Hearing Record – October 23, 2025 – François Émond, Executive Director of the Canadian Public Procurement Council (Part 2) (translated from the French transcript)

Mr. Vincent Ranger and the Clerk
Hello. You may be seated. So, Mr. Commissioner, our next witness will be François Émond.
Hello.
Hello.
Hello. Do you solemnly affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth? Say "I affirm."
François Émond
I affirm.
Your name and occupation?
François Émond, Executive Director of the Canadian Public Procurement Council.
Thank you. Your witness?

Mr. Vincent Ranger
So, Mr. Émond, I would perhaps ask you to present… In fact, we could submit as evidence: Mr. Émond, on behalf of the Canadian Public Procurement Council, submitted a brief to the Commission. So, I would ask you to introduce it as evidence, along with the presentation he prepared for today. So, the brief under 24 X 21-24 and the presentation under 24 X 21-25.
So, I believe Mr. Émond, you would like visual support for my first question, which will be to present the Canadian Public Procurement Council to us.

Mr. François Émond
Perfect, thank you. I'll start first by thanking you for giving us the opportunity to share our thoughts as part of your work. We've followed the commission with interest, so we're very pleased to have the opportunity to present our reflections, as I said, as part of your work.
The Canadian Public Procurement Council—if it's possible to have the presentation. Yes, if we can display the… Assistant, please take the time to show everything on screen. Ah, there it is.
Perfect, thank you. So, page 2 of the presentation. Exactly, thank you.
So, the Canadian Public Procurement Council is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 by the Government of Quebec. So, we are a Canadian organization founded by the Government of Quebec, as I mentioned, in 1999.
The primary mission of the council is to support the public procurement community across Canada by promoting dialogue, networking, facilitating information exchange, providing tailored responses to current questions, and offering the necessary expertise to solve common problems.

What you should know is that back in 1999, someone working at the Treasury Board thought there should be an opportunity for procurement professionals across Canada in the public sector to share their realities. We often tend to think that in Quebec, the procurement function is unique due to its legislative

framework, which is not necessarily the case.
So, this organization was initially created with the idea of allowing everyone to come together and discuss common issues and challenges. Our organization aims to be the main spokesperson for these professionals across Canada.
So, if we can go to the next slide.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Before that, I'd just like you to clarify—when you talk about the procurement function or public procurement, we can guess what it's about, but maybe just simplify it for us.

Mr. François Émond
Yes, that's a good point. It's pretty obvious to me, but just to clarify: procurement functions—so in the context of the commission, we can refer more specifically to a function within the SAAQ (Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec), which was the Directorate of Management of the so-called DGCC. But this function, more generally, is responsible for the acquisition and awarding of contracts for various goods and services within public organizations. So, to summarize, that's essentially it.
We could also now include, over time, the entire contract management aspect. Traditionally, this function oversaw acquisition, and once contracts were awarded,

Mr. François Émond
the responsibility was transferred to the client service for execution. What we're seeing over time is that contract management is taking up more and more space because there's added value in this function due to its neutrality. It can contribute to contract execution with suppliers by being a neutral party that can negotiate and try to resolve deadlocks between a public organization and its internal client responsible for execution, and a supplier.
So, we're increasingly seeing that contract management is becoming a larger part of the overall mandate of procurement functions in public organizations.
I hope that helps clarify the role a bit.
But as I said, it's a role that's evolving. That's why our interest in your work was very strong—it directly relates to what we do daily and how we see it gradually evolving in Quebec, in Canada, and internationally.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Perfect. In any case, we'll have the opportunity to come back to that function, which can evolve—or rather, should evolve.
Should evolve, yes.
In your opinion, I'll let you continue with your organization—your members. Who makes up the Canadian Public Procurement Council?

