



Evaluation of the Public Service Commission of Canada's Oversight Function



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Executive summary

This evaluation assesses the effectiveness, efficiency and integration of the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC)'s oversight function. It covers the period from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2024. It looked at the PSC's external audit, investigation, monitoring and research activities. These activities are, for the most part, contained within the Oversight and Investigations Sector.

Effectiveness of oversight activities: The Oversight and Investigations Sector effectively supports the PSC in assuring Parliament of the health and integrity of the staffing system. However, the sector needs to be more flexible and engage stakeholders better.

Stakeholder appreciation: External stakeholders value the professionalism and teamwork of the Oversight and Investigations Sector's staff. They want more chances to give feedback and a clearer explanation of how findings apply to their specific situations.

Timeliness, targeting and transparency of audits: Audits need to be timelier and more focused. Delays in reporting diminish the usefulness of audit findings for departments and agencies that use them to make decisions. There is a desire for more transparency in how audit topics are chosen and a quicker response to emerging staffing issues.

Data availability: Limited access to data on employment equity and equity-seeking groups makes it difficult for the Oversight and Investigations Sector to analyze and address equity-related issues.

Review processes: Internal stakeholders find that the current review process for audits and investigations is too complex. It causes delays in report publication and hinders the timely sharing of findings.

Communication: While communication with external clients is generally good, there is a need for clearer, focused messaging that addresses specific stakeholder needs.

Integration and collaboration within the Oversight and Investigations Sector: The 3 sector directorates work well together without scope overlap. While collaboration among the directorates is effective, there is an opportunity to improve knowledge sharing across teams. Many staff members want to learn more about what other directorates are doing.

In summary, the Oversight and Investigations Sector plays a key role in overseeing the federal public service staffing system. Addressing these findings is essential for improving the effectiveness of the sector and better meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Increase the impact of audits and investigations on the staffing system by:

- narrowing the scope of audits
- being specific in audit conclusions
- being more attentive to emerging issues
- completing investigations in a timely fashion

Rationale

- External stakeholders indicated audit conclusions are broad; they said that it is difficult for them to understand how audit conclusions apply to their department or agency
- Stakeholders felt that the delay between the start of an audit and its publication is often too long to use audits for decision-making
- A narrower scope of audits would improve timeliness
- Stakeholders said that investigations are completed a little too late to generate a meaningful impact
 - Investigation timelines are impacted by data collection and witness availability
 - Departments and agencies often do not provide important documents in a timely manner
 - Scheduling key witness interviews can prove difficult due to their availability
 - Departments and agencies feel that investigation conclusions come too late to have an impact on the staffing system
 - For example, employees may have already left the public service, or corrective measures come so late that they feel like a punishment rather than guidance for the employees who made mistakes
- External stakeholders said that strong system-wide staffing audit recommendations are needed to generate change in the staffing system

- External stakeholders expressed a desire for improved responsiveness and analysis of emerging issues in the staffing system; this may be impeded by the Oversight and Investigations Sector's governance requirements

Recommendation 2

Improve communications with stakeholders by:

- developing communication strategies that meet the expectations and needs of external stakeholders
- determining roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholder communication and collaboration

Rationale

External stakeholders reported:

- a desire to discuss the findings of audits with the Audit Directorate after reports are published
- an appetite for outreach activities from the Audit Directorate outside of their external audit reports
- a desire for access to their department-specific results
- receiving too many communications and the communications being confusing at times
- a desire to see both exhaustive analyses as well as brief reports (executive summaries and 2-pagers)

Internal stakeholders reported:

- a desire for improved collaboration between the Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate and the Oversight and Investigations Sector
- that communication between the Oversight and Investigations Sector and the Policy and Communications Sector could be improved by creating a clear outline of their roles and responsibilities

Recommendation 3

Improve efficiency and flexibility of Oversight and Investigations Sector review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes

- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

Rationale

- Too many steps in review process affects timeliness
- Review process is overly structured and does not allow for supervisory discretion and flexibility

Program background

The PSC's oversight framework is designed to support it in providing assurances to Parliament on the integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service. This responsibility is shared between the PSC, which provides system-wide oversight, and deputy heads, who provide departmental oversight.

At the PSC, 2 sectors conduct activities in support of the oversight function. The Oversight and Investigations Sector is responsible for providing objective and timely information on the integrity and effectiveness of the public service staffing system. It conducts independent external audits, data analyses, surveys and investigations to fulfill its mandate. The Policy and Communications Sector conducts monitoring activities, which provide valuable compliance reporting and a pulse on staffing activities in departments and agencies. The activities of both sectors complement each other to support the oversight function. See [Annex 2](#) for PSC Oversight Activities and Resources.

Evaluation objective and scope

The objective of this evaluation is to provide a neutral, evidence-based analysis of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the PSC's oversight function, to support informed decision-making. The scope covers the 6 fiscal years spanning April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2024. This period reflects current external audit and investigation activities since the last significant changes were made, following the implementation of the New Direction in Staffing and including the 2021 amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act*.

Evaluation questions

1. Effectiveness: To what extent are oversight activities responsive to issues in the federal public service staffing system and public servants' political activities?
2. Effectiveness: Do oversight activities support the PSC in providing assurances to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service?
3. Efficiency: To what extent are oversight activities delivered efficiently?
4. Integration: To what extent is the oversight function integrated across functions and sectors?

Methodology

(refer to [Annex 4](#) for more information)

- Conducted a total of 44 interviews
- Reviewed over 100 documents from the 3 directorates
- Conducted 2 focus groups
- Reviewed administrative data
- Conducted a case study
- Consulted a focus group composed of members of integration and inclusion sub-committees at the planification and analysis phases

Key findings

Effectiveness

The Oversight and Investigations Sector supports the PSC in providing assurance to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political impartiality of the public service. The sector supports departments and agencies with its expertise and professionalism. The sector could benefit from shorter timelines and greater transparency.



Key finding 1: Oversight activities effectively support the PSC in executing its mandate of ensuring the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the non-partisan nature of the public service.

Departmental support

This evaluation found no duplication of effort or scope overlap across the 3 directorates of the Oversight and Investigations Sector (Audit Directorate, Investigations Directorate, Data Services and Analysis Directorate). All 3 directorates have developed key performance indicators for their expected outcomes, including indicators for the identification of biases and barriers.

The Audit Directorate identifies irregular staffing files through audits, and provides them to the Investigations Directorate, who reviews them and decides whether to investigate. The Audit Directorate's system-wide staffing audit and horizontal-based audit products support departments and agencies in managing their staffing frameworks by identifying strengths and weaknesses across the public service.

The Investigations Directorate supports departments and agencies by investigating possible irregularities in the staffing system which, when founded, leads to their correction. The directorate also provides information sessions and summaries of investigations.

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate supports the other 2 directorates with data, and departments and agencies with data visualization tools. The directorate is looking to expand its visualization tools, and its staffing dashboard is greatly appreciated by members of the HR community.

Both the Audit Directorate and the Data Services and Analysis Directorate conduct planning activities (priority and risk-based audit plan and an annual research plan, respectively) that identify issues of importance in the staffing system. As a new product this year, the Professional Practices Unit has prepared audit plan topic summary notes for each approved engagement in their 2024 to 2027 plan. These notes aim to shorten planning phase timelines by bridging the gap between the analysis completed to identify a topic for the plan, and the work undertaken by audit teams during the engagement's planning phase.



Key finding 2: Internal and external stakeholders expressed appreciation for the professionalism, expertise and collaboration of Oversight and Investigations Sector staff, and for the information provided by the PSC.

