

**Report on**

**2012 Inspection of Grant Thornton LLP  
(Headquartered in Toronto, Canada)**

**Issued by the**

**Public Company Accounting Oversight Board**

**October 2, 2014**

**THIS IS A PUBLIC VERSION OF A PCAOB INSPECTION REPORT**

**PORTIONS OF THE COMPLETE REPORT ARE OMITTED  
FROM THIS DOCUMENT IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH  
SECTIONS 104(g)(2) AND 105(b)(5)(A)  
OF THE SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002**



### Notes Concerning this Report

1. Portions of this report may describe deficiencies or potential deficiencies in the systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct of the firm that is the subject of this report. The express inclusion of certain deficiencies and potential deficiencies, however, should not be construed to support any negative inference that any other aspect of the firm's systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct is approved or condoned by the Board or judged by the Board to comply with laws, rules, and professional standards.
2. Any references in this report to violations or potential violations of law, rules, or professional standards are not a result of an adversarial adjudicative process and do not constitute conclusive findings of fact or of violations for purposes of imposing legal liability. Similarly, any description herein of a firm's cooperation in addressing issues constructively should not be construed, and is not construed by the Board, as an admission, for purposes of potential legal liability, of any violation.
3. Board inspections encompass, among other things, whether the firm has failed to identify financial statement misstatements, including failures to comply with Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "Commission") disclosure requirements, in its audits of financial statements. This report's descriptions of any such auditing failures necessarily involve descriptions of the apparent misstatements or disclosure departures. The Board, however, has no authority to prescribe the form or content of an issuer's financial statements. That authority, and the authority to make binding determinations concerning whether an issuer's financial statements are misstated or fail to comply with Commission disclosure requirements, rests with the Commission. Any description, in this report, of financial statement misstatements or failures to comply with Commission disclosure requirements should not be understood as an indication that the Commission has considered or made any determination regarding these issues unless otherwise expressly stated.

## **2012 INSPECTION OF GRANT THORNTON LLP**

In 2012, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB" or "the Board") conducted an inspection of the registered public accounting firm Grant Thornton LLP<sup>1</sup> ("the Firm"). The Board is issuing this report of that inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 ("the Act").

The Board is making portions of the report publicly available. Specifically, the Board is releasing to the public Part I of the report and portions of Part IV of the report. Part IV of the report consists of the Firm's comments, if any, on a draft of the report.<sup>2</sup>

The Board has elsewhere described in detail its approach to making inspection-related information publicly available consistent with legal restrictions.<sup>3</sup> A substantial portion of the Board's criticisms of a firm (specifically criticisms of the firm's quality control system), and the Board's dialogue with the firm about those criticisms, occurs out of public view, unless the firm fails to make progress to the Board's satisfaction in addressing those criticisms. In addition, the Board generally does not disclose otherwise nonpublic information, learned through inspections, about the firm or its clients. Accordingly, information in those categories generally does not appear in the publicly available portion of an inspection report.

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<sup>1</sup> The Firm has issued audit reports under the names of Grant Thornton LLP Chartered accountants and Grant Thornton LLP Chartered Accountants Licensed Public Accountants.

<sup>2</sup> The Board does not make public any of a firm's comments that address a nonpublic portion of the report unless a firm specifically requests otherwise. In addition, pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), if a firm requests, and the Board grants, confidential treatment for any of the firm's comments on a draft report, the Board does not include those comments in the final report at all. The Board routinely grants confidential treatment, if requested, for any portion of a firm's response that addresses any point in the draft that the Board omits from, or any inaccurate statement in the draft that the Board corrects in, the final report.

<sup>3</sup> See Statement Concerning the Issuance of Inspection Reports, PCAOB Release No. 104-2004-001 (August 26, 2004).

**PART I**

**INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS**

Members of the Board's inspection staff ("the inspection team") conducted primary procedures for the inspection from October 9, 2012 to October 19, 2012.<sup>4</sup> These procedures were tailored to the nature of the Firm, certain aspects of which the inspection team understood at the outset of the inspection to be as follows:

Number of offices	59 <sup>5</sup>
Ownership structure	Limited liability partnership
Number of partners	190
Number of professional staff <sup>6</sup>	1,200
Number of issuer audit clients <sup>7</sup>	5

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<sup>4</sup> The Board's inspection was conducted in cooperation with the Canadian Public Accountability Board.

<sup>5</sup> The Firm's offices are located in Antigonish, Barrie, Bathurst, Bridgewater, Burlington, Calgary, Camrose, Charlottetown, Corner Brook, Digby, Edmonton, Fredericton, Grand Falls, Halifax, Hamilton, Kelowna, Kentville, Langley, London, Markham, Marystown, Miramichi, Mississauga, Moncton, Montague, New Glasgow, New Liskeard, North Bay, Orillia, Port Colborne, Port Hawkesbury, Saint John, Sault Ste. Marie, St. John's, Summerside, Sydney, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Truro, Vancouver, Victoria, Wetaskiwin, Winnipeg, and Yarmouth, Canada.

