



March 4, 2010

Ref. 76774

Ms. Norma Glendinning, MBA, CMC
Assistant Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia
8 Bastion Square
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Glendinning:

On behalf of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Industry Training Authority, I am pleased to provide an update on the progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's November 2008 Report, *A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia*.

The Ministry and the Industry Training Authority have taken further action since our last report to your office in March 2009 and welcome the opportunity to provide an update on the significant progress made in addressing the report recommendations. A complete recommendation status summary and listing of progress in implementing each recommendation is enclosed.

This follow-up report demonstrates our commitment to build on the current strengths and continually improve the industry training and apprenticeship system.

Sincerely,



Lorne Brownsey
Deputy Minister

Enclosures

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pc: Mr. Kevin Evans
Chief Executive Officer
Industry Training Authority

Ms. Shannon Baskerville
Assistant Deputy Minister
Labour Market and Immigration Division

Ms. Susan Brown
A/Assistant Deputy Minister
Post-Secondary Education Division

RECOMMENDATION STATUS SUMMARY
A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia
as at January 31, 2010

Auditor General's Recommendations	Implementation Status				
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Alternative Action	No Action
1. The Industry Training Authority develop an action plan in consultation with key stakeholders to address the issues we have identified in this report.	✓				
2. The Industry Training Authority consult with Industry Training Organizations and industry to clarify roles and responsibilities and revise its policies and guidelines accordingly.	✓				
3. The Industry Training Authority work with Industry Training Organizations and industry to determine the costs associated with each required responsibility and ensure the funding model is appropriate and sustainable.		✓			
4. The Industry Training Authority develop a comprehensive quality assurance program to help safeguard the quality of trades training. This should include good practice guidelines on how to develop occupational analyses, program outlines and program profiles.		✓			
5. The Industry Training Authority strengthen its compliance monitoring mechanisms to provide greater assurance that training providers and apprenticeship sponsors are following program standards.			✓		
6. The Industry Training Authority, the Industry Training Organizations, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the colleges work together to produce high quality information for assessing demand for trades training.		✓			
7. The Industry Training Authority, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the training providers work together to periodically assess the capacity of the trades training system to meet demand, and address any issues or opportunities identified.	✓				
8. The Industry Training Authority and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development work with the colleges to ensure funding decisions are informed by a proper understanding of what it costs to deliver trades training.			✓		

Auditor General's Recommendations	Implementation Status				
	Fully	Substantially	Partially	Alternative Action	No Action
9. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development ensures that its funding allocations to public colleges for the purposes of supporting trades training are coordinated with the Industry Training Authority.			✓		
10. The Industry Training Authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the internal controls it applies to the calculation of its performance measures; and • clearly and explicitly disclose its performance reporting definitions, sources and calculation methodologies. 			✓		
11. The Industry Training Authority improve its records management to ensure it can easily access key participant information when needed.		✓			

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia
as at January 31, 2010**

General comments

The following report on progress has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (Ministry) and the Industry Training Authority (ITA), as a follow-up to the November 26, 2008 report by the Office of the Auditor General entitled “*A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia*”.

The following information demonstrates the considerable progress made since the Auditor General’s review of the trades training system in British Columbia. The Ministry and the ITA remain committed to working collaboratively with our system partners to ensure that the province’s industry training system continues to grow and improve in order to meet the needs of British Columbians and the economy.

Progress by recommendation

The following table describes the progress made for each recommendation, including the implementation status as per the legend at the bottom of the page, information on actions taken and planned, and results to support the status reported.