Professionalism and skills

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the professionalism and skill of Oversight and Investigations Sector staff. During interviews, the PSC's senior managers were unanimous in emphasizing that the sector's employees are competent, professional, and show integrity in their work. HR staff appreciate the collaborative way the Audit Directorate conducts their audits and the responsiveness of Oversight and Investigations Sector staff to questions about an ongoing audit or possible investigations. Overall, the sector's employees build quality relationships with departments and agencies to better disseminate information.

External stakeholders appreciated the expertise and professionalism of staffing support advisors. Information sessions provided by these advisors (in the Policy and Communications Sector) inform departments and agencies about upcoming audits, research projects and Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument reporting requirements. External stakeholders noted that these information sessions provided vital support to federal departments and agencies. These sessions build connections that are appreciated. Internal stakeholders reported that Oversight and Investigations Sector employees intentionally build quality relationships with departments and agencies, which leads to better informal dissemination of information.



Key finding 3: Oversight activities could be more effective with shorter timelines (audit, investigations conclusions) and more targeted audits. Targeted and timely Oversight and Investigations Sector products would allow departments and agencies to link oversight products more easily to their own staffing practices.

Support provided

System-wide staffing audits are a cornerstone of PSC oversight. Along with the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey, they provide essential data and information that help the PSC ensure compliance with staffing requirements and report on the health of the public service staffing system.

Data Services and Analysis Directorate outputs support departments and agencies in managing their staffing frameworks. The directorate presents macrosimulation models to external stakeholders. Heads of HR and corporate HR staff said that they greatly

appreciated the directorate's staffing dashboards, as they are useful and allow them to compare their departmental staffing performance to that of departments and agencies.

Through system-wide and horizontal-based audits, the Audit Directorate supports departments and agencies in managing their staffing frameworks. Audits uncover staffing system weaknesses and propose remedies. The consensus during focus group discussions with external stakeholders was that audits are useful and allow departments and agencies to make progress in the areas of highest risk and emerging issues. However, external stakeholders mentioned that sometimes, audit conclusions are broad, and it is difficult to understand how these conclusions apply to their department or agency.

Timeliness

Internal and external stakeholders said during interviews that the delay between the start of an audit and its publication is too long for heads of HR to make decisions based on audit conclusions. They reported that this delay decreases their ability to rely on the PSC findings for timely decision-making. In the 2021 post-audit feedback of the *Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment*, respondents expressed a desire for smaller and more targeted audits. This would allow federal departments and agencies to rely on the PSC for decision making.

The Audit Directorate recognizes the need to narrow the scope of its audits to improve the timeliness of its publications. The priority and risk-based audit plan for 2023 to 2026 addresses the desire for more targeted and focused audits or reviews, with shorter timelines from launch to publication (12 to 15 months); future audits should do the same.

To reduce the burden on departments and agencies taking part in audits, the Audit Directorate has adopted software used by departments and agencies to share staffing files with the PSC. This practice was set up in 2024, during an audit of the *Veterans Hiring Act*.

Interviewees and focus group participants said that the summaries of investigations results were useful and shared broadly within their department or agency. However, external stakeholders mentioned that sometimes, investigations are concluded a little too late to generate a meaningful impact.

Impact of the recommendations

Due to the current horizontal nature of audits, external stakeholders reported that they do not have access to their specific results, which decreases the impact of audit recommendations.

Although the action plans were slightly different, a few external interviewees said that the conclusions of the most recent system-wide staffing audit were weak, and similar to the conclusions of the 2018 system-wide staffing audit. They indicated strong system-wide audit recommendations are needed to generate change in the staffing system.



Key finding 4: While the Oversight and Investigations Sector consults widely, stakeholders would like the PSC’s oversight function to be more transparent in the choice of audit topics and more attentive to the emerging issues in the staffing system.

Planning

The Audit Directorate consults stakeholders for its priority and risk-based audit plan, while the Data Services and Analysis Directorate consults stakeholders for its research plan. These directorates also consult each other to avoid duplication or overlap on these plans.

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate revises its research plan on an annual basis. Its research agenda enables timely interventions and aims at improving the overall system performance.

Considered an evergreen document, the research plan allows for contingencies and flexibility to address unexpected needs, emerging priorities and new analytical requirements. An emphasis is placed on engaging and consulting with stakeholders from the beginning to the end of each project to ensure that research is aligned with PSC and government priorities. The Data Services and Analysis Directorate undertakes

an environmental scan (key government publications such as Clerk of the Privy Council's report on the public service, mandate letters) and internal and external consultations¹.

As well, the Data Services and Analysis Directorate and the Personnel Psychology Centre have a joint research plan to avoid duplication of work and to enable data sharing.

Stakeholder feedback

Members of the Meeting of the Commission would like:

- the Oversight and Investigations Sector to share more planning and scoping documents
- to see the feedback received from earlier committees (disposition tables from sub-committees and Executive Management Committee)

Departments and agencies can provide the Data Services and Analysis Directorate with feedback through the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey inbox. The Audit Directorate conducts post-audit surveys. During the interviews, external stakeholders, particularly heads of HR, said that they would like to discuss the findings of audits with the Audit Directorate after they have published reports. They also mentioned that they would appreciate outreach activities from Audit Directorate in addition to their external audit reports.

Finally, external stakeholders expressed a desire for the Data Services and Analysis Directorate and the Audit Directorate to find possible root causes of issues so that they can adjust their operations and align themselves with the *Public Service Employment Act*. The Audit Directorate is generally reluctant to do this because there may be multiple explanations, and timelines may not allow for this added workload. However, the Audit Directorate has already started implementing this approach in their 3 upcoming audits using econometrics.

¹ Internally: Executive Management Committee, Meeting of the Commission, Data Services and Analysis Directorate, Audit Directorate, Investigations Directorate, staffing support advisors. Externally: Heads of HR, Chief Audit Executives, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, PSC Joint Advisory Committee and the PSC Employment Equity Research Working Group, which regroups members from equity-seeking groups, unions and multiple departments and agencies.

Reacting to emerging issues

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate uses simulations to help find emerging issues.

Although the PSC does a lot of proactive work with projections for employment equity sub-groups, employment equity targets, audit plans, and research reports, both internal and external stakeholders said that the PSC could do more analysis on emerging issues.



Key finding 5: The PSC has made great steps towards the full implementation of the 2021 *Public Service Employment Act* amendments.

In preparation for the *Public Service Employment Act* amendments, consultations were held internally within the PSC and externally to the PSC. All 3 Oversight and Investigations Sector directorates have taken action to implement the amendments. Specifically:

The Audit Directorate has created a specialized team, reporting directly to the Director General, to work on biases and barriers. This team received targeted training and is providing leadership to the directorate on equity matters. As this team is new, its ability to detect biases and barriers effectively and make adequate recommendations is not yet known. The priority and risk-based audit plan for 2023 to 2026 incorporates regular and recurring audit activities, such as bias and barrier audits.

The Investigations Directorate has:

- prepared guides and tools to equip its employees, and it has consulted diversity networks on its implementation approach
- developed training materials for the PSC on the updates to the investigation framework related to new authorities, including all components of legislative changes
 - this training was provided to PSC employees who would benefit from it (staffing support advisors, Policy, the Personnel Psychology Centre, the Audit Directorate)
- updated its employee manual to reflect the amendments

No investigations on biases and barriers have been conducted yet.

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate's 2023-25 Research and Development Plan focuses on diversity and inclusion. The directorate also added questions on bias and barriers to the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey. The directorate has expanded its macrosimulation model to produce projections for employment equity subgroups and department/agency level projections for employment equity targets.

