

*Ministry of Community and  
Social Services (MCSS)*

Social Assistance Management  
System (SAMS) – Transition  
Plan Review

Progress Report

March 31, 2015

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# *Overview*

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# Overview

## SAMS Progress Report Overview:

The purpose of the Social Assistance Management System (“SAMS”) progress report is to provide the Ministry of Community and Social Services (“Ministry”) with:

- A project status of the overall efforts to date;
- Initial areas of focus for the SAMS transition covering the following:
  - Planning, Organizational Change Management, User Experience, Stakeholder Management and Communications, Transition to Operations, and Governance.
- An overview of future activities needed to fully complete the review and final report.

It is important to note that PwC has not completed its data gathering and consultation phase of the review. Initial areas of focus provide an early view into stakeholder perspectives and documentation reviewed to date. These areas will require additional focus to inform the final report. Additional efforts continue to be directed toward the completion of stakeholder consultations, documentation reviews and jurisdictional research, all of which will help inform future recommendations for the Ministry’s consideration.

## SAMS Review Objectives:

The Ministry engaged PwC to perform an independent assessment of SAMS that is specifically focused on the Ministry’s transition plan and associated business processes to:

- Determine whether the plans and activities actioned are addressing the challenges associated with the SAMS transition, and
- Identify enhancements that could further strengthen ongoing transition activities and efforts.

## SAMS Review Scope:

The scope of PwC’s transition plan review includes the following:

- Current plans for system transition and an assessment of the balance between planning and execution;
- Consultation with key stakeholders/users and review of transition artifacts;
- Transition change management plans and activities, including stakeholder engagement and partner engagement activities and efforts;
- Strategies, plans and processes that are planned for the transition phase;

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# Overview

## SAMS Review Scope (continued)

- Research leading practices and relative maturity scale from projects in other jurisdictions of similar scope and scale to SAMS.
- Project governance structure to manage and monitor transition efforts, in addition to capacity to support the transition.
- Success measures (i.e. Key Performance Indicators) for the transition and steady state, as well as maturity level (i.e. where should we be).
- Knowledge transfer (KT) structure, skills and plans (with consideration for balance between KT and execution).
- Variables that could prevent the Ministry in meeting its objectives.

The scope of PwC's review does not include the following:

- An opinion on the functional or technical readiness of the SAMS solution and only comments on our knowledge of leading practices with respect to the transition plans of client relationship management solutions in the context of the Ministry's remediation.
- Assessment of the overall system / infrastructure performance of SAMS.
- A historical assessment of project performance since inception.

## Review Approach

PwC has developed a Project Review Assessment Framework which covers five areas of focus being Project Success Factors, Change Management, Functional Readiness, Technical Readiness and Audit & Controls. This review focuses on two of the five areas: Project Success Factors and Change Management

Project Success Factors allows us to explore and examine six project characteristics that are often seen as common drivers of success (project governance, project management & methodology, resource utilization, benefits management, issue resolution).

Change Management Assessment takes a focused look at the overall change management strategy, plan and activities. Based on leading practices, research and applied learnings, our change management assessment provides an evaluative framework that will assess the level of maturity and comprehensiveness of the SAMS change program around four key areas (change vision and strategy, stakeholder engagement, workforce transition, knowledge transfer and training).

The evaluation is evidence based, combining artefact review and key stakeholder interviews to undertake the assessment (see Appendix A for details).

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# Overview

## Progress and Activities to Date

The content contained in this progress report has been largely generated through the following completed activities:

- Interviews with Ministry Staff and Project Team Members (see Appendix B for detailed list).
- Interview with Canadian Union of Public Employees (“CUPE”).
- Focus groups with the Technical Working Group and the Front Line User Working Group.
- Documentation review of key transition documents and artifacts.