<sup>6</sup> "Professional staff" includes all personnel of the Firm, except partners or shareholders and administrative support personnel. The number of partners and professional staff is provided here as an indication of the size of the Firm, and does not necessarily represent the number of the Firm's professionals who participate in audits of issuers or are "associated persons" (as defined in the Act) of the Firm.

<sup>7</sup> The number of issuer audit clients shown here is based on the Firm's self-reporting and the inspection team's review of certain information for inspection planning

Number of other issuer audits in 11  
which the Firm plays a role<sup>8</sup>

Board inspections are designed to identify and address weaknesses and deficiencies related to how a firm conducts audit work.<sup>9</sup> To achieve that goal, Board inspections include reviews of certain aspects of selected audit work performed by the firm and reviews of other matters related to the firm's quality control system.

In the course of reviewing aspects of selected audit work, an inspection may identify ways in which particular audit work is deficient, including failures by the firm to identify, or to address appropriately, departures from U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP"), or, as applicable, International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ("IFRS").<sup>10</sup> It is not the purpose of an inspection, however, to review all of a firm's audit work or to identify every respect in which an audit performed by the firm, or in which the firm

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purposes. It does not reflect any Board determination concerning which, or how many, of the Firm's audit clients are "issuers" as defined in the Act. In some circumstances, a Board inspection may include a review of a firm's audit of financial statements and internal control over financial reporting ("ICFR") of an issuer that ceased to be an audit client before the inspection, and any such former clients are not included in the number shown here.

<sup>8</sup> The number of other issuer audits encompasses audit work performed by the Firm in engagements for which the Firm was not the principal auditor, including audits, if any, in which the Firm plays a substantial role as defined in PCAOB Rule 1001(p)(ii).

<sup>9</sup> This focus on weaknesses and deficiencies necessarily carries through to reports on inspections and, accordingly, Board inspection reports are not intended to serve as balanced report cards or overall rating tools.

<sup>10</sup> When it comes to the Board's attention that an issuer's financial statements appear not to present fairly, in a material respect, the financial position, results of operations, or cash flows of the issuer in conformity with GAAP or IFRS, the Board's practice is to report that information to the SEC, which has jurisdiction to determine proper accounting in issuers' financial statements.

played a role, is deficient. Accordingly, a Board inspection report should not be understood to provide any assurance that the firm's audit work, or the relevant issuer financial statements or reporting on internal control, are free of any deficiencies not specifically described in an inspection report.

In addition, inclusion of a deficiency in an inspection report does not mean that the deficiency remained unaddressed after the inspection team brought it to the firm's attention. Under PCAOB standards, when audit deficiencies are discovered after the date of the audit report, a firm must take appropriate action to assess the importance of the deficiencies to the firm's present ability to support its previously expressed audit opinions.<sup>11</sup> Depending upon the circumstances, compliance with these standards may require the firm to perform additional audit procedures, or to inform a client of the need for changes to its financial statements or reporting on internal control, or to take steps to prevent reliance on previously expressed audit opinions. A firm also should consider whether there are actions the firm should take to alert another auditor that has expressed an opinion on financial statements that the firm played a role in auditing. A Board inspection does not typically include review of a firm's actions to address deficiencies identified in that inspection, but the Board expects that firms are attempting to take appropriate action, and firms frequently represent that they have taken, are taking, or will take, action. If, through subsequent inspections or other processes, the Board determines that the firm failed to take appropriate action, that failure may be grounds for a Board disciplinary sanction.

A. Review of Audit Engagements

The inspection procedures included a review of aspects of the Firm's auditing of financial statements of two issuer audit clients and the Firm's audit work on one other issuer audit engagement in which it played a role but was not the principal auditor. The scope of this review was determined according to the Board's criteria, and the Firm was not allowed an opportunity to limit or influence the scope.

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<sup>11</sup> See AU 390, *Consideration of Omitted Procedures After the Report Date*, and AU 561, *Subsequent Discovery of Facts Existing at the Date of the Auditor's Report* (both included among the PCAOB's interim auditing standards, pursuant to PCAOB Rule 3200T), and PCAOB Auditing Standard No. 5, *An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That Is Integrated with An Audit of Financial Statements* ("AS No. 5"), ¶ 98.

The inspection team identified what it considered to be audit deficiencies. Those deficiencies included a failure by the Firm to identify or appropriately address an error in the issuer's application of IFRS, including, in some cases, errors that appeared likely to be material to the issuer's financial statements. In addition, the deficiencies included failures by the Firm to perform, or to perform sufficiently, certain necessary audit procedures.