Mr. François Émond
Our members are public organizations, not individuals. So, it's public sector entities that are members

with us.
They come from the six levels of government in the Canadian public sector. We always summarize them as the six main levels: municipal, provincial, federal, Crown corporations, education, and health.
To name a few: cities are members, provinces like the Treasury Board in this specific case, the federal government—Public Services and Procurement Canada is a member. There are Crown corporations like Hydro-Québec,

Mr. François Émond (continued)
educational institutions as well—universities and healthcare institutions. So, we have hospitals and hospital networks that are members.
And while the members are public organizations, more specifically it's the procurement functions—procurement departments, procurement managers, and procurement professionals—who choose to become members.
The public organization becomes a member and can then extend the benefits of our services to its entire procurement team or function.
We have around a hundred members across Canada, with a community of over 1,000 public procurement professionals from coast to coast.
So, British Columbia, the Atlantic provinces, and up north—the governments of Nunavut, Yukon, etc. It's quite broad and covers the entire Canadian territory.
Our role in supporting our members also leads us to extend our reach a bit beyond Canada, with international visibility through strategic partnerships.
I can elaborate a bit later on what those strategic partnerships look like.
But when we talk about procurement challenges here in Quebec and Canada, we find that when we look abroad, those challenges tend to be similar.
That's why we want to gather insights and expertise from outside the country as well.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Very good, thank you. Now, getting closer to the topic that interests the Commission—digital transformations or procurement in information technology—do you have any observations from your experience in public procurement about what's happening in that area?

Mr. François Émond
…which are very ambitious. We start with a very large project and think we'll be able to deliver something despite too many uncertain variables and great difficulty in assessing the complexity of these projects at the outset.
So, that's what we've seen happen here, and it's also a constant concern for procurement functions across Canada and abroad.
These projects are ambitious, large, complex, and hard to measure in terms of complexity—especially because every IT project is unique and requires highly specialized expertise that public organizations often don't have internally.
That's why they turn to external providers for contract awarding and support during integration.

So, it's hard to measure that complexity. There are also many challenges in assessing user needs—what does the user really need?
Often, IT projects are launched because the public organization is faced with an outdated or unsupported solution that needs to be replaced, rather than because of emerging user needs.
This difficulty in assessing user needs upstream makes it hard to define the requirements.
Often, the motivations behind IT projects aren't driven by user needs but rather by technological constraints or the need to update systems for various reasons.
Political pressure is also a factor—it's often present in government IT projects.
This pressure is common across major procurement projects. We're not saying it should be eliminated, but it needs to be managed.
Managing political pressure often leads to overestimating the benefits of IT projects because it's politically favorable.
Beyond that, there's a tendency to overestimate benefits, costs,

Mr. François Émond (continued)
and return on investment.
This political pressure leads to a desire to move quickly—to launch projects fast because benefits have been presented.
So, there's a push to move quickly.
That's one of the difficulties in government projects.
If I may continue—thank you.
Structural challenges and governance…
There are many grey areas. Earlier, I mentioned contract management.
Managing a contract is usually straightforward when things go well.
But when complications arise, it becomes increasingly complex.
Delegations of authority aren't always clear, and acquisition authority isn't always obvious.
In many public organizations, it varies, which makes things murky and complex to navigate.
Ultimately, this makes accountability and responsibility harder to pinpoint.
That's a general observation we make in IT projects as well.
Regarding knowledge of the legislative framework—procurement professionals and legal departments in public organizations are well-versed in the legal frameworks.
It's a bit more difficult for internal requesters, and it's not necessarily expected of them to master the legal framework.
But this lack of knowledge can lead to poor decisions, which can expose the organization to significant legal and financial risks.
This applies not only to the acquisition process but also to the resulting contract management.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
I'd like to take advantage of your presence to ask about this last point. What do you generally observe in your member organizations—in public bodies—regarding the relationship between what we'd call the legal affairs department, or in any case the lawyers (those presumed to have a good understanding of

the legislative framework), and the procurement function? Is there generally a symbiosis between the two? Are they separate departments? Who is responsible for what?

Mr. François Émond

They are separate functions, but they must operate in symbiosis. Legal affairs is a support function for procurement.

