

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

Developing the individual

21. In addition to the work it is already doing on career management and development, the department should prepare career plans for each officer, based on interviews with officers to determine their career aspirations; assessments of individuals' current knowledge, skills and experience; and professional advice on career paths.
22. Each career plan should incorporate a career development program providing for assignments in a variety of fields and secondments to other government departments.

Enhancing professionalism

23. The department should institute the practice of having officers going on posting prepare for their assignment through a familiarization visit or a period of overlap with the incumbent. Such practice should be the rule not the exception, and budgets should protect funds for this purpose.
24. Mission political officers should be meeting at regional conferences or traveling to Ottawa every year for discussions with headquarters contacts and other stakeholders.
25. The department should launch a feasibility study for the creation of a Canadian Wilton Park. Options could include joint ventures with other government departments and/or with private sector interests.
26. The department should begin publication of Politique étrangère du Canada, perhaps as a joint venture with a university or NGO which specializes in Canadian foreign policy.

Standard operating procedures

Political reporting

27. The department should issue a directive on mission reporting, affirming that political and economic reports are an obligation not a discretionary activity, and establishing minimum requirements for all missions.
28. Missions should be instructed to prepare annual reporting plans in conjunction with geographic bureaux and other stakeholders, which specify the nature and frequency of the reports to be prepared commensurate with the size and composition of mission staff.