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External Affairs and International Trade Canada Affaires extérieures et Commerce extérieur Canada

EVALUATION REPORT

EVALUATION OF EAITC'S

CONSULAR PROGRAM

Evaluation of the Consular Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAIN REPORT

1. THE EVALUATION

- 1.1 The Initial Concerns
- 1.2 The 1981 Program Evaluation
- 1.3 The 1988/89 Auditor-General Audit
- 1.4 Evaluation Model
- 1.5 Emerging Issues
- 1.6 Methodology in Post Survey
- 1.7 Structure of the Report

2. THE CONSULAR PROGRAM

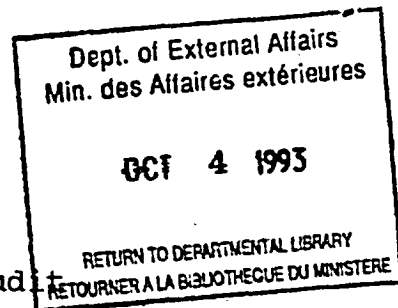
- 2.1 Mandate and Objective
- 2.2 The Demand for Services
- 2.3 Consular Services and/or Assistance
- 2.4 Program Administration and Delivery
- 2.5 Program Resources.

3. LEVEL AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

- 3.1 Assessing the Service/Assistance
- 3.2 Program Clientele
- 3.3 Perceptions of the Travel Industry
- 3.4 Request for Services/Assistance
- 3.5 Level/Quality of Service/Assistance Provided
- 3.6 Administration for Increasing demands.

4. THE CHANGING CONSULAR ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 Current Operating Environment
- 4.2 Changes in Demand
- 4.3 Changes in International Conditions.



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5. IMMEDIATE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

- 5.1 Identification of the Issues
- 5.2 The Importance of the Program
- 5.3 Lack of Career Paths for Consular Officers
- 5.4 Improved Training
- 5.5 Updated COMIS
- 5.6 Service Auditing.

6. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC RESPONSE

- 6.1 Need to Prepare
- 6.2 Strategic Issues
- 6.3 Adapting EAITC's Consular Services
- 6.4 Demand Management
- 6.5 Development of Consular Officers
- 6.6 Future Difficulties in Delivering Services

TABLES

1.1 Consular Program Logic Model

2.1 Consular Services and/or Assistance in 1988

2.3 Program Resources

3.1 Composition of Travelling Canadians

3.2 Composition of Consular Clientele, 1988

3.3 Summary of Comments by Travel Industry on Canadian Consular Service.

3.4 Variations in Demand for Consular Services Between Regular and Peak Seasons

FIGURES

2.1 Delivery of Consular Services (based on the Mission in Mexico)

6.1 Changes in Consular Services

CHARTS

3.1 Timeliness and Quality of Services/Assistance Delivered

APPENDICES

A Specific Recommendations, 1981 Program Evaluation

B Interviews with Travel and Related Organizations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1988 External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC) provided assistance in approximately 600 000 instances to Canadians living or travelling abroad. Consular services which is a basic responsibility of the Department constitutes the major point of contact with the Canadian public. In 1988 EAITC utilized some 200 person years, 50 of which Canadian based.

This Report outlines the findings in response to two major concerns. First, concern had been raised that the continuing resource constraints had resulted in a drop in the quality of services provided under the Consular Program. Second, questions were raised on how well the Program is positioned to meet the challenge of increased demands coming in the Nineties. The latter dominated the deliberations of the Departmental Evaluation Working Group established to assist in the Evaluation.

Investigations included a pilot survey of 16 representative missions and a limited interview survey of the travel industry to obtain their views on the quality of the services and emerging demands. Findings from these surveys were reviewed with the program officials concerned and the Evaluation Working Group.

Work on this Evaluation was coordinated with the Auditor General's review reported in his 1989 Report which was released this fall. Particular attention was paid to the Auditor General's findings in formulating the recommendations from this Evaluation. Also the status of the recommendations from the 1981 Departmental Evaluation were reviewed as a part of the investigations.

On the positive side the Evaluation concluded that EAITC has been able to maintain the quality of its Consular services and that the resource constraints have not had a measurable impact on them. On the negative side serious concerns were raised about the Department's ability to continue to deliver these services during the Nineties at a level of quality acceptable to the Canadian public and the government. The key findings and recommendations are summarized below.

THE QUALITY OF CONSULAR SERVICES

In 1988 some 2.8 million Canadians were either travelling and/or living abroad excluding the United States. As mentioned above, in that year EAITC provided services in approximately 600,000 instances to Canadians abroad.

Since EAITC's Consular Program is a service, timeliness and quality are critical factors in assessing its performance. Surveys of officials in the travel industry and of the consular officers established that:

The consular services provided to Canadians abroad are considered to be effective and better than those of several other major nations.

Further the Evaluation concluded:

That resource restraints have not had a measurable impact on the quality of consular services to date.

The missions have been able to maintain the standard of their consular services by making organizational adjustments in the delivery of services. However the extent of the negative impact of the adjustments in other programs could not be readily assessed.

THE SERVICE PACKAGE

The design and control of the package of services/assistance which the missions provide to Canadians abroad will have to be improved in light of the resource constraints and the Auditor General's 1989 Report. The Auditor General is concerned about the unevenness of services and proposed that the range and extent of services be specified for each mission. As a consequence more attention should be paid in focusing effort on higher priority activities. This will require more careful planning and greater operational control at the missions and more functional supervision from Headquarters. Therefore it is recommended:

That the missions be directed to focus on the services considered to be of higher priority and to limit discretionary services such as the provision of general information.

