

LEARNING STRATEGY FOR OUR CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Introduction

BC Timber Sales relies heavily on contracted resources to deliver its mandate and meet program objectives in a cost-effective manner. Annually BCTS manages over 2,000 contracts totaling more than \$150 million. Contracts vary widely in size, terms and complexity. Having staff members who are proficient in contracting is critical to the long term success of BCTS.

There are two key contracting activities: Contract Management (oversight and strategic planning); and Contract Administration (the “doing”). To date the focus has been on Contract Administration and while there are policies and procedures for contracting, there is no overall framework to pull all the various parts of contract administration and management together.

In 2005/06 BCTS HQ undertook a project to research and develop a contracting framework to support effective contracting and provide a basis to assess and continuously improve our contract management and administration. The draft framework was presented to and endorsed by the Business Officers and Analysts and the Contract Efficiencies Working Group (CEWG). The framework will be presented to the TSLT for input and endorsement later this year.

A key part of the framework is ensuring that BCTS staff who have contract responsibilities are appropriately trained. The CEWG believes that - irrespective of any endorsement or implementation of the proposed framework - ensuring staff are appropriately trained and have the knowledge required to fulfill their contract management and administration responsibilities is a high priority.

The CEWG also believes a systematic approach to staff learning will open new communication channels that support continual improvement. One downside of a formal learning and training platform is the commitment to staff time and financial resources. The Working Group believes, however, this is an investment that will continue to provide positive net returns year after year.

As a result the Working Group is advancing the following strategy and recommendations which should strike a reasonable balance between systematic learning and training consistent with the proposed contracting framework and the anticipated draw on staff time and BCTS resources.

Proposed Contract Knowledge Strategy

Contract Management Framework objective

“All BCTS staff will have the appropriate level of knowledge to support effective contract management within the organization.”

There are four levels of contract training/knowledge – Basic, Working, Expert and Teaching.

Basic Knowledge

- All BCTS staff will have a basic knowledge of contract administration and management.

Working Knowledge

- BCTS staff with responsibilities for administering or managing contracts will have a working knowledge of contract administration and management.

Expert Knowledge

- BCTS will have one or two people with expert knowledge at each TSO and HQ.

Teaching Knowledge

- BCTS will rely on Ministry Contract Analysts at Finance and Management Services Branch for teaching level expertise. The services of the Contract Analysts are provided to BCTS under its Service Agreement with Corporate Services Division.

In order to implement this initial strategy the CEWG is making the following 10 recommendations for TSLT approval.

Recommendations

Short Term

1. To support continuous improvement of contract management and administration within BCTS the CEWG recommends the above contract knowledge strategy and the proposed Contracting Framework be formally presented to the TSLT for endorsement at the September TSLT meeting.
2. To ensure all BCTS staff have a basic knowledge of contract administration and management the CEWG recommends that:
 - a) All current staff complete the web-based course Base Contract Administration Theory (PCMP 110) or demonstrate equivalent skills.
 - b) All new personnel joining BCTS complete the web-based course Base Contract Administration Theory (PCMP 110) as a part of their orientation.
3. To initiate the development of working and expert level knowledge within BCTS the CEWG recommends that:
 - a) Each TSO and HQ designate 1 or 2 people as their “contract management champions”.
 - b) With the support of BCTS management, the designated champions will be responsible for providing working knowledge level contract management assistance and advice to other BCTS staff within their Business Areas. (Expert level assistance and advice will continue to be provided through Ministry Contract Analysts in FMSB)
 - c) Completion of PCMP 201 and 202 or equivalent be considered a priority for the designated champions and be included in their EPDPs.
 - d) A small team (with members from the Training and Contract Efficiency Working Groups and others) should be tasked with developing a plan (for TSLT approval) to enable
 - the remaining BCTS staff with contract administration and/or management responsibilities to achieve working level knowledge and
 - the local champions to achieve expert level knowledge over time.Such a plan would include but would not be limited to refining the competencies and experience requirements for each level of knowledge within the strategy and recommending how BCTS might effectively deliver such learning/training to the appropriate staff members.

Longer Term

4. In the longer term the CEWG recommends that:
 - a) The task team should also lead the development of a more inclusive contract knowledge strategy to be integrated with the proposed contracting framework.
 - b) The champions form the nucleus of a contract management community of practice within BCTS to share best practices, collaborate on resolving issues, and develop and promote contracting knowledge transfer.
 - c) The BCTS contract knowledge strategy and learning/training be integrated with EPDPs and job competencies.