

Fiscal Review Steering Committee Terms of Reference

June 2012

1. Name

The name of the group will be the Fiscal Review Steering Committee.

2. Authority

Established by the Deputy Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) in conjunction with UNSM. All options will be explored in the context of the fiscal challenges facing the Province and municipalities.

3. Background

- In response to a Government commitment to review the provincial Equalization Program, SNSMR conducted an internal review in 2009. The internal review determined that the Equalization Program cannot be reviewed in isolation of other municipal programs, and a comprehensive review of the provincial-municipal fiscal arrangement and all provincial-municipal programs was recommended.
- Ten years have passed since the last time a provincial-municipal collaborative program review was completed. In August, 2010, Executive Council gave approval for SNSMR to proceed with a review of all financial and non-financial provincial-municipal programs, and to work in collaboration with the UNSM to explore areas for improvement.
- The Premier and Minister of SNSMR announced the Fiscal Review, including plans for UNSM/municipal consultation, at the Fall UNSM Conference held in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality on October 22, 2010.
- Since then, SNSMR staff have been conducting research on the current situation facing municipalities in Nova Scotia. This research looked at the following:
 - The current financial condition of municipalities in NS
 - The existing grants and other funding programs that exist for municipalities in NS
 - Municipal contributions to the Province
 - Non financial supports currently offered to municipalities in NS
 - Emerging issues in municipal structure across Canada

4. Purpose

The purpose of the Fiscal Review Steering Committee will be to confirm the scope of the Fiscal Review, determine areas for further analysis and research to be conducted by the working group, ensure work conducted by the Working Committee reflects the vision of the Steering Committee,

and approve options for recommended changes to the current situation. The Steering Committee will represent the interest of municipalities and the province throughout the Fiscal Review, and members will provide relevant information from their municipalities and provincial departments to the committee. The committee will also help develop a framework for future two way communication between the province and municipalities.

5. Composition

- A Steering Committee shall be established consisting of representatives from the UNSM (the executive of UNSM, plus representatives from towns, rural municipalities, and regional municipalities, and representatives from HRM and CBRM), Deputy Ministers from the Province, and the co-chairs of the Working Committee.
- The Steering Committee will be chaired by Kevin Malloy, Deputy Minister of SNSMR.
- The Steering Committee shall be formed for a minimum period of twelve months following the date of the first meeting and can resume its mandate beyond this period pending approval by the UNSM Board of Directors and the Province.

6. Reporting

The Steering Committee shall:

- Provide regular updates to the Provincial-Municipal Roundtable
- Seek feedback on the final report from municipalities
- Present the final report to the Municipal-Provincial Roundtable
- Present the final report at the 2013 Fall UNSM Conference
- The Working Committee will report directly to the Steering Committee

7. Phase One – Current Situation and Development of Work Plan

The Steering Committee will provide feedback on, and ultimately approve a Work Plan developed by the Working Committee that will outline the areas for further research and analysis under the Fiscal Review. This Work Plan will clearly outline the scope of the project, and the intended vision for the Provincial-Municipal relationship in Nova Scotia.

8. Phase Two – Draft Report with Options for improvement

During Phase Two, the Working Committee will present the Steering Committee with a draft report that outlines options for improving the current situation in areas as identified under the Work Plan. The Steering Committee will review analysis and findings and provide feedback to the Working Committee on areas to be included in the Final Report or areas for further exploration. The Steering Committee will review the full impact analysis on municipalities and the province as a result of recommended options.

9. Phase Three - Final Report

The Steering Committee will approve the Final Report and present the findings in the report to the UNSM membership for input. Following gathering input from municipalities, the Steering Committee will present the findings to the Provincial-Municipal Roundtable.

10. Milestones

- Preliminary meeting with AMA executive, UNSM reps and SNSMR reps
- First Meeting of Steering Committee
- Approval of Terms of Reference and Work Plan
- Presentation of Options to Steering Committee
- Draft Final Report to Steering Committee
- Final Report: Delivered at AMA and UNSM Annual Conference
- Final Report: Delivered to Roundtable

11. Meetings

Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be held as required.

12. Resources

- The Province shall provide staff support from Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and other Provincial Departments as required.
- SNSMR will establish a website for the Fiscal Review for the Steering Committee and Working Committee to access information.
- The UNSM shall provide staff support through the UNSM office and AMANS (with their approval).

13. Budget

The Province will cover meeting costs and report production costs.