## Continuing Activities

The following additional activities will be completed by PwC to inform the final report:

- Consultations with select Ontario Works (“OW”) and Ontario Disability Support Program (“ODSP”) offices, including both management and front line staff
- Interviews with Ontario Public Sector Employees Union (“OPSEU”) and Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (“OMSSA”)
- Jurisdictional review
- Additional documentation review

## Transition Business Context

Since the implementation of SAMS on November 10 and 11, 2014, the Ministry has been working through a transition plan to support the use of SAMS and address any related challenges. Over the last four months the Ministry has made progress addressing transition challenges, but not limited to the following:

- Identified 57 priority system issues; as of March 28 most issues have been addressed;
- Began addressing system issues/defects on a weekly basis;
- Opened help lines, in addition to the Provincial ticketing system; and
- Developed and released new and updated job aides;
- Released ‘What’s New’ documents to better inform Front Line Users of the weekly issues/defect fixes.

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# Overview

## Transition Business Context (continued)

The Ministry has continued to engage with front line users and management through the following (list is not exhaustive):

- Formed the Technical Working Group comprised of front line users and management from sites across Ontario; The Technical Working Group has been helping to prioritize the 57 priority issues, as well as other issues that have arisen since November;
- Formed the Front Line User Working Group comprised of front line users from sites across Ontario (first meeting was March 25, 2015);
- Ministry staff have completed over 30 site visits to meet with front line users and management to discuss issues and provide support; and
- A CUPE working group was assembled by the Minister where 79 priority issues were identified.

It is important to note that the current environment under which this review is being undertaken is fluid. Decisions are being made on a regular basis, and as such the content of this report is based on a point in time. PwC's focus is to understand and identify the opportunities and challenges to the support the Ministry in further transitioning to SAMS and moving to an operating "steady state".

This progress report shares some initial perspectives and comments from consultations and review activities completed to date. Our analysis and understanding of SAMS, presented in this report, is based on observations made during the initial stages of our data gathering and consultation phase, and does not reflect a comprehensive analysis considering the views of all stakeholders. It is envisioned that the content contained in this progress report will be further refined and validated through the remaining consultations and project review activities, leading to a final report for the Ministry.

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## *Focus areas*



# Planning

## Context

- The Ministry has been working through a transition plan to address 57 high priority issues. With most of these issues now addressed, the Ministry's go forward transition plan will address remaining system and change management issues.
- A weekly release schedule was put in place to address critical issues and fixes to support front line staff in their use of SAMS. This release schedule will become monthly in April.
- Value drivers and potential Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of the SAMS benefits have been identified and effort to track, measure and report on these benefits is in progress.

## Initial Observations

- Transition planning is an area acknowledged by stakeholders as requiring greater communication.
- A common definition for the term 'transition' is needed to help align all stakeholders. To acknowledge steady state operations status, stakeholders suggest that both qualitative and quantitative measures be defined.
- Stakeholders have noted the benefits of weekly releases, enabling immediate issues to be addressed. They have also acknowledged the risk with these releases and their challenge 'keeping up' with the pace of change.

## PwC Next Steps

- Review relevant Ministry transition planning documents.
- Review transition communication plan.
- Examine Ministry technology development processes and plans.
- Consult with OW and OSDP staff on local needs.

# Organizational Change Management

## Context

- Business readiness remains a critical focus area for the Ministry in transitioning to steady state operations.
- The Ministry is investing in stakeholder and change management activities and in support of this have completed a number of site visits to meet with front line staff.
- The Ministry recognizes that the challenges since SAMS go-live and through the initial transition period have impacted stakeholder confidence.

## Initial Observations

- Stakeholders have expressed that there are varying levels of readiness using SAMS across offices. This has been an area identified as needing attention.
- Several stakeholders have noted that an understanding of the change impacts would be helpful to support their usage of SAMS and ongoing transition efforts.
- Some front line users have commented that changes to operating delivery models have been undertaken in some offices to better leverage SAMS and is an area that may require additional focus (e.g., business process design).

## PwC Next Steps

- Review relevant Ministry change management activities and documents.
- Consult with OW and OSDP staff on change management impacts and needs.

## *User experience*

### **Context**

- As noted earlier, The Ministry has completed most of the priority areas identified since initial 'go-live'. The priority items have largely focused on stabilizing the SAMS application for front line staff.
- Users have accommodated an accelerated system release schedule associated with the identified priority items.
- Ministry recognizes the need to direct efforts to improve user experience and enable corresponding business process changes in local service delivery offices.
- User experience is being addressed from many perspectives (e.g., weekly systems fixes, What's New documents, updated job aids, helplines) and through the work of both the Technical Working Group and Front Line User Working Group.

