reporting and ensuring that risk responses are documented and implemented effectively.

Furthermore, PHAC's Project Management Framework (PMF) states that the Corporate Project Management Office (CPMO) is expected to lead efforts to standardize PHAC's project management competency requirements and ensure PHAC's workforce has the requisite knowledge, experience, and skillsets to effectively exercise its responsibilities in this area. This includes ensuring project team experience and skills are commensurate with industry, project complexity, and project risk requirements.

What we expected to find

We expected to find that PHAC had processes in place to identify, assess, prioritize, and manage risks at both the project and portfolio levels.

Why it matters

A strong risk management process identifies, assesses, and mitigates potential risks to support successful project delivery. Formal risk management practices provide the necessary structure to address uncertainties, meet Treasury Board requirements, and enhance decision making throughout the project management process.

Key findings

Project-Level Risk Identification and Oversight

We found that risk management practices were in place and consistently applied across the sampled projects. Risk registers, business cases, and Project Complexity and Risk Assessments (PCRAs) were on file for all applicable projects, with PCRAs completed only for projects valued at over $1 million, as required by the Framework.

We also found that project-specific risks were being tracked at the project level through individual risk registers and regularly monitored by project teams. At the corporate level, project dashboards provide a high-level overview of the key risks faced by each project, allowing senior management to monitor risk statuses and emerging issues. When significant deviations or change requests occur, these are escalated to governance committees for discussion and, where appropriate, projects are re-baselined.

Deviation Follow-up

While project level risks are being consistently monitored, we found that follow-up on project deviations was not always timely. Through document reviews, we noted that five of the seven projects with change requests on file had submitted the requests after the formal deviation thresholds were exceeded. Interviews with project teams indicated uncertainty around the change request process, including when a change should be triggered, which templates to use, and what information to provide. In some cases, project teams also reported receiving unclear feedback from governance bodies.

These gaps in understanding and communication can slow decision making and delay the resolution of project issues. Lack of timely follow-up on deviations increases the risk of projects proceeding without appropriate approvals or adjustments to scope, cost, or schedule. These challenges are also linked to broader project management capacity gaps, including limited experience among project staff and the absence of mechanisms to track or support project management expertise across PHAC.

Portfolio-Level Risk Management

We found that there was no systematic process to monitor and manage risks and opportunities across PHAC. The absence of a portfolio-level risk register limits PHAC's ability to consolidate risk information, identify recurring or systemic issues, and assess cumulative risk exposure. Both the Directive and PHAC's PMF require that PHAC establish processes to enable the coordinated management of relevant projects to reduce risk, contribute to shared outcomes, and find efficiencies not available from individual project management. Without this portfolio-wide view, opportunities for proactive risk mitigation and strategic decision making at the organizational level are reduced.

Project Management Knowledge and Capacity

We found that project management knowledge and capacity were not being systematically tracked across PHAC. While individual projects may identify capacity issues in their project documentation, reports to senior management have focused primarily on high-level budget information, and CPMO does not monitor resource use beyond funding levels or project capacity at the portfolio level. As a result, there is limited knowledge of whether project teams have the necessary skills, experience, and resources to deliver projects effectively.

Interviews indicated that many project staff are learning project management practices “on the job” due to limited formal training or experience. Project teams also reported challenges like a lack of comprehensive guidance, communication gaps with enabling functions, and uncertainty around timelines and requirements. In addition, the majority of project managers assigned to PHAC projects are directors or analysts, who do not have substantive backgrounds in project management. The absence of experienced project management staff and structured support can contribute to inefficiency, inconsistent execution, and delays in project delivery.

Conclusion and Impact

Projects are actively identifying and managing risks; however, gaps have existed in portfolio-level oversight, knowledge, and capacity monitoring, and a lack of deviation management reduces PHAC’s ability to proactively address risks and ensure timely and efficient project delivery.

Recommendations

Recommendation #2 (medium priority)

The VP of CFOCMB should strengthen portfolio-level oversight by systematically monitoring risks and identifying potential efficiencies across PHAC, and clarify the process and expectations for timely management of project deviations by sponsors.

Recommendation #3 (medium priority)

The VP of CFOCMB should enhance Agency-wide oversight of project management capacity and strengthen understanding of project management processes and tools to better support staff without formal experience who must navigate the current project management landscape.

