

MINISTRY OF SMALL BUSINESS AND REVENUE

REVENUE SERVICES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ANNUAL REPORT

December 2004 to December 2005

March 31, 2006





March 31, 2006

Honourable Rick Thorpe
Minister of Small Business and Revenue
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 1X4

Dear Honourable Thorpe:

I am pleased to present the first Annual Report for Revenue Services of British Columbia.

In 2004, the Province of British Columbia signed a 10-year Agreement with EDS Advanced Solutions Inc. (the Service Provider), a British Columbia company, to work with the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue to create a Centre of Excellence for revenue management within the Province. Revenue management services are provided under the terms of the Agreement, under the Province's official brand and mark, Revenue Services of British Columbia.

This report covers the first year of operations under the Agreement, from December 2004 to December 2005.

During the first year of operations, significant progress has been made in achieving improvements to both customer service, and revenue management and recovery. The Province is on track to realize projected net benefits of \$382 million over the 10 years of the Agreement.

I invite you to read about these improvements in the attached report. The Ministry will continue to build on this success in creating a Centre of Excellence for revenue management and recovery for the Province of British Columbia.

Yours truly,

Robin Ciceri
Deputy Minister

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Introduction

The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue's mandate is to create a Centre of Excellence for revenue management in the Province of British Columbia. As a public sector leader in revenue management, the Ministry will:

- Be responsive to customer needs - continuously improve customer service.
- Streamline the way government collects revenue - provide cost effective and efficient delivery of service to British Columbians.
- Maximize revenue recovery - support important public services, such as health care and education, for British Columbians.

In 2004, the Province of British Columbia signed a 10-year Agreement with EDS Advanced Solutions Inc. (Service Provider), a British Columbia company, to work with the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue to build and operate a Centre of Excellence for revenue management. Revenue management services are provided under the terms of the Agreement, and on behalf of the Province of British Columbia, under the Province's official brand and mark, Revenue Services of British Columbia.

The Agreement will generate projected net revenue benefits of \$382 million to the Province over the 10 year period and leverage private sector expertise, technology and investment capital. In addition, the Agreement transfers the up-front investment and project implementation risk of building the Centre of Excellence from the Province to the Service Provider.

This Report provides an overview of the results achieved during the first year of operations under the Agreement, from December 6, 2004, when the Service Provider began revenue management operations on behalf of the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue, to the end of December 2005. The report identifies the progress made towards the objectives set out in the Revenue Management Project Summary Report¹ published in November 2004.

¹ View the Revenue Management Project Summary Report online at http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/rmp_summary_report.pdf

Background

Historically, revenue management has been dispersed across government, with monies owed collected by several ministries through 40 different recovery systems. This has resulted in challenges in revenue recovery and data integrity, antiquated and overloaded technology systems, and the potential for delayed collections and inconsistent application of policies. As a result, government's over 90-day accounts receivable had grown to over \$800 million, bad debt provisions and write-offs were increasing, and customers were experiencing multiple contacts with different ministries.

To address this challenge, the Ministry explored alternative service delivery strategies and opportunities to streamline and simplify revenue management across government, with the objectives of:

- improving customer service;
- increasing voluntary compliance;
- lowering accounts receivable balances;
- reducing bad-debt expenses;
- avoiding costs associated with disparate, antiquated information systems;
- improving government reporting and transparency; and
- ensuring consistent application of policies and business processes.

EDS Advanced Solutions, Inc. (EAS) was the successful proponent of an extensive procurement process. Operating under the Province's official brand and mark, Revenue Services of British Columbia business responsibilities include:

- Excellence in customer service, focused on citizen-centered service delivery that ensures public services are more accessible, responsive and customer-friendly.
- Compliance with stringent privacy, confidentiality, and contractual security provisions for the protection of British Columbians' personal information.
- The creation and operation of a streamlined and simplified Revenue Management System, including the implementation of new technology to support account management, billing, payment processing, tax return processing and collections activities.
- Implementation of timely and innovative information technology solutions and support for the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue.

Table 1: Scope of revenue management services

Revenue Services of British Columbia performs different revenue management functions for different portfolios, depending on program and client ministry needs. Table 1 shows the current portfolios managed by Revenue Services of British Columbia.

Ministry Portfolios	Account Management	Billing	Payment Processing	Collection of Overdue Accounts	Tax Return Processing
Medical Services Plan Premiums(MSP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Immigrant Sponsorship Program			✓		
B.C. Ambulance Service			✓	✓	
British Columbia Student Assistance Program				✓	
Employment and Assistance Program				✓	
Court Fines				✓	
Mineral Oil and Gas Revenues			✓		
Subsidized Bus Pass Program			✓		
Commercial Loans			✓		
Social Service Tax, Corporation Capital Tax, Tobacco Tax, Fuel Tax, Rural Property Tax, Property Transfer Tax, Hotel Room Tax, and other small tax statutes			✓		✓

First Year Results

The Service Provider has completed the first year of the Agreement with the Province of British Columbia. Through innovation and new technology, improvements to business processes and skilled employees, Revenue Services of British Columbia is meeting performance expectations. First year results are presented for:

- Customer service.
- Protection of privacy.
- Transition of staff.
- Revenue management system.
- Benefits and payments.
- Audit.
- Contract monitoring.

