

## **MANDATE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **1. Mission**

1.1 The Audit Committee assists the Board of Directors in its general management responsibilities of the Corporation by:

- a) selecting and recommending the external auditors and reviewing their independence and effectiveness;
- b) reviewing:
  - (i) the financial statements;
  - (ii) the processes for presenting financial information;
  - (iii) the internal controls;
  - (iv) the audit processes;
  - (v) the management information systems; and
  - (vi) the financial risk management processes and control methods for managing such risks;

for the purpose of determining the integrity and effectiveness thereof; and

- c) serving as intermediary between the Board of Directors and the independent oversight functions (internal and external auditing).

1.2 The Corporation's external auditors are responsible for reporting to the Board of Directors and to the Audit Committee acting as the shareholders' representatives, and these shareholders' representatives have the ultimate power and responsibility of choosing, evaluating and, where necessary, recommending the replacement of the external auditors.

1.3 The Committee fulfills its responsibilities to the Board by carrying out the duties set forth in section 10 of this Mandate.

1.4 Although the Audit Committee has the powers and responsibilities set forth in this Mandate, the role of the Audit Committee is oversight. The members of the Audit Committee are not full-time employees of the Corporation and may or may not be accountants or auditors by profession and, in any event, do not serve in such

capacity on the Audit Committee. Consequently, it is not the duty of the Audit Committee to conduct audits or to determine that the Corporation's financial statements and disclosures are complete and accurate and are in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (“IFRS”) and applicable rules and regulations. These are the responsibilities of management and the external auditors.

## **2. Composition**

- 2.1 The Committee is comprised of at least three (3) members appointed annually by the Board of Directors from among the Corporation's Directors.
- 2.2 Every Committee member shall be independent within the meaning of *Regulation 52-110 respecting Audit Committees* (“**Regulation 52-110**”).
- 2.3 No officer or employee of the Corporation or of a subsidiary of the Corporation shall be a member of the Committee.
- 2.4 Every Committee member shall be financially literate within the meaning of Regulation 52-110, i.e. shall have the ability to read and understand a set of financial statements that present a breadth of complexity of accounting issues that are generally comparable to the breadth and complexity of the issues that can reasonably be expected to be raised by the Corporation's financial statements.

At least one Committee member shall have “related accounting or financial expertise” acquired either through previous work experience in finance or accounting, through the required professional certification in accounting, or through any other comparable experience or training giving him financial sophistication, such as being or having been a chief executive officer or chief financial officer of a company, or having held another position with a company as a senior executive with financial oversight responsibilities. This member shall have the ability to analyze and interpret a complete set of financial statements, including the accompanying notes, in accordance with IFRS.

## **3. Chairperson**

- 3.1 The chair of the Committee is appointed by the Board of Directors. Where the chair is absent or unable to attend a meeting, the meeting shall be chaired by a member chosen by the Committee.
- 3.2 Subject to a contrary decision by the Board of Directors, members who have sat on the Committee for two years are eligible for appointment as Committee chairperson.
- 3.3 The Committee chairperson may make suggestions to the Chairman of the Board concerning the content of the agendas of certain meetings of the Board of Directors, where he considers it appropriate or necessary to do so.

## **4. Secretary**

The Committee chairperson appoints a person who does not need to be a member of the Committee, to act as Committee secretary.

## **5. Holding and calling of meetings**

5.1 The Audit Committee meets at least once per quarter and the Committee's meetings are held on the dates and at the time and place fixed by the Board of Directors. The Committee members shall be notified annually in writing of the dates, times and places of the Committee meetings, without any other notice being required.

5.2 An off-schedule meeting may be called at any time by the Committee chairperson, the Chairman of the Board, the President and Chief Executive Officer, one of the members of the Committee, the Chief Financial Officer, the Secretary or an assistant secretary of the Corporation, and by the external auditors and auditors in charge of the internal audit function.

A notice stipulating the purpose, place, date and time of every off-schedule meeting shall be sent to each of the Committee members by mail or by any other means of telephone or electronic communication at least twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled time and date of the meeting.

Off-schedule meetings of the Committee may be held without notice when all Committee members are present or when absent members give written waiver of notice of such meeting.

5.3 The Committee meetings may be held by telephone or by any other means enabling all members to communicate adequately and simultaneously with each other. In such case, the persons participating in a meeting by telephone or by any other means of communication are deemed to be present at the meeting.

5.4 The external auditors are entitled to receive the notices of the Committee's meetings and to be heard at such meetings.

5.5 The Committee may call a meeting of the Board of Directors to study issues of interest to the Committee.

5.6 The Committee members shall meet in closed sessions, at least once a year, under the direction of the Committee chairperson.

