

The Department's priorities as stated in Part III of the Estimates are: fostering Canada's economic development, promoting international peace and security, and managing Canada's inter-relationship with the USA. A wide-ranging International Relations review will take place within the next few months and new foreign policy initiatives may emerge which will require the re-allocation of financial and personnel resources. The Department places strong emphasis on the improvement of its management practices, and particular attention is being given to mechanisms for creating better links between Departmental priorities and the allocation of Departmental resources. Informatics systems can provide management with timely information about personnel and financial resource utilization to assist the decision-making process.

4.2.4 OBJECTIVES

The effective utilization of the Department's resources in accordance with these priorities requires a major improvement in the capabilities of the Department's Informatics systems. The Department's broad objective over the next five years must be to move from operating a number of systems serving the needs of individual users to operating several large systems capable of supporting needs across the entire Department both at Headquarters and at Posts. Already some steps have been taken towards the achievement of this objective as shown by the progress made in planning improvements to existing systems so that they can meet wider needs. New projects are proposed that will enable the Department to introduce the advantages of new technology to a greater part of its operations. Projects are in various stages of development to support delivery of programs at Headquarters and abroad. This broad objective can be divided into the following six parts:

- (1) To support an effective corporate planning capability for the efficient allocation of resources by drawing from the range of Departmental systems to provide senior management with comprehensive and timely information about the Department's utilization of resources and performance against plans.
- (2) To explore the possibility of introducing appropriately secure systems at Headquarters to enhance the effectiveness of personnel working in the substantive areas of the Department's activities.
- (3) To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems operating in support of the Department's International Trade activities at Headquarters and at Posts.
- (4) To improve the operating efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery of the Social Affairs programs and the Passport program both in Canada and at Posts.
- (5) To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of those systems operating in support of the Department's financial, personnel, physical resources and other administrative programs at Headquarters and at Posts.
- (6) To exploit technological development in a comprehensive way in order to make Post operations more efficient, by providing Posts with systems of appropriate levels of security.

4.2.5 PRINCIPLES

In a short period of time the Department has changed from being an operator of several modest systems supporting administrative operations to becoming responsible for a number of major systems supporting complicated processes. Moreover, several of the Department's operations, especially in the support area are entirely dependent on Informatics systems.

The need to introduce a formal planning process for Informatics development, which had previously been seen as desirable has now become imperative. Planning