Customer Service

Over the first year of operations under the Agreement, the Service Provider implemented significant service and business process improvements, resulting in more citizen-centred service delivery. Improvements include:

- **Extended customer service hours** - customer service hours were extended on Saturdays and evenings to meet the needs of customers. An additional 16 hours of phone service per week were added to provide service during early evening hours Monday through Thursday, as well as customer service hours on Saturday. This means customers have increased access to a customer service representative.
- **Improved customer service training** - all Revenue Services of British Columbia employees have received training based on the Taxpayer Fairness and Service Code, supporting the Ministry's commitment to a customer's right to timely customer service, courtesy, respect, fair treatment and confidentiality.
- **Reduced billing and payment processing errors** - use of improved technology, such as new remittance processing equipment, upgraded telephone systems and increased skip tracing abilities, has resulted in fewer billing and payment processing errors. This ensures the right information is provided to customers and supports improved revenue recovery.
- **Increased focus on quality assurance** – implemented streamlined business processes and the consistent application of collection guidelines and principles to provide clear information and increase fairness and equity. Revenue Services of British Columbia implemented a formal complaint tracking system to focus on quality assurance.

Overall, performance trends indicate an improvement in the quality of customer service. The implementation of improved technology and additional staffing during peak hours has allowed Revenue Services British Columbia to handle increased customer call volumes and provide faster phone response times. This improved service means fewer customers abandon their call or reach a busy signal before accessing a customer service representative.

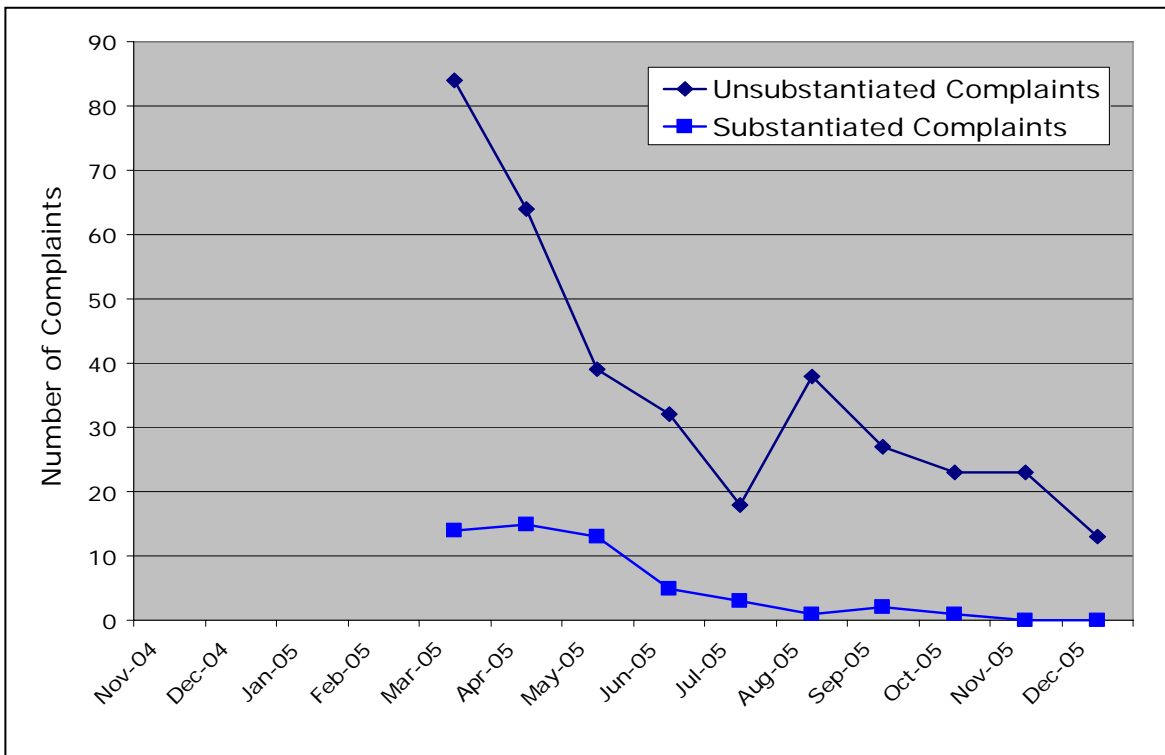
There are 25 service levels defined in the Agreement. Three customer service levels are reported in the following tables - customer complaints, customer busy signal rate and call abandon rate. The remaining service levels come into effect in the future, with most related to providing internal information technology services and the implementation of the new Revenue Management System in mid-2006.

The following tables show performance trends over the first year of the Agreement for five key indicators of customer service quality – customer complaints, customer contacts, customer call wait time, customer busy signal rate and call abandon rate.

