

RESPONSE PACKAGE

PSPC responses to Questions Taken on Notice Standing Committee on Government Operations & Estimates (OGGO) Supplementary Estimates (B) November 24, 2022

Q1. What is the security clearance process, and how is it assessed and managed, in the context of subcontractors?

Client departments are responsible for identifying the security requirements for contracts. Client departments are required to complete a Security Requirements Check List (SRCL) where business security requirements exist, and ensure the statement of work (for the eventual contract) is calibrated accordingly. The SRCL needs to be signed by both the Technical Authority and the Chief Security Officer (CSO) of the requesting department.

When security requirements are identified for a procurement, the completed SRCL is provided to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). PSPC's Contract Security Program reviews the complete Check List, along with the statement of work, to determine the appropriate security clauses to be included in solicitation documents and resulting contracts. Security clauses typically involve requirements for organization security clearances as well as security screening requirements for its personnel.

To obtain a security clearance, companies must be sponsored by an approved source. For a prime contract (i.e. a contract between the Government of Canada and a company), the responsible federal procurement officer is typically the approved source. For subcontracts, the approved source is typically the prime contractor.

The contract security clauses determine the required level of screening. For subcontractors, the security requirements are either the same as those of the prime contractor, or possibly lower threshold depending on the specific work to be performed. For example, a prime contractor may subcontract the project scheduling to a subcontractor, which may not require similar security requirements.

Upon receipt of a sponsorship request, the Contract Security Program validates the organization's eligibility for security screening and conducts the screening in accordance with the Contract Security Manual. To be eligible, a company must be legally formed and existing under the laws of Canada. The Contract Security Program will conduct verifications of corporate structure, including ownership. Additional security screening of Key Senior Officials (directors, officers) of a company will be conducted for any organizational clearances at the secret level or higher. A security clearance is granted to an organization when all the requirements are met, which includes the ownership assessment, and the personnel security clearances for the key personnel including the Company Security Officer (CSO) are granted. At this point, the CSO can initiate personnel security clearance requests for the company's employees that require a clearance to work on a contract or subcontract.

Contractors and subcontractors are required to hold the appropriate level of organization clearance prior to beginning any work (i.e., accessing protected or classified information, assets and worksites).

Q2. In the appropriations to be passed, there are funds of just over \$18 million to cover the costs of providing basic information technology services. This is in addition to some \$25 million already provided. First, I would like to know what is meant by basic information technology services. Secondly, what makes it so unpredictable that we must ask for more money in a supplementary budget?

SSC is mandated to manage IT-infrastructure services related to email, data centres and telecommunications for 45 government departments, including SSC itself.

This funding is to support the onboarding of new government full-time equivalents (FTE) with core IT services, including standardized network services, procuring software and hardware for workplace technology devices, as well as providing technology-related services.

Examples of ongoing costs that are covered by this funding include:

- Email service
- Standard software
- Mobile device service plans
- Internet service
- Audioconferencing service

SSC accesses funds that have been centrally withheld through the annual Supplementary Estimates process. The requests represent an accumulation of Treasury Board decisions made throughout the fiscal year regarding FTEs delivering core IT services in partner organizations.