Procurement is usually responsible for the entire procurement cycle, starting with market knowledge, defining the acquisition strategy based on that market or markets, and drafting the competitive bidding documents accordingly.

We often refer to calls for tenders, but a call for tenders is just one tool—there are several others for competitive bidding.

So, strategic choices must be made upstream, and legal affairs is there to support procurement in making those choices and in concretizing them, with the goal of managing risks for the organization.

That's for the upstream part. Once the cycle is underway—when proposals or bids are received—there are sometimes issues of non-compliance or concerns about that part of the process.

Again, legal affairs is there to support procurement, and the same applies to contract management.

We must not overlook the fact that, in our view, procurement should be the lead for the entire cycle, with legal affairs providing support.

Because in a contract or competitive bidding process, there are legal clauses—clearly the domain of legal affairs—but also commercial clauses that are necessary and must be considered based on the strategy being implemented.

So, in our view, procurement should lead this and be supported by legal affairs when needed.

Throughout the entire cycle, this symbiosis is very important because legal affairs often interpret things strictly through the lens of the legal framework, without necessarily considering many external constraints or the strategic thinking done upstream.

This symbiosis must exist so that legal affairs can adopt the critical perspective that procurement brings and advise and support them in preparation and continuity.

Because drafting a call for tenders

Mr. François Émond (continued)

must be done in compliance with the legislative framework, but the definition of certain commercial terms and conditions may also require drafting that respects legal constraints—civil codes, etc.—within the legislative framework, but also takes into account commercial realities.

That's our view.

Mr. Vincent Ranger

So, in your view, if you had to identify the actor responsible for overall contract compliance—whether at the awarding stage or during execution—you would place that responsibility within the procurement function rather than the legal affairs department?

Mr. François Émond
Yes, absolutely. And that's what we see among our members.
The determination of compliance and the recommendation for awarding contracts is usually done by the procurement function—by a procurement team that is somewhat independent within the organization, fairly autonomous, and has a certain level of authority.
This authority is typically a recommending one, since the actual awarding is often done by various bodies.
However, we also see among our members that this recommending authority is not just advisory—it can be a full awarding authority, completely independent from legal affairs, internal clients, elected officials, etc.
So yes, to answer your question, this responsibility falls within the procurement function and should be supported by legal affairs.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Okay. I'll let you continue with the definition of needs.

Mr. François Émond
So, yes—the famous definition of needs.
As I mentioned earlier, there's a lot of complexity and pressure involved.
The definition of needs is, for the procurement function—let's be honest—the daily battle.
It's the heart of the matter.
Mr. Vincent Ranger: The heart of the matter?
Mr. François Émond: Yes, the heart of the matter, for various reasons.
Clients often need to move quickly and, for all sorts of reasons—constraints, budget cycles, political pressure—they decide to rush through the definition of needs and move forward with a project based on a deficient or vague needs definition.

This vagueness, in our view, can lead to significant risks—legal risks for the public organization, cost overruns, execution issues.
In the end, when the project is complete, people often say, "Maybe we should have spent more time properly defining the need."
And we probably would have made up that time later in the process.
But at the beginning, that's not always clear—there's a desire to move quickly.
And as I said, it's a daily battle.

From our observations and from various testimonies we've heard, the definition of needs—what is the role of the procurement function in that?
For me, it's more than just validating that it complies with the legal framework.
When I say it's a daily battle, a strong and well-structured procurement function in a public organization will be able, through its professionals, to support its internal clients in defining their needs—consistently.
Not just by taking a portion of a technical specification, reading it, and saying "Okay, it's fine, it complies with the legal framework," and stopping there.

