

**Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Corporate Services
Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch**

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**Review of Management Practices
Saskatchewan Region**

**Project 97/19
March 1999**

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Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the employees of Saskatchewan Region for their cooperation in conducting this review of management practices. The warmth of our reception, the support and cooperation and personal interest made the work rewarding and fun.

Review, editing and administrative support from the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch team materially contributed to the project and was very much appreciated.

Finally, the Corporate Services Directorate staff of Saskatchewan Region deserves special mention. Arlene Kardynal, Clarence Krause and Dorothy Desharnais made it easy for the review team to complete the work by ensuring that accommodations, meetings, personnel and documents were available in a timely and convenient way.

Executive Summary

Introduction

There are 70 First Nations in Saskatchewan, 61 of which are affiliated with 7 Tribal Councils. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) is the main Indian political organization in the province.

The Saskatchewan Region of the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND) includes the Regional Office (Regina), the North Central District Office (Prince Albert), the South Budget Centre (Fort Qu'Appelle) and the Northwest Budget Centre (co-located with the regional office in Regina). Through these locations, DIAND provides a wide range of funding, lands, trust, treaty and inter-governmental services to First Nation governments and people living on reserves.

At the end of 1997-1998 fiscal year Saskatchewan Region had a total budget of \$579,770.3 million: \$567,223.0 for transfers to First Nations and/or First Nation organizations; \$10,339.1 for salaries; and \$2,208.2 for Operations and Maintenance. The region had 218 people on staff: A base allocation of 205 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and, 13 Resourcing Our Priorities FTEs.

The Deputy Minister recently said “Change continues to be a central reality at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development”. The most significant changes that have impacted Saskatchewan Region include the closure of the North West District Office, the downsizing of the South District Office, the implementation of Resourcing our Priorities and the introduction of Gathering Strength. In light of all of these changes, the Saskatchewan Region has managed to implement a number of interesting initiatives which include: the creation of a Leadership and Learning Support Team and a Leadership Facilitation Committee, a Framework for Action Deliverables for the Saskatchewan Region, Management Agreements which tie into the Framework for Action, the development of a working protocol agreement with FSIN and, an employee survey. All of these initiatives are helping the Saskatchewan Region effectively manage change.

Scope

The Audit and Evaluation Committee of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development requested a review of management practices of Saskatchewan Region to assess whether they are operating with due regard to effectiveness, efficiency and economy. The objective of the review was to provide practical advice and further assurance that regional management practices met DIAND philosophies and values and were appropriate for the unique circumstances of the region.

Methodology

The assessment looked at the alignment, integration and adaptability of management processes such as: policy-making, planning and budgeting, ethical values, risk identification, strategic planning, communication and monitoring. The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants criteria of control (CoCo) model was used to identify areas where controls need to be strengthened.

The CoCo framework used to assess control effectiveness is structured in four main areas: purpose, commitment, capability and monitoring and learning.

- **Purpose:** - knowing what to do
- **Commitment:** - wanting to do it
- **Capability:** - being able to do it
- **Monitoring and Learning:** - learning to do it better

An organization is guided by its **purpose**, the vision and the objectives to be achieved and supported by its employees through their **commitment** to achieve interrelated goals and strategies. In order for the organization to be successful, its human resources must be **capable** of achieving the objectives through adequate resource levels, appropriate training, skills and tools. Organizations must then **monitor** their performance and the external environment to **learn** how to improve their performance and identify required changes.

The review included visits to all DIAND offices located in Saskatchewan. It included the examination of key documents, individual interviews and focus groups. Overall, a total of 23% of staff participated either in interviews or focus groups.

We conducted our review and summarized our findings based on the four CoCo principles. These findings fall into two categories. Effective practices which require no improvement and observations for which we have made recommendations. The following table summarizes our findings into these two categories.

Conclusion

Overall, the Saskatchewan Region of DIAND has implemented many effective management practices and is well operated. Employees understand the overall vision and mission of the department and the region and believe in its mandate. There is a strong sense of commitment to achieve the department's mission. There is also a strong respect for the RDG and A/RDG and the partnership with First Nations. In general, employees feel they have the necessary resources, skills and tools to perform their job as efficiently as possible.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATION
<p>Purpose</p> <p>1. Communication of the Gathering Strength Vision</p> <p>Saskatchewan Region has succeeded in communicating the overall broad themes of Gathering Strength to employees who now understand Canada's vision for the First Nations people.</p> <p>2. Protocol Agreement with FSIN</p> <p>The protocol, designed to enhance the partnership of Canada and Saskatchewan First Nations, supports the Fiscal and Governance tables, as well as co-ordinating and supporting many other joint initiatives related to partnership, self-government, policy and program development and capacity building to address social, economic and cultural priorities.</p>	<p>1. Operational Impact of the Gathering Strength Initiative</p> <p>While most employees understand the broad concepts and themes of Gathering Strength, not all people interviewed understand its potential impact on their daily operations and the changes that may occur while Gathering Strength is implemented.</p> <p><i>The RDG should ensure the management team continues to communicate to employees the operational strategies, expected results and progress of each directorate's Gathering Strength initiatives over the short, medium and long term.</i></p>
<p>Commitment</p> <p>1. Effective Leadership</p> <p>Employees at various levels of the organization believe the RDG, ARDG and Directors are effective leaders and respect them as supervisors and individuals.</p> <p>2. Commitment and Opportunity</p> <p>There is a high sense of commitment from the management team and most employees to accomplish their duties efficiently and effectively. Managers believe they are given the opportunity to be effective leaders.</p>	<p>1. Senior Management & Information Sharing</p> <p>Employees want senior management to share information with them directly so that they feel a sense of partnership to the organization.</p> <p><i>To sustain and foster employees sense of belonging and partnership with the entire regional organization, the RDG and ARDG, with the support of the Leadership and Learning Support Team, create more opportunities to meet directly with employees.</i></p> <p>2. Risk Taking and Empowerment at the staff level</p> <p>Leadership and empowerment are not given the same focus across the region. Not all staff feel they have sufficient flexibility to take calculated risks.</p> <p><i>The RDG in consultation with the Leadership Facilitation Committee should ensure that all managers take measures, including risk management training, to support employees in their initiatives.</i></p>

