

Although client-originated specific reporting activities have been undertaken by science counsellors on occasion, the fourth function is essentially a new one. For handling client-originated requests, the best mode of operation would appear to be direct contact between the client and the Embassy. Direct contact would ensure good understanding of the clients' needs and speedy response and, furthermore, would help assure prospective clients that proprietary information would be protected. The home base need not play any active part in the process. One of its major roles would be the "marketing" of the services - to give science and technology counsellors a higher profile domestically. Surveys of potential industrial users clearly indicate that what is lacking principally is the knowledge, by the potential client, of the very existence of the science counsellor network. From these surveys it is also reasonably clear that, once industrial users become more aware of what the network could do in helping them to satisfy their specific information needs, the demand could sorely tax our meagre resources at our posts abroad, particularly in the United States and Japan.

The home base would work very closely with existing domestic networks in the technological infrastructure, such as NRC's Industrial Technology Advisors, DRIE, industry associations, federal and provincial research organizations, etc. The home base could also assist clients in making contact with the appropriate post or posts, and also in tapping mechanisms such as the Catalytic Seed Fund to fund the visits of experts for on site investigations, to follow-up their initial information requests. The home base would also provide an institutional memory of the contacts made through this process. Most important, it would monitor the work load on each science and technology office and ensure that adequate resources are provided.

Resources required

It is important that the home based be staffed with the kind of people that would have credibility in the eyes of the clientele. The qualifications required would be similar to those for NRC's Industrial Technology Advisors: "A university degree in engineering or science with a minimum of 8 years of relevant industrial experience, good organizational abilities and a good knowledge of Canadian industry". Some of these technological experts could be recruited on secondment from industry or from other government departments and agencies. In order to achieve good institutional memory, however, some degree of permanence in the staff would be