It has to be a continuous support process, especially for major projects, to ensure there's a critical perspective throughout.
This ensures that the resulting product—a competitive bidding document or call for tenders—meets certain criteria, not just legal ones but also market-related ones.
In a highly competitive market, the definition of needs must ensure that no one is unfairly excluded.
In more restricted markets, the approach may differ, but the definition of needs must, in our view, be done with support from procurement professionals.
This ensures that when the process begins, we're confident in our approach, we minimize risks for the organization, and we create conditions for success—because success, ultimately, is awarding a contract that serves the best interests of the organization.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Now, I don't want to push too far—I'm not sure how familiar you are with the hearings in the Casa case—but is it common, without drawing conclusions about the evidence (the Commissioner will do that), to see tensions between internal clients and the procurement function?
Some witnesses have spoken to the Commission about situations where the internal division wants to go in one direction, while contract management acts more as a barrier or legal constraint on what can be done.
This dynamic between the two doesn't quite match the one you described, but is it common?
And what do we do about that dynamic?

Mr. François Émond
Well, I'd say yes, it's common. It's not unusual. We didn't necessarily learn anything new from the hearings—it's something we've seen before.
But it varies greatly, and I'd say it depends a lot on, first, the position of the procurement function within the organization, and the perception of it and the role it's given.
A procurement function that is independent and strong within a public organization will help reduce the risk of such tensions, because it will be attentive.
First, procurement will listen to the needs of its internal client, and the internal client will listen to what procurement is trying to do.
So yes, to answer your question, it's something we've seen and heard in some testimonies.
But I'd say that in many public organizations where the procurement function is more mature and well-established, those risks of tension are reduced.
And when I talk about a daily battle, it's not just about defining needs—it's about ensuring that the procurement function is developed and mature across public organizations.
So that it's not just seen as a tactical function that executes administrative processes, but as one that adds value upstream in the process, enabling continuous support rather than rigidly defined roles.
Defining needs isn't the procurement function's role—it's the internal client's.
But the continuous support, in my view and based on what we see in various public organizations depending on their structure, can help reduce those tensions.

Just as I mentioned earlier the importance of legal affairs working in symbiosis with procurement, this kind of symbiosis must also exist between procurement and all internal partners in a public organization.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Very good. I'm jumping ahead a bit—you had a slide on contract management and its role. Could you talk a bit about your observations on that?

Mr. François Émond
Yes. I touched on it earlier, and it's important to clearly distinguish between contract management and procurement.
In this case, throughout the Commission, we've referred to the DGCC.
That's procurement—contracts are awarded, tender documents are written, competitive bidding processes are conducted.
In my view and definition, that's procurement.
But contract management, to me, is what comes after—once the contract is awarded and execution begins.
So we shouldn't be misled by the department's title in this specific case.
And in most public organizations, I'd say it's more common to see a procurement department than a contract management department.

So, regarding contract management, there are certainly many grey areas around responsibility and accountability.
In many public organizations, contract management is handled by the internal client—the person responsible for executing the contract.
In some cases, they're supported at various levels by the procurement function.
But as I said earlier, procurement should be seen as a strategic, value-creating function.
And I believe that procurement can add significant value in contract management by providing support that relieves the internal client of some responsibilities.
Procurement can intervene at different levels through escalation mechanisms to support the internal client during execution.

Of course, unclear contract management mechanisms can lead to loss of control, especially regarding cost overruns.
This is where the neutrality of procurement becomes important.
A supplier interacting daily with an internal client naturally develops a certain closeness.
That's human nature—it's normal.
So when commercial or legal issues arise, the internal client needs some distance from that reality.
Procurement can provide that neutrality, helping to resolve impasses and ensuring everything is done in the best interest of the public organization.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
So now we've transitioned into your first recommendation for the Commission, which you began

discussing on the next slide: strengthening the procurement function within public organizations.
I'd like to hear more about that, because in the Casa case, we saw that there was a function—maybe not the right title, as you said—but regardless of the title, there was an institutionalized procurement function within the SAAQ.
So why are you reiterating this recommendation to strengthen the procurement function?

Mr. François Émond
Quite simply because, based on the various testimonies, we saw that as soon as things moved outside the normal framework, this function didn't necessarily have the status it should have had to support and guide the execution of those tasks.
In some testimonies, we saw that the IT vice-presidency took charge of part of the process.
And as you said, your work will lead to findings and recommendations, but it's fair to ask: was the procurement function strong enough within the organization? Was it well-positioned to take its place and provide that support, rather than having the internal client take over the process?

