

RESOURCE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SECRETARIAT

Established in 1990, the Secretariat is responsible for the planning, allocation and management of Departmental resources. It also provides support to the newly constituted Program Management Board consisting of the Department's three deputy heads.

The new Secretariat adjusted resources according to decisions made during the Corporate Review, and implemented strategies to satisfy the resource restraint measures announced in the February 1991 budget.

It established a system of multi-year reference levels for use by branches in managing and planning their resources for 1991/92 and subsequent years, and developed processes for delegating more authority in this area to Assistant Deputy Ministers.

The Secretariat also assisted Departmental managers in obtaining incremental funding from Treasury Board to carry out initiatives such as the new Five-Year Immigration Plan.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL AND AUDIT AND EVALUATION DIVISION

To improve the overall quality of management, the Office of the Inspector General assessed management practices at a number of missions abroad. The Office also undertook special investigations at the request of senior management.

As a result of the Corporate Review, the Audit and Evaluation functions were combined into one unit which reports to the Inspector General.

There were 32 mission audits undertaken in the areas of management services, immigration and trade. Another eight audits of headquarters' management systems and processes were completed, and two special audits were carried out in response to requests from management.

An evaluation of the International Cultural Relations Program was completed. Both the Department and the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA's) own evaluators have been studying CIDA decentralization and a second annual report (for 1990) was submitted to the Treasury Board.

Staff of both the Inspector General's Office and the Audit and Evaluation Division contributed to the Corporate Review and its subsequent implementation.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND BUDGET

The Finance and Headquarters Administrative Services Bureau is responsible for all aspects of financial administration. These include financial policy, systems and training; financial planning, analysis and reporting; accounting, commitment control and other financial services; provision of a comprehensive advisory, control and reporting function for service contracts; headquarters accommodation services; and headquarters inventory data and materiel support. A primary function of the Bureau is to report on actual performance relative to budgets.

The Department has reaffirmed its decision to standardize and install on-line financial systems at missions around the world. An initial pilot project was completed in San Francisco and Los Angeles. As a result of its success, further implementation of on-line systems will take place over the next four years. In the interim, the Department is providing missions with small, personal computer-based systems. Seventy-eight percent of all missions had been equipped with this temporary system as of March 1991. Financial training for staff abroad is still a high departmental priority. Two courses were held for mission accountants; and a new course for mission administrative officers was introduced.

The developmental phase of a new cost-accounting system has been completed. This system will be used for resource allocation and cost recovery, and for calculating the full cost of delivering departmental programs and new initiatives. Also, the Bureau has developed a new accounting and control system for person-year management. This system will be operational in 1991/92.

In response to operational difficulties and audit findings, the accounting function was restructured to improve the focus of its operations, by concentrating separate activities in separate units. Within this structure, each activity is expected to be as timely and accurate as possible, reflecting sound accounting principles and practices. Many projects have been undertaken, in particular, the modernization of the cashier's office and the development of a sound, accountable system for managing advances. There have also been special reviews in the areas of travel claims, revenue deposits, collections of amounts due and overlapping claims, with the intention of determining the extent of irregularities, recovering any amounts owed to the Crown and improving records and controls.