Self-Assessed Status	Actions Taken Since Report Issued	Results of Actions and/or Actions Planned (with information on implementation, including dates)
<p>Recommendation 1: The Industry Training Authority develop an action plan in consultation with key stakeholders to address the issues we have identified in this report.</p>	<p>Fully</p> <p>The Industry Training Authority (ITA) canvassed key stakeholders and circulated a draft action plan for input in February 2009.</p>	<p>In February 2009, a Program Standards Working Group was struck with representation from Industry Training Organizations (ITOs), training providers and the ITA. This group has been addressing issues arising from Recommendation 4.</p> <p>In October 2009, an ITO/ITA Executive Council was formed comprised of ITA and ITO CEO’s to monitor and address any strategic level issues arising from Recommendation 2.</p> <p>In January 2010, an ITA/ITO Working Group was formed comprised of senior management from the ITA and ITOs to address operational issues arising from Recommendation 2.</p>

Status

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<p>Recommendation 2: The Industry Training Authority consult with Industry Training Organizations and industry to clarify roles and responsibilities and revise its policies and guidelines accordingly.</p>	<p>Fully</p> <p>The Industry Training Authority (ITA) consulted with the Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) throughout the summer of 2008 regarding roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>ITOs were established as independent bodies created by, and accountable to, industry sectors. In May 2009, the ITA consulted with the Office of the Comptroller General and the Ministry regarding ITA/ITO roles and responsibilities. It was determined that changes were required to ensure that ITOs would not be considered as entities of the ITA. As a result, further consultation with ITOs was completed and structural changes to the reporting relationship were implemented.</p> <p>In October 2009, the ITA facilitated the creation of the ITO/ITA Executive Council which provides a forum for on-going discussion with respect to further role clarity and issues resolution at a strategic level.</p> <p>In January 2010, the ITA facilitated the creation of the ITO/ITA Working Group which provides a forum for on-going discussion with respect to further role clarity and issues resolution at an operations level.</p> <p>In January 2010, the ITA created the new executive position of Chief Operating Officer with direct accountability for maintenance of a productive ITA/ITO operating relationship.</p>	<p>Consultations resulted in confirmation of roles and responsibilities and revised policies and guidelines relating to Industry Training Organizations.</p> <p>The ITA Board approved a draft Enterprise Partnership Framework in March 2009. The draft Framework was circulated to ITO Boards for input and was finalized in April 2009.</p> <p>Over the summer of 2009, ITO Service Plans were replaced by Enterprise Partnership Agreements which detail respective responsibilities/accountabilities/deliverables and provide a further dimension of role clarity.</p> <p>The responses of the ITA and the ITOs to the Auditor-General's recommendations have improved working relationships and channels and protocols for communication.</p> <p>The ITA's self-assessed status for this Recommendation is rated as "fully completed" with the caveat that maintaining an effective relationship between the ITA and ITOs requires on-going dialogue on roles and responsibilities as the industry training system's operating environment is dynamic and evolving.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The Industry Training Authority work with Industry Training Organizations and ensure the funding model is appropriate and sustainable.</p>	<p>Substantially</p> <p>The Industry Training Authority (ITA) consulted with Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) in August 2008 on the costs associated with the responsibilities identified in the revised Enterprise Partnership Framework.</p>	<p>The new budget framework for the purchase of services was implemented in April 2009 and funding for ITOs was increased to \$5.64 million for fiscal 2009/10 from \$4.24 million in fiscal 2008/09.</p>

