

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

PROPOSAL: Bureau and mission objectives should dovetail with managers' annual performance contracts; such contracts should be developed for all employees; and personnel appraisals should reflect individual successes in fulfilling contracts.

PROPOSAL: The department should enhance training for all officers in the government's expenditure management system, program development and evaluation, and performance management.

PROPOSAL: The department should launch a "performance management" initiative aimed at achieving operational improvements in foreign policy work, the focus to be on identifying core functions, ensuring program resources are managed accordingly, establishing program delivery standards, and creating program support positions where warranted. (See Annex 1)

Information management

The department's substantial investment in informatics has bought some remarkable benefits, not least a fast and reliable means for worldwide communications between headquarters and missions, an asset of fundamental importance in an age of globalization. But there has not been sufficient dialogue and synergy between the technical community and program personnel to deliver similar benefits in another critically important area, the management of the information produced by the department. In fact, informatics appears to have made the situation worse. Others do not have this problem. They have found a way of maintaining control over the introduction of new communications technology so as to extract the benefits to be had without compromising or defeating operational disciplines essential to productivity and performance.

- At the State Department, user needs drive the informatics program. The objective is "the establishment of a technological framework for the conduct of international affairs in the new millenium, that is e-Diplomacy". The first principle guiding IT modernization at State is "priority on mission-critical activities". The second is "a shift in focus to substantive foreign policy applications and databases". The DFAIT IT strategy suggests technology should be in the driver's seat: "The department must plan, manage and operate in a way that maximizes the benefits from information management and technology infrastructure".