

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past few years have brought a dramatic shift in the way that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is expected to manage its resources. Increased public concern for the environment and tougher domestic environmental legislation and international standards all require an enhanced level of corporate commitment to the sound environmental management of resources.

Proactive, prevention-oriented environmental management is essential to DFAIT's long term efficiency and competitiveness. The environmental vision of DFAIT's corporate leadership will be central to motivating employees to environmental excellence and ensuring that sustainable development becomes an integral part of DFAIT's corporate culture and decision-making in the 1990s. Sustainable development must remain a key DFAIT corporate value.

For DFAIT, the overriding priority is environmental impact assessments of new policy and program initiatives -- as required by 1990 Cabinet Directive on The Environmental Assessment Process for Policy and Program Proposals. Prospects are that the existing requirements will be strengthened in the coming months. In the interim, ministers must be advised of possible environmental impacts of decisions they are asked to make.