Efficiency

The oversight function's efficiency is impeded by data availability and a complex review process for audits and investigations. Communications also need to become more tailored to the needs of stakeholders.



Key finding 6: While communications with external clients are generally good, they could be clearer and more consistently directed to the correct audience.

Although there is mixed messaging about what departments and agencies wish to see from external communications, focus group data showed that in general, they receive most of the communications (data, reports, guidance tools from Policy and Communications Sector, executive summaries) they wish to see from the Oversight and Investigations Sector. However, external stakeholders also noted that this sector sends more communications than is wanted by heads and directors of HR. They added that sometimes relevant information (data, reports, guidance tools from the Policy and Communications Sector, executive summaries) is not communicated.

External stakeholders also described communications as being confusing at times, (too numerous and disorganized) and ineffective. Instead, they wish to see both exhaustive analyses as well as brief reports (executive summaries, and 2-pagers). The Audit Directorate publishes fact sheets and summaries, and the Data Services and Analysis Directorate publishes highlight reports. However, stakeholders said that they would like this to become standard practice.

External stakeholders mentioned during focus groups and interviews that summaries of investigations were useful to inform their HR practices and training.

Collaboration between the Audit Directorate and Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate

The PSC's communications team (Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate) decides the ideal time of publication for maximum impact. However, delays in deliverables are not communicated efficiently to this directorate, undermining their communications strategies.

The Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate publishes and communicates service standards and informs clients of these standards throughout the communication cycle. These established service standards, requirements, and deadlines are crucial for them to deliver effectively. Despite these requirements stemming from Government of Canada policies, Audit Directorate staff and management expressed during interviews that they would like the communications directorate to be more flexible at times. Interviewees from the communications team recognized the need to streamline processes between the communications and Policy and Communications Sector's outreach teams. Interviewees from both the communications and audit teams expressed a strong desire for improved collaboration.



Key finding 7: Although the PSC is not responsible for collecting self-identification data on employment equity and on equity-seeking groups, the lack of equity-seeking group data reduces the analytical capacity of the 3 directorates on equity matters.

Mandate and responsibilities

The PSC is identified as an employer for the purposes of the *Employment Equity Act* for matters falling within its mandate. The *Public Service Employment Act* was recently amended to broaden the scope of the PSC's oversight authorities to include some matters relating to biases and barriers that disadvantage members of equity-seeking groups.

The PSC is not directly responsible for collecting self-identification information, which is managed by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat through various departments and agencies. The PSC, through the Public Service Resourcing System, collects data on employment equity designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act*. Since 2023,

the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey is used to collect data on both employment equity designated groups and equity-seeking groups.

Data availability

Employment equity data availability has improved during the period covered by this evaluation, due to both better data collection efforts by departments and agencies, and central agencies, and the Data Services and Analysis Directorate's efforts to modernize its data integration systems. The new data integration environment enables high-quality reporting and analysis on the health of the public service staffing system. Nevertheless, there continues to be a lack of data on equity-seeking groups, and this is a major external barrier for the Data Services and Analysis Directorate. The lack of data limits the range of topics on which the directorate can provide quality information and the possible support it can provide to the audit and investigations directorates.

Looking forward

The PSC intends to expand the Public Service Resourcing System to include the questions proposed in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's self-identification questionnaire in job seekers' GC Jobs accounts. This is a first step in collecting more data on equity-seeking groups, including racial groups and ethnic origins, gender identity and 2SLGBTQIA+.

In the feedback survey following the PSC's 2021 *Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment*, respondents expressed a desire for the PSC to play a leading role in creating uniformity in employment equity data collection.

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate has been developing its expertise in innovative data analysis techniques. External stakeholders mentioned during the focus groups that there is an opportunity for the directorate and the PSC to continue to expand its expertise on artificial intelligence.



Key finding 8: Although the review process is there to ensure the quality of audits and investigations, it has too many steps. Governance appears heavy.

Review process

Internal stakeholders said that the audit and investigations directorates' file review process is overly structured and does not allow for supervisory discretion and flexibility.

They described the current review process as having too many steps. The current multi-level review process significantly impacts the timeliness of Oversight and Investigations Sector products (audit products, investigations conclusions). This concern was echoed by all the sector's directorates and applies particularly to the investigations and audit directorates.

For instance, the fast-track process for investigations on improper political activity currently involves over 40 steps, leading to delays and confusion among employees. The Investigations Directorate is streamlining the internal review process for improper political activity.

As part of the process, the Audit Directorate reviews and assesses hiring files sent by participating departments and agencies. An auditor completes an assessment, and their work is reviewed by their manager. There is then a fact validation process and an analysis of audit results. A report is written and then it must be reviewed and approved by both the Director General (DG) and Vice President (VP). The Audit Directorate can then consult with stakeholders. The report is presented at the Executive Management Committee and then reviewed again by the DG and VP. Finally, it is presented to the Meeting of the Commission.

Governance

While internal stakeholders recognize the importance of governance, they suggested that it could be streamlined and simplified. Internal stakeholders described governance as lengthy, with too many levels of approval. They added that the approval of the Audit Directorate's reports is sometimes delayed due to governance requirements.

Integration

The 3 Oversight and Investigations Sector directorates work well together and don't overlap. While collaboration among the directorates is effective, there is an opportunity for better knowledge sharing across teams.



Key finding 9: The Oversight and Investigations Sector collaborates with the Policy and Communications Sector; however, communication could be improved through more meaningful exchanges of information and shared decision-making.²

The Audit Directorate and Investigations Directorate are independent directorates. They collaborate with the Policy and Communication Sector to interpret policies accurately, conduct outreach activities and communicate results.

The Audit Directorate executes the authority of the Commission. As a result, there are some constraints on what can be shared with other sectors to prevent conflicts of interest.

Contradictory feedback from the 2 sectors showed that bilateral communication could be improved through a clear outline of roles and responsibilities. Regular bilats between the Audit Directorate and Policy and Communications Sector could improve overall collaboration. Their collaboration appears to be stronger at the planning phase than at the conclusions and recommendations phase.



Key finding 10: The directorates are well integrated within the Oversight and Investigations Sector.

Investigations Directorate

Due to its independence and the confidential nature of its work, the Investigations Directorate has limited collaboration with the 2 other directorates. However, its collaboration is meaningful and productive.

Audit Directorate

Within the confines of its mandate, the Audit Directorate collaborates mainly with the Data Services and Analysis Directorate, but also with the Investigations Directorate.

² For this report, the evaluation focused on the collaboration of the Oversight and Investigations Sector with the Policy and Communications Sector through the lens of the System-Wide Staffing Audit.

Data Services and Analysis Directorate

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate collaborates largely with the 2 other directorates by analyzing and interpreting data; the 2 directorates reported during the interviews that they appreciate its work.

Oversight and Investigations Sector

Information circulates between directorates through formal means. This includes dedicated resources, regular project meetings, joint presentations with senior management on planning and conduct, formal analytical outputs that receive approval up to the VP level and attendance as participants throughout governance. Information is also shared at extended sector management committee meetings, briefings and more informally.



Key finding 11: Although updates on projects and results are shared internally, many Oversight and Investigations Sector staff would like to be more aware of its activities, but not all of them take advantage of Sector Management Committee extended meetings.

Managers must inform employees of sector activities, and employees are responsible for staying up to date.

Interviewees reported knowing little about the work of other teams within their own directorate. They said that they would like to know more about other directorates' work.