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	<p>Based on the findings, a new proposed budget framework for the purchase of services was developed, ITOs were consulted in October 2008, and the framework was approved by the ITA Board in March 2009.</p>	<p>The September 2009 provincial budget resulted in a revision to fiscal 2009/10 to \$4.59 million – a \$350,000 increase from the previous year at a time of severe fiscal pressure on other areas of the ITA's operations. The budget framework will be reviewed during fiscal 2010/11 for implementation in fiscal 2011/12. Further refinement is required as the contractual relationship between the ITA and the ITOs evolves into a full fee-for-service arrangement.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: The Industry Training Authority develop a comprehensive quality assurance program to help safeguard the quality of trades training. This should include good practice guidelines on how to develop occupational analyses, program outlines and program profiles.</p>		
Substantially	<p>In February 2009, a comprehensive review of Program Standards development processes and tools was undertaken to clarify roles and responsibilities, streamline systems, update guidelines and embed quality assurance milestones.</p> <p>A series of Program Standards Working Groups were established in July 2009 comprised of representatives from ITO's, training providers and the ITA.</p> <p>Deliverables included updated guidelines and templates for developing program standards documentation such as occupational analyses, program outlines and program profiles, and standardized document templates.</p>	<p>Over the spring and summer 2009, the review team developed a program standards responsibility matrix and process maps for modifications of existing programs, development and launch of new programs and development of examinations.</p> <p>By September 2010, a complete guidebook for program standards development will have been produced and implemented updating and providing detailed step-by-step processes and templates covering the following areas:</p> <p>Standards Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and template for developing Program Profiles • Guidelines and template for developing Occupational Analysis Charts • Guidelines and template for developing Program Outlines • Guidelines and templates for developing Exams • Guidelines and templates for planning and managing the Transition Process <p>Preparing and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for Evaluating Industry Needs • Guidelines for preparing Letter of Intent • Guidelines for preparing a Proposal • Guidelines for determining an appropriate Training Model • Guidelines for preparing a Project Plan

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		<p>Process Mapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluating Programs • Implementing Exams • Program Review Cycle <p>Further action is required to consolidate a number of stand-alone quality assurance initiatives (i.e. private trainer designation, level and certification assessment, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, ITO/industry input) into a comprehensive Continuous Improvement Framework. Funds have been budgeted for this activity in fiscal 2010/11.</p>
	<p>Recommendation 5: The Industry Training Authority strengthen its compliance monitoring mechanisms to provide greater assurance that training providers and apprenticeship sponsors are following program standards.</p> <p>Partially</p> <p>In 2009, the ITA updated its Apprenticeship Sponsor guide. This step by step guide contains the critical information that Sponsor's need to know to ensure they meet: responsibilities of all system partners; steps to success in sponsoring an apprentice; and information on credentials and apprentice responsibilities. The Guide includes a checklist of Sponsor responsibilities. Upon registration of a new apprentice, Sponsors also receive a copy of the apprentice's program profile. This provides information on the program completion requirements, assessment methods, technical training content and locations, and credentials awarded. New registration forms also provide greater clarity of a sponsor's responsibilities.</p> <p>The ITA has a designation review process for non-public training providers. A comprehensive review of learning resources, facilities and delivery of program standards is conducted before the program and training outcomes receive ITA designation. Training providers are evaluated against standards developed by industry. Shortcomings identified during the review must be rectified before an institution will be recognized as an ITA designated training provider for a particular program and a specific location. The designation process is triggered on a 5-year cycle. To ensure issues are resolved in the interim, the Continuous Improvement Framework will inform ongoing training delivery.</p>	<p>The Industry Training Authority (ITA) regularly monitors "Red Seal" (interprovincial) apprenticeship program pass rates. For BC apprentices writing Red Seal exam, the pass rate for 2008 was 77 per cent compared to a national rate of 72 per cent.</p> <p>With funding from the Ministry and the ITA, BC Stats conducted the fifth annual BC Apprenticeship Student Outcomes Survey of all apprenticeship students who completed the final year of their apprenticeship technical training in a BC post-secondary institution (public and private) between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. The report provides insight into the apprenticeship experience of former students with respect to: rating in-school and workplace training; the usefulness of the knowledge and skills gained; their level of satisfaction with their training; and employment outcomes.</p> <p>High level results from the 2009 Apprenticeship Student Outcomes Survey demonstrate a high level of former apprentice satisfaction with school and workplace training: 93 per cent said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their in-school training; 91 per cent said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their overall workplace training experience. Eighty-nine per cent of former apprentice respondents were employed at the time of the survey.</p> <p>The ITA conducts an annual stakeholder survey. Results from the latest survey (April, 2009) indicate that 84 per cent of apprentices are satisfied with their work based training experience; 89 percent were satisfied with</p>

