Guideline for Environmental Management
of Physical Operations at Headquarters and Missions

These guidelines are intended to provide employees in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) with information to help integrate environmental considerations into the physical operations of the Department.

1. Background

In February 1995, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade released its first Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The plan outlines the Department's commitment to protecting the environment while carrying out daily operations. Specific elements of the plan include supporting Canada's sustainable development goals, conducting environmental assessments of projects where needed, emulating the best environmental practices of the private and public sectors, and reporting annually on progress towards EMP objectives.

The federal government has established environmental standards for its internal operations, policies and programs. A minimum amount of data respecting the environmental aspects of DFAIT's physical operations must be collected and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that already scarce resources are best directed at priority areas. The framework of information templates that constitute the Environmental Management Database initiative represent only the most essential data required to develop and strategically fund programs to bring about real change in priority areas of the Department's physical operations. In consultation and with assistance from the Physical Resources Bureau (SRD) and the Environmental Services Division (JEN), each responsibility centre should establish meaningful and realizable targets in environmental impact areas and then monitor performance in these areas. Annual performance measurements are reported to JEN for integration into the Department's annual environmental report.

Each responsibility centre will be required to review and report annually on their progress against several specific environmental performance indicators. This reporting framework is based upon the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14000 approach to managing environmental performance within large organizations. Responsibility centres have considerable flexibility in assigning priority and hence resources to each of the aspects of environmental management to suit the wide array of local environments where the Department is engaged.

2. Environmental Management: Baseline Data, Planning and Reporting

A framework was established for managing the Department's operations to take environmental considerations into account. The central tool to achieve this framework is the Environmental Management Database located on the Internet on the DFAIT Sustainable Development Home Page: *http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/sustain/menu-e.asp*

The database is comprised of three main templates:

    A – Environmental Baseline Data
    B – Environmental Management Plan
    C – Annual Environmental Statement

These templates are to be completed electronically. They contain embedded, on-line help keys to assist staff in completing them. Entry and editing of data is restricted to individuals with assigned passwords.

The templates are linked so that when baseline data is entered, it is automatically carried through to assist in plan formulation and annual reporting on progress. The subject areas identified in the templates reflect the seven priority areas established by the federal government in the *Best Practices Guidelines* (June 1995). The seven areas are: procurement, waste reduction, energy and water conservation, vehicle fleet management, land resources, and human resources.

If the responsibility centre has already established an environmental program in one or more of the template aspect areas, it is important that credit is assigned for this work. In such cases the responsibility centre has two options: they can establish their baseline in the year that they initiated their program, i.e. prior to FY 1996/97, or they can provide a narrative in the database explaining the established environmental management program and how it