

1.0 Background and Research Objectives

Every year, Canadians make more than 80 million trips abroad. While the vast majority of these trips occur without incident, consular staff at Canadian missions are facing a growing number of requests for services, some of which go beyond the scope of consular services normally provided.

To help manage the number of requests received by consular staff, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade launched a public awareness initiative designed to increase preparedness and self-reliance among Canadian travelers and to communicate the scope of activity of Canada's foreign missions. The following are key objectives of the campaign:

- to generate awareness among the traveling public of potential problems when traveling abroad;
- to educate travelers on the consular services available through foreign missions; and
- to influence behaviour to help manage the number of enquiries and to ensure resources are used in an effective manner to meet legitimate requests from Canadian travelers.

To develop information products and services which support the objectives of the Consular Awareness Program in a cost-effective manner, the Department commissioned a qualitative research study with Canadian travelers and travel agents. The main objectives of the research were to assess the effectiveness of existing information products against client needs and to develop strategies to better achieve program objectives. Specifically, the research was used to:

- identify the ideal messaging, and channels of communication required to generate awareness;
- describe the attitudes and behaviour that may affect usage of consular services and supporting information products; and
- test existing and new product concepts as a means of generating awareness and changing behaviour related to self-preparedness and use of consular services.