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		<p>their technical training experience; 84 per cent of employers were satisfied with the technical training received by their apprentices; and 96 per cent feel their apprentices make a positive contribution to their business.</p> <p>The ITA is leveraging its work leading a national initiative, under the auspices of the Red Seal Program, to develop a national framework of Occupational Performance Standards. (Fifty of BC's 141 trades are covered by the Red Seal Program and 80 per cent of apprentices are in Red Seal Programs.) Once in place, these standards will ensure greater alignment between industry expectations and activities related to skill acquisition and skill recognition. Specifically, the occupational performance standards will provide a benchmark that can be used in both the institutional and on-the-job components of industry training to ensure that learning / training activities align with the expected outcomes of industry. The standards will also better support assessment that provides a reliable and consistent signal of competency.</p> <p>Flowing from this work, the ITA is developing Standard Level Assessments that will determine how apprentices are progressing through their apprenticeship. These assessments build on the ITA's Common Exam Initiative. They will be a component of the Continuous Improvement Framework and will integrate with training providers own quality assurance frameworks to facilitate informed decision making concerning the quality of training being delivered. The first phase, in 2010/11, will focus on three trades confirm the appropriateness of the methodology and inform the timing of the subsequent rollout.</p> <p>While significant progress has been made in relation to this objective, the ITA's self-assessed status is rated as "partially completed" because, as noted for recommendation 4, further action is required to consolidate a number of stand-alone quality assurance initiatives (i.e. private trainer designation, level and certification assessment, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, ITO/industry input) into a comprehensive Continuous Improvement Framework. Funds have been budgeted for this activity in fiscal 2010/11.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6: The Industry Training Authority, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the colleges work together to produce high quality information for assessing demand for trades training.</p> <p>Substantially</p>	<p>The ITA continues to work with the Ministry, ITOs and training providers to assess trades training demand. ITA and training provider apprenticeship waitlist definitions and methodology have been aligned.</p> <p>The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (Ministry) has developed a business plan for a BC Labour Market Information System to ensure that BC can anticipate labour market challenges and opportunities and has the analysis necessary to support competitive, innovative labour market strategies and investments.</p> <p>Government has made a commitment (documented in its Shareholder's Letter of Expectations) to consult with the Industry Training Authority in developing labour market information resources, in order to consider the information requirements of the Authority. In addition, the ITA has been represented on the cross-ministry labour Market Information Roundtable since March 2009.</p> <p>In 2009, the Ministry developed a BC Labour Market Scenario Model. The scenario model is a credible, innovative tool that improves labour market decision making and enhances labour market competitiveness. The model provides information on the possible future supply, demand and balance of occupations across development regions of the province over the next ten years.</p> <p>In November 2009, the Ministry launched a new, comprehensive on-line service which will benefit British Columbians seeking career and skills development information, employers looking to improve labour productivity, and skills training service providers interested in emerging best practices. The WorkBC web centre is available at the following link www.WorkBC.ca.</p> <p>In March 2009, the ITA and public post-secondary institutions formed an Industry Training Economic Recovery Working Group to assess and address the changing market requirements for industry training as well as the changing needs of trainees.</p> <p>In May 2009, the ITA launched the "Now's the Time" information campaign to encourage continued training participation during the</p>	<p>Waitlists through 2010/11 (to date) have decreased and are now very close to the targets set in the ITA's Service Plan. It is also anticipated that utilization rates (determined at year end) will also be close to or exceed Service Plan targets.</p> <p>The BC Labour Market Scenario Model will be used to better assess trades-related supply and demand on a regional basis. Regional information by occupation, available by Summer 2010, will be used to identify the anticipated supply and demand for skilled trades occupations in each region. The analysis will proceed in two steps: 1) identifying potential gaps in labour market supply and demand for skilled trades occupations and; 2) assessing whether the availability of skilled trades training aligns with these potential gaps.</p> <p>Working Group recommendations have been implemented by the ITA as recession mitigation tactics (e.g., policy changes to facilitate technical training participation).</p>