Criterion 3 – Controls

Context

The TBS *Directive on the Management of Projects and Programmes* requires departments to establish effective controls and ensure benefit realization throughout the project life cycle. As per the Directive, it is expected that there is regular monitoring and reporting of progress, risks, budgets, and schedules for all projects, and that projects deliver measurable results that are aligned with departmental priorities.

Additionally, the PHAC Project Management Framework (PMF) sets out clear reporting and monitoring requirements at both the project and corporate levels. As per the PMF, all projects that fall under CPMO oversight are required to submit project documents to CPMO before each gate to confirm completeness and accuracy, ensuring that projects can progress through their approval stages appropriately. Based on the CPMO gating model, it takes approximately 13 weeks per gate for IT projects to obtain approval, equating to 10 months of administrative processes for medium projects, and 16 months for large IT projects. Projects subject to corporate oversight currently require over 140 pages of documents.

CPMO also prepares bi-monthly project dashboards to inform corporate oversight committees of the status of Agency projects. These reports provide a summary of project health status indicators, upcoming gating presentations, risks and issues and related mitigation strategies in place, recommendations on lessons learned, and potential changes to each project's oversight. Project managers are required to provide the necessary information to compile a quarterly report.

What we expected to find

We expected to find that PHAC has effective controls in place to ensure compliance with the established PMF. Additionally, we expected to find mechanisms in place to validate that projects are managed consistently, that key deliverables align with planned objectives, and that expected outcomes and benefits are achieved.

Why it matters

Well-designed and functional controls are essential for ensuring the integrity and success of the project management process. These controls help mitigate risks, ensure compliance with established policies, and promote effective project execution. Additionally, they support the realization of project benefits by providing clear guidelines for monitoring, reporting, and making informed decisions throughout the project life cycle.

Key findings

Performance Measurement

We found that oversight and performance monitoring mechanisms are in place for projects above the $250K threshold, as required by the PMF. Project performance is regularly tracked against established PMF metrics, including progress, risks, issues, and budget.

This enterprise-level oversight for medium and large projects includes monthly dashboard reporting and review by senior management committees. These dashboards consolidate project information to provide visibility into project health, identify emerging risks, and support informed decision making. Additionally, tools such as the Organizational Project Management Capacity Assessment (OPMCA) further support oversight.

Project Identification

We found that there is no comprehensive record of all projects being undertaken at PHAC. Small projects under the $250k threshold are managed at the branch level without enterprise-level oversight. At the time of the audit, the senior designated official was sending bi-annual call-outs for the identification of small projects; however, this process only led to the identification of one project. CPMO does not currently maintain centralized records of active or recently completed small projects, creating gaps in understanding of PHAC's overall project portfolio, and posing cost and scope risks. This limits visibility into the full range of project activities and reduces the ability to assess cumulative risks, resource demands, and outcomes across the organization.

In May 2025, the threshold for branch-governed projects was increased from $250K to $1 million. This change was intended to align project oversight thresholds with existing governance mechanisms, reduce the administrative burden on smaller projects, and provide greater flexibility to branches. To mitigate potential risks associated with this increase, CPMO has committed to tracking all projects through a standardized intake process, requesting and reviewing quarterly dashboards from branches, and centrally storing all approved project artifacts.

Costing Tools and Financial Controls

We found that the financial oversight mechanisms and tools currently used to track project costs lack sufficient detail to support effective monitoring. Existing costing systems do not consistently capture key financial elements like invoiced amounts, interdepartmental settlements, or internal orders. As a result, senior management has limited knowledge of actual spending patterns and cost variances over the life cycle of a project.

Document reviews showed that 154 of the 155 individual project dashboards listed project cost health as “green,” indicating a variance of less than 10 percent. While project dashboards are self reported and indicate that the project team and sponsor are in agreement on that assessment, interviews with project teams raised frequent concerns about the accuracy of cost estimates and the reliability of cost tracking. The lack of detailed financial data and standardized costing practices limits PHAC’s ability to validate reported results and ensure that project financial performance is accurately represented.

Conclusion and Impact

While PHAC has oversight for medium and large projects, inconsistency in costing tools reduces PHAC’s ability to fully enforce the PMF and to demonstrate accurate performance and financial oversight.

