



MEMORANDUM

To: Deb Crawford, Chair

From: F. Leslie Thompson, MFA, MBA, FCSI, ICD.D, CMC, HRCCC, ACOTO Volunteer Treasurer

Date: June 4, 2025

Subject: ACO Inc. RFP Process for External Auditor

Background:

Consistent with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONPC), and the standards of the Chartered Professional Accountants Canada (CPAC) and the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD). The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO Inc.) has a long history of annually reviewing the performance of its external auditor and recommending whether the contract should be renewed for the subsequent year. This recommendation is one of the key agenda items outlined in the ONPC Act for all annual general meetings.

In early 2024, the ACO Inc Finance and Audit Committee, (FAC) began formalizing the annual external auditor review by developing formal performance criteria under the leadership of then Treasurer, Eben Rawluk CPA. ACO's external auditor review is based on a tool developed by the CPACⁱ and customized to ACO. In 2024 the FAC and ACO's external auditors, Vloet and Kan recommended to the ACO Inc. board that it was time to send out another request for proposals (RFP) for external auditors. The following chart illustrates the chronology of ACO's 2024-2025 process for that RFP. We believe that it was a rigorous process and we are grateful for the hundreds of volunteer hours and staff time (notably Marie May) that enabled it over 11 months.

Chart 1: ACO Inc. Chronology for RFP for External Auditor

Date	Action	Responsible Parties
Years prior to 2024	Annual FAC review of External Auditor performance	- ACO Treasurer, - Finance and Audit Committee
May 21, 2024	Applying new External Auditor performance review tool, FAC members compare assessments and prepare recommendations for the board and the AGM	- ACO Treasurer, - Finance and Audit Committee
June 22, 2024	FAC recommends that ACO Inc. go through the RFP process	ACO Inc. Board
June 24, 2024	Prepare project work plan and GANTT chart	L. Thompson
July 5, 2024	Treasurer and Chair suggest a preliminary survey of approximate external audit fees. Researcher suggests calls to Stern Cohen LLP and Welch LLP. Chair suggests Fabbi & Ass. Treasurer makes calls	- Treasurer - Chair L. Thompson
July-October 2024	Research audit firms in Ontario with not-for profit corporation practices	- Lead: L. Thompson - Additions: E. Rawluk, D. Crawford, L. Driver
August 14 – October 17, 2024	Milestone: Draft ACO RFP based on Past RFP, guidance from CPAC, ICD, NACD documents 3 drafts reviewed	- Lead: L. Thompson - Reviewers: E. Rawluk, M. May, W. Coukell; M. Mengele, D. Crawford
October 11,	Milestone: Prepare list of eligible external audit firms: Eight firms:	L. Thompson

Date	Action	Responsible Parties
2024	Adam& Miles, Baker Tilly, Davis Martindale, Fruitman Kates, Hogg Shaun & Scheck, Rashid LLPi, Vloet & Kan LLP, Welch LLP	
Oct 12, 2024	L. Thompson briefs new Treasurer designate, Mebby Mengele, on RFP project workplan. He assumes control of ACO Treasurer e-mail	
Oct 28, 2024	Milestone: Send finalized RFP document to 8 proponents	L. Thompson, W. Coukell
Nov. 15, 2024	Milestone: Interested firms are to indicate that they will submit a proposal. Three firms indicate that they will submit a proposal for External Auditor role.	• Rashidi LLP • Vloet & Kan LLP • Welch LLP
Dec 1, 2024	Milestone: Submission deadline Only one firm submits by deadline: Vloet & Kan, ACO's current auditor	• Vloet & Kan LLP
Dec 20, 2024	New Treasurer designate does not respond to numerous e-mails or telephone calls. He has disappeared. Regrettably, questions submitted by RFP proponents to Treasurer prior to deadline were not opened or shared with .	E. Rawluk L. Thompson D. Crawford
January 2025	Rashidi LLP and Welch LLP are contacted by ACO Chair by phone. Both agree to submit proposals by revised deadline:	• D. Crawford
Jan. 20 2025	Questions, sent to Treasurer designate are answered when mailbox is accessed by COO.	• L. Thompson and M. May
Feb 28, 2025	Receipt of three proposals and written responses to questions	• Rashidi LLP • Vloet & Kan LLP • Welch LLP
March-April 2024	Initial review of three proposals by: D. Crawford, M. May, L. Thompson, W. Coukell. ACO was interviewing for a new Treasurer	
April 12, 2025	Prepare and circulate preliminary review matrix (Scorecard)	• L. Thompson
May 6, 2024	Commentators prepare additional questions following review of proposals. E-mail to proponents	• Preparer: L. Thompson • Input: M. May
May 12, 2024	Proponents respond to additional questions	• Rashidi LLP • Vloet & Kan LLP • Welch LLP
May 28, 2025	Final decision-matrix is drafted by Chair and circulated. Reviewers: D. Crawford, L. Thompson, M. May, W. Coukell, new Treasurer designate.	• Drafter- D. Crawford
May 31, 2025	Deadline for review of proposals, websites, responses to written questions. Reviewers: D. Crawford, L. Thompson, M. May, W. Coukell, new Treasurer designate	RFP Reviewers
June 4, 2025	Reviewers rank incumbent auditors Vloet & Kan as their top choice. Given ranking, and knowledge of the leading firm, candidate interviews would not change rankings.	RFP Reviewers
June 2025	ACO Finance and Audit Committee will recommend that Vloet and Kan be appointed as ACO's 2026 External Auditors	ACO FAC

ⁱ <https://www.cpacanada.ca/business-and-accounting-resources/audit-and-assurance/enhancing-audit-quality/publications/comprehensive-review-of-external-auditor-tool>