

reporting may be at the expense of other activities providing greater value. As well, personnel at missions, because of deep involvement in local issues, may get “carried away” in the detail provided on, for example, local politics, reports of which may be seldom read by anyone other than the desk officer at headquarters.

It was in this context that a pilot project that could feed into the next round of reporting contracts for Southeast Asia was launched. One of the long-term objectives was to identify processes by which OGDs could benefit from periodic reporting from some overseas missions, and how these reporting themes might be developed and included into the next cycle of reporting contracts. There is also the question of how some of our missions’ reporting can be modestly “reprofiled” to better reflect broader government interests and priorities, rather than narrow desk interests.

One of the current constraints on reporting is that not all reporting subjects of interest fall neatly into the traditional divide of “political” or “trade” related reporting. There is a clear interest in PCO, for example, to receive more analysis of pertinent national social and economic trends in key countries, rather than statistics and static “descriptions” of events, ie. elections, trade statistics, etc. This requires some new thinking in the kind of reporting missions undertake.

As well, much of our political reporting is descriptive in nature, and the “Canadian interest angle,” even if mentioned, can be tenuous. Neither does most traditional political reporting always feed into the true value added of our missions, their advocacy and public diplomacy work.

There has been substantial work through the e3 and New Approach initiatives to refine reporting tasking and formatting to minimize many of the ad hoc and irregular reporting demands that are placed upon missions, and it is hoped that the PSE pilot project build on these initiatives. In essence, the pilot project hopes to be a small first step to better identify potential client needs and seek feedback on those needs. It is hoped that this analysis can also contribute to current discussions of what are the broader government of Canada “interests” on the international scene.