Recommendations

Recommendation #4 (high priority)

The VP of CFOCMB should improve and implement costing tools and systems that provide accurate and complete financial details for projects, in order to fully enforce the PMF and demonstrate accurate performance and financial oversight.

Overall Conclusion

Overall, we found that PHAC's Project Management Framework (PMF) is aligned with Treasury Board requirements for the oversight of larger projects. However, the Framework's efficiency and effectiveness is limited by gaps in portfolio-level oversight, staff's project management knowledge, capacity monitoring, detailed financial costing, and smaller project visibility.

Enhancing the tools that support project management, such as standardized templates, costing tools, cost recognition, and mechanisms for tracking risks and enhancing project management knowledge and capacity, including timely resolution of interdependencies, will improve project management governance by creating consistency, accountability, and transparency. Clearer guidance and tools will also help staff who are not formally trained in project management to navigate the PMF and apply it as intended resulting in better compliance, proactive risk management, and a solid foundation for performance measurement. The audit has made four recommendations to improve the control framework for project management at PHAC.

Appendix A

Audit objective

The objective of this audit was to assess whether the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) had developed and implemented an effective project management framework that is working as intended to promote effective and efficient project management.

Audit scope

The scope of the audit encompassed the PHAC Project Management Framework (PMF) and projects that were worth more than $250K. These projects fall under the Corporate Project Management Office's (CPMO) umbrella of responsibility for review and tracking requirements. Projects with less than a $250K budget were managed by the branches and were excluded, as they were not subject to CPMO review and not tracked centrally as required by the PMF. The audit reviewed processes in place during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 fiscal years including projects initiated in previous fiscal years.

Audit approach

The audit was conducted in accordance with the Government of Canada's *Policy on Internal Audit*, which requires examining sufficient and relevant evidence, and obtaining sufficient information and explanations to provide a reasonable level of assurance in support of the audit conclusion.

The audit included, but was not limited to:

- Reviews of relevant documentation, policies, standards, guidelines, and frameworks related to project management at PHAC.
- Interviews with PHAC project managers, sponsors, and owners, as well as CPMO team members and employees.
- Analysis of select project files.

Statement of conformance

This engagement was conducted in conformance with the IIA's Global Internal Audit Standards and is supported by the results of the OAE's Quality Assurance and Improvement Program.

Audit criteria

1. PHAC has a project management framework in place that aligns with policy requirements and provides effective guidance to project managers and stakeholders.

2. PHAC has a process in place to identify and manage portfolio-level and project-level risks.

3. PHAC has effective controls in place to ensure compliance with the project management framework and to support the achievement of expected project outcomes and benefits.

Appendix B – Recommendation ratings

Recommendations are ranked to assist management in prioritizing their response to audit findings. These ratings are intended to assist with resource allocation to address identified weaknesses and help improve internal controls and operating efficiency. Please note that ratings are for guidance purposes only. Management must evaluate ratings provided by OAE based on their own experience and risk tolerance.

Recommendations are ranked according to the following definitions:

- **High priority**: Item should be given immediate attention due to the existence of either a significant control weakness, such as control not existing, not being adequately designed, not operating effectively, or there being a significant operational improvement opportunity.

- **Medium priority**: This is a control weakness or operational improvement that should be addressed in the near term.

- **Low priority**: This is a non-critical recommendation that could be addressed to either strengthen internal controls or enhance efficiency, normally with minimal cost and effort. Individual ratings should not be considered in isolation and their effect on other objectives should be considered.

Appendix C – Management Response and Action Plan

Recommendation #1

The VP of CFOCMB should improve the support for project managers and ensure that essential documents involved with projects should be clear and templates should be easily accessible, to promote consistent oversight and efficient project delivery.

Management Response and Planned Management Action

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The Corporate Project Management Office (CPMO) had already identified challenges related to the clarity, consistency, and accessibility of project documentation and has taken concrete steps to address these gaps. Actions taken include the development and implementation of an evergreen operational guide for new and existing project teams, designed to orient them to the end-to-end project management process, relevant policies, governance and approval requirements, roles and responsibilities, and standardized templates. The guide is maintained and updated on an ongoing basis as processes, policies, and governance requirements evolve. Expectations have also been reinforced through regular project check-ins and ongoing communications with PHAC senior management and Shared Service partners.

Building on this foundation, CFOCMB will further strengthen documentation clarity and accessibility, and ongoing support to project managers through the following actions.