Reduced Customer Complaints

- A key success factor for customer service is to reduce customer complaints. This includes reducing customer complaints received by e-mail, phone and letter by the Minister's Office and offices of Members of the Legislative Assembly, as well as any matters escalated to a supervisor or manager.
- Prior to signing the Agreement with the Service Provider, customer complaints were not consistently monitored or reported. The first available statistics from March 2005 show total unsubstantiated customer complaints at 84 per month and substantiated customer complaints at 14 per month.
- **Substantiated customer complaints were reduced to virtually zero by December 2005.**

Figure 1: Customer complaints



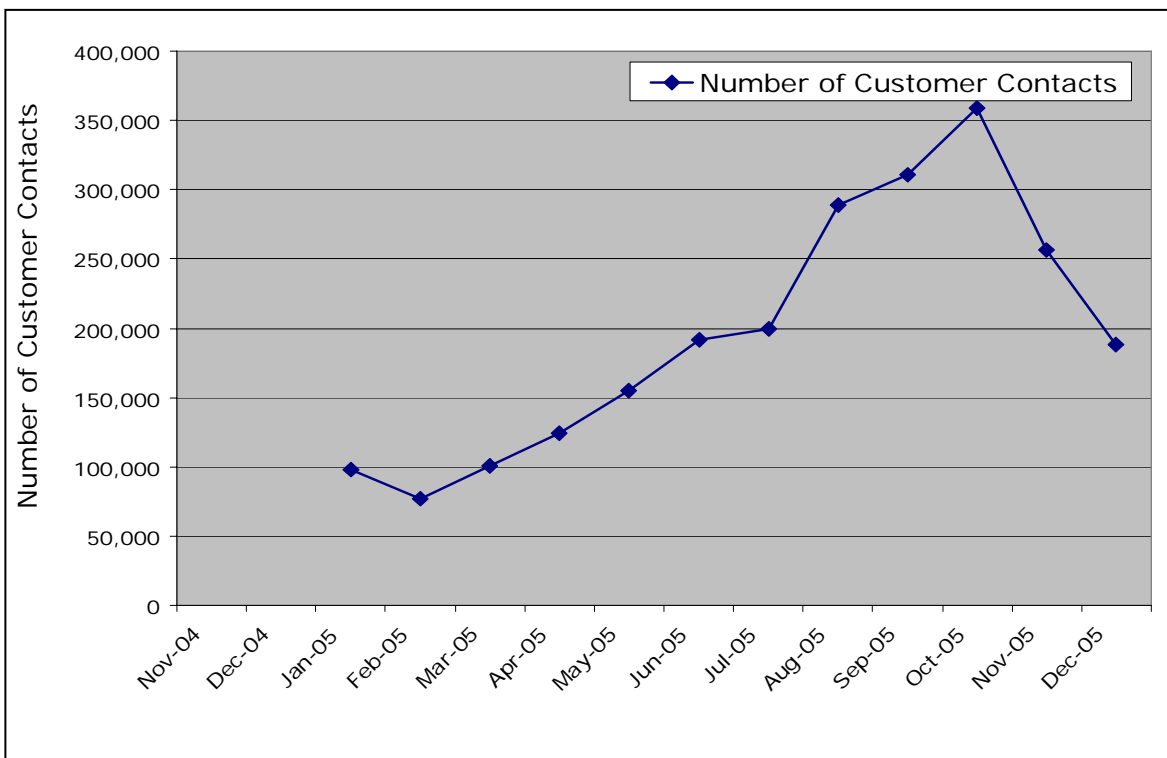
Statistics available beginning in March 2005.

A complaint is "Substantiated" when, during a customer interaction, an EAS customer service agent: (1) materially deviates from established policies or processes; (2) uses threatening, inappropriate or unprofessional language; or (3) presents incorrect facts of the case. This is evaluated jointly with the Service Provider and Ministry staff.

Increased Customer Contacts

- A key success factor for customer service is to increase customer contacts, providing clear, complete and accurate information and access to customer service representatives quickly and efficiently.
- Customer contacts include incoming customer inquiries, proactive collection contacts and managing other revenue management services.
- **Customer contacts increased from 97,600 to approximately 180,000 per month by December 2005, an increase of 84 per cent.**

