

EAMIP PROJECT NUMBER MG07.2

TITLE: Rationalization of Enquiry and Reception
Services for the Department

RESPONSIBILITY: Project Manager: A.D. Small, Director General (MGD)
Project Officer: L.G. Stewart (MGDT);
(With assistance from the EAMIP
group)

PRESENT SITUATION:

In 1978, the Department established a unit under the supervision of the Telephone Services Section (MGDT) to respond to telephone enquiries from the general public. The unit worked hand-in-hand with the departmental duty officers to provide service on a 24 hour 7 days a week basis via a single telephone number identifiable to the Department of External Affairs. The recent integration, re-organization and subsequent restructuring of the Department has significantly increased the workload of the two Enquiry Attendants. Trade related enquiries have added to the volume and complexity of servicing enquiries. Demands from the business community meant that an initial measure was needed to handle trade enquiries. A Trade Information Centre was created in the lobby of the Pearson Building. The Centre requires new information pamphlets and guides to supplement the information provided via the new toll-free enquiry service number for trade/export information. Other enquiries are fielded by the public affairs branch, the consular/passport divisions and, during silent hours, the duty officer system fields the whole range of public enquiries. Numerous complaints from the public about poor servicing of enquiries necessitates quick action to rationalize this highly visible service.

OBJECTIVE:

Improve enquiry and reception services to the public; improved service will enhance the public's perception of the Department and DEA's ability to serve its clients.

GOAL:

Rationalize the reception and enquiry functions, as far as practical, possibly under one organization, to project a cohesive, well-managed department; to explore the feasibility of providing the general public with a limited number of contact points and thereby reduce the present confusion; explore the feasibility for a referral system once initial contact is made with the Department and establish a data base for the service or services as may be determined.

DESCRIPTION:

At least five major organizational units could be involved: the Building Receptionists (ZSSG); the Telephone Enquiry Service (MGDT); the Trade Information Centre (TERE); Public Affairs enquiries and publications distribution (SCI); and, the Duty Officer service (ZSE).