Action plan items:

1. Update the Project Management Framework, PHAC's high-level guidance for project planning, governance, and oversight, to add clarity, depth, and clear parameters for processes.

2. Develop policy and guidance for managing projects under $1M at the branch level, including a toolkit of simplified artefacts, presentation templates, and dashboard and reporting templates to reduce corporate burden and make smaller project management more efficient.

3. Enhance and streamline project artefacts by clarifying expectations related to document content, modification, timing, access, removing redundancies, embedding guidance directly into artefacts where feasible, and maintaining them as evergreen to support continuous improvement and readiness for the next Organizational Project Management Capacity Assessment (OPMCA) renewal.

4. Launch a centralized CPMO SACR site accessible to all staff, providing a single authoritative source for all project management artefacts, guidance, best practices, change management tools, and learning resources.

Deliverables

1. Updated Project Management Framework shared with all PHAC and Shared Services VPs.

    a. Expected completion date: Completed (November 2025)

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, Corporate Management Directorate (CMD)

2. Policy and guidance for managing projects under $1M and shared with all PHAC and Shared Services VPs.

    a. Expected completion date: Completed (August 2025)

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

3. Updated and Streamlined Project Artefacts and templates

    a. Expected completion date: May 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

4. Centralized CPMO SACR site accessible to all employees

    a. Expected completion date: November 1, 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

Recommendation #2

The VP of CFOCMB should strengthen portfolio-level oversight by systematically monitoring risks and identifying potential efficiencies across the Agency, and clarify the process and expectations for timely management of project deviations by project sponsors.

Management Response and Planned Management Action

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The CPMO has established portfolio level oversight mechanisms to support consistent monitoring of project health and risks. A portfolio-level dashboard was developed that provides a consolidated view of the overall project portfolio, as well as individual project dashboards within a single reporting package. These dashboards have been shared with all PHAC and Shared Services Vice Presidents on a periodic basis for the past two years.

As of December 2025, project and portfolio dashboards are presented as a standing item by the Vice President, CFOCMB, at the Vice President Corporate Management Committee to support discussion of portfolio and project baselines and applicable variances with project sponsors. Vice Presidents may request that projects with multiple or elevated risk factors present directly to the committee, strengthening executive oversight and supporting the timely management of project deviations by project sponsors.

Action plan items

1. Develop and implement a new project risk methodology that aligns with the corporate risk approach to strengthen both project-level and portfolio-level risk practices and improve visibility and oversight.

2. Create and deliver an e-learning course to support the consistent application of the risk methodology across projects, reinforcing portfolio-level oversight, trend analysis, and improved strategic decision making.

3. Update the Project Management Framework to clarify risk management processes and expectations for the timely management of project deviations by project sponsors, including clear guidelines and defined thresholds for when deviations must be escalated for committee awareness, discussion, or decision.

4. Transition dashboards to the enhanced Power BI platform to capture additional portfolio level risks, track trends over time, and support executive decision making. New enhanced Power BI platform will facilitate a targeted discussion on portfolio level risks during DG and VP governance discussions.

Deliverables

1. New project risk methodology aligned with the corporate risk approach, shared with PHAC and Shared Services VPs.

    a. Expected completion date: Completed (August 2025)

    a. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

2. E-learning course supporting consistent application of the project risk methodology across projects, rolled out to all project teams.

    a. Expected completion date: Completed (October 2025)

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

3. Update the Project Management Framework clarifying risk management processes and escalation thresholds for project deviations.

    a. Expected completion date: Completed (October 2025)

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

4. Transition Dashboards to the enhanced Power BI platform to capture portfolio level risks and track trends over time and facilitate portfolio level risk discussion at DG and VP governance.

    a. Expected completion date: March 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

Recommendation #3

The VP of CFOCMB should enhance agency-wide oversight of project management capacity and strengthen understanding of project management processes and tools to better support staff without formal project management experience who must navigate the current project management landscape.

Management Response and Planned Management Action

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The CPMO has taken concrete steps to strengthen Agency-wide project management capacity and improve access to project management processes, tools, and guidance for staff with varying levels of experience.

A Project Management Learning Roadmap was developed and shared to support the limited project management experience within project teams. The roadmap offers comprehensive training for staff leading projects at all levels and was recently updated to include training aligned with the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) program, the GoC Project Management Competencies Framework, and additional TBS learning toolkits and resources.