Figure 2: Customer contacts

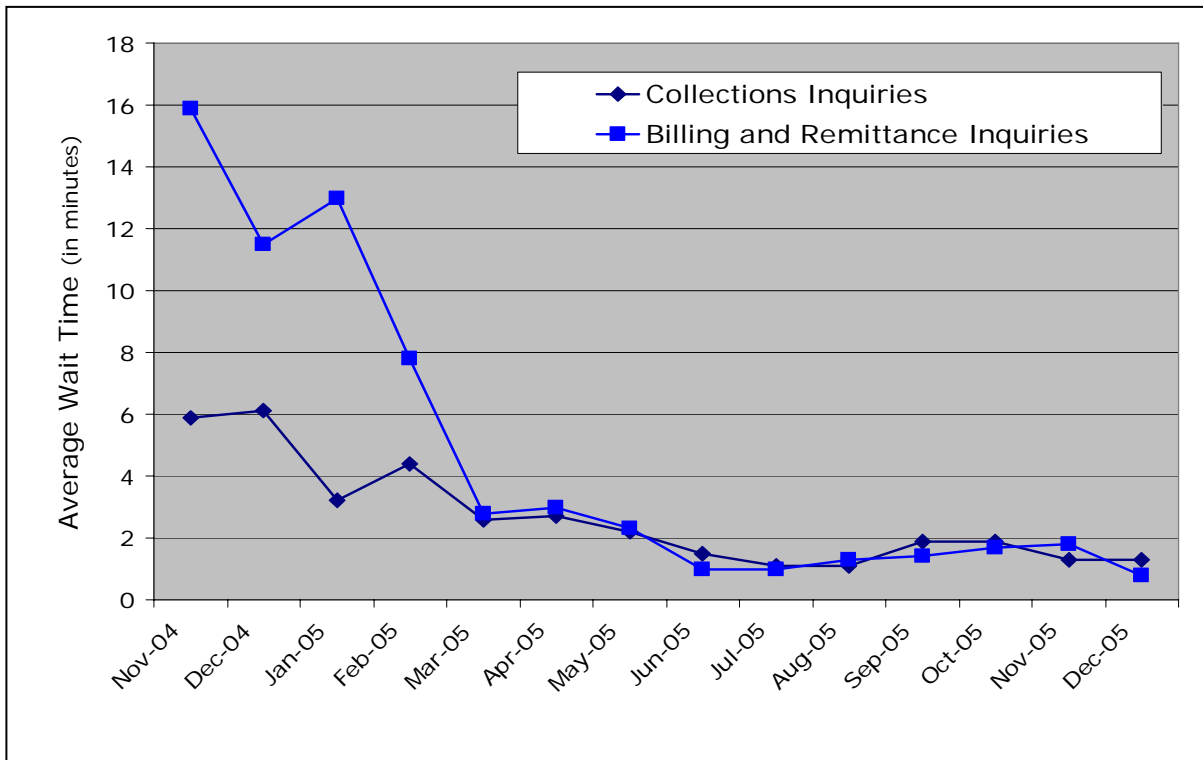


Statistics available beginning in January 2005.

Decreased Customer Call Wait Time

- A key success factor for customer service is to decrease the customer call wait time to an average of less than 3 minutes.
- Prior to signing the Agreement with the Service Provider, the customer call wait time averaged 15.9 minutes for billing and remittance inquiries and 5.9 minutes for collection of overdue accounts.
- **The average customer call wait time for billing and remittance inquiries was consistently under the 3 minute objective by May 2005, and was at less than 1 minute by December 2005.**
- **The average customer call wait time for collections inquiries was consistently under 3 minutes by March 2005 and at 1.3 minutes by December 2005.**

