

As one mission wrote,

COMIS does not reflect the degree of difficulty involved in various types of cases. This problem prevents the system from understanding or analyzing the amount of time consumed by cases of different types.

The mission survey results still suggest that the missions feel the system is clear, efficient and cost-effective, notwithstanding the very obvious limitations that it possesses or concerns on its utility. It was stressed that while the system is suitable for certain comparisons of the types of services offered at each mission, it is only a general element amongst others.

Therefore it is recommended:

That COMIS particularly be upgraded in regard to the definition of a "case" and the provision of training on its use to improve its effectiveness.

The utility and function of COMIS should also be explained to the missions to prevent disillusionment and ensure successful compliance in reporting. The possibility exists that consular staff who are ignorant of the utility of COMIS may not ensure the accuracy of their reporting.

It is worth noting that COMIS was unable to supply various data sought as a part of this evaluation, and that the data obtained was often inaccurate. For example, COMIS data shows a small but steady decline in the number of consular cases abroad over the past several years. However, the mission survey and other reports suggest the very opposite. This confirms the need for clarification of a "case," as suggested earlier. As well the headquarters staff often were not fully conversant on the COMIS data, either in respect to problems with accuracy or otherwise. It appeared obvious to evaluation team members that the consular staff at Headquarters should be well-acquainted with the data - such was not the case.

5.6 Service Auditing

Part of this consular evaluation included a mission survey sent to 16 of the missions to enquire concerning the consular services, delivery, and other related issues as discussed throughout this evaluation report.