CPMO delivers regular project management learning and best practice communications through periodic updates issued via the Senior Designated Official to promote consistency and continuous capacity building across the Agency. CPMO also increased the emphasis on establishing and actively managing project-level Director and DG Steering Committees to ensure full stakeholder engagement and increase capacity.

Action plan items

1. Identify and document core project management competencies for staff leading and supporting projects across the Agency, providing clear guidance on the skills and knowledge required for effective project delivery.

2. Develop a practical tool or checklist to assess branch-level capacity to deliver planned and active projects, helping ensure project sponsors have the resources and support needed about workload and capacity.

3. Establish a Community of Practice for project managers and project teams across the Agency to share lessons learned, promote consistent application of project management practices, and strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange across projects and branches.

Deliverables

1. One-pager outlining project management competencies for staff across the Agency.
    a. Expected completion date: December 2026
    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD
2. Project management capacity assessment tool/checklist to support branches in demonstrating readiness and sustained capacity.
    a. Expected completion date: December 2026
    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD
3. Community of Practice for project managers and project teams to share lessons learned, promote consistent practices, and strengthen collaboration across the Agency.
    a. Expected completion date: September 2026
    b. Office of Primary Interest: CPMO, CMD

Recommendation #4 (High Priority)

The VP of CFOCMB should improve and implement costing tools and systems that provide accurate and complete financial details for projects, in order to fully enforce the PMF and demonstrate accurate performance and financial oversight.

Management Response and Planned Management Action

Management agrees with this recommendation.

The Corporate Project Management Office (CPMO) works closely with Financial Management Advisors (FMAs) assigned to the branch sponsoring the project. FMAs review all costing and project governance documents to confirm financial accuracy and provide guidance to the project teams based on their understanding of the branch's financial context. They also participate actively in projects' Steering Committees, supporting informed decision-making and ensuring alignment with financial policies.

Building on this foundation, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer will further enhance project financial management and oversight by implementing structured costing tools, financial controls, dashboards, and integrated reporting processes that provide clear financial visibility and accountability at both the project and portfolio levels.

Action plan items

1. Develop and implement a standardized Project Costing Guide to support project managers and stakeholders. The guide will outline roles and responsibilities, provide clear instructions for estimating project costs, and ensure consistent application of the costing methodology across all projects.

2. Implement financial controls supported by process flowcharts and financial documentation standards to track and monitor project expenses from initiation through completion. This includes establishing coding standards, assigning at least one Internal Order number per project to track project costs in the financial system of record. This includes defining standardized financial documentation requirements for project expenditures between PHAC and Health Canada (Shared Services) to demonstrate compliance with financial policies, support accurate forecasting, and meet project financial reporting requirements.

3. Develop and integrate automated Project Financials reporting into the Project Management Dashboard. This will consolidate project financial information and provide portfolio level visibility to support governance oversight and informed decision making.

4. Launch periodic and recurring project reporting processes that align project forecasting and expenditure tracking with the regular Financial Status Reporting cycle. This will ensure consistent financial oversight, strengthen accountability, and embed Financial Management Advisors in the review, challenge, and escalation of project financial information.

Deliverables

1. Standardized Project Costing Tool implemented to support consistent project cost estimation across the Agency.

    a. Expected completion date: March 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: Internal Reporting under Resource Management and Investment Division (RMID), Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO) Directorate with support from CPMO

2. Project Costing Guide developed and shared with project managers and stakeholders, outlining roles, responsibilities, and costing expectations.

    a. Expected completion date: March 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: Financial Management Advisory Services (FMAS), DCFO with support from CPMO, CMD

3. Documentation standards established between PHAC and Health Canada to support compliance, audit readiness, and accurate project financial certification.

    a. Expected completion date: December 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: DCFO

4. Automated project financial reporting established and integrated into Project Dashboards.

    a. Expected completion date: September 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: Internal Controls and Financial Analytics (ICFA), DCFO with support from FMAS, DCFO and CPMO

5. Standardized financial processes and controls implemented to support tracking and monitoring of project expenses throughout the project lifecycle. Recurring project financial reporting processes implemented and aligned with the Financial Status Reporting cycle.

    a. Expected completion date: September 2026

    b. Office of Primary Interest: RMID, DCFO with support from FMAS, DCFO