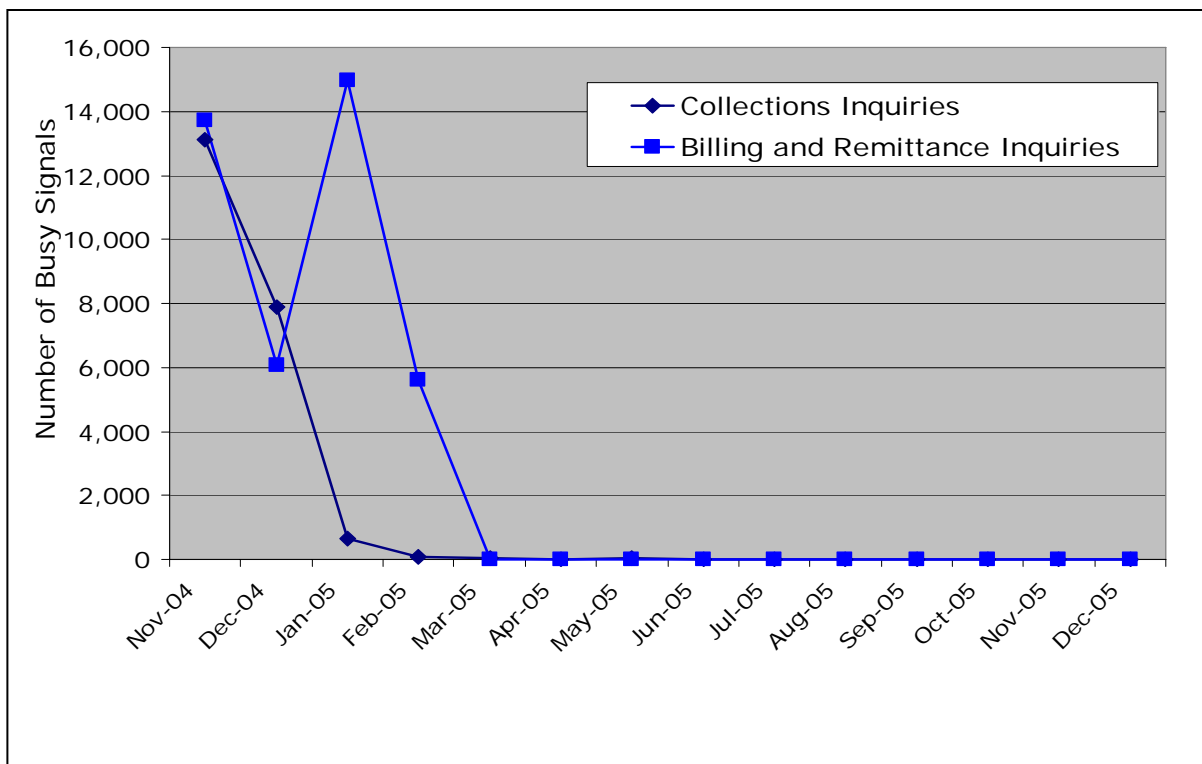
Figure 3: Customer call wait time



Elimination of Customer Busy Signal Rate

- A key success factor for customer service is to decrease the customer busy signal rate to 1 per cent.
- Prior to signing the Agreement with the Service Provider, approximately 27,000 customers received busy signals each month.
- **The number of customers receiving a busy signal decreased to virtually zero by December 2005 for both collections, and billing and remittance inquiries.**

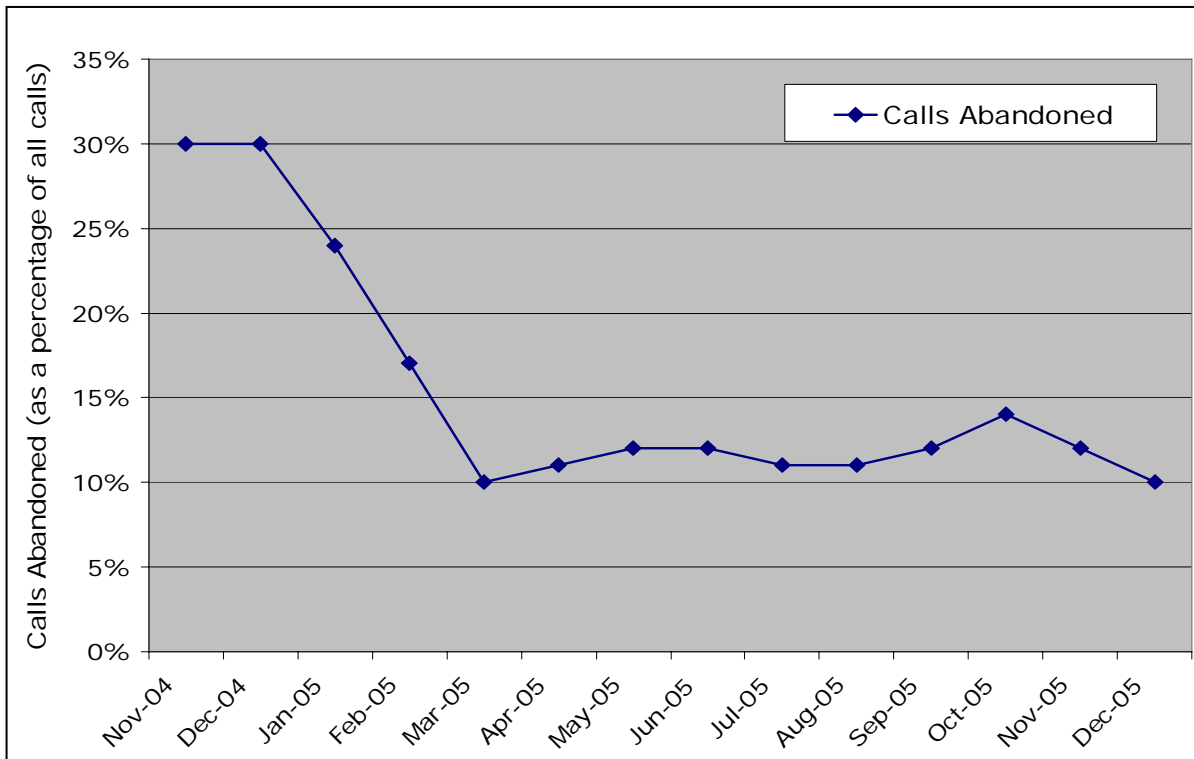
Figure 4: Customer busy signal rate



Decreased Call Abandon Rate

- A key success factor for customer service is to decrease the call abandon rate – the percentage of customers who hang up before reaching a service representative.
- Prior to signing the Agreement with the Service Provider, the customer call abandon rate averaged 30 per cent. This means for every 100 customers who got through to the voice response system, an average of 30 hung up before reaching a service representative.
- **The average customer call abandon rate was reduced to 10 per cent by December 2005, despite a significant increase in the number of calls handled.**

Figure 5: Call abandon rate



Protection of Privacy

The Province of British Columbia is committed to the protection of all personal information of British Columbians. This commitment is reinforced under the Agreement with the Service Provider. Prior to signing the Agreement with the Service Provider, a rigorous privacy framework was developed by the Province for the protection of personal information. The Agreement with the Service Provider contains stringent privacy, confidentiality and security provisions for the protection of personal information. Together, these strong contractual provisions provide a comprehensive strategy and privacy framework for protection against unauthorized access, use or disclosure of personal information.

