RCMP External Review Committee

Comité externe d'examen de la GRC

RCMP External Review Committee

2024-25 Report Against Forced Labour in Canada Supply Chains

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Canada

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Introduction

The Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act ("*Supply Chains Act*") and an amendment to the *Customs Tariff*, was enacted on January 1, 2024. This legislation mandates that the leaders of all government institutions involved in the production, procurement, or distribution of goods, whether domestically or internationally, must submit an annual report to the Minister of Public Safety no later than May 31 each year.

The RCMP External Review Committee (ERC) is subject to reporting requirements as per section 5 of the *Supply Chains Act* and therefore must report on steps taken during its previous financial year to prevent and reduce the risk that forced labour or child labour was used at any step of the production of goods produced, purchased or distributed by the organization.

The following report presents the ERC procurement context and measures in place during the fiscal year 2024-25 (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025) that contribute to preventing and reducing the risk that forced labour or child labour is used at any step of the production of goods produced, purchased or distributed by the organization.

Structure, activities and supply chains

About RCMP External Review Committee

The ERC is an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal established under the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*. It is separate and distinct from the RCMP. Due to its specific and narrow mandate, the ERC has one office located in National Capital Region, Ontario, Canada.

The ERC impartially reviews appeals of certain decisions made within internal RCMP labour relations processes and provides findings and recommendations to the Commissioner of the RCMP.

Under its mandate, the ERC reviews a variety of matters that must be referred to it under statute or regulation, including:

- appeals of certain decisions made by RCMP Conduct Authorities and RCMP Conduct Boards;
- appeals of certain decisions made in RCMP processes other than the conduct process; and
- grievances involving assorted issues, commenced under the RCMP's previous statutory scheme.

The ERC provides its findings and recommendations in an appeal or a grievance to the Commissioner of the RCMP. The Commissioner of the RCMP is not bound by the ERC's Findings and Recommendations.

The ERC is the only independent review body available to RCMP members for these matters, other than the Federal Court. A party can apply to the Federal Court after the Commissioner or delegate makes the final decision in a matter.

Procurement activities and supply chains

As a micro organization with less than 50 full-time equivalents, the ERC has a budget of $6.5M, 77% of which is dedicated to personnel. The ERC's purchasing needs are mainly common office required goods and services that are procured through Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) established supply arrangements or standing offers, as well as the Shared Services Canada (SSC) Standing Offers for IT equipment.

In 2024-25 fiscal year, the ERC has purchased goods for a total of $53K, representing less than 1% of its total budget, or 3.5% of its Operating and Maintenance budget of $1.5M. Of these goods, 95% were procured through the use of PSPC tools such as Standing Offers and Supply Arrangements. The goods purchased during 2024-25 focused on office furniture and office supply.

Policies and due diligence processes

Effective April 1, 2023, amendments to the Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Procurement require contracting authorities from all departments listed in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act* (with the exception of the Canada Revenue Agency) and commissions established in accordance with the *Inquiries Act* and designated as a department for the purposes of the *Financial Administration Act* to incorporate the Code of Conduct for Procurement ("the Code") into their procurements.

The Code requires that vendors, providing goods and services to the Government of Canada and their sub-contractors, comply with all applicable laws and regulations. In addition, the Code requires vendors and their sub-contractors to comply with Canada's prohibition on the importation of goods produced, in whole or in part, by forced or compulsory labour. This includes forced or compulsory child labour and applies to all goods, regardless of their country of origin.

Pursuant to the aforementioned amendments, the ERC had already integrated the Code into its procurement process. In 2024-25, to strengthen its processes and build its limited internal procurement expertise, the ERC has established a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Parole Board of Canada (PBC) to ensure that its contracts comply with the Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Procurement Directive, including the application of Code of Conduct for Procurement.

Forced labour and child labour risks

As a micro-organization with simple and minimal procurement needs, the risk of forced labour or child labour used in the ERC supply chain is low. As previously stated, the ERC uses PSPC and SSC established procurement mechanisms in meeting its contracting needs thus leveraging their initiatives to further support the Government of Canada in achieving procurement free from risks of forced labour. As such, all of ERC contracts for goods resulting from the use of these tools include clauses relating to forced labour which set out, among other things, human rights and labour rights requirements. These clauses can be found in the Annex 2.8 – Anti-forced labour requirements of the Supply Manual.

Although PSPC supports government institutions in their daily operations by acting as the central purchasing agent for the Government of Canada, the ERC can undertake activities under its own procurement authority, independently of the aforementioned PSPC tools. During the previous fiscal year, the ERC purchased minimal office supply goods for accommodation reasons and it continues to acquire legal publications required for the delivery of its program, which were not listed under the established standing offers or supply arrangement.

The ERC continues to monitor related follow action, including the development of a Policy on ethical procurement and a human rights due diligence framework, as well as developing awareness and training materials for suppliers and procurement officers.

Remediation Measures

Since the coming into force of the *Supply Chains Act* on January 1, 2024, the ERC has not identified any forced labour or child labour risks in its activities and supply chains. Through the use of the established standing offers and supply arrangements, the ERC will continue to rely on PSPC's as well as SSC's process and taken measures to remediate any force labour or child labour in the supply chain.

Additionally, through its Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Parole Board of Canada (PBC), the ERC will continue to leverage its procurement expertise in Ethical procurement.

Loss of Income Remediation

Due to its low risk, the ERC has not identified any loss of income to vulnerable families resulting from measures taken to eliminate the use of forced labour or child labour in its activities and supply chains.

Training

In the late 2023-24, the ERC strengthened the awareness of procurement responsibilities by including key messaging and reference to the PSPC Code of Conduct for Procurement in its revised Code of Conduct. The ERC also ensures that all employees who are responsible for procurement activities are up to date with the mandatory training related to their functions.

Understanding that PSPC is currently developing awareness-raising and training materials for suppliers and procurement officers, the ERC will continue to monitor the availability of this training and ensure to update its mandatory training requirements accordingly.

Assessing Effectiveness

Due to its narrow and simple procurement needs, the ERC will continue to assess its effectiveness by leveraging the PSPC and SSC existing tools and measures. Further, it will also work with its services providers to ensure that these measures are built into the applied procurement process.