September 30, 2016

Mr. John Messina
Chief Information Officer of the Government of Canada
Treasury Board Secretariat
Chief Information Officer Branch
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, ON   K1A 0R5

Dear Mr. Messina,

On behalf of the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC), I would like to thank you for tabling the draft Strategic IT Plan for industry review and feedback.

I also wish to congratulate the Government of Canada—specifically the Federal CIO Branch and its CIO community—for publishing this important document for consultation. ITAC looks forward to the end result: a strategy that provides a consistent, clear set of directions to help the Government leverage IT in the delivery of its many important programs, and meet its ever-evolving mandate.

As ITAC is the voice of Canada's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, I can tell you that our constituents greatly appreciate the current Government's recognition of the strategic role that ICT sector can play in further developing the plan. As subject-matter experts with countless years of experience shaping plans like these all over the world, our members can most certainly offer you real value and insight into best practices and lessons learned.

We recognize that much of what is addressed in the Strategic IT Plan has been pursued by Government and its partners over the course of many years; however, we also acknowledge that these issues have not been addressed as openly and boldly in a single clearly stated document until now.

ITAC regularly work with members to gain feedback, distill down their insights, and provide a perspective to Government. This letter/document is the result of discussions with our Enterprise Working Group: a group of volunteer experts focused on responding to governmental transformation and modernization initiatives.

Overall, we find the Strategic IT Plan high-level, aspirational and practical in addressing very specific initiatives and providing expected timeframes for implementation. To help further shape and strengthen the Strategic IT Plan— as well as the Cloud Adoption Strategy—we have provided a few recommendations on the following pages.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. We hope that our combined voices help set the stage for a modern digital federal service in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Robert Watson
President

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Strengthening the Strategic IT Plan

1. **Industry engagement**
   The Canadian ICT industry has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in using technology as a key enabler for innovation. We have worked closely with Government through our Public Sector Business Committee, and more directly through our Enterprise Working Group, to bring their ideas and know-how to the forefront.

   ITAC recommends... further emphasizing in the Strategic IT Plan the need for Canada's ICT sector to directly support the Government through its expert insight, advice and guidance.

2. **Digital government**
   Governments are among the largest consumers of ICT and ICT services in Canada. To increase innovation, productivity and economic prosperity for Canadians, Government can provide leadership for Canadians and Canadian business by being model adopters, users and promoters of ICT.

   ITAC recommends...creating a leadership council of academia and the ICT sector, focused on digital infrastructure and digital service, to help inform Government's IT investments pre-procurement—ensuring purchases align with delivering citizen-centric services; and bolster the broader economy, ICT sector and Canada's productivity.

3. **Governance**
   The Government has embraced a "deliverology" approach to managing transformation and modernization. The GoC may also wish to consider policy changes to ensure accountability across activities stemming from the IT Strategy—such as through incorporation into the Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPPs) and the Management Accountability Framework.

   ITAC recommends...going beyond project oversight to establish accountability mechanisms are in place for departments to be successful; and that a whole-of-government approach to IT is secured, serviced, managed and worked on effectively.

4. **Support Canadian Small and Medium Businesses**
   Canada's Innovation Agenda speaks to how public sector procurement can help Canadian businesses grow and scale. Moreover, with the consolidated IT environment created by Shared Services Canada, small and medium enterprises are impacted by large-scale transformation and modernization projects. As such, support for small and medium Canadian businesses is needed, along with a commitment from global multinationals, and all of this reinforced by inclusive procurement practices.

   ITAC recommends...encouraging departments embarking on IT transformation and modernization efforts to consider supporting small and medium enterprises in Canada.

5. **Focus on innovation**

    Leveraging IT as a strategic business enabler requires a paradigm shift in public-service thinking. Blueprint 2020 highlighted what the government is doing to enable a high-performing public service that embraces innovation, transformation and continuous renewal. Greater dialogue is needed on how Canada's public service embraces innovation stemming from the Internet of Things (IoT) or Artificial Intelligence. ITAC's *The Internet of Things: Time for National Discourse* speaks to IoT benefits and impacts.

    ITAC recommends...*putting more emphasis on investigating how the public service can harness new technologies to (a) help innovate public service delivery, while (b) keeping the Government of Canada safe and secure.*

6. **Committing to renewal ("avoiding the pitfalls of aging IT")**

    Building a "public service of the future" with the nimbleness to support evolving citizen needs and demands requires ongoing planning, resources and actions to establish and maintain modern and up-to-date IT infrastructure, business applications, tools and services. This can be more generally expressed as a commitment to IT renewal. Moreover, the safety and security of our critical infrastructure also depends on it.

    ITAC recommends...*encouraging departments to develop renewal strategies, thereby facilitating proactive planning and supporting seamless IT service delivery to Canadians.*

7. **Business alignment**

    So that departments can gain value from their IT investments, alignment must occur between each department's business requirements and IT strategy. This must happen at every level—including strategic planning, transformation and execution.

    ITAC recommends...*placing more emphasis on the relationship between business and IT so departments can more easily identify ways to improve, establish and implement action plans and best practices; and monitor and measure results.*

8. **Developing an enterprise architecture (EA) framework**

    To achieve measurable business value from transformation and modernization initiatives, governments must have a defined, mature business or enterprise architecture practice. A greater emphasis on EA capability is required to ensure initiatives are efficient, effective, and well planned. Moreover, such a framework melds strategic goals and strong integration with business strategy, enterprise program management, portfolio management and governance functions.

    ITAC recommends...*encouraging the development of an enterprise architecture (EA) capability within departments, so the Government can eventually integrate these plans and move to a whole-of-government EA approach.*

9. **Procurement**

Because procurement is often the final step of a transformation and/or modernization project, this leads to highly prescriptive procurements focused on best price. More recently, procurement is being used as a strategic enabler where frameworks are created to support the conditions needed; and more attention is given to identifying, specifying and signaling needs so that contracts are outcome-based.

IT recommends…that TBS highlight the importance of procurement planning; and underscore the balance required by departments on the cost/value of products, services and solutions that they require.

Strengthening the Cloud Adoption Strategy

ITAC would also like to amplify a few areas that we believe, if you include them, will strengthen the Government's Cloud Adoption Strategy:

1. **Clarity in the Cloud**

ITAC is pleased that the Cloud Adoption Strategy was released in tandem with the Strategic IT Plan. Additionally, seeing Shared Services Canada kickstart its procurement process around its cloud brokerage role further proves that this government intends to embrace innovation to improve the federal public service. Knowing this, it is important that we clearly define the roles each department will play in adopting and deploying cloud-based services.

ITAC recommends...that TBS clearly define its role, and that of Shared Services Canada, its client and partner departments.

2. **Hybrid Cloud**

As the Government migrates to cloud, it is unlikely that public cloud services will be used for all application development, workloads or applications. As with virtually all large organizations, it is expected that the GoC will function in a Hybrid cloud model: with some workloads and applications residing in a private cloud (GoC data center), some in the public cloud, and some that use both environments simultaneously.

ITAC recommends...recognizing the hybrid cloud; defining application and workload deployments; and holding a discussion on how migration, management and execution be orchestrated.

3. **Towards an agile enterprise**

As the Government moves towards agile development environments, DevOps, and Continuous Integration and Delivery models, as identified in the IT Strategic Plan, providing enterprise IaaS/PaaS services are mission-critical.

ITAC recommends...providing greater clarity on how the Government intends to provide an Enterprise IaaS/PaaS environment in support of internal agile and DevOps methodologies for the GoC developer community.