Privacy protection within the Agreement includes:

- The Province retains control and ownership of all personal information.
- Privacy provisions that either meet or exceed the requirements under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)* regarding the unauthorized access, use and disclosure of personal information.
- The Province has step-in rights under a power of attorney, which may be exercised in the event of an anticipated privacy breach.
- All data and information backups are located exclusively in Canada.
- Direct agreements between the Province and the Service Provider's employees, and employees of sub-contractors, which include non-disclosure obligations where the employees have access to personal information.
- Whistleblower protection is provided for employees.

Privacy Report Update

The following privacy provisions and strategies are included in the Agreement with the Service Provider. Table 2 records the status of each provision or strategy after the first year of operations.

Table 2: Privacy provisions and strategies – status at end of first year of operations

Privacy Provisions and Strategies	Agreement	First Year Report
Compliance with new FOIPPA amendments.	√	The requirements of FOIPPA, as amended by Bill 73, were incorporated into the operations by the Service Provider to protect against the unauthorized access, use and disclosure of personal information.
The Service Provider's policies and procedures outline all privacy and security objectives, methodologies and disclosure requirements.	√	Policies designed to protect against the unauthorized access, use and disclosure of personally identifiable information were adopted and implemented by the Service Provider, and are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.
Within the Service Provider, data access will be segregated to align with specific job requirements.	√	Strict security controls within business applications were implemented by the Service Provider to align access to personal information with job functions that require such access.
Tools will be implemented to enable trace and audit of all data access/copying, including individual user logs.	√	The Service Provider has implemented auditing and is monitoring data access.
Strong technology security measures will be implemented, including firewalls, encryption and physical security.	√	The Service Provider implemented a secure infrastructure surrounded by two factor physical authentication systems and a combination of firewalls, as well as routers, to shield and protect personal information from unauthorized access. Encryption has been added to telecommunications traversing the secure infrastructure.
Strict records management and retention policies will be implemented.	√	The Service Provider adopted and implemented strict records management and retention policies consistent with the requirements of the Agreement, and that incorporate the Province's ARCS and ORCS procedures.

Privacy Provisions and Strategies	Agreement	First Year Report
Privacy Impact Assessments will be required prior to any systems change.	√	Privacy Impact Assessments for changes within the secure infrastructure were completed before any changes were implemented. Privacy Impact Assessments were developed for the Revenue Management System and will be completed before any changes are implemented.
Contract includes termination rights in the event of disclosure or privacy breach.	√	Termination provisions were included in the Agreement with the Service Provider. There has been no cause for the Province to consider exercising its rights under these provisions.
Employees of the Service Provider and their sub-contractors who have access to personal information are required to sign non-disclosure agreements with the Province.	√	Non-disclosure agreements in favour of the Province were signed by the employees of the Service Provider, and its sub-contractors, who have access to personal information.
Non-disclosure agreements include the requirement for employees to notify the Province in the event of any potential or actual unauthorized disclosure of personal information.	√	In addition to the whistleblower requirements included in the non-disclosure agreements with the Province, the Service Provider adopted and implemented whistleblower policies that include the requirement for employees to report all unauthorized requests for personal information.
The non-disclosure agreements with employees will be updated annually.	√	The Service Provider has implemented an annual process that requires all employees to re-sign and restate their personal commitment to protecting personal information.
A detailed Privacy Plan will be created and referenced to the contract.	√	The Service Provider developed a detailed Privacy Plan, which is continually reviewed, updated and monitored by the parties.
Special restrictions on data access and oversight/supervision requirements apply to employees of foreign entities working on transition and transformation activities.	√	Special restrictions on data access and oversight/supervision requirements for employees of foreign entities working on transition and transformation activities have been implemented by the Service Provider.

