

THE HEADQUARTERS STAFF (HQS)

Non Rotational Staff should be identified by another name. They are the only group of employees I know who are identified as what they are not. The group (Headquarters staff would be a title that gives a hint of its core purpose) provides an essential element of expertise and continuity of DFAIT as a ministry charged with ongoing programs (e.g. export/import controls), or tasks requiring the input of high levels of expertise that can best be gained in other, more specialised institutions (eg. economics, statistics, industry, sectoral expertise). HQS also manage systems which depend on highly specialized knowledge and a measure of continuity (Information Technology, H.R., Financial and Property management). Senior executives also join the Department to provide invaluable management expertise obtained in other areas of government (for instance from time to time in parliamentary relations, fed-prov relations, cultural promotion, human resources and financial management), and at EX levels, are part of an integrated government-wide pool.

These various groups are integral and essential to the fabric of the Department.

We should develop a coherent approach to the management of Headquarters staff. This will require a long term commitment and a change in our human resources culture.

A significant inhibition for HQS is the lack of opportunities for career advancement in the Department. We have made progress in opening up the EX level to HQS, but this avenue will have its limits. In order to help provide mobility, **we should also actively facilitate the movement of expert staff to and from other Departments** where the pool of specialist opportunities are larger, **creating an informal "international affairs" network within specialized groups across the government.** We should encourage the development of such a network and charge CFSI with this role.

Such a network through which expert staff could advance would provide greater opportunities for individuals **and strengthen the Government's capacity to integrate the external and domestic policy environments** (much better than we do today).

Two other measures related to **mobility within the Department** should be introduced in our approach to HQS.

A Foreign assignment requiring specific expertise should be an accepted part of HQS career opportunities, available on a competitive basis.

Internal Recruitment of HQS into the Foreign Service should continue on a competitive and transparent basis.

Note: In the same sprint, we should include FS officers more actively in the process of opening up the Department, systematically encouraging exchanges not just with OGD's, but also provinces, NGO's and the private sector.

We tend to categorize FS's as generalists and permanent staff as specialists. This is a false distinction. FS's are specialists of a unique kind. Their expert speciality consists of hard knowledge of other environments and capacity to work in them. This expertise is of increasing utility in a globalized environment in government and the private sector. We should encourage FS officers to serve outside DFAIT/FS to enrich their own understanding of the **Canadian** environment to spread international expertise, to build networks that we can use, to provide variety of work experience to our workforce. It is my view that **no FS officer should be promoted to the EX level who has not served in Canada outside the Department as some point in their career.**