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Verdict on the Canadian Policy Research Networks: If it did not exist, it would have to be invented.

Ottawa – The Final Report of the External Review Committee on Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. has concluded that "CPRN has succeeded in its core mission,...advanced policy thinking in Canada" and "made a significant, positive contribution to the examination of social and economic issues." In the words of one of the academic researchers interviewed by the Committee, "What would happen if there were no CPRN in Canada? We would have to invent it."

The Evaluation Committee was chaired by Robert Brown, currently the Clifford Clark Visiting Economist in the federal Department of Finance and Past Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Price Waterhouse. The evaluation report was presented to the Board of Directors in support of the Board's obligation to submit a review of the organization to the government of Canada.

The report identifies a number of challenges and issues, the primary one being a need to secure a diversified and stable funding base and sufficient capital to enable the organization to continue to undertake projects defined by potentially high risks and high returns. The report suggests long-term strategies that can be pursued to achieve balance among its sources of funding by securing greater financial support from the provinces, the private sector and foundations. While the report acknowledges that the federal government is the organization's principal funder, it "found no evidence that CPRN is overly influenced by the federal government."

The report highlights the value of the intellectual leadership of Canadian Policy Research Networks President, Judith Maxwell in strategically focusing the organization's work on critical issues and in creating a high profile among policy leaders. It lauds the organization's neutral stance and its ability to, at the same time, pursue open inquiries and enable Canadians' shared values to inform its work.

To support Judith Maxwell and to help Canadian Policy Research Networks expand its influence, the report recommends that greater depth be developed in key senior positions, including the

appointment of a strong Vice-President. The Committee also recommends the appointment of an independent Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Brown Committee envisions an organization that continues to develop in a well-defined niche, bridging the gap between academic research and government policy. For the future, the organization should become somewhat larger, stronger in its communications and management functions, and funded through a different structure.

The management team agrees with the recommendations and has developed a plan to implement them; some recommendations are already operational.

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CPRN is a national not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to create knowledge and lead public debate on social and economic issues important to the well-being of Canadians, in order to help build a more just, prosperous and caring society.

For more information on the publication, please contact:

Peter Puxley, Director, Public Affairs, Tel: (613) 567-7500 ext. 2019 – E-mail: ppuxley@cprn.org

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