We talked about defining needs, but also about defining evaluation criteria—criteria that were established by the internal client, with a procurement function that was quite distant.
We can question whether that was the right approach.
So for me, strengthening the procurement function is essential.
And as I said, it's a daily challenge for many public organizations across Canada to strengthen their procurement functions and ensure they're there to support internal clients.

We're talking about different stages of the process, but also strategic thinking and market analysis.
Right now, the market is far from static—think about the tensions between Canada and the United States, which raise concerns about procurement cycles and contract management.
So the procurement function needs to be strong to take on these evolving roles and adapt to external realities.

And I'd like to briefly return to a point we discussed earlier—contract management and maintaining the nature of a contract.
Preserving the nature of a contract isn't always about a percentage of its value.
It can relate to the original purpose of the contract and how it evolves.
It's not always tied to the amount, even though we often hear about the "10% rule."

Mr. François Émond (continued)
The 10% rule—on a multi-million dollar contract, that's significant.
It can raise questions about the nature of the contract.
I wanted to clarify that because it's a point I noticed before you changed the slide.
And when you say "nature," you're referring to the concept of accessory modification, especially within Quebec's regulatory framework?

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Exactly. And the role of the procurement function is to have a critical perspective on that as well.

Mr. Vincent Ranger (continued)
And that the delegations of authority and procedures for contract modifications should be adapted accordingly.
Still on that point, I understand that strengthening the procurement function can also be reflected in its place within the organizational chart and hierarchy of a public body?

Mr. François Émond
Yes, absolutely—its place within the organization.
And of course, you could ask me where we think it should be placed in a public organization.
There's no one-size-fits-all answer—it depends on the nature of the organization's activities.
If a public organization doesn't award many contracts, or if the value of acquisitions is low relative to its overall operating budget, then there's not necessarily added value in placing it high in the organizational chart.

However, in an organization where procurement processes and acquisition values are significant relative to the overall budget, then the function should first be independent from the rest of the organizational structure—and possibly positioned higher as well.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
So that's essentially it. Strengthening the procurement function involves its position in the organizational chart, but also centralizing the procurement cycle—especially, as you said, for large-scale projects.
Very good. Your second recommendation is to strengthen the role of the procurement professional.
You've already touched on this a bit. Do you have anything else to add about the professional themselves?

Mr. François Émond
Yes, absolutely. Because if we're going to talk about strengthening the procurement function in a public organization, we need to ensure that the people within that function are capable of evolving with it.
It requires competencies.
We've often heard during the hearings: how do you train when you start in a role like this?
A common practice in public organizations in Quebec and elsewhere is to read the legislative framework, the rules and procedures—and then you're off.
But for me, it's much more than that.

Here in Quebec, we're fortunate to have an entity like the Secretariat of the Treasury Board, which offers many tools to procurement professionals in public organizations, including online training.
But that training is mostly focused on the legislative framework and associated rules and procedures.
That's what I would call the "know-how" of the function.
But there's a whole other dimension related to "soft skills"—the *know-how-to-be*—which refers to specific competencies that allow professionals to guide their internal clients, especially when those clients are heading in the wrong direction.
It takes someone with the skills to steer them back on track.

These competencies need to be developed and are more about soft skills.
So strengthening the role means ensuring these professionals have a much more strategic vision of the entire procurement cycle, taking into account various variables…

Mr. François Émond (continued)
…and providing more support in defining needs, as I mentioned earlier.
This also helps reinforce the rigor and transparency of procurement processes, in compliance with the legislative framework.
Strengthening the procurement function and the professionals within it—seeing them take on more responsibility—leads to greater trust in how acquisitions are handled.
It builds confidence and transparency in procurement processes, while still respecting the legal framework.