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	<p>economic downturn. A diverse group of industry system partners participated in the campaign. Further information is available at www.nowsthehive.ca.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 7: The Industry Training Authority, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the training providers work together to periodically assess the capacity of the trades training system to meet demand, and address any issues or opportunities identified.</p>		
<p>Fully</p>	<p>Government revised the Shareholder's Letter of Expectations for the ITA (in 2009 and for 2010) which includes a commitment to consult with and continue to work with the ITA on periodic reviews of facility capacity and requirements for effective delivery of trades training.</p> <p>The ITA and the post-secondary institutions have formed a Joint Leadership Committee to address policy and strategic issues that affect the success of B.C.'s trades training system. The Committee includes representatives of the BC Trades Training Consortium which is comprised of all the public post-secondary institutions that deliver trades training in the province. The Committee has established a joint Economic Recovery Working Group to gather and analyze training demand information and related capacity issues to maximize training opportunities during the economic downturn.</p> <p>The Ministry and the ITA worked with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to improve the financial supports that apprentices receive when they attend technical training (e.g., a portion of tuition is reimbursable, and daycare, commuting and living away from home allowances were increased).</p> <p>The ITA develops annual Training Plans for each training institution through consultation with ITOs and training providers to annually adjust to the evolving training needs of apprentices and employers in the province. The ITA is also working with the Industry Training Economic Recovery Working Group during the development and on-going management of the Training Plans to ensure the training needs of apprentices are met through the current economic environment.</p> <p>In addition to the annual update from institutions regarding facility utilization, the Ministry, in consultation with the ITA, conducted a review of the public post-secondary trades training facility capacity in 2007. Following the review, the Ministry, ITA and the public</p>	<p>The Joint Leadership Committee continues to constitute an effective forum to address issues that affect the success of B.C.'s industry training system including the capacity of system training facilities to meet demand and the "Training Plan" process.</p> <p>Increased supports for apprentices were announced by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development in September 2009 and are intended to encourage apprentices to take technical training while the economy is slower and ensuring trained workers are available when the economy improves.</p>

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	<p>post-secondary institutions completed a number of actions related to enhancing system capacity and utilization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved the accuracy of apprentice waitlist data and reporting. - Developed and implemented a central web page to provide apprentices and employers with information on training availability at public institutions (http://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/). - The Industry Training Authority announced a major investment into its new E-PPRENTICE initiative to develop flexible delivery options to increase trades training access and capacity. The project is supported by the Ministry through the Labour Market Agreement funding and through the Federal Pan-Canadian Innovations Initiative. - In 2008, the Ministry provided \$8.75 million for trades training equipment to enhance trades training in public institutions. <p>In 2008 and 2009, to further assess progress in addressing challenges and opportunities and for planning and budget allocation purposes, the following actions were taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry, ITA, and the public post-secondary institutions jointly conducted a follow-up survey to determine post-secondary institutions' progress in addressing training capacity. - The Ministry conducted a further review of the use of trade facilities in the summer months to determine institutions' current summer training capacity and their options for increasing capacity. The results of this review were shared with the ITA. - ITA conducted a survey of public and private training institutions to determine the additional training capacity for 2009/10. 	<p>The Ministry, the Industry Training Authority and post-secondary institutions will continue to conduct periodic capacity reviews that include an assessment of trades training facilities. The timing of such reviews will be determined through on-going consultation with the Industry Training Authority and public post-secondary institutions. Waitlist levels through 2010/11 have indicated that demand is being accommodated as set out through waitlist targets in the ITA's Service Plan. It is also anticipated that utilization rates (determined at year end) will also be close to or exceed Service Plan targets.</p>

