

The Centre completed the electronic version of the Strategic Planning Aid to Negotiation (SPAN) to assist negotiating teams with strategies and tactics to manage negotiation processes. In a related development which bodes well for future international cooperation projects, CFSP delivered its negotiation course to entry-level Brazilian foreign service officers.

"CFSP was instrumental in facilitating the redesign of the department's Bureaux Business Planning framework through the provision of the appropriate external consultancy skills, the development and implementation of training for key participants in the exercise and the provision of constant monitoring and feedback to ensure that design and conceptual flaws were rapidly identified and corrected".

Doreen Steidle,
Director General, SMD.

In the Corporate Services area, the most significant development was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Information Management and Technology Bureau and the Institute for the design and delivery of SIGNET training. This transfer of the Informatics Learning Centre constitutes a first step towards integrating IMT training with other types of training. It also provides CFSI with the opportunity to build a training infrastructure that will accommodate the needs of several major technology enabled projects.

A significant effort was expended to develop a training strategy, implementation plan and budget for the IMS project that took into account good training practices, lessons learned and the DFAIT environment. The IMS training team has worked hard to deliver the first tranche of IMS training on time for the April implementation of the first phase of the project. Similarly, the SIGNET renewal project was launched and initial planning and scoping of the training effort was completed.

Another development centered in the integration of training into new initiatives by functional bureau. For the first time in 1997/98, CFSI was able to analyze Bureaux Business Plans in a timely manner and to integrate this information into its own business plan ensuring that training is directly supportive of DFAIT business plan objectives.

In connection with this, the Centre assisted the business planning process of the Department by providing performance consultancy services to Resource Planning and Management Secretariat in the redesign of the process.

An on-going training program of 14 individual courses for members of the Administrative and Technical Staff was given in FY 1997-98. Preliminary steps were also taken in conjunction with Rotational Administrative Personnel Division and Recruitment Staffing and Workforce Adjustment Services to develop an Information Management Certificate Program.

Distance Learning and the Virtual Campus

1997/98 was an exciting year. The Centre ventured into the area of distance learning by piloting 15 paper-based courses using e-mail, conference calls and on-line advisors.

Recognizing that DFAIT's IMT infrastructure can be used to serve as the vehicle of choice for distance learning, the Centre led the way by developing a prototype Virtual Campus within the SIGNET environment. The Virtual Campus will enable CFSI to adapt existing knowledge-based training to decentralized delivery, to contain the increase in training costs and to make training more universally accessible. Progress with the development of the Virtual Campus has been made possible through the continuous support of the Information and Technology Management Bureau.

Based on the joint 1996 SPD/CFSI study, an integrated LES training strategy has been developed and approved by the Human Resources Steering Committee. The strategy calls for the use of distance learning (through the CFSI Virtual Campus currently under development), in-Canada classroom training, on-the-job learning and coaching at missions, and the development of a worldwide learning network.

The strategy was piloted in 1997 for the LES property and materiel management programme. Combining core competencies such as client service, knowledge of Canada and of DFAIT and job specific competencies such as contract management and negotiations, property and materiel management, the programme was delivered using a 40 hour distance learning course as a pre-requisite for a three weeks in-Canada session. Results exceeded expectations.

"Our Property and Materiel Manager (PMM) returned to the mission and to his work with a refreshed and more focused approach. He is now developing a far more informative and service oriented style. Our PMM has absorbed the Canadian way of approaching property management. I heartily support LES training in Canada. It makes management's job so much easier. Our PMM returned to the post fully confident having acquired new knowledge and skills."

Extract from a mission
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