

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

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Main points

The Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is one of the Assembly's four policy field committees. It considers matters relating to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) and its corporations; supply and services; central agencies; liquor; gaming; and all other revenue-related agencies and entities. During its review of Crown corporation annual reports, the Committee can inquire about current matters, future objectives, and past performance.

The Committee also reviews chapters of our reports concerning CIC and its related corporations. The Committee's discussions relate to broader issues including strategic plans, key risks to achieving goals and objectives, and performance measurement. It also reviews significant transactions made by these corporations.

Through its work and recommendations, the Committee helps the Assembly hold the Government accountable for its management of these corporations. The Government has implemented most of the Committee's recommendations. This chapter sets out the status of the Committee's recommendations that the Government has not yet implemented.

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. We describe what the Committee does, how it is structured, and how it works. We discuss the importance of the Committee's deliberations and recommendations. We also highlight some of its recent activities. In the Exhibit, we set out the status of the Committee's outstanding recommendations.

Overview of Committee's role and responsibilities

The Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is one of the Assembly's four policy field committees. Policy field committees are responsible for examining various documents referred to them by the Assembly. These documents include bills and regulations (proposed laws), annual budget Estimates, and annual reports. Policy field committees can also conduct inquiries into matters within their mandates.

This Committee's mandate is to consider matters relating to Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) and its corporations; supply and services; central agencies; liquor; gaming; and all other revenue-related agencies and entities. At the beginning of each Legislature, the Legislative Assembly appoints the members of the Committee.

The Committee focuses on corporations that receive revenues from sources other than the General Revenue Fund. During its review, the Committee can inquire about issues of current concern, future objectives, and past performance. Because of the magnitude of financial activity that the Government manages through CIC and its corporations, the Committee has an important role. It helps the Assembly hold the Government accountable for its management of these corporations.

The Assembly refers the annual reports and financial statements of CIC and its corporations to the Committee. The Committee uses these reports to review the corporations' operations. Also, the Assembly refers the Provincial Auditor's reports (or parts thereof) that relate to CIC and its corporations to the Committee.

The Committee also requires CIC and its corporations to submit reports of their significant transactions. Significant transactions are defined as those that are material in amount and outside the ordinary course of business, or are judged to be sensitive and likely of interest to legislators and the public. These reports describe the transaction, the objectives of the transaction, its financial implications, and the authority for the transaction. Because Crown corporations must submit these reports within 90 days after the transaction, the Committee can review them on a timely basis. During 2006-07, the Committee received four significant transaction reports.

Our Office attends meetings of the Committee to help it with its reviews. The Committee also invites each corporation's appointed auditor to help the Committee with its review.

Crown corporation officials and the Minister responsible for the corporation attend the Committee's meetings. They answer questions about their corporation's financial results, plans and priorities, significant transactions, and related chapters in our reports. Periodically, the Committee formally reports its findings and recommendations to the Assembly.

The Committee's meetings are open to the public. Its website (www.legassembly.sk.ca/committees/) contains information about the composition of the Committee and records of the Committee's meetings (i.e., Hansard verbatim, minutes, videos, and reports).

As with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, this Committee's discussions and recommendations to the Assembly result in a more open and accountable Government and in better management of Government operations. The Committee's work is crucial in a well-managed parliamentary system of government. The Committee provides a vital link in the chain of accountability over public resources. The work of the Committee also contributes to the public's confidence in our system of government.

Members of the Committee

The following members served on the Committee during 2006-07:

- ◆ Honourable Graham Addley
- ◆ Dan D’Autremont, Deputy Chair
- ◆ Dustin Duncan (from October 16, 2006)
- ◆ Donna Harpauer
- ◆ Allan Kerpan (to October 16, 2006)
- ◆ Hon. Warren McCall (from October 16, 2006)
- ◆ Sandra Morin, Chair
- ◆ Hon. Mark Wartman
- ◆ Kevin Yates (to October 16, 2006)

Committee activities

During 2006-07, the Committee met 17 times. It reviewed various Estimates and bills, and issued three reports thereon to the Assembly. Also, the Committee reviewed the 2004 and 2005 annual reports of the following corporations:

- ◆ Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan
- ◆ Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan
- ◆ Investment Saskatchewan Inc.
- ◆ Saskatchewan Government Insurance
- ◆ Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
- ◆ Saskatchewan Power Corporation
- ◆ Saskatchewan Telecommunications
- ◆ Saskatchewan Transportation Company

In addition, it considered the following Provincial Auditor reports.