To allow the Oversight and Investigations Sector's employees to learn more about other directorates' ongoing projects and facilitate better information sharing, sector management launched Sector Management Committee extended meetings. These meetings highlight the work of each directorate. The meetings take place regularly, but not all staff choose to attend these meetings.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Increase the impact of audits and investigations on the staffing system by:

- narrowing the scope of audits
- being specific in audits conclusions
- being more attentive to emerging issues
- completing investigations in a timely fashion

Rationale

- External stakeholders considered audit conclusions to be broad, and they said it is difficult to understand how they apply to their department and agency
- Stakeholders felt that the delay between the start of an audit and its publication is often too long to use audits for decision-making
- A narrower scope of audits would improve timeliness
- Stakeholders said that investigations are done a little too late to generate a meaningful impact
 - Investigation timelines are affected by data collection and witness availability
 - Departments and agencies often do not provide important documents in a timely manner
 - Scheduling key witnesses' interviews can prove difficult due to their availability
 - Departments and agencies feel that investigation conclusions come too late to have an impact on the staffing system
 - For example, it may be that employees have already left the public service, or the corrective measures come so late that they feel punitive rather than constructive for the employees who made mistakes
- External stakeholders said that strong system-wide staffing audit recommendations are needed to generate change in the staffing system
- External stakeholders expressed a desire for improved responsiveness and analysis of emerging issues in the staffing system; this may be impeded by Oversight and Investigations Sector governance requirements

Recommendation 2

Improve communications with stakeholders by:

- developing communication strategies that meet the expectations and needs of external stakeholders
- determining roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholder communication and collaboration

Rationale

External stakeholders reported:

- a desire to discuss the findings of audits with the Audit Directorate after reports are published
- an appetite for outreach activities from the Audit Directorate outside of their external audit reports
- a desire for access to their department-specific results
- receiving too many communications and the communications being confusing at times,
- a desire to see both exhaustive analyses as well as brief reports (executive summaries, and 2-pagers)

Internal stakeholders reported:

- a desire for improved collaboration between the Communications and Parliamentary Affairs Directorate and the Oversight and Investigations Sector
- that communication between the Oversight and Investigations Sector and the Policy and Communications Sector could be improved by creating a clear outline of each of their roles and responsibilities

Recommendation 3

Improve efficiency and flexibility of the Oversight and Investigations Sector review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes
- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

Rationale

- Too many steps in review process affects timeliness
- Review process is overly structured and does not allow for supervisory discretion and flexibility

Evaluation of the Public Service Commission of Canada's oversight function: Management Response Action Plan

Note the tables below uses the following acronyms:

- AD: Audit Directorate
- ADAI: Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument
- CPAD: Communications and Parliamentary Affairs
- CDO: Chief Data Officer
- DG: Director General
- DGC: Data Governance Committee
- DSAD: Data Service and Analysis Division
- ID: Investigation Directorate
- IIC: Integration and Inclusion Committee
- MOC: Meeting of the Commission
- NRD: National Recruitment Directorate
- OIS: Oversight and Investigations Sector
- PCS: Policy and Communication Sector
- PD: Policy Directorate
- PEER: PSC Employment Equity Research Working Group
- PPC: Personnel Psychology Centre
- Q4 2024 to 2025: the fourth quarter of 2024 to 2025. Q1 is April to June 2024; Q2 is July to September 2024; Q3 is October to December 2024 and Q4 is January to March 2025
- QR: Quality Review
- SSA: staffing support advisor
- VP: Vice-President

Recommendation 1: action plan

Response and planned actions: 1.1 and 1.2

Recommendation 1: Increase the impact of audits and investigations on the staffing system. The Audit Directorate can increase their impact on the staffing system by narrowing the scope of audits, being specific in audit conclusions and being more

attentive to emerging issues. The Investigations Directorate can generate a meaningful impact on the staffing system by completing their investigations in a timely fashion.

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
1.1.a Audit will put forward more specific conclusions and recommendations to the Commission for their approval.	Beginning with current and upcoming audits Q4 2024 to 2025	1.1 DG of Audit	1.1.a Narrower audit scope, and more specific results and conclusions submitted to Commission for approval.
1.1.b As well, we have introduced the use of econometric modelling in performance audits to improve our ability to identify factors which may contribute to observations as a means to focus conclusions and recommendations.	Change in approach currently in effect		1.1.b Use of econometric modelling where appropriate in audit methodology.
<p>1.2. A number of initiatives aimed at creating efficiencies in investigations have recently been undertaken and have been approved by the Commission. This will allow resources to focus on more complex cases in a more timely fashion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new process for candidacy-related political activity cases 	Change in approach currently in effect.	1.2 DG of ID	<p>1.2.a Aiming for a 10% reduction in overall time to complete investigations.</p> <p>b. Increase in number of completed investigation per fiscal year.</p>



Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in organizational structure to reduce bottlenecks in the process and better support for the investigators • implementation of a risk-based approach to treat allegations received and ongoing investigations as per, among several factors, the risk to the integrity of the staffing system • outreach strategy in place to increase awareness and prevention of irregularities 			<p>c. Overall planned reduction of 75% of candidacy-related political activities that are investigated.</p>



Response and planned actions: 1.3 and 1.4

Recommendation 1: Increase the impact of audits and investigations on the staffing system. The Audit Directorate can increase their impact on the staffing system by narrowing the scope of audits, being specific in audit conclusions, and being more attentive to emerging issues. The Investigations Directorate can generate a meaningful impact on the staffing system by completing their investigations in a timely fashion.

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
1.3 New VP of OIS to meet with the Commission to better understand their perspective on OIS role and products.	Q4 2024 to 2025	1.3 VP of OIS	1.3 VP of OIS to meet with Commission on OIS approach and products by Q4 of 2024 to 2025.
1.4 OIS will leverage the ADAI Annex D questionnaire to follow up and report on the impacts of audits and investigations.	Q1 2025 to 2026	1.4 VP of OIS	1.4 OIS will provide to PCS by December 2024 proposals for new questions on audit and investigations for Annex D in 2025 to 2026.



Recommendation 2: action plan

Response and planned actions: 2.1

Recommendation 2: Improve communications with stakeholders by:

- developing communication strategies that meet the expectations and needs of external stakeholders
- determining roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholder communication and collaboration

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
2.1. Better leverage existing and new mechanisms for communications and outreach related to audit results.	Q4 2024 to 2025	2.1 DG of Audit	<p>2.1 Early inclusion of audits in Corporate calendar for planning. Presentation of audit results to relevant committees.</p> <p>Leverage new tools (for example: Empowering Excellence) to communicate audit results.</p>

Response and planned actions: 2.2

Recommendation 2: Improve communications with stakeholders by:

- developing communication strategies that meet the expectations and needs of external stakeholders
- determining roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholder communication and collaboration

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
2.2.a For audit reports, OIS will establish a document of roles and responsibilities of internal stakeholders with respect to communication and collaboration on management response action plans.	Q1 2025 to 2026	2.2.a DG of Audit	2.2.a Completed roles and responsibilities document.
2.2.b The ID will put in place an internal collaboration group with key oversight players (ID, AD, PD, SSA, NRD, PPC) that will serve to exchange information and results related to the oversight mandate of the Commission that may provide useful insights on required policy work. This will also ensure the Commission's preoccupations or desire to explore new/modified policy direction are heard and actioned by the program.	Q4 2024 to 2025	2.2.b DG of ID in collaboration with other key groups	2.2.b Internal collaboration group will be established by end of Q4 and will hold quarterly meetings.
2.2.c In addition to the existing PEER working group and the Integration and Inclusion Committee, VP of OIS chairs a new PSC Data Governance	Q4 2024 to 2025	2.2.c DG of DSAD	2.2.c Data management roles and responsibilities

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
Committee involving all PSC VPs and other stakeholders to ensure they are aware of, and have an opportunity to comment on, data products and research outcomes. As part of its mandate, the Data Governance Committee will establish clear roles and responsibilities across sectors for data management.			within PSC to be documented as part of the creation of the Data Governance Committee.