In some cases, an inspection team's observation that a firm failed to perform a procedure may be based on the absence of documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence, even if a firm claims to have performed the procedure. PCAOB Auditing Standard No. 3, *Audit Documentation* ("AS No. 3"), provides that, in various circumstances including PCAOB inspections, a firm that has not adequately documented that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion must demonstrate with persuasive other evidence that it did so, and that oral assertions and explanations alone do not constitute persuasive other evidence. See AS No. 3, paragraph 9 and Appendix A to AS No. 3, paragraph A28. For purposes of the inspection, an observation that the Firm did not perform a procedure, obtain evidence, or reach an appropriate conclusion may be based on the absence of such documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence.

The deficiencies identified included deficiencies of such significance that it appeared to the inspection team that, in two of the audits performed by the Firm, the Firm, at the time it issued its audit report, had not obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to support its opinions on the issuer's financial statements. Those deficiencies were –

- (1) the Firm's failure to identify, or to address appropriately, a departure from IFRS that related to a potentially material misstatement in the audited financial statements concerning the accounting for certain liabilities incurred in a business combination;
- (2) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the valuation of certain assets acquired in a business combination;
- (3) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test revenue, including the inadequate performance of substantive analytical procedures;

(4) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence of cash and cash equivalents, and the existence and completeness of other bank indebtedness, and commitments and contingencies, including following up on exceptions referenced, but not described, in a bank confirmation response ; and

(5) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to evaluate whether fixed assets were impaired.

The deficiencies identified also included a deficiency of such significance that it appeared to the inspection team that, in the audit in which the Firm played a role but was not the principal auditor, the Firm had not obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to fulfill the objectives of its role in the audit. That deficiency was –

the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the existence of accounts receivable.

**B. Review of Quality Control System**

In addition to evaluating the quality of the audit work performed, the inspection included review of certain of the Firm's practices, policies, and procedures related to audit quality. This review addressed practices, policies, and procedures concerning audit performance and the following eight functional areas (1) tone at the top; (2) practices for partner evaluation, compensation, admission, assignment of responsibilities, and disciplinary actions; (3) independence implications of non-audit services; business ventures, alliances, and arrangements; personal financial interests; and commissions and contingent fees; (4) practices for client acceptance and retention; (5) practices for consultations on accounting, auditing, and SEC matters; (6) the Firm's internal inspection program; (7) practices for establishment and communication of audit policies, procedures, and methodologies, including training; and (8) the supervision by the Firm's audit engagement teams of the work performed by foreign affiliates. Any defects in, or criticisms of, the Firm's quality control system are discussed in the nonpublic portion of this report and will remain nonpublic unless the Firm fails to address them to the Board's satisfaction within 12 months of the date of this report.

END OF PART I





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PARTS II AND III OF THIS REPORT ARE NONPUBLIC  
AND ARE OMITTED FROM THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT

## **PART IV**

### **RESPONSE OF THE FIRM TO DRAFT INSPECTION REPORT**

Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(a), the Firm provided a written response to a draft of this report. Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), the Firm's response, minus any portion granted confidential treatment, is attached hereto and made part of this final inspection report.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In any version of an inspection report that the Board makes publicly available, any portions of a firm's response that address nonpublic portions of the report are omitted. In some cases, the result may be that none of a firm's response is made publicly available.



SENT VIA FAX TO: 1-202-862-8433

July 7, 2014

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**RE: Grant Thornton LLP (Canada) response to Part I of  
the Draft Report on 2012 Inspection**

Dear Ms. Munter:

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our firm response to Part I of the Draft Report on the 2012 Public Company Accounting Oversight Board's (PCAOB) Inspection dated June 9, 2014. We are committed to the highest standards of audit quality and fully support the PCAOB inspection process and its crucial role in protecting investors and serving the public interest. Each year, we make significant investment in improving our systems of quality control and monitoring processes and we continually enhance our audit tools and guidance, all with a goal of improving audit quality. The PCAOB inspection provides valuable information as we continue to focus our efforts and make sustainable improvements.

We carefully considered each of the report findings for the Issuer audits described in Part I of the Draft Report. Our engagement teams identified two of the deficiencies reported in the Draft Report subsequent to release of the audit report; immediately completed remedial procedures; and, evaluated the impact on our audit opinion. In addition, the deficiencies were disclosed to the PCAOB at the commencement of the inspection process. For each of the other deficiencies identified in the Draft Report, we took all steps necessary to fulfil our responsibilities under AU 390, *Considerations of Omitted Procedures after the Report Date* and AU 561 *Subsequent Discovery of Facts Existing at the Date of the Auditor's Report*. All remedial actions have been appropriately documented in our files. The completion of this work did not impact our overall audit conclusions and audit opinions.

We look forward to the continuing dialogue as we pursue our shared goals of improving audit quality across the profession and protecting the investing public.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grant Thornton LLP".

Cathy L. MacGregor, CA  
National Director of Assurance Quality