

## Section 3

Update on the implementation of  
recommendations from:

**Strengthening Accountability in British Columbia:  
Trends and Opportunities in Performance Reporting**

April 2008

April 2009



# Response from the Ministry of Finance

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February 27, 2009

184177

Malcolm Gaston  
Assistant Auditor General  
Office of the Auditor General  
PO Box 9036 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W9A2

Dear Mr. Gaston:

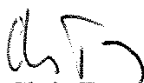
**Re: Follow-up review of your report on *Strengthening Accountability in British Columbia: Trends and Opportunities in Performance Reporting – April 2008***

As requested, please find attached our updated self-assessment regarding actions taken in response to the recommendations in your audit report named above. I understand that this response will be printed, unedited, in your semi-annual follow-up report, to be released April 1, 2009.

All recommendations have been implemented.

I trust that this is satisfactory.

Sincerely,



Chris Trunpy  
Deputy Minister

Attachment

pc: See Attached List

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Ministry of Finance

Office of the  
Deputy Minister

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Section 3

## Response from the Ministry of Finance

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pc: Honourable Colin Hansen  
Minister of Finance and Minister Responsible for the Olympics

Jessica MacDonald  
Deputy Minister to the Premier and Cabinet Secretary

Robin Ciceri  
Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and  
Labour Market Development

James Gorman  
Deputy Minister of Education

Gordon Macatee  
Deputy Minister of Health Services

Graham Whitmarsh  
Associate Deputy Minister of Revenue

Chris Johnson  
A/Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Executive Officer  
Crown Agencies Secretariat

Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland  
Comptroller General  
Ministry of Finance

Denise Walker  
Executive Director, Social Development, Service Planning and Reporting  
Deputy Ministers' Policy Secretariat  
Office of the Premier

**RECOMMENDATION STATUS SUMMARY**  
**Strengthening Accountability in British Columbia: Trends and Opportunities in Performance Reporting – April 2008**  
**As at January 31, 2009**

*(Please tick implementation status for each recommendation)*

Auditor General's Recommendations	Implementation Status				
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Alternative Action	No Action
1. We recommend that each ministry focus on developing short- and long-term measures of performance that have enduring relevance. In developing these measures, consideration should be given to how reliable data will be collected and results will be analyzed in a timely way.		✓			
2. We recommend that the government's Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the BC Reporting Principles;</li> <li>• provide stronger linkages to ministry annual reports; and</li> <li>• include the performance of all organizations within the government reporting entity.</li> </ul>		✓			
3. We recommend that guidelines provided to ministries for the preparation of service plans and annual reports (service plan reports) be fully consistent with the agreed basis of presentation in British Columbia — the BC Reporting Principles — and require full compliance with the principles.		✓			
4. We recommend that health authorities, school districts, colleges and universities be subject to similar accountability for their planned and actual performance as the ministries and Crown agencies of government.		✓			
5. We recommend that legislators have the opportunity to publicly scrutinize, in a systematic way, the planned and actual performance of ministries, Crown agencies and the SUCH sector — in essence, all organizations within the government reporting entity.		✓			

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM**

*Strengthening Accountability in British Columbia*

As at January 31, 2009

**General comments**

Government is fully committed to continuous improvement in public performance reporting to enhance transparency and accountability to the public, consistent with the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA) requirements and the guidance provided in the BC Reporting Principles. This continuous improvement is demonstrated in the on-going work of the government to research and adopt best practices and move towards having the BC Reporting Principles' fundamentals in place in more government reporting entity organizations.

**Progress by recommendation**

Self-Assessed Status	Actions Taken Since Report Issued	Results of Actions and/or Actions Planned (with information on implementation)
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> We recommend that each ministry focus on developing short- and long-term measures of performance that have enduring relevance. In developing these measures, consideration should be given to how reliable data will be collected and results will be analyzed in a timely way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the 2008/09-2010/11 service plans ministries focused their efforts on developing performance measures that were focused on outcomes and would have enduring relevance. This has included limiting the number of performance measures that appear in plans in order to focus on the most relevant outcome measures. The 2009/10-2011/12 service plans will have outcome-focused performance measures with enduring relevance.</li> <li>A number of organizations already have short and longer term measures of performance and reliable data collection systems in place. This includes ministries that have ten and three year targets in place.</li> <li>We continue to work with ministries, on an ongoing basis, to</li> </ul>	<p>Government will continue its efforts to improve the relevance of the performance measures in its reports, to make them more conducive to assessing whether long term goals are being met, in an efficient and effective manner. Continued efforts will also take place to ensure underlying systems are in place to provide the required data and support timely analysis.</p>

**Status**

- F or S – Recommendation has been fully or substantially implemented
- P – Recommendation has been partially implemented
- AA – Alternative action has been undertaken, general intent of alternative action will address OAG finding
- NA – No substantial action has been taken to address this recommendation

