

Risk 5: Staff Capacity



Risk Definition

There is a risk that the Department may not be able to acquire and retain adequate levels of staff and management to deliver Departmental activities.

This risk focuses on the capacity (number of appropriate staff) needed by the Department to achieve its objectives. For example, there are currently 48 Foreign Service Officer (FSO) positions waiting to be staffed but that remain unfilled, and 40 FI positions have been available in finance for the past 9 months.

This risk is closely aligned to Risk 6: Staff Capability (skill set).

This risk has the potential to obstruct the organization from achieving all of its strategic outcomes.

Sources of Risk

Increased Competition in Recruiting and Retaining Staff

The environment for acquiring skilled staff is very competitive (especially in finance, project management and HR). As a result, poaching of DFAIT staff by other Departments as well as other internal units is a common problem.

DFAIT's demand for staff levels is affected by the rotational nature of the Department's assignments. The rotational nature of work causes an accelerated rate of turnover within certain positions. Furthermore, staffing senior positions (such as program management positions) for rotational staff may be an inadvertent disincentive to non-rotational staff who may feel that they will not be rewarded for high-level performance. Also, rigidities in the staffing and reassignment processes make it more attractive for staff to look outside the Department for opportunities.

Systemic Cultural Change and Erosion of Incentives

There has been a fundamental shift in how individuals view their careers. The current view is more transient than in earlier generations, thus making talent retention a greater challenge. There has also been a demographic shift where both spouses have