Privacy Provisions and Strategies	Agreement	First Year Report
Data storage and access, including remote access, will be only in Canada, and can only be changed with the Province's express consent.	√	The Service Provider only stores personal information in Canada, and has taken steps to ensure that personal information is only accessed (including remote access) from Canada.
Data access by the Service Provider will be segregated to prevent access from non-Canadian affiliates.	√	The Service Provider is a British Columbia company and it does not have the legal authority or power to disclose personal information contrary to <i>FOIPPA</i> . In addition, the Service Provider has implemented procedures to separate its operations that involve access to personal information from those of its affiliates, to prevent access to personal information from non-Canadian affiliates.
Processes will be put in place to notify the Province if it appears that data is copied or accessed in an unusual manner.	√	The Service Provider has adopted and implemented policies that require the Service Provider to notify the Province of any unusual copying of or access to personal information (including the maintenance and monitoring of access and copy logs). In addition, the employees and subcontractors of the Service Provider are required to advise the Service Provider's supervisors, managers and Privacy and Security Compliance Officer if they become aware of any unusual copying of or access to personal information, or other suspicious activities.
Hardware that could enable data to be copied and taken off site, such as removable floppy drives, CD burners and USB smart drives will be restricted to designated personnel.	√	The Service Provider implemented security standards for hardware that restrict the ability to copy and remove personal information. These standards are further enhanced through physical limitations on who has access to personal information and the access restrictions to physical locations where personal information is stored or can otherwise be accessed.
The Service Provider must have a dedicated Privacy and Security Officer who monitors compliance.	√	The Service Provider appointed a dedicated Privacy and Security Officer, who monitors compliance with security and privacy obligations. The Service Provider provides the Province with regular reports on compliance monitoring.

Privacy Provisions and Strategies	Agreement	First Year Report
Severe consequences, including termination of the contract and significant damages in the event of unauthorized use, access or disclosure of personal information, including <i>Patriot Act</i> disclosures.	√	In addition to the contractual provisions contained in the Agreement with the Service Provider (which include termination rights and significant damages), the Service Provider's and subcontractors' employee training on privacy matters addresses the consequences of unauthorized use, access or disclosure of personal information.
The Province retains ownership and control of all records and personal information. The Service Provider will be the custodian of the documents while on contract with government.	√	The Agreement with the Service Provider specifies that the Province retains ownership and control of all records and personal information.
The Service Provider will comply with the Government of British Columbia's existing Administrative and Operational Records Classification Systems (ARCS and ORCS).	√	The Service Provider has implemented, and is complying with, the Province's Administrative and Operational Records Classification systems for all records relating to the revenue management operations.
The Service Provider will return records to the Province annually for off-site storage and upon expiration or termination of the Agreement.	√	Hard copy records are returned to the Province annually for off-site storage through the Ministry.
Risk and control audits will take place.	√	The first risk and control audit of the Service Provider's revenue management operations is in process in preparation for the Revenue Management System implementation.
Use of privacy enhancing technologies is required.	√	Restrictive controls to desktop computers have been implemented. Restrictive controls to servers have also been implemented, including those governing data and operational access.

Privacy Provisions and Strategies	Agreement	First Year Report
Restricted access to personal information by employees of foreign entities and reliance, wherever possible, on employees of Canadian entities.	√	The Service Provider has developed and implemented restrictive practices and processes for granting access to personal information to only those persons who require access to carry out their job functions. These practices include annual reviews of authorization and access restrictions to physical locations where personal information is stored.
The Province has step-in rights under a Power of Attorney to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure of personal information.	√	There has been no requirement for the Province to exercise this right under the Agreement.
Covenant from the Service Provider not to take EDS Corporate direction pursuant to a <i>Patriot Act</i> disclosure request.	√	The Service Provider has provided this covenant contractually in the Agreement, and reconfirms its compliance with this covenant in an annual Officer's Certificate that is delivered to the Province.
All directors of the Service Provider will be Canadian citizens.	√	This has been verified.

Transition of Staff

As part of the Agreement, 177 government employees were offered employment with the Service Provider. Government employees transferring their employment to the Service Provider retained their pensions, salaries and benefits, while unionized employees remained members of the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union. After the first year of operations under the Agreement, 96 per cent of the Province's employees transferring their employment remained with the Service Provider.

In the first year of operations under the Agreement, the following staffing activities have occurred in connection with Revenue Services of British Columbia:

- 27 staff promoted since the transfer of employment from the Province.
- 32 additional staff hired by the Service Provider.
- 12 staff left their employment (7 returned to government for employment promotions and 5 resigned for other employment or family reasons).

Revenue Services of British Columbia has experienced low turn-over rates (5.6 per cent), indicating a high level of workforce stability. Findings from a recent employee survey indicate that a majority of employees believe in the success of the company, operate well in teams (helping each other out to get the job done), and recognize the importance of delivering excellent customer service. Staff transition highlights include:

- Successful relocation of staff to a new, consolidated facility at the Vancouver Island Technology Park in June 2005.
- Successful completion of a comprehensive change management plan involving the transition of government employees and business processes to the Service Provider, including training, mentoring, employee professional development and knowledge management in the first year.
- Successful skills upgrading for employees on new technologies and business processes.

Revenue Management System

The development of a Revenue Management System is a key component of the Agreement with the Service Provider. The system will create innovation through the use of leading edge technology, streamlining the way government collects revenue. The Revenue Management System will provide financial and transformational benefits to the Province allowing service levels to be met and exceeded.