Recommendation 3: action plan

Response and planned actions: 3.1 to 3.3c

Recommendation 3: Improve efficiency and flexibility of OIS review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes
- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
3.1 Streamline and make more responsive quality assurance process for audits.	Q1 2025 to 2026	DG of Audit	3.1 Revised QR process/procedures and updated audit manual.
3.2 Improve internal communication,	First meeting	VP of OIS	3.2 Early inclusion of audits in Corporate calendar to ensure

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
coordination and collaboration between OIS and PCS.	in Q3 2024 to 2025		visibility of VPs and DGs to align plans, deliverables and timelines. Regular joint management team meetings are scheduled.
3.3 Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.	Q4 2024 to 2025	DG of ID	3.3.a Mapping the existing review process of investigations files and establish review timelines for key stages.
	Q3/Q4 2024 to 2025	DG of DSAD/ID	3.3.b Create data visualization tool for the Commission that gives more details on active files to increase understanding of the current workload. This would be shared with the Commission with our quarterly data update.
	Q1/Q2 2025 to 2026	DG of DSAD	3.3.c DSAD to prepare a Data Quality Policy (Q3 to Q4 in 2024 to 2025) and related processes outlining the roles and responsibilities throughout the data quality process and procedures for data including PSC governance (beginning Q2 2025 to 2026). The policy will be available on the Intracom page for the CDO (2025 to



Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
			2026) and a communications plan for its dissemination will be created.

Response and planned actions: 3.3d to 3.5

Recommendation 3: Improve efficiency and flexibility of OIS review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes
- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
3.3 Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products	FY 2025 to 2026	DG of DSAD	3.3.d Increased awareness of research and data products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research and development plan developed in collaboration with PCS for all research and survey reports (ongoing)
			3.3.e Agenda and/or presentations and/or minutes demonstrating outreach activities to audit stakeholders.



Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
3.4 Ensure proposed audit reports are shared with IIC, SSA, regional offices, Outreach and CPAD to ensure appropriate awareness of audit products.	Q1 2025 to 2026	DG of Audit	3.4 The DGC meets monthly and combined with the IIC in a special joint meeting, when necessary, which eliminates the need for multiple meetings and optimize resources. VP of OIS (Chair) is responsible for the committee achieving its mandate and ensuring that when needed joint meetings are held to ensure that the right members are at the table when there is a potential overlap between committee responsibilities.
3.5 Beyond the PEER working group, DSAD will further leverage both IIC as is currently the case as well as Data Governance Committee to share data products and studies as part of internal governance.	3.5.a. First DGC held at Q2 2024 to 2025	3.5.a VP of OIS, as the Chair, is responsible for the forward agenda and the DGC meeting its mandate	Improved efficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.a include the research and survey reports in PCS' strategic communications plan (ongoing)
	3.5.b. Q4 2024 to 2025	3.5.b DG of DSAD	



Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.b continue leveraging new efficient communication mechanisms (newsletters, open government portal) to streamline the review and approval process and integrate these approaches in our outreach plans to reduce redundancies. (ongoing)

Response and planned actions: 3.6

Recommendation 3: Improve efficiency and flexibility of OIS review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes
- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
3.6 In collaboration with the PCS' communications, mapping of report generation and publication deadlines will be elaborated describing respective roles and responsibilities and associated timelines while ensuring	Q1 2025 to 2026	DG of Audit	3.6 Updated report production guide for CPAD and OIS, reducing steps where possible and

Response and planned actions	Timelines	Proposed persons responsible	Measures of achievement
they are complementary (that is, that they reduce or eliminate overlap of responsibilities).			clearly outlining roles and responsibilities.

Management Response Action Plan Transcript

Acronyms:

Note the following acronyms are used:

AD: Audit Directorate

ADAI: Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument

DG: Director General

DSAD: Data Service and Analysis Division

ID: Investigation Directorate

IIC: Integration and Inclusion Committee

MOC: Meeting of the Commission

NRD: National Recruitment Directorate

OIS: Oversight and Investigations Sector

PCS: Policy and Communication Sector

PEER: PSC Employment Equity Research Working Group

PPC: Personnel Psychology Center

PD: Policy Directorate

QR: Quality Review

SSA: Staffing Support Advisors

VP: Vice-president

Recommendation 1:

Increase the impact of audits and investigations on the staffing system. The Audit Directorate can increase their impact on the staffing system by narrowing the scope of audits, being specific in audit conclusions, and being more attentive to emerging issues. The Investigations Directorate can generate a meaningful impact on the staffing system by completing their investigations in a timely fashion.

1.1.a

Response and Planned action(s):

Audit will put forward more specific conclusions and recommendations to the Commission for their approval.

Timelines:

Beginning with current and upcoming audits Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG of Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

Narrower audit scope, and more specific results and conclusions submitted to Commission for approval.

1.1.b

Response and Planned action(s)

See [Recommendation 1](#) and [Acronyms](#).

As well, we have introduced the use of econometric modelling in performance audits to improve our ability to identify factors which may contribute to observations as a means to focus conclusions and recommendations.

Timelines:

Change in approach currently in effect.

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG of Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

Use of econometric modelling where appropriate in audit methodology.

1.2

Response and Planned action(s)

See [Recommendation 1](#) and [Acronyms](#).

A number of initiatives aimed at creating efficiencies in investigations have recently been undertaken and have been approved by the Commission. This will allow resources to focus on more complex cases in a more timely fashion.:

- New process for candidacy-related political activity cases;
- Changes in organizational structure to reduce bottlenecks in the process and better support for the investigators;
- Implementation of a risk-based approach to treat allegations received and ongoing investigations as per, among several factors, the risk to the integrity of the staffing system.
- Outreach strategy in place to increase awareness and prevention of irregularities.

Timelines:

Change in approach currently in effect,

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG of ID

Measure(s) of achievement:

- a) Aiming for a 10% reduction in overall time to complete investigations
- b) Increase in number of completed investigation per fiscal year.
- c) Overall planned reduction of 75% of candidacy-related Political Activities that are investigated*

1.3

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 1](#) and [Acronyms](#).

New VP OIS to meet with the Commission to better understand their perspective on OIS role and products

Timelines:

36 – Evaluation of the Public Service Commission of Canada's Oversight Function



Q4 2024-25

Proposed person(s) responsible:

VP OIS

Measure(s) of achievement:

VP of OIS to meet with Commission on OIS approach and products by Q4 of 2024-25.

1.4

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 1](#) and [Acronyms](#).

OIS will leverage the ADAI Annex D questionnaire to follow-up and report on the impacts of audits and investigations.

Timelines:

Q1 2025-26

Proposed person(s) responsible:

VP OIS

Measure(s) of achievement:

OIS will present to MOC by Q1 2025-26 an overview of the approach to tracking impact of audits and investigations

Recommendation 2:

Improve communications with stakeholders by:

- developing communication strategies that meet the expectations and needs of external stakeholders.
- determining roles and responsibilities for internal stakeholder communication and collaboration.

2.1

Response and Planned action(s):

Better leverage existing and new mechanisms for communications and outreach related to audit results.

