

Personnel

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that it will be positive. The Human Resources Development Bureau (SPD) is actively working on laying the groundwork for this project, in order to be fully prepared when approached by Treasury Board. It is anticipated that this program will be in place within the next 18 months.

5. INTERCHANGES

As our competitors have noted, DFAIT, too, believes that an interchange program is a viable tool for facilitating exchanges between ourselves, the private sector and other levels of government.

Interchange Canada, a program of the Public Service Commission, was created in 1971 "to bridge the gap in understanding between the private and public sectors in Canada." This program also encompasses other levels of government (provincial, municipal, regional) and associations (industry organizations, NGOs).

DFAIT has used the program to bring technical experts into the department (e.g. nuclear and chemical engineers for the Export Controls Division), and occasionally, for assignments of provincial government officials and members of academia to headquarters and to specialized posi-

tions overseas (e.g. current Agriculture Attachés in Seoul and Beijing and minerals expert in Tokyo).

While this is a two-way program, allowing foreign service officers the opportunity to work in the private sector or within other levels of government, it is not used extensively by departmental employees (there are currently only a handful of officers on "Interchange out" — mostly to industry associations). This is mainly due to the fact that remuneration is much better when officers take leave without pay in order to collect higher salaries at host organizations, and to the perception among some officers that serving outside the department (with the exception of a few federal central agencies) is not a "career move." These issues are preventing the program from being used more fully and effectively.

For more information on HRD in the department, interested employees should have a look at the consultation paper titled *Comprehensive Human Resources Strategy For The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*, available on the Intranet at:

<http://folio.lbp/english/branches/corporat/hrd/index.htm>

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