

Certificates of Identity are issued to non-Canadians legally landed for less than three years who are stateless or unable to obtain a travel document from their country of origin and are residing in Canada. The Certificate of Identity is endorsed for travel to countries specified in the document and valid for not less than one year or more than two years, with one-year extension periods up to a maximum of three years.

THE PASSPORT OFFICE

The Passport Office is headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is accountable to the Deputy Minister of DFAIT for the Passport Offices' operations and results. The CEO and the Agency's directors form the Executive Committee. This committee is responsible for all policy and the implementation of operational decisions.

The Office is made up of the following functional and operational divisions: Corporate Secretariat, Management Services and Technology Enhancement Project, Human Resources Services, Finance and Administrative Services, Security, Policy and Entitlement, Western Operations, Ontario Operations, Central Operations, and Eastern Operations. The key decision-makers in the Passport Office are the members of the Executive Committee (EC) comprised of the CEO and all directors. EC's main focus is corporate decision making and medium-term strategic planning while supporting the CEO in long-term strategic planning.

LONG TERM AND FUTURE SERVICES

What does the future hold? The Passport Office evaluates new technologies at all levels and for all attributes. Security looks towards new design and production methods, as well as secure software and communications. New application systems and on-line access to applications, as well as electronic forms, should have a great impact on improving services, and would reduce the amount of time required in applying for a passport. Improved electronic transfer, issuance software, LAN/WAN, debit/credit machines, fibre optics and the IRIS¹ system could greatly improve all aspects of operations.

Long term plans for technological development continue on schedule. This year marked the end of Phase 4 for the IRIS system; Treasury Board submissions have been prepared for Phase 5; and rollout of IRIS is expected in early 1999.

In the upcoming year, for missions abroad, full connectivity will be piloted for passport personnel to provide full on-line access to all software associated with the Department's case management system (COSMOS). This year, tests were conducted, and the version is being revised to meet future needs and improve the security of the passport issuance program for missions abroad.

The Passport Office plans to maintain an ongoing response to changing technologies, and to identify the future needs of the Canadian traveller. This year, we continued to adapt to our changing environment, and we were able to sustain our level of service to our clients, here and around the world.

1 Formerly known as OSCAR, IRIS is the new name for the information system used for capturing, archiving and retrieving digital images. The name OSCAR is a registered trademark of the Laurentian Bank of Canada