Timelines:

Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

- Presentation of Audit results to relevant committees,
- Leverage new tools (e.g. Empowering Excellence) to communicate audit results.

2.2a**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 2](#) and [Acronyms](#).

For audit reports, OIS will establish a document of roles and responsibilities of internal stakeholders with respect to communication and collaboration on management response plans.

Timelines:

Q1 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

Completed roles and responsibilities document.

2.2.b**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 2](#) and [Acronyms](#).

The ID will put in place an internal collaboration group with key oversight players (ID, AD, PD, SSA, NRD, PPC) that will serve to exchange information and results related to the oversight mandate of the Commission that may provide useful insights on required policy work. This will also ensure the Commission's preoccupations or desire to explore new/modified policy direction are heard and actioned by the program.

Timelines:

Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG- ID in collaboration with other key groups

Measure(s) of achievement:

Internal collaboration group will be established by end of Q4 and will hold quarterly meetings.

2.2.c**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 2](#) and [Acronyms](#).

In addition to the existing PEER working group and the Integration and Inclusion Committee, VP OIS chairs a new PSC Data Governance Committee involving all PSC VPs and other stakeholders to ensure they are aware of, and have an opportunity to comment on, data products and research outcomes. As part of its mandate, the Data Governance Committee will establish clear roles and responsibilities across sectors for data management.

Timelines:

Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD

Measure(s) of achievement:

Data management roles and responsibilities within PSC to be documented as part of the creation of the Data Governance Committee.

Recommendation 3

Improve efficiency and flexibility of OIS review processes and governance by:

- optimizing the review and approval processes
- clearly defining roles and responsibilities
- establishing review deadlines and following them
- reducing redundancies

3.1

Response and Planned action(s):

Streamline and make more responsive quality assurance process for audits

Timelines:

Q1 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

Revised QR process / procedures Updated Audit Manual

3.2

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Improve internal communication, coordination and collaboration between OIS and PCS.

Timelines:

First meeting in Q3 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

VP OIS

Measure(s) of achievement:

Regular joint management team meetings are scheduled between OIS and PCS (i.e., VPs and DGs) to review and discuss upcoming plans, deliverables and timelines.

3.3.a

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.

Timelines:

40 – Evaluation of the Public Service Commission of Canada's Oversight Function



Q4 2024-25

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG ID

Measure(s) of achievement:

Mapping the existing review process of Investigations files and establish review timelines for key stages.

3.3.b

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.

Timelines:

Q3/Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD / ID

Measure(s) of achievement:

3.3.b Create data visualisation tool for the Commission that gives more details on active files to increase understanding of the current workload. This would be shared with the Commission with our quarterly data update.

3.3.c

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.

Timelines:

Q3/Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD

Measure(s) of achievement:

3.3.c DSAD to prepare a Data Quality Policy (Q3-Q4 /2024/2025) and associated processes that will outline the roles and responsibilities throughout the data quality process and procedures for data including PSC governance (Beginning Q1 2025). The policy will be available on the Intracom (FY 2025–2026) page for the CDO and a comms plan for its dissemination will be created.

3.3.d

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.

Timelines:

FY 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD

Measure(s) of achievement:

Increased awareness of research and data products

- Outreach plans developed in collaboration with PCS for all research and survey reports. (on-going)

3.3.e

Response and Planned action(s):

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Increase awareness/understanding of PSC/Commission governance and how it relates to timelines for approvals of OIS products.

Timelines:

FY 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD

Measure(s) of achievement:

Agenda and/or presentations and/or minutes demonstrating outreach activities to Audit stakeholders.

3.4**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Ensure proposed audit reports are shared with IIC, SSA, Regional Offices, Outreach and Communications to ensure appropriate awareness of audit products.

Timelines:

Q1 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

The DGC meets monthly and combined with the IIC in a special joint meeting, when necessary, which eliminates the need for multiple meetings and optimize resources. VP OIS/Chair is responsible for the committee achieving its mandate and ensuring that when needed joint meetings are held to ensure that the right members are at the table when there is a potential overlap between committee responsibilities.

3.5.a**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Beyond the PEER working group, DSAD will further leverage both IIC as is currently the case as well as Data Governance Committee to share data products and studies as part of internal governance.

Timelines:

First DGC held at Q2 2024-25

Proposed person(s) responsible:

VP OIS, as the Chair, is responsible for forward agenda and the DGC meeting its mandate

Measure(s) of achievement:

Improved efficiency

- Included the research and survey reports in PCS' strategic comms plan. (on-going)

3.5.b**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

Beyond the PEER working group, DSAD will further leverage both IIC as is currently the case as well as Data Governance Committee to share data products and studies as part of internal governance.

Timelines:

Q4 2024–2025

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG DSAD

Measure(s) of achievement:

Improved efficiency

- Continue leveraging new efficient communication mechanisms (Newsletters, Open government portal, etc.) to streamline the review and approval process and integrate these approaches in our outreach plans to reduce redundancies. (on-going)

3.6**Response and Planned action(s):**

See [Recommendation 3](#) and [Acronyms](#).

In collaboration with PCS' communications, mapping of report generation and publication deadlines will be elaborated describing respective roles and responsibilities and associated timelines while ensuring they are complementary (i.e., reduce or eliminate overlap of responsibilities).

Timelines:

Q1 2025–2026

Proposed person(s) responsible:

DG Audit

Measure(s) of achievement:

Updated report production guide for Comms and OIS, reducing steps where possible and clearly outlining roles and responsibilities.

Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
1. Do oversight activities support the Commission in providing assurances to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service?	1.1 To what extent does the oversight function support the Commission in providing assurances to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the	1.1.1 Stakeholder perspective of oversight activities	1.1.1	1.1.1	1.1.1	1.1.1	-
		1.1.2 Extent to which oversight function outputs support departments and agencies in managing their staffing framework	1.1.2		1.1.2	1.1.2	-



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
	public service?						
	1.2 To what extent is the oversight function equipped to implement the 2021 changes to the <i>Public Service Employment Act</i> ?	1.2.1 Evidence of practices (including standard operation procedures, data interpretation, and learning material) in support of changes to the 2021 <i>Public Service Employment Act</i>	1.2.1		1.2.1	1.2.1	-
		1.2.2 Evidence of a diversity of internal/external discussions and consultations	1.2.2		1.2.2	1.2.2	-



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
2. To what extent are oversight activities responsive to issues in the federal public service staffing system and public servants' political activities?	2.1 Are oversight function activities focusing on issues of greatest importance in the staffing system?	2.1.1 Evidence that areas of highest risk and emerging issues are identified in oversight planning activities	2.1.1	-	2.1.1	2.1.1	-
		2.1.2 Alignment with government-wide priorities, with respect to staffing in the federal public service	2.1.2		2.1.2	2.1.2	
	2.2 Are oversight function activities effective in meetings	2.2.1 Evidence of established processes and procedures	2.2.1		2.2.1	2.2.1	



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study	
	their outcomes?	2.2.2 Perception by stakeholders if oversight function outputs are received in a timely and effective manner	2.2.2		2.2.2	2.2.2		
		2.2.3 Extent that oversight function activities identify bias and barriers	2.2.3	-	2.2.3	2.2.3	-	
	2.3 Are communications from the PSC's oversight function effective?	2.3.1 Level of awareness of oversight activities and outputs	2.3.1	2.3.1	2.3.1	2.3.1	2.3.1	-
		2.3.2 Level of satisfaction with	2.3.2	2.3.2	-	2.3.2	2.3.2	-



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
		communication of oversight activities and outputs					

Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
3. To what extent are oversight activities delivered efficiently?	3.1 To what extent are resources managed efficiently?	3.1.1 Evidence of barriers and efficiencies of work processes	3.1.1	3.1.1	3.1.1	-	3.1.1
	3.2 To what extent is the oversight function	3.2.1 Evidence of collaboration and exchange of information across	3.2.1		3.2.1	3.2.1	3.2.1



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
	integrated across functions and sectors?	functions and sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of shared decision-making processes within the oversight sector (evidence of joint problem-solving and resource use) • evidence of trust among partners, within the oversight sector and with other sectors 					



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of flexible leadership, which responds to changing contexts and challenges, within the oversight sector and with other sectors • evidence of robust project management , within the oversight sector • evidence of relationship management and communication, within the oversight sector and with other sectors 					



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
3. To what extent are oversight activities delivered efficiently?	3.2 To what extent is the oversight function integrated across functions and sectors?	<p>3.2.2. Evidence of overlaps or redundancies in conducting oversight activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of possible duplication of efforts: whether audit, investigations and DSAD are conducting similar or identical activities without coordination resource allocation within the oversight sector 	3.2.2	3.2.2	3.2.2	3.2.2	3.2.2



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of information sharing within the oversight sector (information, findings, and data) evidence of possible overlaps in scope of oversight activities evidence of the existence of coordination mechanisms between Investigations, Audit and DSAD 					
	3.3 How does delivery of	3.3.1 Description of best practices and innovative	3.3.1	3.3.1	3.3.1	3.3.1	



Key evaluation question	Related sub-questions	Evaluation indicators	Document review	Admin data	Interviews	Focus groups	Case study
	activities compared to best practices in the oversight field?	oversight practices					

Evaluation Matrix Transcript

Key question 1

1. Do oversight activities support the Commission in providing assurances to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service?

Sub-question 1.1

- To what extent does the oversight function support the Commission in providing assurances to Parliament on the health and integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service?

Indicators

- Stakeholder perspective of oversight activities.
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, administrative data, interviews and focus groups.
- Extent to which oversight function outputs support departments and agencies in managing their staffing framework
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, interviews and focus groups.

Sub-question 1.2

- 1.2 To what extent is the oversight function equipped to implement the 2021 changes to the Public Service Employment Act?

Indicators

- 1.2.1. Evidence of practices (including standard operation procedures, data interpretation, and learning material) in support of changes to the 2021 Public Service Employment Act
- 1.2.2. Evidence of a diversity of internal/external discussions and consultations

Lines of evidence for indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 include: document review, interviews and focus groups.

Key question 2

2. To what extent are oversight activities responsive to issues in the federal public service staffing system and public servants' political activities?

Sub-question 2.1

- 2.1 Are oversight function activities focusing on issues of greatest importance in the staffing system?

Indicators

- 2.1.1. Are oversight function activities focusing on issues of greatest importance in the staffing system?
- 2.1.2. Alignment with government wide priorities, with respect to staffing in the federal public service

Lines of evidence for indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 include document review, interviews, focus groups.

Sub-question 2.2

- 2.2 Are oversight function activities effective in meetings their outcomes?

Indicators

- 2.2.1. Evidence of established processes and procedures
- 2.2.2. Perception by stakeholders if oversight function outputs are received in a timely and effective manner

- 2.2.3. Extent that oversight function activities identify bias and barriers

Lines of evidence for indicators 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 include document review, interviews, focus groups.

Sub-question 2.3

- 2.3 Are communications from the PSC's oversight function effective?

Indicators

- 2.3.1. Level of awareness of oversight activities and outputs
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, administrative data, interviews and focus groups.
- 2.3.2. Level of satisfaction with communication of oversight activities and outputs
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, interviews, focus groups.

Key Question 3

3. To what extent are oversight activities delivered efficiently?

Sub-question 3.1

- 3.1 To what extent are resources managed efficiently?

Indicator

- 3.1.1. Evidence of barriers and efficiencies of work processes
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, administrative data, interviews, case study

Sub-question 3.2

- 3.2 To what extent is the oversight function integrated across functions and sectors.

Indicators

- 3.2.1. Evidence of collaboration and exchange of information across functions and sectors
 - Evidence of shared decision-making processes within the oversight sector (evidence of joint problem-solving and resource use)

- Evidence of trust among partners, within the oversight sector and with other sectors.
- Evidence of flexible leadership, which responds to changing contexts and challenges, within the oversight sector and with other sectors.
- Evidence of robust project management, within the oversight sector.
- Evidence of relationship management and communication, within the oversight sector and with other sectors.
- 3.2.2. Lines of evidence include: document review, interviews, focus groups, case study.
 - Evidence of overlaps or redundancies in conducting oversight activities
 - Evidence of possible duplication of efforts: whether audit, investigations and DSAD are conducting similar or identical activities without coordination.
 - Resource allocation within the oversight sector.
 - Evidence of information sharing within the oversight sector (information, findings, and data)
 - Evidence of possible overlaps in scope of oversight activities.
 - Evidence of the existence of coordination mechanisms between Investigations, Audit and DSAD.

Lines of evidence include: document review, interviews, focus groups, case study.

Sub-question 3.3

- 3.3 How does delivery of activities compare to best practices in the oversight field?

Indicator

- 3.3.1 Description of best practices and innovative oversight practices
 - Lines of evidence include: document review, interviews, focus groups.

Annex 2: Oversight activities and resources

Public Service Commission of Canada oversight activities

External audits

- Horizontal audits
- Risk-based audits

Investigations

- Related to appointment processes
- Related to political activities

Monitoring

- Annex D reporting
- Cyclical assessments ³

Research

- Data visualization hub
- Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey

Three directorates within the Oversight and Investigations Sector assume these activities: the Audit Directorate for external audits, the Investigations Directorate for investigations and the Data Services and Analysis Directorate, for monitoring and research.

Directorate	Full-time equivalents	Actual expenditures in fiscal year 2022 to 2023
Data Services and Analysis	47	\$4,477,300
Audit	25	\$2,941,686

³ Became a responsibility of the Policy and Communications Sector following a recommendation from the 2021 evaluation of the New Direction in Staffing.
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Directorate	Full-time equivalents	Actual expenditures in fiscal year 2022 to 2023
Investigations	36	\$3,796,911
Total	108	\$11,215,897

For the 2022 to 2023 fiscal year, the Data Services and Analysis Directorate is the largest of the 3 directorates, with 47 full-time equivalents and expenditures of \$4.5 million. It is followed by the Investigations Directorate, with 36 full-time equivalents and expenditures of \$3.8 million. Finally, the Audit Directorate had 25 full-time equivalents and expenditures of \$2.9 million. In total, the 3 directorates had 108 full-time equivalents and overall expenditures of \$11.2 million.

Data Services and Analysis Directorate

The Data Services and Analysis Directorate supports the PSC's mandate by conducting analytical research and statistical analyses of recruitment and retention in the public service. The directorate is made up of 3 divisions.

The Data Analytics Division

The Data Analytics Division produces integrated analysis, designs and administers the Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey, provides methodological support for audits, and conducts qualitative and quantitative research studies.

The Data Systems and Integrity Division

The Data Systems and Integrity Division supports PSC databases within the analytical environment and develops business tools, including a macrosimulation tool and the Staffing Dashboard. It also manages data requests from internal and external clients.

The Data Management Strategy Division

The Data Management Strategy Division is responsible for data management practices and leads the Open Government initiative for the PSC.