### **Initial Observations**

- Those front line users consulted, have express concerns over the degree of business change in using SAMS when compared to the previous SDMT legacy solution.
- Front line users consulted have expressed concerns that staff in local offices may have reached their capacity for change.
- Users consulted have expressed the need for new knowledge transfer and training once the frequency of change is reduced and SAMS is more stable.
- Front line users expect to see system enhancements that focus on improving user experience and supporting the use of SAMS.
- Stakeholders, specifically users, acknowledge the Ministry's positive efforts in engaging front line workers and creating an environment to share concerns, feedback and improve collaboration.

### **PwC Next Steps**

- Continue with OW and ODSP office site visits and user consultations.
- Review Ministry plans and activities specific to improving user experience.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

## Context

The Ministry is focused on developing stakeholder engagement during the transition. This has been demonstrated through:

- The establishment of the Technical Working Group with a mandate to establish a prioritized list of issues and challenges that require changes to SAMS or associated business processes.
- The establishment of the Front Line User Working Group which has been put in place specifically to support the ongoing improvement efforts specific to SAMS transition by providing direct input from front line staff.
- Front line visits from Ministry staff to over 30 locations across the province.

There has also been considerable efforts undertaken with respect to communication with the publication of various documents aimed at sharing information and providing updates to front line staff including:

- Regular emails; Job aids; What's new documents; SAMO website

The Ministry continues to solicit feedback from front line staff of its various communication content and mechanisms used to share information.

## Initial Observations

From the stakeholder consultations that have occurred to date, there appears to be buy in for both the Technical Working Group and Front Line User Working Group.

We have heard that:

- *“The technical working group has been good to validate and prioritize issues.”*
- *“The group makes us feel like we are being heard, but, there is a long way to go.”*
- *“It is unclear how we will work with the Front Line Working Group and what each working group will be responsible for.”*

To date, we have heard some concerns about the volume and content of communications:

- *“Staff are so overwhelmed that even reading the fixes is a time barrier.”*
- *“We have had to contact IT to get an increase in our mailbox size.”*
- *“Job aids are too long and the language is too technical.”*

## PwC Next Steps

- PwC will continue to review documentation for ongoing communication planning for the transition.
- On-going stakeholder interviews and site visits.

## *Transition to Operations*

### **Context**

- SAMS was launched officially in early November 2014 and since that time resources from the Ministry have been working to address immediate “go-live” challenges and other transition activities.
- Given the immediate focus and attention to stabilizing SAMS, the Ministry has not been able to fully transition to a business as usual operations state.
- Efforts are being directed toward moving transition efforts from the project team and into the Ministry’s operating division and Information and Information Technology (I&IT) Cluster with a focus on SAMS sustainment and ongoing solution enhancements for users.

### **Initial Observations**

- Capacity and knowledge transfer have been acknowledged by stakeholders on both the Ministry and front line as areas requiring attention.
- Resource planning and management required to enable SAMS transition to steady state is seen as an area that requires continued attention at both the Ministry and service delivery offices.
- Several stakeholders have noted that more SAMS experts would be helpful to the front line to support day-to-day operations.

### **PwC Next Steps**

- Review relevant Ministry transition to “operations” planning process, documents and schedule.
- Examine Ministry resource planning assumptions and estimates.
- Consult with OW and OSDP staff on local resource planning and management activities.

# Governance

## Context

- The Ministry has in place governance structures to assist with the SAMS transition, including the creation of two front line staff working groups – Technical Working Group and Front Line User Working Group.
- The existing Ministry governance structure used during the SAMS project phase is being used to manage and monitor transition efforts and progress.
- The Ministry recognizes as it moves to full operations, the governance structure will require changes to reflect steady state.

## Initial Observations

- Stakeholders acknowledge the need to use performance metrics or Key Performance Indicators to help measure transition progress and systems benefits.
- Stakeholders have commented that the governance framework to support transition activities into full operations should be examined and potentially enhanced, including roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and the identification of resources to assume roles.

## PwC Next Steps

- Review relevant documentation with respect to governance, roles and responsibilities and on-going decision making and prioritization.