The strategic role of support during contract execution, which I mentioned earlier, also requires competencies.
You need to be able to negotiate with suppliers, internal clients, and various partners.
So this strategic support role during execution definitely demands skills.

Contract management, which goes hand-in-hand with this, as we discussed earlier.
Unless you have more questions on this?
Mr. Vincent Ranger: No. Let's move to your final recommendation slide.
Mr. François Émond: Yes. So…

Strengthening competencies, strengthening knowledge.
Ultimately, what we'd like to see—our long-term goal—is to professionalize this function.
Let me share what we're seeing outside Quebec, in English-speaking Canada and North America.
There are university programs in procurement, but ones specifically focused on public procurement are very rare.

So how do we ensure that acquisition professionals can move toward professionalization, adhering to uniform standards within a profession?
We often refer to parallels with professional certification bodies.
In Quebec, there aren't really any that are dedicated to public procurement, but in English-speaking Canada and the United States, there are.

Mr. François Émond
There's an independent organization called the **Universal Public Procurement Certification Council**, which manages professional certification processes specifically for public procurement.
It offers two professional certification programs—one for managers and one for procurement professionals.
These programs guide professionals through a certification process that helps them develop competencies they may lack, based on a defined competency framework that covers specific areas

related to the procurement function.
Professionals must prepare to take an exam aligned with this framework.

We're seeing these certifications expand significantly in the United States, and increasingly in English-speaking Canada.
Our organization is a partner—earlier I mentioned partnerships with organizations outside the country—and we are a partner with this certification body.
We promote and endorse these professional certifications in Canada.
More and more, we're seeing public organizations in English-speaking Canada encouraging their professionals to obtain these designations.

Ultimately, this contributes on multiple levels:

- It helps professionalize the procurement function.
- It strengthens the function within public organizations when professionals hold these certifications.
- And in the end, everyone benefits.

As I said, these certifications are well-established in the U.S., and they're gaining traction in English-speaking Canada.
In the U.S., they've even become hiring criteria—when recruiting procurement professionals, preference is given to candidates who hold one of these two professional designations.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
And that's not the case in Quebec, as I understand?

Mr. François Émond
No, not at all. It's something we'd like to see.
When we talk about professionalizing the function, it ultimately involves certification.
We see this in other professions.

Of course, to encourage people to pursue these certifications, we need to provide them with training tools.
That means we also need academic programs tailored to the realities of public procurement in Quebec.
And again, those are quite rare.

Our organization is working to help make this vision a reality—offering public procurement professionals academic pathways that allow them to gain a certain level of knowledge and competency, and ultimately prepare for these professional certifications.

Currently, for example, we're working with the **École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP)** to develop an academic program that would be accessible across all six levels of government.
This program would complement what's already offered by the Secretariat of the Treasury Board and

help professionals in the field build both knowledge and skills—raising the level of execution in procurement functions and, in turn, strengthening the function across public organizations.

So that's essentially what we envision for this professionalization initiative.
It's not something that will happen overnight—it's a long-term goal.
But there's interest in making it available in Quebec, in French.
It's something we're actively thinking about and exploring step-by-step to make it a reality.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
So this brings us to your next point on the same slide—training, not for procurement professionals, but for others…

Mr. François Émond
For stakeholders. Exactly.
We talked earlier about support, proximity, and working in symbiosis.
Stakeholders within a public organization who are involved in procurement cycles need to have at least a basic understanding of what a procurement cycle is—not just knowing the law or general principles, but having foundational knowledge of how procurement works in a public organization.

In some public organizations, the procurement function systematically trains stakeholders—for example, newly elected officials—so they understand their roles and responsibilities in the procurement process, and what the procurement function's role is.
So, training for decision-makers and stakeholders is, in our view, essential.
It helps build closer relationships between functions and reduces the tensions you referred to earlier.
We believe these are winning conditions for achieving success

Mr. François Émond (continued)
when it comes time to award a contract or proceed with the acquisition of goods, services, construction projects, IT projects—whatever the need may be.
We think this kind of training should become more systematic because it's a key condition for success.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
The culture of responsibility and accountability—a term we've heard a lot here.