Benefits to be realized with the implementation of the Revenue Management System include:

- consolidation of revenue management business functions within one system (account, bill, pay and collect);
- improved and streamlined revenue management business functions (consistent application of revenue management policies and procedures);
- creation of a platform for revenue management that could be leveraged by other ministries;
- timely and accurate financial reporting to the Office of the Comptroller General;
- improved privacy protection;
- better access to the right information at the right time;
- improved reporting and performance management; and
- increased ability to collect outstanding amounts owed to the Province by helping customers understand how much they owe, offering several different payment channels and using innovative collection processes.

The new Revenue Management System will be launched in mid-2006. Project development is proceeding in consultation with key government stakeholders. Completion of significant work for the design, configuration and implementation of a new SAP-based Revenue Management System has been completed.

Financial Benefits and Payments

Revenue Services of British Columbia will generate benefits over the 10 years of the Agreement by improving the collection of accounts receivable and reducing associated bad-debt expense and borrowing costs. A portion of these benefits will be shared with the Service Provider to offset the investment the Service Provider is making in business processes, technology and increased operational capacity.

The gross financial benefits of the Agreement are estimated at \$750 million over 10 years. The Service Provider's share of these estimated benefits is \$271 million. The Ministry's share amounts to \$479 million in gross estimated benefits. Of this amount, \$97 million will be used to fund the costs of establishing and maintaining effective governance, transitioning the remaining government revenue programs to the new Revenue Management System and volume growth. This results in projected net benefits to government of \$382 million over 10 years. In the first year of the Agreement, the Province is on track to realize the projected benefits.

Audit

The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue has extensive rights to perform reviews and audits. This includes the use of internal or external auditors or other professional advisors. Audits may cover any aspect of the Agreement, including privacy and security, general controls, practices and procedures, and financial or business matters.

The Ministry uses a risk assessment methodology as the basis for audit planning based on that used by the Office of the Comptroller General (OCG). Internal Audit, with the OCG, assisted the Ministry to develop an audit framework based on a comprehensive risk assessment. A three-year audit plan is being developed based on this audit framework.

In December 2005, the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue exercised its right to audit the services of Revenue Services of British Columbia. A comprehensive privacy and security audit is now underway with results expected in mid-2006. An independent, third party, private sector firm has been engaged to perform a risk and control review of the Revenue Management System prior to implementation.

Contract Monitoring

Effective management is critical to the continued success of alternative service delivery arrangements. Both the Ministry and the Service Provider are committed to build and maintain a positive, effective working relationship founded on stated objectives. Through the Agreement, both parties strive to ensure service levels and performance targets are met, and superior customer service and value for money are provided to British Columbians.

The Ministry and the Service Provider designed a joint contract management structure that reflects best practices in outsourcing initiatives. The Ministry's Alliance Management Office performs contract monitoring and relationship management in connection with the Agreement. The Alliance Management Office reports issues through the parties' joint governance structure, to facilitate achievement of projected outcomes and benefits for the revenue services outsourcing. In addition to regular reporting activities, the Alliance Management Office monitors the performance standards of both parties and provides ongoing recommendations for the project's continued success. Contract monitoring highlights from 2005 include:

- Implementation of clear processes for contract monitoring and relationship management, facilitating the achievement of projected outcomes of the deal.
- Implementation of an effective governance structure, including joint committees and processes to proactively resolve issues, manage risks, and conduct ongoing planning and performance measurement.

Conclusion

The Service Provider has been operating under the Agreement for one year and is meeting performance expectations that will lead to the development of a Centre of Excellence for revenue management and recovery for the Province of British Columbia.

Significant progress has been made in achieving improvements to both customer service, and revenue management and recovery. Service standards for customer service have been met or exceeded. While the volume of customer contacts has increased significantly over the past year, the quality of the customer experience has also improved. For example, customers have quicker access to a service representative to answer their questions, and customer complaints have almost been eliminated.

Revenue Services of British Columbia is generating benefits by improving customer service and the collection of accounts receivable, and reducing associated bad-debt expense and borrowing costs. The Province is on track to realize projected net benefits of \$382 million over the 10 years of the Agreement.

Further improvements to the operation and management of the Province's revenue services and further customer service improvements will be realized with the implementation of the Revenue Management System in mid-2006.

The protection of British Columbians' personal information continues to be of paramount importance to the Province. The year-one privacy provisions and strategies set out in the Agreement with the Service Provider have been designed to provide British Columbians with industry-leading practices for maintaining privacy and security of personal information.

The transition of government employees to the Service Provider was successful. Ninety-six per cent of employees transferring to the Service Provider remained employed by the Service Provider after the first year. The relocation of staff to their new location and the implementation of change management plans were successfully completed.

To ensure the success of the Agreement, the Ministry has implemented clear processes for contract monitoring and relationship management. The implementation of a joint governance structure committed to building a positive, effective working relationship further support the achievement of projected outcomes and benefits for the revenue services outsourcing.

The results of the first year of operations confirm this alternative service delivery initiative is realizing its intended objectives. The Ministry will continue to build on this success to create a Centre of Excellence for revenue management and recovery for the Province.