Audit Directorate

The Audit Directorate undertakes various oversight activities, including audits, to inform deputy heads and Parliament on the health of the staffing system. Consistent with the New Direction in Staffing, the Audit Directorate's activities are focused on the core

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requirements coming from the *Public Service Employment Act*, the Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument, as well as other related policies and regulations. The Audit Directorate also supports deputy heads in adapting the staffing system to suit their departmental context. The Audit Directorate uses various tools and approaches to do this, including:

- a biennial system-wide staffing audit that collects information on the integrity of the staffing system
- horizontal, government-wide, risk-based audits that determine whether more guidance or support is needed
- risk-based organizational audits that examine departmental staffing systems and the effectiveness of their controls, on an as-needed basis (or at the request of the deputy head)

Each year, the Audit Directorate is also responsible for preparing a risk-based audit plan. It develops this plan using risk assessments informed by consultations with key stakeholders within the PSC.

Investigations Directorate

The Investigations Directorate has 3 divisions.

The Jurisdiction Division

The Jurisdiction Division receives investigation requests. This division is responsible for:

- reviewing and analyzing the information received and gathered during the jurisdiction phase
- deciding whether the matter falls within the mandate of the PSC, and whether the allegation or concern warrants an investigation

If the Jurisdiction Division decides that an investigation is warranted, the file is transferred to the Investigations Division.

The Investigations Division

The Investigations Division is responsible for:

- conducting investigations and deciding on the balance of probability, whether an allegation or concern is founded or unfounded
- proposing, and consulting on, corrective actions for founded investigations

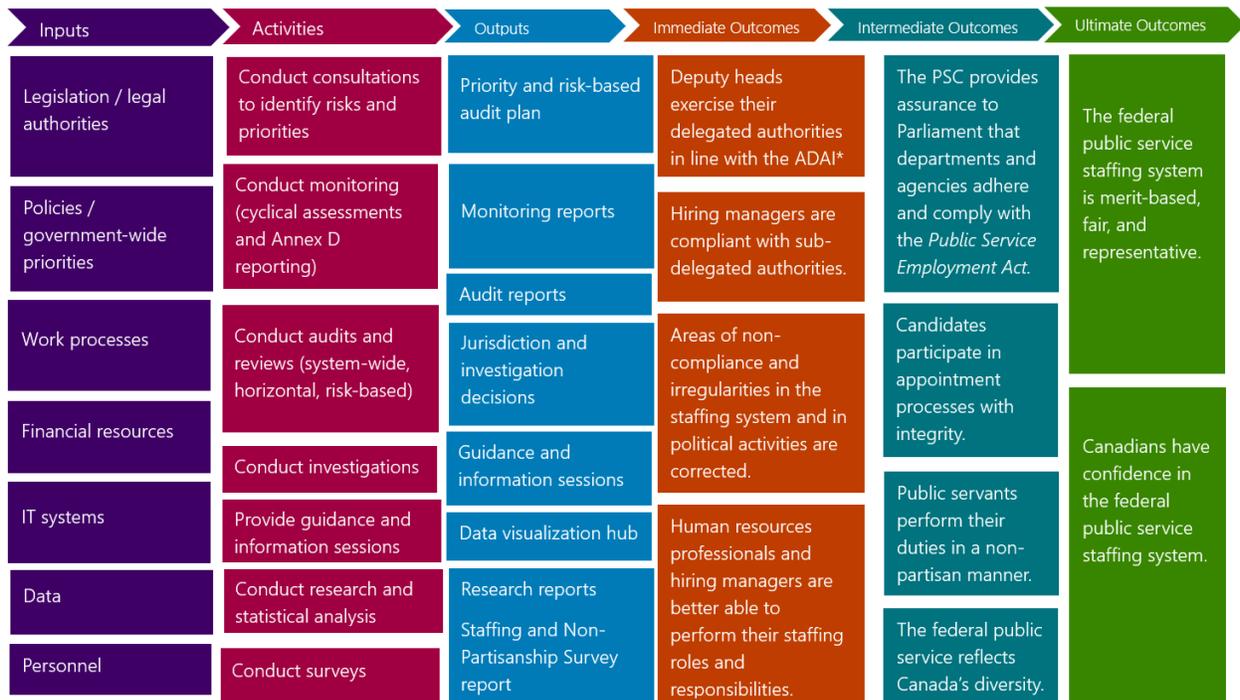
In certain cases, the Investigations Division may offer an alternative dispute resolution as an early intervention, to help the involved parties resolve their differences. If early intervention is not successful, the division will then investigate.

The Quality Assurance Division

The Quality Assurance Division is responsible for:

- monitoring the implementation of corrective actions ordered by the Commission
- managing the process for the disclosure of information following an investigation
- drafting and publishing summaries of select investigation reports on the PSC website
- administering and maintaining the Investigations Management Information System
- providing the performance measurement system key information on the Investigations Directorate's activities
- providing analytical and statistical information related to the PSC investigations' function
- providing quality assurance to the Investigations Directorate
- maintaining the quality assurance regime of the Investigations Directorate

Annex 3: PSC Oversight Function Logic Model



Text version

Inputs

- Legislation / legal authorities
- Policies / government wide priorities
- Work processes
- Financial resources
- IT systems
- Data
- Personnel

Activities

- Conduct consultations to identify risks and priorities
- Conduct monitoring (e.g., cyclical assessments and Annex D reporting)
- Conduct audits and reviews (e.g. system wide, horizontal, risk-based)

- Conduct investigations
- Provide guidance and information sessions
- Conduct research and statistical analysis
- Conduct surveys

Outputs

- Priority and risk-based audit plan
- Monitoring reports
- Audit reports
- Jurisdiction and investigation decisions
- Guidance and information sessions
- Data visualization hub
- Research reports
- Staffing and Non-Partisanship Survey report

Immediate Outcomes

- Deputy Heads exercise their delegated authorities in line with the appointment delegation and accountability instrument (ADAI).
- Hiring managers are compliant with sub-delegated authorities.
- Areas of non-compliance and Irregularities in the staffing system and in political activities are corrected.
- Human resources professionals and hiring managers are better able to perform their staffing roles and responsibilities.

Intermediate Outcomes

- The PSC provides assurance to Parliament that departments and agencies adhere and comply with the Public Service Employment Act.
- Candidates participate in appointment processes with integrity.
- Public servants perform their duties in a non-partisan manner.
- The federal public service reflects Canada's diversity.

Ultimate Outcomes

- The federal public service staffing system is merit-based, fair, and representative.
- Canadians have confidence in the federal public service staffing system.

*ADAI: Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument.

Annex 4: Methodology

Data was collected using the 5 methods described below, and triangulation analysis was conducted to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and integration of the PSC's oversight function.

Interviews

We conducted a total of 44 interviews:

- 36 internal interviewees
- 2 external heads of HR
- 1 external director general of HR
- 2 unions representatives
- Vice-President of the Oversight and Investigations Sector, and sthe PSC Commissioners

Focus groups

We conducted 2 focus groups with a total of 16 corporate HR professionals in other departments and agencies.

Document review

We reviewed over 100 documents from the 3 directorates.

Administrative data

We reviewed administrative data on topics such as key performance indicators, employee turnover and employee equity groups.

Case study

We conducted 5 interviews including 2 representatives from the Policy and Communication Sector and 1 representative from each of the 3 Oversight and Investigations Sector functions (Data Services and Analysis Directorate, Audit Directorate, and Investigations Directorate).

Limitations

Internal interviews may be influenced by organizational culture and could suffer from internal bias if interviewees feel constrained in their responses due to their position within the department/agency.