- ◆ 2004 Report – Volume 1, Chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6
- ◆ 2005 Report – Volume 1, Chapters 13, and 14
- ◆ 2006 Report – Volume 1, Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 13

The Committee did not report to the Legislative Assembly during the year on its review of annual reports or Provincial Auditor reports.

Status of recommendations

The Committee's reports (and those of the predecessor Standing Committee on Crown Corporations) contain recommendations, some of which take more than one year to implement. Each year, we follow up and report on their status. The Government has not implemented three recommendations included in our last update (see our 2006 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 14). The Exhibit lists these and four new recommendations outstanding as at December 31, 2006 that the Committee has concurred with. We encourage the Government to implement these recommendations.

We classify the outstanding recommendations as follows:

1. **Committee concurs** – These are our Office's recommendations that the Committee agrees with and supports. The Committee does not expect a formal response from the Government but does expect the Government to comply with the recommendations. In the Exhibit, these recommendations are identified by a non-bold number (e.g., 4-1) preceding them. The non-bold numbers reflect the chapter and recommendation number of our related report.
2. **Committee recommends** – These are the Committee's recommendations. The Committee expects an official response or action by the Government. In the exhibit, these recommendations are identified by a bold number (e.g., **1.**) preceding them.
3. **Committee considered** – These are our Office's recommendations. The Committee has deferred them for future consideration (e.g., pending the presentation of additional information) or has made its own recommendation on the matter.

For each outstanding recommendation, we assess the status of the recommendation and indicate whether it is not implemented or partially implemented using the following criteria:

Not implemented – Based on the last time that we audited the area or agency, the Government has not taken action on this recommendation.

Partially implemented – Based on the last time that we audited the area or agency, the Government has taken some action on this recommendation.

Exhibit—Outstanding recommendations

Report Year	Outstanding Recommendation	Status
Third Report of the 3 rd Session of the 24 th Legislature – tabled December 9, 2002		
2001 Spring	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>11-1 The Government should clarify the law to require CIC and its Crown corporations to obtain Order in Council approval before purchasing or selling real property through a subsidiary.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Legislative amendments have not been made.</p>
2001 Spring	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>11-4 The Government should change current laws to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - require subsidiaries of Crown corporations to obtain an Order in Council before purchasing shares - require Crown corporations and their subsidiaries to report the sale of shares to the Crown Corporations Committee within 90 days of the transaction date. 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Legislative amendments have not been made.</p>
Fourth Report of the 1 st Session of the 25 th Legislature – tabled May 24, 2005		
2004 Report Vol. 1	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>7-1 CIC should review the limits over which CIC and its subsidiaries must get Order in Council approval to buy and sell real property, either directly or through a subsidiary, and CIC should seek legal changes where appropriate.</p>	<p>Partially implemented.</p> <p>CIC has approved new limits that will apply to CIC and each of its subsidiaries. It has made the necessary legal changes for three Crown corporations to date.</p>

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Report Year	Outstanding Recommendation	Status
Minute No. 42, January 10, 2007		
2006 Report Vol. 1	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>9-1 SaskPower should expand its risk management framework to include risks related to electricity generation.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>We plan to follow up on this recommendation in late 2007.</p>
	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>9-2 SaskPower should document its procedures for preparing its analysis of electricity needs and its ability to meet those needs.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>We plan to follow up on this recommendation in late 2007.</p>
	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>9-3 SaskPower should use its new strategic plan to assess alternative strategies that address identified infrastructure needs.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>We plan to follow up on this recommendation in late 2007.</p>
	<p>The Committee concurs:</p> <p>9-4 SaskPower should document the nature and extent of specific infrastructure risks that it accepts when it approves projects.</p>	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>We plan to follow up on this recommendation in late 2007.</p>