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATION
<p>3. Employee Survey</p> <p>The region conducted a census survey to obtain the views of employees on various working environment topics. Overall, results were positive and consistent with the findings of this review. The survey demonstrates management's commitment to employees and the importance of a positive work environment.</p>	<p><i>The RDG should ensure all the managers assist employees in determining how they can exercise leadership initiatives by discussing how the concepts can be applied and supporting employees in their initiatives.</i></p> <p>3. Employee recognition</p> <p>Employees feel success is not recognized equally at all levels of the organization.</p> <p><i>The RDG, ARDG, Directors and Managers, in conjunction with the Leadership Facilitation Committee, make additional efforts to recognize accomplishments at all levels of the organization and communicate their appreciation to employees.</i></p>
<p>Capability</p> <p>1. Computer Services</p> <p>All aspects of service provided by the Computer Services Unit were positive.</p> <p>2. Adequate Level of Human and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Resources and Appropriate Tools</p> <p>Managers and staff generally feel the level of resources is adequate for on-going operations and they have the skills required to perform their duties.</p> <p>Employees feel they have the appropriate skill sets and training required to effectively perform their job and management is always supportive in offering the training courses required for further development.</p>	<p>1. Communication within the Organization</p> <p>Employees feel there is not enough communication among the various directorates.</p> <p><i>The RDG, with the support of the Leadership Facilitation Committee, ensure a communications protocol is implemented to disseminate information to employees that enhances understanding of their operational environment and horizontal issues.</i></p>
<p>Monitoring and Learning</p> <p>1. Operational Monitoring</p> <p>Although often informal, all directorates within the Saskatchewan Region perform monitoring activities which allow them to evaluate the success of their directorate.</p>	<p>1. Staff Evaluations and Career Planning</p> <p>Although monitoring of task oriented activities and staff evaluations are performed on a regular basis, career planning does not occur as frequently as required.</p> <p><i>The Regional Manager, Human Resources ensure all managers and supervisors include a discussion of career management in each performance review session.</i></p>

Section 1 - Introduction

Background

There are 70 First Nations in Saskatchewan, 61 of which are affiliated with 7 Tribal Councils. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) is the main Indian political organization in the province. Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 cover the province, although about 77 percent of First Nations in Saskatchewan Region participated in Treaty 6 (31 First Nations) or Treaty 4 (24 First Nations). Through the 1992 Treaty Land Entitlement agreement the area of First Nation reserves in Saskatchewan has the potential to expand from 1.6 million acres to 3.187 million acres.

The total registered Indian population of Saskatchewan First Nations as of December 31, 1997 is 97,776, about 9.5 percent of the total population of the province. With an annual growth rate of about 3 percent, it is estimated that registered First Nations members will account for about 14 percent of the total provincial population by 2011.

Approximately 48 percent (47,329) of the total registered Indian population in Saskatchewan lives off-reserve. Saskatoon and Regina have the highest number of aboriginal people per capita of any Canadian city, 7.5 and 7 percent respectively. Youth issues, such as education and jobs, as well as reserve land and urban issues are forecasted to be key public sector challenges for at least the next decade.

The Saskatchewan Region of the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND) includes the Regional Office (Regina), the North Central District Office (Prince Albert), the South Budget Centre (Fort Qu'Appelle) and the Northwest Budget Centre (co-located with the regional office in Regina). Through these locations, DIAND provides a wide range of funding, lands, trust, treaty and inter-governmental services to First Nation governments and people living on reserves. The Saskatchewan Region's primary responsibilities include:

- ***funding services:*** - the negotiation and administration of approximately 110 funding arrangements that provide resources to First Nations governments and organization to deliver community services such as primary, secondary and post secondary education, social services and economic development;
- ***legislated and treaty services:*** - administration of the *Indian Act* (includes lands, estates, trusts, governance and registration) and elements of other legislation including the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*;
- ***intergovernmental services:*** - develop and maintain federal-provincial relations, First Nations relations and negotiations; and

- **advisory services:** - includes advisory services for all of the above activities, except the activities for which advisory services are provided by Tribal Councils.

At the end of the 1997-1998 fiscal year, Saskatchewan Region had a total budget of \$579,770 million: \$567,223 millions for transfers to First Nations and First Nation organizations; \$10,339 millions for salaries; and, \$2,208 millions for Operations and Maintenance. The region had 218 people on staff: a base allocation of 205 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and 13 “Resourcing Our Priorities” FTEs.

