

Quality of annual reports

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Main points

Our Office continues to encourage meaningful public reporting and improvements to public performance reports by the Government and its agencies. This chapter provides an update on the overall quality of the content of the annual reports of various ministries, Treasury Board agencies, and CIC Crown corporations (CIC Crowns).

The CIC Crowns' annual reports remain strong. CIC showed its continued commitment to providing legislators with quality annual reports by setting minimum standards for disclosure of information and engaging an outside agency to periodically review the annual reports of CIC Crowns.

For ministries and Treasury Board agencies, the Ministry of Finance provided guidance to those agencies for preparing annual reports. This guidance reflected best practices for public performance reporting except it did not expect agencies to report against performance targets (i.e., what the agency planned to achieve).

The annual reports of ministries and Treasury Board agencies have improved since our last assessment in 2006. Consistent with our prior assessment, the reports did not include performance targets for most performance measures. Other areas for further improvement include more robust discussions of key factors impacting results (e.g. risks, capacity considerations) and better linkage between financial and non-financial information.

Introduction

Sound public performance reporting can be a powerful tool in promoting better understanding and debate about how resources were used, what was achieved in comparison to what was planned, and how to improve performance.¹

For many years, we have encouraged meaningful public reporting and improvements to public performance reports by the Government and its agencies. Through various reports, we have reminded the Assembly of the importance of annual reports for government accountability,² and provided them with our assessments of the quality of the Government's annual reporting guidelines and the content of annual reports of various government agencies.³

Assessing the quality of annual reports

This chapter provides an update on the overall quality of the content of the annual reports of various ministries, Treasury Board agencies and CIC Crown corporations (agencies). (See Exhibit 1 in Chapter 26A and Exhibit 1 in Chapter 26B for listings of agencies). We assessed whether their most recent annual reports contained information reflecting best practices for public performance reporting. To provide the update, we compared the results of assessments of the content of these agencies' most recent annual reports to our previous assessments of their annual reports.

Part A sets out the results of our assessments of six CIC Crown corporations. Part B sets out the results of our assessments of ten ministries and six Treasury Board agencies.

Overall we found the annual reports of the CIC Crown corporations remain strong. For the ministries and Treasury Board agencies, the annual reports have improved from our 2006 assessment but more work remains.

¹ CICA Public Sector Accounting Board. *Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP-2) Public Performance Reporting*. p. 3.

² *2008 Report – Volume 3 (Chapter 20 – Government accountability) and 2009 Report – Volume 3 (Chapter 19 – Government accountability)*.

³ *2005 Report – Volume 1 (Chapter 12 – Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), 2006 Report – Volume 3 (Chapter 14 – Public plans and annual report assessments), and 2007 Report – Volume 3 (Chapter 9 – Finance)*.

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