## **6. Quorum**

6.1 Quorum for the Committee shall be a majority of the Committee members.

6.2 There shall be a quorum at every meeting in order for the Committee members to validly conduct proceedings and make decisions.

- 6.3 Subject to sections 6.1 and 6.2 above, the subjects submitted for consideration to every Committee meeting requiring a decision shall be approved by a majority of votes of the members present.

## **7. Minutes**

- 7.1 The secretary shall keep the minutes of every Committee meeting, duly approved by it, in a register especially for this purpose.
- 7.2 The minutes of every Committee meeting, duly approved by it, shall be attached to the agenda of a subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors for its information. The Committee chairperson shall make a verbal report of the proceedings of every Committee meeting at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **8. Vacancy**

Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors, where it considers appropriate. A failure to fill a vacancy shall not invalidate the Committee's decisions provided that there is a quorum.

## **9. Hiring of external advisors**

The Audit Committee has the authority to retain the services of expert advisors at the Corporation's expense. In case of an emergency, this responsibility is vested in the Committee chairperson. The Committee may request any officer or employee of the Corporation, its outside legal counsel or its internal or external auditors to attend an Audit Committee meeting or meet any of its members or advisors.

The Audit Committee shall notify the Board of Directors on the extent of the financing required to pay for the compensation of the independent expert advisors retained to advise the Committee.

## **10. Duties and responsibilities**

The Committee's duties are as follows:

### **10.1 Internal control**

- 10.1.1 review the mandate of the internal audit function on an annual basis and ensure that it has the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate and the responsibilities set for it;
- 10.1.2 if the internal audit function has been outsourced in whole to an external consulting firm, make recommendations to the Corporation's Board of Directors on the appointment of such consultants and their compensation;

- 10.1.3 require management to set up and maintain appropriate internal control policies and mechanisms, and review, evaluate and approve such policies and mechanisms;
- 10.1.4 evaluate the effectiveness of the Corporation's internal control policies and mechanisms with the Chief Financial Officer, or any other officer or employee of the Corporation exercising responsibility for the internal audit function;
- 10.1.5 review the report(s) of the internal audit group on a quarterly or annual basis and ensure that the necessary measures are taken to follow up on the suggestions arising from such report(s);
- 10.1.6 recommend to the Board of Directors the appointment or removal of an officer responsible for the internal audit function of the Corporation;
- 10.1.7 review and approve the annual internal audit plan and ensure the independence and effectiveness of this function;
- 10.1.8 require that the internal audit function be free of any influence which could interfere with its ability to carry out its responsibilities in an objective manner and, to this end, obtain disclosure from management of the services other than internal auditing provided to the Corporation by the consultants to whom this function has been outsourced;
- 10.1.9 evaluate the overall performance of the external consultants to whom the internal audit function has been outsourced, whether in whole or in part, including the other services rendered by these consultants, and analyze the effect of such services on their independence;
- 10.1.10 ensure that there is effective cooperation between internal auditing and the external auditors of the Corporation;
- 10.1.11 meet, in the absence of management, with the Corporation's officer in charge of the internal audit function, or the external consultant to whom this function has been outsourced;
- 10.1.12 review any management representation letters on the internal financial systems and controls addressed to the external auditors;
- 10.1.13 review and comment to the Board of Directors on all related-party transactions;
- 10.1.14 review any change in the Corporation's code of ethics;
- 10.1.15 review the recommendations made by the regulatory bodies or external or internal auditors and report to the Board of Directors;

- 10.1.16 establish procedures for the receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the Corporation regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters and for the confidential, anonymous submission by employees of the Corporation of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters; and
- 10.1.17 review and approve the Corporation's hiring policies regarding partners, employees and former partners and employees of the Corporation's, current or former, external auditors that meet the CICA Rules of Professional Conduct.

## 10.2 External auditors

- 10.2.1 submit recommendations to the Corporation's Board of Directors for the appointment and compensation of the external auditors;
- 10.2.2 review and discuss the external auditors' detailed report on all the factors influencing their independence and objectivity; make recommendations for measures to be taken by the Board of Directors to ensure the independence of the external auditors;
- 10.2.3 pre-approve all non-audit services to be provided to the Corporation or its subsidiaries by the auditors and, ensure that the external auditors shall not provide the following services to the Corporation:

### Prohibited Non-Audit Services

- Bookkeeping or other services related to the accounting records or financial statements of the Corporation.
  - Expert services, litigation support unrelated to the audit.
  - Financial information systems design and implementation.
  - Appraisal or valuation services, fairness opinions or contribution-in-kind reports.
  - Actuarial services.
  - Internal audit outsourcing services.
  - Management functions.
  - Human resources services.
  - Broker-dealer, investment adviser or investment banking services.
  - Legal Services and any other advocacy services.
  - Preparation of journal entries and source documents.
  - IT Services.
  - Corporate finance and similar activities.
- 10.2.4 review the nature and scope of the work of the Corporation's external auditors;

- 10.2.5 meet with the external auditors and management to discuss the annual financial statements or transactions which may be detrimental to the sound financial situation of the Corporation;
  - 10.2.6 discuss with the external auditors not only the acceptability but also the quality of the accounting principles followed by the Corporation in its financial reports;
  - 10.2.7 review the Corporation's guidelines for awarding professional services contracts to the external auditors outlining the criteria and levels of authorization required for types of services other than auditing which the external auditors are authorized to offer the Corporation;
  - 10.2.8 meet the Corporation's external auditors on a regular basis, in the absence of the management;
  - 10.2.9 oversee the work of the external auditors, including the auditing services and non-auditing services, and analyze the effect of these services on the auditors' independence and including the resolution of disagreements between management and the external auditors regarding financial reporting;
  - 10.2.10 Carry out an annual assessment and a complete and thorough assessment of the external auditors at least every five years;
  - 10.2.11 determine that the external auditors audit firm has a process in place to address the rotation of the lead audit partner and other audit partners serving the account as required under the CICA independence rules; and
  - 10.2.12 determine that the external auditors are a Public Accounting Firm that has entered into a Participation Agreement as such terms are defined in *Regulation 52-108 respecting Auditor Oversight* and that at the time of their report on the annual financial statements of the Corporation, they are in compliance with any restrictions or sanctions imposed by the Canadian Public Accountability Board.
- 10.3 Financial information
- 10.3.1 review the Corporation's quarterly and annual consolidated financial statements after the review (or read) or audit thereof by the external auditors, and recommend their approval to the Corporation's Board of Directors; review the unaudited (or internally prepared by management) financial statements of certain subsidiaries as appropriate;
  - 10.3.2 obtain an annual report from management, which may be in either oral or written form, on the accounting principles used in the preparation of the Corporation's financial statements, including those policies for

which management is required to exercise discretion or judgment regarding the implementation thereof;

- 10.3.3 annually review separately with each of management, the external auditors and the internal audit group (a) any significant disagreement between management and the external auditors or the internal audit group in connection with the preparation of the financial statements, (b) any difficulties encountered during the course of the audit, including any restrictions on the scope of work or access to required information and (c) management's response to each;
- 10.3.4 annually or periodically, as appropriate, review any significant changes to the Corporation's accounting principles and financial disclosure practices as suggested by the external auditors, management or the internal audit group; review with the external auditors, management and the internal audit group, at appropriate intervals, the extent to which any changes or improvements in accounting or financial practices, as approved by the Audit Committee, have been implemented;
- 10.3.5 review all the investments and transactions which may be detrimental to the Corporation's sound financial situation, when they are brought to its attention by the external auditors or an officer;
- 10.3.6 review and recommend the approval to the Board of Directors of the informational documents containing financial information, whether audited or unaudited, in particular, management's analysis of the financial situation and operating results, the annual information form and the press releases concerning the publication of the Corporation's quarterly and annual consolidated financial statements;
- 10.3.7 ensure that adequate procedures are in place for the review of the Corporation's public disclosure of financial information extracted or derived from the Corporation's financial statements and periodically assess the adequacy of those procedures;
- 10.3.8 review and discuss with management all material off-balance sheet transactions, arrangements, obligations (including contingent obligations), commitments and other relationships of the Corporation or any of its subsidiaries with unconsolidated entities or other persons, that may have a material current or future effect on the financial condition, changes in the financial condition, results of operations, liquidity, capital resources or significant components of revenues or expenses;
- 10.3.9 enquire with management concerning any significant changes adopted by bodies such as the stock exchanges or securities commissions, as well as changes to accounting standards that may have an effect on the preparation or disclosure of the financial statements of the Corporation



or its subsidiaries, and inform the Board of Directors thereof where appropriate; and

- 10.3.10 review the report of management on any dispute, notice of assessment or any other claim of a similar nature which may have a material effect on the Corporation's financial situation, and ensure that these material claims are correctly disclosed in the financial statements.

#### 10.4 Miscellaneous

Exercise any other functions entrusted to it by the Board of Directors and make such recommendations to it as it considers appropriate on the subjects within its competence.

*Last update February 2021.*