

COST RECOVERY INITIATIVES AND THE CONSULAR/IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS

For several years EAITC has been pursuing the concept of cost recovery and its applicability to all programmes and services delivered by the Department. Two of the most visible and public programs are Consular and immigration.

In his final reports on the two programs, the Auditor-General has recommended that further study be undertaken of the costs of these services with a view to establishing and enhancing cost-recovery standards abroad. Complementary with this conclusion is the Expenditure Review Committee approval of a three-Phase approach which this Department will undertake in concert with the CEIC to expand cost-recovery initiatives throughout the immigration program. The first phase, the increase of fees for services where fees are currently charged, was implemented April 1, 1990.

The second phase, which will require Cabinet approval, will also provide this Department with the opportunity to share a portion of the revenue derived with CEIC to be utilized for improvements in the delivery of service abroad to our clients. A Cost Recovery group will be established within the reorganized Consular, Immigration and Passport affairs Branch to both pursue cost-recovery initiatives and ensure that visible service improvements are made with the revenue received.

In order to facilitate further cost recovery initiatives in the Consular program and to complement the decisions of the Corporate Review, the Department will undertake a statistical analysis of the costs of delivering the consular program. Bearing in mind the expectation that every travelling Canadian has the right to assistance abroad, the intention is not to impose cost recovery on services to raise revenue but rather to recover a portion of the costs and to shift some workload into available private sector alternatives, e.g. the provision of notarial services. Essential consular services will continue to be provided without user fees.

Many of the initiatives flowing from Corporate Review are complementary with the direction of Central Agencies in their Public Service 2000 exercise. Increased authority, managerial flexibility and accountability and revenue sharing are all key themes of PS 2000. One of the concepts flowing from both the Expenditure Review Committee and PS 2000 is that of a Special Operating Agency. The Passport Office of EAITC, which has functioned essentially autonomously from the Department on a revolving fund basis since 1970, was one of the groups selected by the ERC to become a Special Operating Agency, effective April 1, 1990. Despite its new status, the Passport Office still remains within the Department and is accountable to the Deputy, although it continues to be funded separately. In return for its achievement of high performance standards, the Passport Office has been given certain additional authorities from Treasury Board, including person-year decontrol, a flexibility which will allow management to increase employee strength as needed in peak periods.