

CONCLUSION

Over its 100 year history, the TCS has served the interests of Canadian business extremely well. So well, in fact, that many observers claim the Canadian TCS to have been the finest of its kind. Although the TCS has undoubtedly faced difficulties in the past, the challenges it faces today seem especially significant. A variety of factors that reduce the current effectiveness of TCs were discussed in the paper.

Two particular problems areas were identified. First, it is widely agreed that TCs face excessive workloads and that the resulting volume of work prevents the best job from being done. Second, it is also agreed that TCs are not meeting the service quality expectations of business and, in many cases, themselves. Major factors accounting for these problems were highlighted in the paper. Most seem likely to persist and, therefore, if the TCS is to be more effective, some change within DFAIT seems indicated. Many TCs express strong opinions on this matter and their views have been reflected in the discussion. Such change should not be seen in isolation. While there are specific actions that might be taken to manage workload and address service quality concerns and, thus, improve TC effectiveness, there are more general matters that also need attention. These concern work conditions and/or the work climate within DFAIT. These were briefly mentioned in the final section of the paper. Progress is being made by DFAIT in many of the areas covered but the need for further effort seems quite clear.

The TCS has played an important role in the development of Canada's trade and investment over the last century. This role will be no less important in the future. As Canadian businesses internationalize their operations, they will need the support and assistance of a strong TCS. The paper has indicated a number of areas where effectiveness needs to be improved and actions that will help in that regard.