The Deputy Minister recently said “Change continues to be a central reality at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development”. Recent significant changes that have impacted the Saskatchewan Region are:

- **Closure of North West District Office.** As a result of Resourcing our Priorities (a National initiative) and First Nation’s progress towards self-government, the Saskatchewan Region has reallocated resources. The North West District Office was closed and services are now delivered from other locations. Land and Trust Services (LTS) responsibilities are delivered from the North Central Office and Funding Services are delivered through the North West Budget-Centre, co-located with the regional office in Regina.
- **Re-organization of North Central District Office.** The North Central District Office was recently re-organized. There has been a shift in responsibility areas and a transfer of employees. The re-organization came as a result of the national initiative Resourcing our Priorities.
- **Re-organization of the South District Office.** Another significant change with respect to the operations of the Saskatchewan Office relates to the downsizing of the South District Office as a result of Resourcing Our Priorities. The District Office has been turned into a budget centre and reports to the regional office.
- **Gathering Strength — Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan.** This initiative requires staff to think and act in new ways about roles and responsibilities. The Action Plan discusses the development of new partnerships, fiscal relations and governance as well as building strong communities, people and economies.

Recent Important Regional Initiatives

In light of these significant changes, the region has implemented a number of initiatives. Some of the most important initiatives can be summarized as follows:

- Management has appointed a **co-ordinator for each of the four themes under “Gathering Strength”** and detailed strategies to achieve outlined objectives have been developed. The four themes are: Partnership, Governance, Fiscal Relations and Strong Communities, People and Economies. The Saskatchewan Region’s strategic plan, based on the goals stated in “Gathering Strength - Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan” is focused on the objective of working in full partnership with the First Nations of Saskatchewan. While Gathering Strength has ambitious goals and objectives, the Saskatchewan Region has been working toward this type of relationship for a number of years. The region has embraced the Gathering Strength initiatives and there is a clear sense of commitment to achieving its objectives on a long term basis.
- The Saskatchewan Region has created a **Leadership and Learning Support Team** as well as a **Leadership Facilitation Committee**. These committees have the mandate to foster and implement leadership behaviours in the working environment of the region. They strive to keep their employees informed of new leadership initiatives and tools in each program sector. They also offer courses and tools to help employees take more risks and empower them in their position.
- Management has developed a **“Framework for Action Deliverables”** document to highlight important initiatives of the Gathering Strength program. The framework identifies the anticipated completion dates and defines the area of responsibility. Management follows up to ensure objectives are being achieved.
- Each Director also develops a **“Management Agreement”** which ties into the Framework for Action program. For each of the four themes, previously listed, the Directors identify specific objectives to be achieved, the completion date and the area of responsibility. The Gathering Strength initiative seems to be well incorporated in all levels of the organization. Management incorporates the four themes in their strategic planning and goals and objectives for the current year.
- The Saskatchewan Region is the only region which has a **working protocol agreement with** its Provincial/Treaty Organization (PTO), the **Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)**. The protocol, designed to enhance Canada’s partnership with Saskatchewan First Nations, supports the Fiscal and Governance tables, as well as co-ordinating and supporting many other joint initiatives related to partnership, self-government, policy and program development and capacity building to address social, economic and cultural priorities.

- The region conducted an **employee survey** within the last year to obtain feedback from their employees on various working environment topics. Overall results were positive and consistent with the findings of this review. The initiative demonstrates management's commitment to employees and the importance of a positive work environment.
- As required by the department for all employees who have more than five direct reports, **upward evaluations** of their supervisors were conducted. Questionnaires were distributed to employees who evaluate their supervisors on various categories. The supervisors can subsequently hold meetings with their staff to obtain feedback on how they can improve in their weak areas.

These examples illustrates the positive initiatives taken by the Saskatchewan Region. Although they, as all other regions, are in a state of transition, management is effectively managing change and welcomes new initiatives.

Section 2 - Scope and Methodology

Scope

The Audit and Evaluation Committee at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development requested a review of management practices of Saskatchewan Region to assess whether it is operating with due regard to effectiveness, efficiency and economy. The objective of the review was to provide practical advice and further assurance that regional management practices met DIAND philosophies and values and are appropriate for the unique circumstances of the region. The review included visits to all DIAND offices located in Saskatchewan.

The review was conducted using Ernst & Young methodology incorporating the principles of the Criteria of Control Objectives (CoCo) model as defined by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. An assessment of the effectiveness of strategic controls, using the CoCo principles, should indicate to management whether practices related to the organization's significant objectives and risks are effective.

The framework used to assess strategic control effectiveness is structured in four main areas:

- **Purpose:** the region's ability to plan, communicate, direct and control operations and achieve objectives;
- **Commitment:** evaluation of the consistency of the organization's mission and vision and its values and policies;
- **Capability:** extent to which the organization has the competency, knowledge and skills to achieve the objectives of the department and fulfill departmental obligations and priorities;
- **Monitoring and Learning:** extent to which current monitoring activities ensure accountability. Review of recent initiatives of the department to ensure constant growth and evolution. The organization is in constant evolution as a result of learning.

The review pertained mainly to the efficiency and effectiveness of strategic management practices within the region and as such detailed testing of transactions or processes was not performed. In essence the effectiveness of management practices was reviewed by holding a significant number of interviews and focus groups and the methodology did not include the review of a sample of transaction-type documents to ensure compliance with departmental policies and procedures.

Methodology

The methodology to complete the assignment consisted of:

- the planning phase;
- the fieldwork phase; (included document review, interviews, focus groups and analysis); and,
- the reporting phase.

