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Public Sector Business Committee hears from Procurement Ombudsman who identifies need for simplified processes and increased transparency

At this month's federal Public Business Sector Committee meeting, members had the opportunity to hear from Alexander Jeglic, Procurement Ombudsman from the Office of the Procurement Ombudsman (OPO). The OPO is a neutral and independent organization of the Government of Canada that helps resolve contracting disputes between businesses and the federal government.

During the discussion, Mr. Jeglic provided an overview of the issues raised by both suppliers and federal officials – including:

- Procurement process is too complicated, with too many rules;
- Procurement tools can be cumbersome to use and difficult to quality for; and
- The inability to transfer security clearances between organizations and the length of time it takes to get one.

He also pointed out the issues with the different phases of the procurement process:

1) Solicitation phase of the procurement process

- How rules are applied
- Late responses or unanswered supplier questions
- Time provided to respond to proposals
- Whether suppliers are being made aware of contract opportunities

2) Evaluation of bid

- Suppliers being evaluated unfairly or inconsistently
- Allegations the successful bidder did not meet requirements set out in the solicitation

3) Evaluation and Selection Plan

- Restrictive or unfair evaluation criteria
- Evaluation grid used to evaluate each supplier bid
- Method by which the winning supplier is selected

4) Debriefing

- Inability to reach federal officials
- Suppliers receiving no debriefing or an insufficient debriefing regarding a contract where they were not the successful bidder

5) Planning and Strategy

- Planning of project requirements and timelines

- Selection of the appropriate procurement approach to be used

The solution? Simplify the process of federal procurement; be more transparent about legislative activities, stakeholder engagement and information sharing; promote more broadly the OPO's alternative dispute resolution services and increase the engagement of federal organizations; and conduct deeper and more comprehensive analysis on procurement-related issues.

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