Mr. François Émond
Exactly, that's what I was about to say.
I'll probably be repeating what's already been said during the hearings, but it's something we believe is very important.
A culture of responsibility and accountability, grounded in a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities.

The procurement function must be responsible and accountable for its part of the process.
The internal client is responsible for theirs.
I won't go further on this topic—you've covered it extensively in your work.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
Very well. I'll leave you with the final word—your conclusion.

Mr. François Émond
Yes. In fact, our view is that the failure in this case should lead to reflections that become catalysts for improving the procurement function within public organizations more broadly.
Ultimately, all of this is for the benefit of citizens.

As I've said to some of you, we went through a similar process during the Charbonneau Commission. The outcomes of that commission, in my view, led to important reflections that became catalysts for improving procurement practices—perhaps more so in the municipal sector, although many public organizations learned from it and worked to strengthen their acquisition and contract management practices.

So, of course, what we hope—and I'm convinced that through your work—there will be findings, reflections, and recommendations that will serve as catalysts for the procurement function.
This will help it take on a more strategic role rather than a tactical one, and become a value-creating function within public organizations, rather than being seen as a purely administrative one that, according to some, merely causes delays.

Mr. Vincent Ranger
That's it. Thank you very much, Mr. Émond. I have no further questions.

Hon. Denis Gallant
How should we position the procurement function—and I'll go beyond Casa here, possibly drawing from my previous experience.
Generally, we have projects that need to move forward.
We need equipment, we need… For example, I need a snowblower because snow is coming, or I need a snow removal contract, etc.
And often, there's tension between procurement, which wants to follow the rules and use the right templates, and the internal client, okay?
And often, the internal client is a vice-presidency or a department that ranks higher than procurement.
You see where I'm going with this?
It's similar to other departments like internal audit.
For procurement to function effectively, it's great to talk about certification and professionalization—but how do we position it within a public organization or ministry so it's not subject to the whims—or maybe whims isn't the right word—but to the urgency of getting contracts out because it's part of the mission?
A city, when it snows, needs those contracts issued. If they're not issued in time, there's a problem.

Mr. François Émond
Exactly. I'll draw a parallel with my previous experience in the public sector, particularly in the municipal domain.
As a best practice, the procurement function was not under the finance department.

It was completely separate, often grouped alongside other administrative functions like human resources, public works, etc.
So it had equal importance, rather than being a subordinate function.
I like what you said—for example, HR is often placed where it can support the requesting client who needs a specific profile, and there's a respect for roles.

Mr. François Émond (continued)
Exactly.
We could take inspiration from that for procurement.
The parallel with HR is a good one.
We talk about talent management today and the challenges of recruiting and retention—I saw the previous testimony.
So placing procurement at that same level positions it as strategic, important, and aligned with reality.
It also changes the internal perception of what it is.
In many municipalities, procurement is seen as equivalent to citizen-facing services or strategic functions like HR and finance.
In some organizations, procurement is on equal footing with finance.
That means when… and as I said, this function includes not just acquisition processes, but also contract management, client support, training, and development.
So giving it that strategic level and positioning brings many benefits.
And yes, that should be the ideal vision—giving it independence.

Because, as I mentioned, in best practices—for example, we work on awarding excellence in procurement prizes to public organizations with exemplary practices.
One of the 18 criteria in the program we support is that the procurement function must be independent within the organization.
It must be completely independent—not buried within a sub-function of finance, which leads to a poor understanding and perception of what procurement really is and the value it can bring to the organization.

Hon. Denis Gallant
That clarifies things a lot. Perfect.

Hon. Denis Gallant (continued)
Are there any questions from the parties?
We have no questions, Commissioner.
Same here, no questions.
Perfect. Well, I just want to thank you.
Thank you—very enlightening.
Thank you for taking the time to help us move forward.
Thank you very much for your time as well.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.