

CHAPTER TWO

ACTION PLAN 1985-90

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Plan has been developed on the premise that the goal of acquiring a single Informatics system that would meet all of the Department's requirements would be too costly and probably impossible to achieve within the planning period, given the wide diversity of activities in which the Department is involved and the world-wide scope of its operations. Instead, in accordance with Canada's Foreign Policy priorities it should aim to modernize existing systems and introduce several new ones, ensuring co-ordination, consistency and linkages as appropriate. This will not only enable the Department to achieve specific objectives, but also enable it to manage its resources more effectively. It is, moreover, an essential part of this Plan that policies and procedures need to be developed and promulgated, especially in the areas of security and data management.

2.2 DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEMS - 1985

2.2.1 In recent years, the Department has become increasingly reliant on Informatics systems. At Headquarters, major systems support its Financial and Personnel Management operations. Consolidation resulted in the acquisition of major systems from the former Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce including those supporting the Import Permit Processing System and the Program for Export Market Development. The systems operating at Headquarters were introduced several years ago and, as the requirements for which they were designed have changed, in part because of consolidation, major modifications are necessary if they are to have the capabilities needed today and those required for the next five years.

2.2.2 Steps have been taken to explore the benefits of introducing new office technology to those in the Department working in the geographic and functional branches. Initial results have been sufficiently encouraging to suggest that Departmental efficiency would be enhanced if this technology was made more widely available. A number of large Posts have been or are being provided with computers for the Financial Management program and the Immigration program.

2.3 DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEMS 1990

2.3.1 The Departmental priorities as stated in Part III of the Estimates, are fostering Canada's economic development, promoting international peace and security and managing Canada's inter-relationship with the USA. The Department's capability to manage utilization of its financial, personnel and physical resources must be strengthened. Posts in the United States and other areas of trade development concentration need to be able to react much more quickly than at present to requests for information about potential Canadian suppliers and economic developments in Canada. They must also be able to build data banks concerning local conditions and where necessary and feasible share these with Headquarters, other Posts and other organizations in Canada. Systems supporting a number of Departmental programs including the Import Permit Processing system have to be modernized and accommodated on Departmental rather than outside facilities to take advantage of cost savings.

2.3.2 Modern, secure office technology needs to be acquired to improve the efficiency of managers and desk officers in the Department's geographic and functional branches. In addition, the Department's capability to manage Canada's relationship with the USA must be enhanced by providing Posts in the United States with additional modern equipment to support all Post programs. They would, as a result, be able to communicate more effectively with Ottawa and with each other, and to build and share data banks.