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Partially	<p>Recommendation 8: The Industry Training Authority and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development work with the colleges to ensure funding decisions are informed by a proper understanding of what it costs to deliver trades training.</p> <p>The Industry Training Authority advised the public institutions in March 2008 that it is prepared to work with post-secondary institutions to ensure that funding decisions are informed by a full understanding of what it costs to deliver trades training (e.g., instructional, administrative support, library, registration, student services, and overhead costs).</p>	<p>The public post-secondary institutions are currently working, through the auspices of the Trades Training BC Consortium, to develop reliable information on the costs associated with trades training which will be used to inform future training delivery funding models. This project is expected to be completed in Fall 2010.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development ensures that its funding allocations to public colleges for the purposes of supporting trades training are coordinated with the Industry Training Authority.</p>		
Partially	<p>Staff from the Industry Training Authority and the Ministry met in December, 2008 to discuss the funding allocation processes for both organizations.</p> <p>In 2008, the Ministry consulted with the ITA on the Ministry's Strategic Investment Plan allocation of trades training (Skills Development) seats, to reduce Foundation training program waitlists.</p> <p>In 2009, the Ministry consulted with the ITA prior to finalizing the allocation of the 2009/10 Skills Development spaces to address waitlists.</p> <p>The Ministry will consult with and seek input from the ITA on relevant programming when considering capital expansion at public post-secondary institutions.</p>	<p>Ministry consultation with the ITA prior to finalizing the allocation of trades training (Skills Development seats) to reduce Foundation training program waitlists in 2009/10 resulted in a coordinated approach that precluded any duplication of funding for Skills Development spaces across the system.</p> <p>Under the federal/provincial Knowledge Infrastructure Program, expansion of trades training capacity at College of New Caledonia (Prince George and Quesnel), Okanagan College (Penticton, Salmon Arm), and North Island College (Courtenay) were announced in 2009 to meet regional demand for trades training based on the applications from the respective institutions. Due to the unique nature of this very time sensitive Federal stimulus program, the funding decisions were made outside of the regular provincial capital funding process.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: The Industry Training Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the internal controls it applies to the calculation of its performance measures; and • clearly and explicitly disclose its performance reporting definitions, sources and calculation methodologies. 		
Partially	<p>During the summer of 2008, the ITA developed Report Specifications to support the reporting capability of its new apprentice information management system (ITADirectAccess). During 2009 these specifications were used to design and build "canned" reports within ITADirectAccess.</p>	<p>The monthly statistical reports currently on the ITA's website are the outcome of this new reporting capability. Through 2009 and into 2010 there has been an issue of timeliness in the generation of monthly reports as the ITA has worked through significant issues in ensuring the third party developers understood the Report Specifications and in completing robust testing on the reliability of the report design. It is worth noting that capacity issues have impacted the ITA's ability to produce these</p>

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	<p>Waitlist data originates with training providers: through 2009 ITA worked with training providers to clarify ITA's definition of a waitlist and to facilitate the training providers' generation of data that complied with this definition.</p> <p>Other methodologies and sources of performance measures are articulated in the notes to ITA's monthly statistics reports. These reports are available on the ITA's website at www.itabc.ca</p>	<p>reports in a timely manner: once this short term challenge is overcome the nature of the reports will lend themselves to timely updating on the ITA's website.</p> <p>Waitlist information is provided by training providers quarterly and more accurately reflects the number of people who have to wait more than 13 months from the time they indicate to a training provider that they are ready to take the next level of in-school training.</p> <p>While Report Specifications are available publicly, the ITA will add a statement to its monthly statistical reports indicating that any Report Specification is available upon request.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: The Industry Training Authority improve its records management to ensure it can easily access key participant information when needed.</p>	<p>Implementation of the new ITADirectAccess information management system will enhance access to key participant information.</p> <p>The Ministry is currently working with the ITA to ensure that records management processes are in accordance with the <i>Document Disposal Act</i>.</p>	<p>The ITA is scanning and storing all new key (non-transitory) participant records electronically as attachments to participant files, significantly enhancing access to participant information when required.</p>

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