

1 Introduction and Context

Members of the Foreign Service group and other professional rotational groups, mainly at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), play a key role in the delivery of the Government's international policy, trade and immigration agendas.

The DFAIT Human Resources Strategy and recent contract negotiations with the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) have brought to the fore the unique conditions and environment in which members of this group operate. They have also pointed out that the majority of Foreign Service Officers are of the opinion that they are not being compensated equitably for the aforesaid conditions or environment. The importance of an effective and motivated Foreign Service to the continued well-being of Canadians makes it imperative that the facts of the situation be determined in an agreed, thorough and objective manner.

Other factors have also led to a need for a study of comparative terms and conditions of employment for Foreign Service Officers, including:

- levels of attrition among all officers;
- new social realities such as dual income households, the impact of rotationality on foreign service spouses, and elder care;
- highly competitive labour market;
- concerns about recruiting and retaining the most suitable candidates;
- issues of internal and external relativities in the conditions and terms of employment in the Foreign Service;
- current demographic challenges;
- retention of senior officers eligible for early retirement; and
- initiatives to make the Public Service an exemplary employer.

This study is designed to provide the parties with a common set of comparators to evaluate issues of joint concern.