CHAPTER ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 SCOPE

This document contains the Long-Term Plan for Electronic Data Processing (EDP) in the Department for the next five years. As the technologies of EDP, telecommunications and office automation are rapidly merging the Department will, in future, have to plan and manage them as integrated parts of single discipline. To underline this the word Informatics is used throughout this document.

It consists of this executive summary, an action plan, a resource summary, a discussion paper, a description of each Departmental system, with projected costs over five years, and a discussion of security issues.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the present stage of the Department's Informatics development, the stage it wishes to reach in five years, and how it should proceed.

Expansion of the use of Informatics technology is increasingly seen in the Department as a means of increasing the effectiveness of program delivery and improving the quality of service wih a minimal increase in resource levels. If the costly mistakes made in other organizations are to be avoided then systems development must follow a long-term plan and appropriate management, acquisition and support procedures must be put in place and followed. The establishment of the EDP Policy Committee and the preparation of this Plan are important first steps towards these goals.

1.3 DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The Plan identifies objectives for Informatics development flowing from the Departmental priorities of fostering Canada's economic development, promoting international peace and security, and managing Canada's interdependence with the United States (Part III of the Estimates). These objectives involve supporting the Corporate Planning capability, introducing secure systems at Headquarters, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of systems supporting the International Trade, Social Affairs, Passport and Administration programs.

1.4 PRINCIPLES FOR INFORMATICS DEVELOPMENT

Four principles should govern the future development of the Department's Informatics systems; development must be in accordance with Departmental policy, procedures and priorities; adequate resources must be made available for project development; data must be managed as a Departmental resource; and necessary documentation on Informatics operations must be prepared, relating particularly to security practices and procedures.

1.5 MANAGEMENT PROCESS

With consolidation the Department changed from being an operator of modest systems for administative support to being responsible for several major systems supporting complicated processes. If the expansion of systems envisaged for the next five years is to meet with the principles described above, then a strengthened management process must be introduced immediately. This can be done if the EDP Policy Committee broadens its role and considers adopting an annual work program that is in synchronization with the Government's Expenditure Management Cycle.