

Over the next two years, the Department will be exploring with central agencies the concept of establishing a similar Special Operating Agency responsible for the delivery of consular and immigration operations abroad. Close consultation with CEIC will also be necessary given that department's policy responsibility for the immigration program. The SOA would remain within the reorganized Consular, Immigration and Passport affairs Branch of the Department but, like the Passport Office, would be funded separately from revenues received abroad. Policy development would remain within the Branch but separate from the SOA.

While the establishment of an SOA and the financial and person-year flexibility which could be used to enhance services are of considerable interest, further examination and review of the concept and its applicability to program delivery is required. Similarly, the implications for policy development and personnel concerns will be clearly determined before any final decisions on implementation are taken. Given the momentum of PS 2000, we may determine that the flexibility which the SOA concept provides will accrue naturally to the Department and the two programs over time, thus rendering the structural change required to establish the Special Operating Agency unnecessary.