Planning Phase

The planning phase of the review, conducted during the week of November 2nd, 1998, focused on obtaining sufficient information to develop a detailed workplan for the review of management practices. To achieve this objective, it was necessary to clearly understand the region's objectives, strategy and philosophy.

During the planning phase, a presentation was made to the Region's Executive Steering Committee. Individual interviews were conducted with each Committee member with the objectives of:

- providing an overview of the planned Management Practice Review of Saskatchewan Region;
- developing an understanding of the region's objectives and strategic plan;
- developing an understanding of the region's organizational structure and operations; and
- soliciting the views of senior management regarding best practices and the concerns, if any, with management practices which may highlight areas for improvement.

In addition to the above, the planning team reviewed numerous documents related to the departments mandate the region's strategic plan, organization and overall structure.

Fieldwork Phase

The fieldwork and analysis phase, conducted in the weeks of November 28, 1998 and January 4, 1999, included visits to the Regional Office and the North West Budget Centre (both co-located in Regina), the South Budget Centre in Fort Qu'Appelle and the North Central District Office in Prince Albert. The review was structured in three significant components as follows:

1. Focus Groups

Four (4) focus groups were conducted: 2 in the Regional Office, 1 in Fort Qu'Appelle and 1 in Prince Albert, which included representatives from management and staff levels within the Saskatchewan Region. The focus groups were created to maximize efficiencies in data gathering, review findings and understand future state visioning. The sessions focussed mainly on the following topics: objectives of the region and the staff's understanding of them, communication, monitoring, leadership, training, commitment and capability.

2. Individual Interviews

Approximately thirty (30) individual interviews were conducted with a cross section of managers, committee chairpersons and employees throughout the region. The purpose of our interviews was to obtain information from various levels of management and staff with respect to management practices. The interviews focussed on obtaining their perspective on the effectiveness of management practices and also focussed on issues previously identified by senior management during the planning phase of the assignment.

3. Documentation Review

We reviewed numerous documents including but not limited to the strategic plan, management agreements, terms of reference for various committees, signing authorities, management regimes and framework for action deliverables. The documents were used to corroborate information obtained in our discussions with management. After the data gathering and the interviews were completed, a detailed analysis of the information obtained was performed to identify trends and common themes. The information was subsequently summarized and presented to the Associate Regional Director General as an initial debrief and to obtain validation of the review findings.

Reporting Phase

Once the analysis phase was completed, a summary of our findings was prepared and prioritized. The most important observations have been included in this report, while other comments or items of interest have been discussed with the Associate Regional Director General.

Section 3 - Management Practices Findings

The review was conducted using the four underlying principles of the CoCo model:

- **Purpose:** - knowing what to do
- **Commitment:** - wanting to do it
- **Capability:** - being able to do it
- **Monitoring and Learning:** - learning to do it better

The findings were also summarized on the four CoCo principles. These findings fall into two categories. Effective practices which require no improvement and observations for which recommendations have been made.

Purpose

Purpose encompasses an organization's direction at the strategic, tactical and operational levels. It involves examining the mission, vision and strategy of an organization and ensuring that individuals understand its meaning and can make linkages to their own objectives. If employees understand what they are doing and why, there is a stronger likelihood that individual and organizational objectives will be achieved.

Effective Practice — Communication of the Gathering Strength Vision

With the introduction of the Gathering Strength initiative in January 1998, the Saskatchewan Region is in transition and senior management has taken measures to communicate the vision. *The Saskatchewan Region has succeeded in communicating the overall broad themes of Gathering Strength to employees who now understand Canada's vision for the First Nations people.* Management has incorporated the many initiatives in their overall strategic plan and it has been reflected in Saskatchewan Region's Framework for Action and Management Agreements. Most of the objectives are defined in terms of targets and performance indicators and have completion dates and responsibility areas assigned to ensure proper accountability.

To ensure proper implementation of Gathering Strength, the Saskatchewan Region has developed the following approach:

1. A coordinator has been assigned for each of the four Gathering Strength themes with responsibility for defining:
 - initiatives;
 - objectives;
 - implementation strategies;
 - resources;

- milestones achieved;
 - progress to date; and
 - next deliverables.
2. Management developed the Framework for Action which ties in with the Gathering Strength themes and strategies developed by the co-ordinators. The Framework identifies milestones or targets dates and expands on key initiatives such as:
- *Public Education*: assisting non-Aboriginal Canadians to better understand Aboriginal issues. An example is providing information on the benefits of the Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) process to City Councils
 - *Youth Programming*: initiate a new cooperative education program at 15 First Nations School
 - *Establishment of Financial Transfer Arrangements (FTA)*: negotiate and implement six new FTA agreements;
 - *Indian Child and Family Services (ICFS)*: establish four new ICFS agencies and convert two existing agency agreements to the revised generic funding agreement for the region.
- These are just a few examples of initiatives which form part of the overall Framework for Action for the Saskatchewan Region.
3. The directors of each directorate prepared “Management Agreements” that tie into the Framework for Action. The Management Agreements have defined and measurable targets, areas or responsibility and completion dates.

Effective Practice — Protocol Agreement with FSIN

The Saskatchewan Region is the only region which has a working protocol agreement with its PTO, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. The protocol, designed to enhance the partnership of Canada and Saskatchewan First Nations, supports the Fiscal and Governance tables, as well as co-ordinating and supporting many other joint initiatives related to partnership, self-government, policy and program development and capacity building to address social, economic and cultural priorities.

