

Given the ever-increasing overall number of requests (see chart, covering fiscal years 1998-2002, on page 12), consultation requests and total number of pages reviewed (see chart on page 11), it has been a priority to increase the efficiency of the ATIP office. To this end, in 2001-2002, a new Procedures Manual was initiated following a complete process review, and our use of specialised computer programmes and communications tools are also being reviewed carefully to ensure maximum efficiency.

Requesters

During this fiscal year, requesters (see chart on page 13) were frequently members of the media - as is clear from the 86 % increase in requests from this group. This reflects the interest of Canadians in the work of this Department, and its involvement in many key issues of concern to the public.

Report Card

Beginning in 1999, the Information Commissioner of Canada introduced a new approach to monitoring the work of federal departments. This Department, along with others, was chosen as a focus of scrutiny and has continued to be subject to this review annually. During this period, the Department greatly improved its capacity for timely response to requests, and these efforts were recognized this year by the Commissioner, who applauded the increase in requests completed on time: "The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has made progress in reducing the number of requests that are answered beyond the time requirements of the *Access to Information Act*. (...) Senior Management of DFAIT and the staff of the ATIP Division are recognized for their hard work and sustained effort (...) The Department is encouraged to sustain its progress"¹.

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¹Annual Report Information Commissioner 2001-2002, pp. 144-146.