Self-Assessed Status	Actions Taken Since Report Issued	Results of Actions and/or Actions Planned (with information on implementation)
	<p>help them develop the best long- and short-term performance measures that they can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry guidelines will be examined to determine if further information is needed to guide ministries towards developing both short- and long-term measures.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> We recommend that the government's Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet the BC Reporting Principles;</li> <li>provide stronger linkages to ministry annual reports; and</li> <li>include the performance of all organizations within the government reporting entity.</li> </ul>	
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government discloses the performance of organizations within the overall package of government reporting entity plans and reports. Collectively this package sets out government's planned strategic, financial and non-financial performance expectations, and what results have been achieved against those plans.</li> <li>The Government Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan Report provide a high level overview of the key strategies for all of government, whereas ministry and Crown agency plans and reports provide the public with a more robust description of the responsibilities of individual organizations.</li> <li>Government will continue to endeavour to create plans and reports that meet the BC reporting principles and will take into consideration all feedback given by the Office of the Auditor General.</li> </ul>	<p>Government continues to communicate its goals, commitments and priorities to the public and to track and monitor implementation of them.</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> We recommend that guidelines provided to ministries for the preparation of service plans and annual reports (service plan reports) be fully consistent with the agreed basis of presentation in British Columbia — the BC Reporting Principles — and require full compliance with the principles.</p>	
S	<p>The guidelines provided to ministries are updated regularly to provide the best and most clear direction possible. These guidelines provide information about the BC Reporting Principles and ministries are reminded that they should be in compliance with them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government reviews draft ministry service plans and reports and provides feedback to ministries</li> </ul>
<p>Government continues to improve the quality of its reports consistent with the learning model introduced by the Office of the Auditor General.</p>	

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<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> We recommend that health authorities, school districts, colleges and universities be subject to similar accountability for their planned and actual performance as the ministries and Crown agencies of government.</p>	<p>The existing processes for reporting provide accountability to the public for the performance of health authorities, school districts and post-secondary systems. Government agrees that extended reporting within the SUCH sector is a goal that should be worked towards, but it will take considerable time, care and effort to implement.</p> <p>Based on feedback and review of the 2008/09 achievement contracts, the System Performance Branch and superintendents of achievement will monitor and support the development of the 2009/10 achievement contracts. Consideration will be given to amending the achievement contract guidelines for 2010/11 if this proves to be necessary.</p> <p>Each year, all of the accountability reports for public post-secondary institutions are posted on the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development website.</p>
<p><b>S</b></p> <p>The performance of the health authority, school district and post-secondary systems (SUCH sector) is currently planned and reported through the Ministries of Health Services, Education, and Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.</p> <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2008/09 achievement contract guidelines were revised to require Boards of Education to report on common areas of performance (i.e., literacy, school completion, and aboriginal education). Boards of education submitted their achievement contracts to the Ministry of Education in July 2008. The System Performance Branch and superintendents of achievement reviewed the contracts and provided feedback to district superintendents. The review showed that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all 60 boards of education had literacy goals/objectives and all 60 provided literacy performance targets;</li> <li>49 boards had aboriginal-specific goals/objectives and 51 boards provided aboriginal-specific performance targets; and</li> <li>39 boards had school-completion goals/objectives and 46 boards provided school-completion performance targets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All public post-secondary institutions are subject to the accountability framework, with annual reporting on 18 performance measures. The annual reporting cycle includes comparison of past performance against annually revised targets. To link the post-secondary accountability framework to the Ministry Service Plan, a small set of the performance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Status</b></p> <p>F or S – Recommendation has been fully or substantially implemented  P – Recommendation has been partially implemented  AA – Alternative action has been undertaken, general intent of alternative action will address OAG finding  NA – No substantial action has been taken to address this recommendation</p>

	<p>measures from the accountability framework is incorporated into the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development Service Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post secondary institutions sign annual Government Letters of Expectations which also include key performance measures.</li> <li>• All health authorities have signed the Government Letter of Expectation (GLE) that sets out the roles and responsibilities of government and the health authorities, and articulates the government's priorities for health and the performance expectations of the health authorities. The expectations and performance measures in the GLE are the basis for annual Health Authority Service Plans.</li> </ul>	<p>The Ministry of Health Services is continuing to work with health authorities to further define how they can align with government priorities and accountability mechanisms.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> We recommend that legislators have the opportunity to publicly scrutinize, in a systematic way, the planned and actual performance of ministries, Crown agencies and the SUCH sector — in essence, all organizations within the government reporting entity.</p>	<p>Government will continue to ensure that legislators are provided with copies of ministry and Crown corporation service plans and annual reports for their review and public scrutiny. Members of the public will also continue to be able to examine a copy of the reports 24 hours a day 7 days a week from ministry websites and the government main site.</p>
<p>S</p>	<p>Currently every MLA from both the government and opposition parties receive copies and have access electronically to copies of all the ministry and Crown corporation service plans and annual reports, and both are tabled annually in the Legislature under the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plans and Reports are also made public and are accessible on ministry websites as well as the government main site.</li> <li>• Government will continue to ensure that legislators are provided with copies of service plans and service plan annual reports for their review. Members of the public will also continue to be able to examine a copy of the reports 24 hours a day 7 days a week from ministry websites and the government main site.</li> <li>• The Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations reviews reports from Crown corporations.</li> <li>• Each year, all of the accountability reports for public post-secondary institutions are posted on the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development's website. Many post-secondary institutions also post their accountability reports on their own websites.</li> <li>• Each year, all of the achievement contracts are posted on the Ministry of Education website at: <a href="http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/">http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/</a>. School districts are required to make achievement contracts available to the public at the district office in hard copy and electronic format. Many school districts post their achievement contracts on their district websites.</li> </ul>

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