Given the limited time since the introduction of the Gathering Strength initiatives, the Saskatchewan Region has taken significant steps in communicating the future direction of the department to all levels of staff.

The following observation however, highlights areas that should be addressed as the vision continues to evolve to help ensure full understanding and commitment of staff.

Observation — Operational Impact of the Gathering Strength Initiative

While most employees understand the broad concepts and themes of Gathering Strength, not all people interviewed understand its potential impact on their daily operations and the changes that may occur while Gathering Strength is fully implemented. It is more difficult to achieve overall objectives if the employees do not fully understand the impact of high level strategies on their job duties. This observation is not surprising given that Gathering Strength was introduced 12 months ago and that many long term Saskatchewan Region operational strategies for the initiative were developed within that timeframe.

Recommendation

1. The Regional Director General should ensure the management team continues to communicate to employees the operational strategies, expected results and progress of each directorate's Gathering Strength initiatives over the short, medium and long term.

Employees must understand management objectives at the operational level to ensure opportunities that arise can be identified and management responds appropriately. Enhancing staff comprehension of each directorate's operational activities under the Gathering Strength initiatives will only help management achieve its objectives more quickly.

For example, to ensure proper dissemination of information to the respective directorates and their employees, management could identify a team leader within each directorate who would be responsible for the overall communication of management's operational strategies. The team leader would obtain the overall strategies from each of the Gathering Strength theme coordinators and ensure implementation strategies are developed and communicated to the employees. The team leaders from the different directorates could also meet on a regular basis to understand issues as they arise and ensure consistency in the application of the strategies across the organization.

Commitment

In most organizations, a high level of employee commitment ensures that the risk of objectives being achieved is maximized. Individuals who buy into the mission and share the urgency to attain objectives are more effective employees. An organization can more effectively achieve its mission by promoting an empowered workforce that has both the responsibility and accountability for their actions and the provision of effective leadership.

Effective Practice — Effective Leadership

Employees at various levels of the organization believe their Regional Director General, Associate Regional Director General and Directors are effective leaders and respect them as supervisors and individuals.

Employees perceive these individuals as hard working and appreciate the work they do to promote partnership with First Nations.

There are several committees in the Saskatchewan Region that help ensure that the region remains on the path set by its strategic direction. The committees are:

- Regional Management Committee meets quarterly and is made up of all Regional Directors and Managers. They are responsible for regional policy and strategic decision making.
- Regional Executive Committee meets bi-weekly and is made up of the Regional Directors, Managers of Human Resources and Communications and the District Director. They are responsible for operational information sharing.
- Executive Steering Committee meets monthly and is made up of the Regional Director General, Associate Regional Director General, all Directors, Budget Centre managers and manager of Human Resources. They are responsible for strategic budgeting and human resource management.

Regular participation in these committees demonstrates a commitment from senior management with respect to the strategic vision and operational strategies of the region and translates into consistent leadership.

Effective Practice — Commitment and Opportunity

There is a high sense of commitment from the management team and most employees to accomplish their duties efficiently and effectively. Managers believe they are given the opportunity to be effective leaders.

Managers demonstrated a high commitment to accomplishing the tasks and implementing Gathering Strength initiatives. They have a strong desire to belong to the team and understand the changing environment. They believe the region offers appropriate personal development courses in the leadership field that allows them to adequately deal with their day to day activities.

The Leadership and Learning Support Team and the Leadership Facilitation Committee also have the mandate to develop and implement a leadership culture in the working environment of the region. They strive to keep their employees informed of new leadership initiatives and tools. The Leadership Facilitation Committee takes a proactive role in developing capacity in each

directorate to use the leadership tools. The Leadership and Learning Support Team keeps employees informed of national initiatives and is responsible to develop a leadership culture within the region.

Effective Practice — Employee Survey

The region conducted an employee survey within last year to obtain feedback from employees.

The fact that the region conducted a census survey to obtain the views of employees on various working environment topics demonstrates a strong commitment to them and the importance management attributes to a positive work environment. Overall results were positive and consistent with the findings of this review. Further commitment to employees will be demonstrated by action taken on the basis of the results of the survey.

Observation — Senior Management and Information Sharing

Employees want senior management to share information with them directly so that they feel a sense of partnership with the organization.

As previously mentioned, senior management is well respected by the employees. Employees understand how busy Directors are implementing new initiatives and promoting partnerships with First Nations. Many employees also feel the need for more frequent direct contact to hear about current departmental, regional and directorate developments regarding operational issues, major projects and lessons learned and to learn the rationale behind key decisions. For example, employees appreciated the daily reports they received from senior management in the time of crisis with one of the tribal councils. They felt a sense of partnership with the organization and appreciated the information that was shared.

Recommendation

2. To sustain and foster employees sense of belonging and partnership with the entire regional organization, the Regional Director General and Associate Regional Director General, with the support of the Leadership and Learning Support Team, create more opportunities to meet directly with employees.

It is important for the Regional Director General and Associate Regional Director General to participate in office activities and make personal contact with the employees as often as feasible. Effective methods of accomplishing these objectives include:

- holding quarterly or semi-annual town hall meetings where all employees are invited to participate. The meetings could be as short as two or three hours and cover a wide range of topics as requested by the employees. The town hall meetings would be different from the existing Open Space meetings in that they would be relatively short and share information on topics of an operational perspective as opposed to a strategic nature. Each

Directorate could share information about developments in their business area and the impact they see on the organization as a whole. The town hall meetings could also be used to share information concerning the successful implementation of Gathering Strength initiatives.

