(a) it is becoming cheaper and capable of processing increasingly sophisticated applications;

(b) it is becoming easier and more attractive to use.

The first is primarily a consequence of the micro-electronics revolution, while the second results from strong user demands and a conscious effort on the part of manufacturers and designers to improve the technology so that it can be put into the hands of an increasingly wide range of users.

The purpose of this section is to identify the overall environment and the trends within the Department for informatics technologies such as: computers, telecommunications and office automation equipment; to examine the Department's anticipated technology requirements, and to develop an appropriate informatics technology plan that will take full advantage of the rapidly changing technological environment.

4.7.2 OBJECTIVES

The development of the Technology Strategy was based upon the following objectives:

(1) The main thrust of systems development in the Department should be to ensure that the right information gets to the right person at the right time in the most cost effective manner.

(2) Applications requirements should be the driving force behind theadoption of new technology. It should be governed by real and observable need; technology should be a means to an end not an end in itself (applications-push not technology-push).

(3) The Department is not a research organization but a line department with real-life programs to deliver, therefore new technology should only be adopted once it has undergone thorough testing and has been proven in operational conditions outside and inside the Department.

(4) Security of information is a mandatory requirement for much of the data collection, transportation, storage and dissemination within the Department; any technology adopted by the Department should therefore provide appropriate levels of security.

(5) Software and hardware independence should be maintained wherever possible to reduce dependence on any one supplier.

(6) To minimize development and maintenance costs and to maximize the level of support that can be provided a single family of equipment should be adopted at Posts and at HQ, although it is realized that this ideal solution may not always be feasible because of conditions at certain Posts.

(7) There should be an orderly growth path from the existing base of hardware and software systems to the future technology environment in order that an effective rationalization of these facilities is achieved.

4.7.3 EXISTING TECHNOLOGY SITUATION AND TRENDS

SUMMARY

Consolidation resulted in the Department becoming responsible not only for the operation of a number of existing systems but also for the operation of a number of different systems inherited from IT&C. They include the Programme for Export Market Development, the Import/Export Permit Processing System and the International Trade Data Bank. The Import/Export Permit Processing System has over 35 on-line terminals distributed across Canada in the offices of import brokers.