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## *Next steps*

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## ***Next Steps***

PwC will complete the following activities to inform the final report:

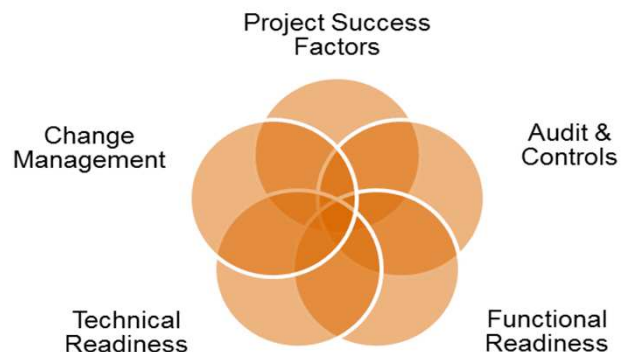
- Over the next two weeks, complete consultations with selected OW and ODSP offices, OPSEU and OMSSA
- Continue to research other similar IT initiative experiences from selected jurisdictions
- Consolidate consultation findings, assessment of SAMS transition artifacts / plans
- Complete analysis of findings and development of proposed recommendations
- Further refine and validate the focus areas presented in this progress report based on additional consultations, the jurisdictional review and additional documentation reviews



# *Appendix*

## Appendix A: Approach

For this review, PwC will employ our Project Review Assessment Framework (PRAF).



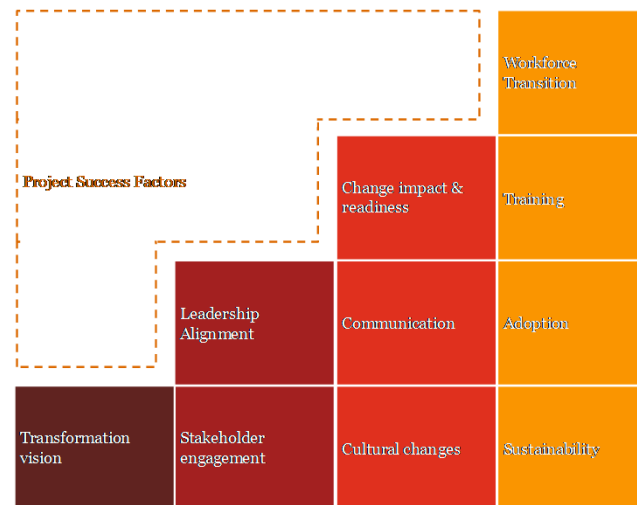
Underpinning the review and the approach that we will take throughout the review, is our Project Success Factors which incorporates 6 Pillars of Project Success. The 6 Pillars allows us to evaluate projects using an evidenced based approach combining artifact review and key stakeholder consultations.



The illustration below identifies the areas that will be covered during the review.

Framework Elements	Project Focus – In Scope
<b>Project Success Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project governance</li> <li>Project management &amp; methodology</li> <li>Resource Utilization</li> <li>Benefits management</li> <li>Issue resolution</li> </ul>
<b>Audit &amp; Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not included</li> </ul>
<b>Functional Readiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not included</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Readiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not included</li> </ul>
<b>Change Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change vision and strategy</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>Workforce transition</li> <li>Knowledge transfer and training</li> </ul>

Our Change Management Assessment Framework is coupled with the 6 Pillars of Project Success to provide a comprehensive approach to reviewing complex transformation projects.



## ***Appendix B: Stakeholder consultations***

Stakeholder consultations that have occurred to date are listed below:

<b>Interviewee name and title</b>		<b>Interviewee name and title</b>	
1	Richard Steele, ADM SAOD	12	Wade Jones, Senior Manager – Technical Manager
2	Jeffrey Bowen, Director SAMO	13	CUPE
3	Patti Redmond, Director SASD	14	IBM
4	Bohodar Rubashewsky, Deputy Minister	15	Technical Working Group
5	Corbin Kerr, CIO	16	Front Line Staff Working Group
6	David Nicholl, OCCIO	17	Toronto OW Office
7	Erin Hannah, ADM Policy		
8	Martin Thumm, Executive Lead		
9	Nelson Loureiro, Business Director		
10	Paul De Gray, Technical Director		
11	Dianna Moss, Senior Manager – Business Manager		

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