- attending each directorate's strategic planning meetings to share information with employees and learn what they are doing; and
- when in the office, increase their efforts to meet with staff and discuss issues with them.

Observation — Risk taking and empowerment at the staff level

Leadership and empowerment are not given the same focus across the region. Not all staff feel they have sufficient flexibility to take calculated risks.

Some employees indicated that although they believed leadership courses gave them leadership skills, they did not feel they had the opportunity to apply the course concepts in their day to day operations. Leadership needs to be exercised at all levels of the organization and currently not all employees feel they are able to take leadership initiatives or risk in their daily activities. Many do not feel comfortable with risk taking and as such do not feel appropriately empowered to do their job.

Recommendations

3. The Regional Director General in consultation with the Leadership Facilitation Committee should ensure that all managers take measures, including risk management training, to support employees in their initiatives.
4. The Regional Director General should ensure all managers assist employees in determining how they can exercise leadership initiatives by discussing how the concepts can be applied and supporting employees in their initiatives.

It is important to ensure that management not only supports leadership initiatives in theory but also assist employees in applying the concepts in practice by monitoring, coaching and providing the opportunity. To ensure employees feel supported, managers must determine how each of the principles and concepts discussed on the leadership courses apply to the areas of responsibility of their staff.

Observation — Employee recognition

Employees feel success is not recognized equally at all levels of the organization.

An indicative number of employees interviewed felt that recognizing the day-to-day contributions of individuals to the success of the region could be given greater emphasis in regional ceremonies. The day-to-day recognition of good performance and success will result in an enhanced appreciation of the nature and importance of each job to the region, greater identification with and understanding of broader objectives, and heightened motivation to achieve both individual job and organizational objectives. Insufficient recognition for a job well done will eventually demoralize employees and the motivation levels will decrease.

Recommendation

5. The Regional Director General, Associate Regional Director General, Directors and Managers, in conjunction with the Leadership Facilitation Committee, make additional efforts to recognize accomplishments at all levels of the organization and communicate their appreciation to employees.

Specific means of communication can be used to ensure the process is done automatically. The town halls suggested earlier would be a great opportunity for each directorate to recognize an employee for a job well done in front of colleagues and peers and do not require a great deal of effort. Management should also be in the habit of sending quick e-mails to thank employees or recognize their efforts in accomplishing a special assignment at “stand-up” meetings and other gatherings. The recognition does not have to be elaborate but employees need to hear how they are performing to remain motivated.

Capability

Capability addresses the need to properly provide an organization and its employees with the right tools to achieve its objectives. This includes providing training to employees and ensuring that they have the proper skill sets to perform tasks. It also includes providing the appropriate resources and information.

Overall, Saskatchewan Region has provided employees with the necessary tools for them to effectively and efficiently perform their duties. Most employees had very positive comments about their ability to do their job and the support they receive from the organization.

Effective Practice — Computer Services

All aspects of services provided by the Computer Services unit were positive.

During all interviews only positive feedback with respect to the Computer Services unit was received. Computer Services has managed to answer the needs of users and employees agreed the informatics support they received was exemplary. The unit receives support from the Regional Informatics Steering Committee to ensure that the implementation of technology meets business requirements. There is a detailed Information Technology Plan for the fiscal year which identifies the business needs of each directorate, the rationale to support the business case and the implications of rejecting the proposal.

Effective Practice — Adequate Level of Human and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Resources and Appropriate Tools

Managers and staff generally feel the level of resources is adequate for on-going operations and they have the skills required to perform their duties.

Employees feel they have the appropriate skill sets and training required to effectively perform their job and management is always supportive in offering the training courses required for further development.

In general, employees have the capability required to perform their job through appropriate levels of resources, adequate training and skills and, suitable tools. Over the last few years, the region has provided a number of development courses which employees feel they have benefited from. Employees did express a desire for more training directly related to their job function.

Observation — Communication within the Organization

Employees feel there is not enough communication among the various directorates.

It is important to note that the employees felt they had sufficient and appropriate information concerning their own work units and felt any weakness in communication related to information concerning other units of the organization. More specifically the following observations were made:

- Communication between the various directorates of the region appears weak. The organization communicates very well along hierarchical lines but horizontal communication mechanisms and protocols that help employees understand what the others are doing are not always available. Few employees understand other directorate's operations and current issues with First Nations on an on-going basis. There is the risk of duplication of work or even diverging philosophies on similar topics if information is not shared.

- Employees are overwhelmed with information. Often information communicated may not be pertinent or relevant to them. Information of a general nature versus information directly impacting their work is not easily distinguished. There needs to be a distinction between information directly related to them and information of a general nature.

Recommendation

6. The Regional Director General, with the support of the Leadership Facilitation Committee, ensure a communications protocol is implemented to disseminate information to employees that enhances understanding of their operational environment and horizontal issues.

Like many DIAND employees, Saskatchewan Region employees receive numerous e-mails which may or may not be of relevance to them. Employees should be conscious of ensuring that their e-mails are relevant to all recipients. For information of a general nature such as developments with First Nations, up coming events, employee recognition and the introduction of new initiatives, a regular news bulletin could be posted where all employees have access. This method of communication will reduce the number of e-mails, provide a common source of consistent and current information and provide a better understanding of horizontal issues.

