



News Release

For Immediate Release

Procurement Ombudsman continues to help Canadian businesses and federal departments resolve contracting issues

OTTAWA, December 17, 2015 – Federal Procurement Ombudsman Frank Brunetta released his 2014-15 Annual Report, which summarizes his office's activities over the past year and identifies key issues in federal procurement. This Annual Report was tabled in Parliament by the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, the Honourable Judy Foote.

In his Annual Report message, the Ombudsman highlights three procurement issues brought to his attention by suppliers and federal officials:

1. Lowest cost purchasing: the belief that departments are not obtaining best value with an over-reliance on the lowest price;
2. Lengthy security clearance process: a recurrent problem, we heard of this at almost every supplier meeting we held;
3. Recent changes in federal procurement tools, rules and procedures have created a certain malaise amongst suppliers and federal officials alike.

On the first issue, the Ombudsman stated that: "Numerous suppliers called for improved bid evaluation models which place a greater emphasis on delivery capacity and quality" and added "neither industry nor government benefit from lowest cost being the default in federal purchasing." With regard to federal security clearance processes, Mr. Brunetta said: "Many business people referred to the security clearance process as an unequivocal and unmitigated barrier to doing business with the federal government". On the third issue, Mr. Brunetta said he was: "struck by the general sense of uneasiness expressed by suppliers and federal official created by the challenges of adapting to changes occurring both in the procurement world and in the public service as a whole."

The Ombudsman also noted that for the first time in the office's history, one department refused to provide him with the information necessary to review a supplier complaint. The Ombudsman stated: "Despite repeated attempts to obtain the information necessary for the conduct of the review, including a request to the deputy head of the organization, the department chose to provide limited material in the form of redacted documents which was insufficient for me to assess the fairness, openness or transparency of the department's procurement process. This deliberate withholding of information impeded my ability to execute my mandate."

The Office of the Procurement Ombudsman is an independent organization with a government-wide mandate to promote fairness, openness and transparency in federal procurement.

This report can be found on OPO's Website at www.opo-boa.gc.ca.

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