

Upkeep of the Provincial Roads Network by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

As at: August 10, 2012

Released: 18 November 2010

1st Follow-up: October 2011

Discussed by the Public Accounts Committee: 10 February 2011

Self-assessment conducted by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Comments:

The Auditor's recommendations continue to be a key area of focus for the ministry as we continue to improve our maintenance services across the province. The ministry continues to consider the recommendations of the Auditor General's Report and seeks opportunities to integrate the recommendations into the business practices for highway maintenance.

Recommendations

| RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED IN PREVIOUS FOLLOW-UP REPORT(S): | SELF-ASSESSED STATUS |
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| Recommendation 2: Set firm but attainable timelines for each highway district to have the Central Highway Resource Information System (CHRIS) fully functional and updated with the inventory of road and bridge assets. | Fully or substantially implemented |

Outstanding Recommendations:

| RECOMMENDATION AND SUMMARY OF PROGRESS | SELF-ASSESSED STATUS |
|---|---|
| Recommendation 1: Identify the factors that could impede its success in meeting its road network condition standard. In addition, the ministry should periodically monitor the likely impact of such factors and determine when a comprehensive needs assessment is required to enable adjustments in condition standards, actions or funding. | Fully or substantially implemented |

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The ministry has established a list of critical factors that impact the condition of the highway network. Factors within the list will be monitored over time and an annual report will be prepared and used to determine whether a comprehensive needs assessment is required.

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| Recommendation 3: Make it a priority to complete the development of a network level lifecycle costing model to improve the estimating process used in planning for network upkeep | Partially implemented |
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Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The ministry completed a review of available lifecycle costing models and identified areas where existing asset management systems could be improved. The ministry is considering the recommendation from this review and will take steps to improve asset management systems.

Recommendations (Cont.)

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| <p>Recommendation 4: Collaborate with the wider road-building industry to assess whether or not the performance incentives are effective in encouraging excellence and, if they are not, modify the system appropriately.</p> | <p>Fully or substantially implemented</p> |
| <p>Actions taken, results and/or actions planned</p> | |
| <p>Discussions with industry and internally with ministry staff were undertaken. It was recommended that the current foundation of performance assessment and incentive compensation for assessment remain in the contract.</p> | |
| <p>The performance bonus is intended to ensure the maintenance contractors strive to meet or exceed the basic acceptable level of performance required by the contract. Based on the historic data surrounding the basic contract requirements component of the local assessment, there is a trend of increased performance over recent years and added value. The ministry will work with internal staff to ensure we continue to achieve consistency, transparency and fairness in the performance bonus assessment.</p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 5: Revise the stakeholder consultation part of its contractor assessment program to ensure that judging of contractor performance by ministry staff is done in a way that is clearly fair and objective.</p> | <p>Partially implemented</p> |
| <p>Actions taken, results and/or actions planned</p> | |
| <p>A working group has been struck to improve the stakeholder portion of the contractor assessment program and consultations with stakeholders have been concluded. Additional industry consultations will occur over the next few months; a standard information package for stakeholders will be developed and other potential improvements will be considered.</p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 6: Reassess its current service area configuration to determine if there are opportunities to improve efficiency.</p> | <p>Fully or substantially implemented</p> |
| <p>Actions taken, results and/or actions planned</p> | |
| <p>The ministry hired a consultant to provide options for improving efficiency through minimizing costs while maintaining service quality under a private sector delivery model and maintaining competition in the industry. The consultant made a number of recommendations for consideration in the next round of bidding. The consultant also concluded that there is no benefit to reconfiguring the service areas.</p> | |
| <p>Recommendation 7: Set safety-related performance objectives and measures for its road upkeep programs so that Legislators and the public can better assess how well the programs are contributing to the ministry-wide goal of providing a safe environment for travel.</p> | <p>Partially implemented</p> |
| <p>Actions taken, results and/or actions planned</p> | |
| <p>The ministry completed a study that assessed the current safety performance measures, reviewed the practices of other jurisdictions and identified additional safety related performance measures that could be adopted by the ministry.</p> | |
| <p>Potential new performance measures identified will be reviewed and considered for implementation and publication in fiscal year 2013/14.</p> | |

Recommendations (Cont.)

Recommendation 8: Provide the results of network-wide assessments of road and bridge condition, and options for future funding, to personnel responsible for planning and overseeing upkeep work at the district and regional levels. In addition, a summary of those results and the funding options provided should be presented to Legislators and to the public as a report card on ministry efforts at network upkeep.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The ministry completed an assessment of the practices of other jurisdictions regarding the publication of asset condition data. The findings of this assessment will be reviewed and considered for implementation and publication in future fiscal years.

Recommendation 9: Create a set of service-related objectives and performance measures to assess its own contributions to the success of contracted routine maintenance services.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

A project team has been established to assess the ministry's current service performance measures. Recommendations being considered include a performance measure to monitor the number and type of audits conducted by ministry staff to ensure that trends in each service area are understood and corrective actions are taken.

Recommendation 10: Analyze customer complaints and enquiries, and use this information to identify areas for making improvements in the road upkeep programs and in results reporting.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The best practice is for local staff to assess and determine short-term trends in complaints and enquiries and take action at the local level as required. The ministry project team is reviewing our current practice for determining longer term trends and will be making recommendations for best practices.