Several suggestions were previously made concerning additional exposure of senior management to employees (e.g. quarterly town hall meetings, attending staff meetings and spending more time with staff). These initiatives would also help address concerns raised by employees regarding communication.

Monitoring and Learning

For any organization, there are needs for dynamic monitoring processes which meet the demands of change. Monitoring processes must be flexible enough to be modified when required and be clear enough to meet needs for accountability. On an on-going basis, management must assess performance, and based on the results, modify the vision, objectives or practices of an organization.

Effective Practice — Operational Monitoring

Although often informal, all directorates within the Saskatchewan Region perform some type of monitoring activity which allow them to evaluate the success of their directorate.

Some directorates hold weekly meetings to determine the status of various on-going activities and informally assess whether or not they are achieving their objectives. Others file regular reports with their immediate supervisor outlining the original objectives and the stage of completion of each objective. Targets are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure remedial actions

can be taken if activities don't meet the planned due dates. The monitoring function varies within each directorate, however all were doing some type of activity either verbally or in written format. The monitoring ensures timely feedback and ensures proper follow up of issues.

Observation — Staff evaluations and career planning

Although monitoring of task oriented activities and staff evaluations are performed on a regular basis, career planning do not occur as frequently as required.

Many employees do not have a long term sense of where they are headed and what opportunities exist for them within the organization. The career planning aspect will become even more important as Gathering Strength is implemented and DIAND's roles and responsibilities are redefined.

Recommendation

7. The Regional Manager, Human Resources ensure all managers and supervisors include a discussion of career management in each performance review session.

Section 4 - Conclusion

Overall, the Saskatchewan Region of DIAND has implemented effective management practices and is well operated. Employees understand the overall vision and mission of the department and the region and believe in its mandate. There is a strong sense of commitment to achieve the department's mission of working together to make Canada a better place for First Nations people to live. There is also strong respect for the Regional Director General and Associate Regional Director General and the partnership with First Nations. In general, employees feel they have the necessary resources, skills and tools to perform their job as efficiently as possible.

Management of Saskatchewan Region is aware of practices that require improvement. These are:

- **Communication:** Of all observations and comments made, there was always some aspect of the information sharing mentioned. Employees have a desire to better understand the region's strategic plan and the internal and external environment in which they operate.
- **Risk taking and empowerment.** Some employees indicated that although they believed leadership courses gave them leadership skills, they did not feel they had the opportunity to apply the course concepts in their day to day operations and that they are able to take leadership initiatives or risk in their daily activities
- **Employee Recognition.** Employees would also like to be recognized for their accomplishments on a more regular basis. They believe that recognition is inconsistent and varies between levels within the organization.
- **Monitoring.** Employees want to be provided with more guidance and career planning with the implementation of Gathering Strength.

Saskatchewan Region has many particularly effective management practices and accomplishments for which they could be recognized. These include the following:

- **Communication of the Gathering Strength Vision.** Saskatchewan Region has succeeded in communicating the overall broad themes of Gathering Strength to employees who now understand Canada's vision for the First Nations people.
- **Protocol Agreement with FSIN.** The protocol, designed to enhance the partnership of Canada and Saskatchewan First Nations, supports the Fiscal and Governance tables, as well as co-ordinating and supporting many other joint initiatives related to partnership, self-government, policy and program development and capacity building to address social, economic and cultural priorities.

- **Effective Leadership.** Employees at various levels of the organization believe the Regional Director General, Associate Regional Director General and Directors are effective leaders and respect them as supervisors and individuals.
- **Commitment and Opportunity.** There is a high sense of commitment from the management team and most employees to accomplish their duties efficiently and effectively. Managers believe they are given the opportunity to be effective leaders.
- **Employee Survey.** The region conducted a census survey to obtain the views of employees on various working environment topics. Overall, results were positive and consistent with the findings of this review. The survey demonstrates management's commitment to employees and the importance of a positive work environment.
- **Computer Services.** All aspects of the Computer Services unit were positive.
- **Adequate Level of Human and O&M Resources and Appropriate Tools.** Managers and staff generally feel the level of resources is adequate for on-going operations and they have the skills required to perform their duties. Employees feel they have the appropriate skill sets and training required to effectively perform their job and management is always supportive in offering the training courses required for further development.
- **Operational Monitoring.** Although often informal, all directorates within the Saskatchewan Region perform monitoring activities which allow them to evaluate the success of their directorate.

Term of Reference

Terms of Reference

Review of Management Practices - Saskatchewan Region

Background: This project is part of the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) ongoing cycle of management practices reviews to be conducted in each region and at headquarters. The cycle started in 1994-1995, and is part of a five-year plan. As specified in our 1997-1998 plan, the Saskatchewan Region has been identified for this year.

The Saskatchewan Region is comprised of a Regional Office located in Regina, one District Office and two Budget Centres. The North Central District Office operates out of Prince Albert, the Northwest Budget Center operates out of the Regional Office in Regina while the South Budget Centre operates out of Fort Qu'Appelle.

Saskatchewan Region offers a wide range of services to the First Nation communities and individuals, as well as information service to the general public. Overall programs and services are administered by a Regional Management Committee (RMC) under the direction of a Regional Director General (RDG) and an Associate Regional Director General (ARDG). The RMC also includes seven Directors and five Managers of various programs.

Need: DAEB conducts, on a periodical basis, reviews and assessments of management practices, as well as a determination of effective practices. These reviews assist management in improving their practices to ensure the most effective and efficient support to the organization.

Scope & Issues: The review will be looking at the Criteria of Control Objectives (CoCo) defined by the Canada's chartered accountants under four principal areas:

Purpose - a sense of the organization's direction and planning

- How does the region achieve the organization's objectives? (Both regional and departmental)

Commitment - a sense of the organization's identity and values

- To what extent are values, policies and divisions of responsibilities consistent with the organization's direction?

Capability - a sense of the organization's competence

- Do people have the competency, knowledge, skills and tools to support the departmental's objectives?

Monitoring and learning - a sense of the organization's evolution

- To what extent monitoring and learning support the evolution of the department?

Approach:

It is proposed to adopt a review process based on principles of consultation and participation together with quantitative and qualitative research method for the achievement of concrete, visible results. The project will be initiated by a senior Audit Manager from the Departmental and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) with the assistance of the consultants. The selection of the firm will be done by the senior Audit Manager in consultation with the Saskatchewan Rregion.

The review will be conducted in four phases as follows :

Planning/Orientation Phase

The planning phase establishes the framework for the project. It clarifies the mandate, the objectives, the scope and expected results. This phase entails studying the regional management practices.

The object of this phase is for the review team to reach a common understanding of the orientation and the methodology of the project. The members of the team clarify the methodology, the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods and the nature of the sampling where applicable to produce an activity plan.

Gathering/Conduct Phase

During this phase the review team carries-out the plan developed earlier. Activities include individual interviews and group meetings; group sessions; review of records and processes and management practices; and all other necessary research and gathering information.

Analysis Phase

Once the information has been gathered, the review team analyses the data and clarifies issues such as :

- What is the current state of affairs?
- What are the gaps?
- Suggestions for filling the gaps and improve the regional practices to respond to future needs.
- Identification of effective practices.

This information will be presented to a group of regional representatives. The group will validate the data, propose recommendations, and develop the framework of a work plan for implementation.

Report Phase

The purpose of the report phase is to incorporate all information and recommendations gathered during the course of the review into a concise format. This includes results of analysis and work plan for implementation.

Resources: The work will be undertaken both in-house and with the use of consultants.

Cost: The estimated cost for the contracted resources is \$50,000.

Timeframe: The planning will commence in April 1998. A draft report will be completed by September 1998.

Approved by:

R. Bird
Regional Director General
Saskatchewan Region
June 7, 1998

Action Plan

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET : Review of Management Practices - Saskatchewan Region
 REGION OR SECTOR / RÉGION OU SECTEUR : Saskatchewan Region

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PRÉVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
1. The Regional Director General should ensure the management team continues to communicate to employees the operational strategies, expected results and progress of each directorate's Gathering Strength initiatives over the short, medium and long term.	10	Gathering Strength is a high priority at Regional Management Committee meetings. Expanded participation at RMC's ensures a broader regional knowledge. Quarterly staff meetings to provided information and participation have been scheduled for June 15, September 8, December 8 and March 1, 2000.	Director General	March 31, 2000
2. To sustain and foster employees sense of belonging and partnership with the entire regional organization, the Regional Director General and Associate Regional Director General, with the support of the Leadership and Learning Support Team, create more opportunities to meet directly with employees.	12	Regular quarterly all staff meetings where everyone is encouraged to attend. Regional Director General and A/Regional Director General at public events such as Public Service Week. The Leadership and Learning Support Team works closely with the Regional Director General and A/Regional Director General to identify increased opportunities.	Director General Associate Director General Learning & Leadership Support Team	March 31, 2000
3. The Regional Director General in consultation with the Leadership Facilitation Committee should ensure that all managers take measures, including risk management training, to support employees in their initiatives.	13	An event is planned to provide information sessions for RISK Management training.	Learning & Leadership Support Team	December 31, 1999

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4. The Regional Director General should ensure all managers assist employees in determining how they can exercise leadership initiatives by discussing how the concepts can be applied and supporting employees in their initiatives.	13	Four formal Leadership Teams have been established with an open invitation to all employees to participate. The Teams listed support employees in exercising leadership initiatives. 1. Communications 2. Employee Appreciation 3. Visioning Team 4. Employee Training Leadership Training identified by employees in their training plans will be provided by the Leadership and Learning Support Group.	Director General Learning & Leadership Support Team	March 31, 2000
5. The Regional Director General, Associate Regional Director General, Directors and Managers, in conjunction with the Leadership Facilitation Committee, make additional efforts to recognize accomplishments at all levels of the organization and communicate their appreciation to employees.	14	A leadership Employee Appreciation Team has been established to improve on methods to recognize employee accomplishments. Employee appreciation will be a regular event at the quarterly all staff meetings.	Director General Associate Director General Directors/Managers Learning & Leadership Support Team	March 31, 2000
6. The Regional Director General, with the support of the Leadership Facilitation Committee, ensure a communications protocol is implemented to disseminate information to employees that enhances understanding of their operational environment and horizontal issues.	16	Leadership Communication Team has been established with participation from all sectors and is currently developing a detailed plan. The objective is to look at all vehicles of communication be that written, visual, electronic or verbal.	Director General Learning & Leadership Support Team	March 31, 2000

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7. The Regional Manager, Human Resources ensure all managers and supervisors include a discussion of career management in each performance review session.	18	An email dated May 17, 1999 was sent by the Regional Manager Human Resources to all Managers and employees encouraging Career Planning discussions during the PREA process.	Manager, Human Resources	May 17, 1999