That the implementation of this recommendation be monitored as a part of the mission planning exercise.

IMMEDIATE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

The protection of the rights and interests of Canadians abroad is a basic and continuing responsibility of EAITC. As well, consular services is the major point of contact for the Department with the Canadian public abroad. Unfortunately the consular program has been overshadowed during the past decade by other departmental concerns including national security, trade and technology and immigration. As the Department became more involved in these areas, the importance assigned to consular services declined.

The culture of an organization in terms of its perceptions and values is a central force in how it responds to its clients and the environment. There is a now deep concern that EAITC's senior managers are not in tune with the new realities which are driving the demands for consular services. These include increased tourist and business travel, additional demands due to dual citizenship, as well as increases in drug related incidents and violence.

The success of the Consular Program lies in being prepared to respond to personal crises, and disasters, either political or natural. Failure to adequately prepare for such events puts the Department at risk to criticism and reduces the security of Canadians abroad. Considering these factors it is recommended:

- . That the Department reaffirm the importance of the Consular Program by including a compulsory training program for all foreign service officers at the time of hiring to be followed by a first tour of duty abroad with consular responsibilities.

In addition to the question of program priority, there is another major concern which will have a major bearing on the quality of consular services in the future. This is the lack of an appropriate classification system for consular officers and its implications for career aspirations and paths. Consular experience is not recognized as an important factor for promotion boards. The result is that foreign service officers dedicated to consular work are not promoted whereas foreign service officers dedicated to only political, economic or trade for example, are promoted. The Evaluation Working Group stressed that this practice is recognized across the Department and has a very negative impact on officers assigned to the Consular Program. Further they stressed that action to correct this practice is fundamental to improving the Consular Program. Considering these factors it is recommended:

- . That action be taken to recognize the performance of officers involved on consular work by ensuring that these officers can legitimately expect career advancement on the basis of consular work through established departmental promotion exercises.

Concerns also exist about the effectiveness of the current consular training. Officers in the field feel that more on-the-job training should be provided. Further the Evaluation concluded that EAITC should encourage the development of a "service ethic" promoting excellence in the delivery of consular services. In respect to the current training it is recommended:

That the formal training of consular officers be expanded to 2 weeks supported by a minimum 3 week on-the-job training session.

The views on the effectiveness of the Consular Operations Management Information System (COMIS) were mixed. Overall it was concluded that the accuracy of information needs to be substantially improved. Some officers complained that it was too time consuming. At present EAITC does not have in place an ongoing procedure for monitoring the quality of services or assistance provided to Canadians abroad. Such a system would complement the existing COMIS and complete the information required to effectively control the Program. Therefore it is recommended

- . That COMIS be upgraded, particularly in regard to the definition of a "case" and provide the training on the use of the system to improve its effectiveness.
- . That a service auditing procedure be established whereby the quality of the service provided by the various missions would be periodically monitored.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The demand for Consular services is strongly influenced by the historical role which EAITC has played in looking after the interests of Canadians abroad. Opportunities exist for limiting this demand by improving the public knowledge of potential travel problems and making greater use of services now available through the private sector. Therefore it is recommended:

- . That a process of consultations be instituted with the provincial governments, the travel and related industries to encourage greater use of private sector services.

- . That a more active role be taken in improving the public's awareness of potential travel problems through such mechanisms as travel bulletins and a "hot" line.

In making this recommendation it is noted that it is important to launch the process and that the changes in delivery will probably be a series of adjustments as opposed to major organizational changes. Such a process should include expanded consultations with organizations in the private sector offering related services and other like-minded agencies or countries such as the United States. The growing restraints in resources can be expected to lead to significant modification in EAITC's global network of missions. The need for representation which is already provided in many tourist areas and smaller countries beyond the main missions by honorary consuls can be expected to increase. In recent years EAITC has increased the number of honorary consuls to 50 to meet this demand, Also the Department has developed reciprocal arrangements for providing consular services with Australia in some 12 locations. Time did not permit the kind of thorough investigation required to deal effectively with the relative merits of these arrangements during the Evaluation. However it is clear that there is a need to develop innovative ways of providing consular services. Therefore it is recommended:

- . That JID continue to explore and develop innovative ways of delivering consular services.

In making this recommendation it is noted that it is important to launch the process and that the changes in delivery will probably be a series of adjustments as opposed to major organizational changes. Such a process should include expanded consultations with organizations in the private sector offering related services and other like-minded agencies or countries such as the United States.

MAIN REPORT

1. THE EVALUATION

1.1 The Initial Concerns

Based on the initial investigations three issues were identified:

- . What has been the impact of resource constraints on the effective delivery of consular services?
- . Does the current level of expertise and skill development of consular officers facilitate the efficient delivery of services?
- . Are there areas where less costly arrangements could be used to facilitate savings in resources?

The focus of the Evaluation was to be on the impact of resource constraints in providing the consular services particularly in respect to the timeliness and the quality of the services provided.

Since consular is a service program, the expertise and skills of the consular officers are critical in the delivery of the program. This factor received major attention during the review, particularly in respect to training programs introduced as a result of the 1981 Program Evaluation. Also, the potential for the development of more cost effective arrangements was examined.

1.2 The 1981 Program Evaluation

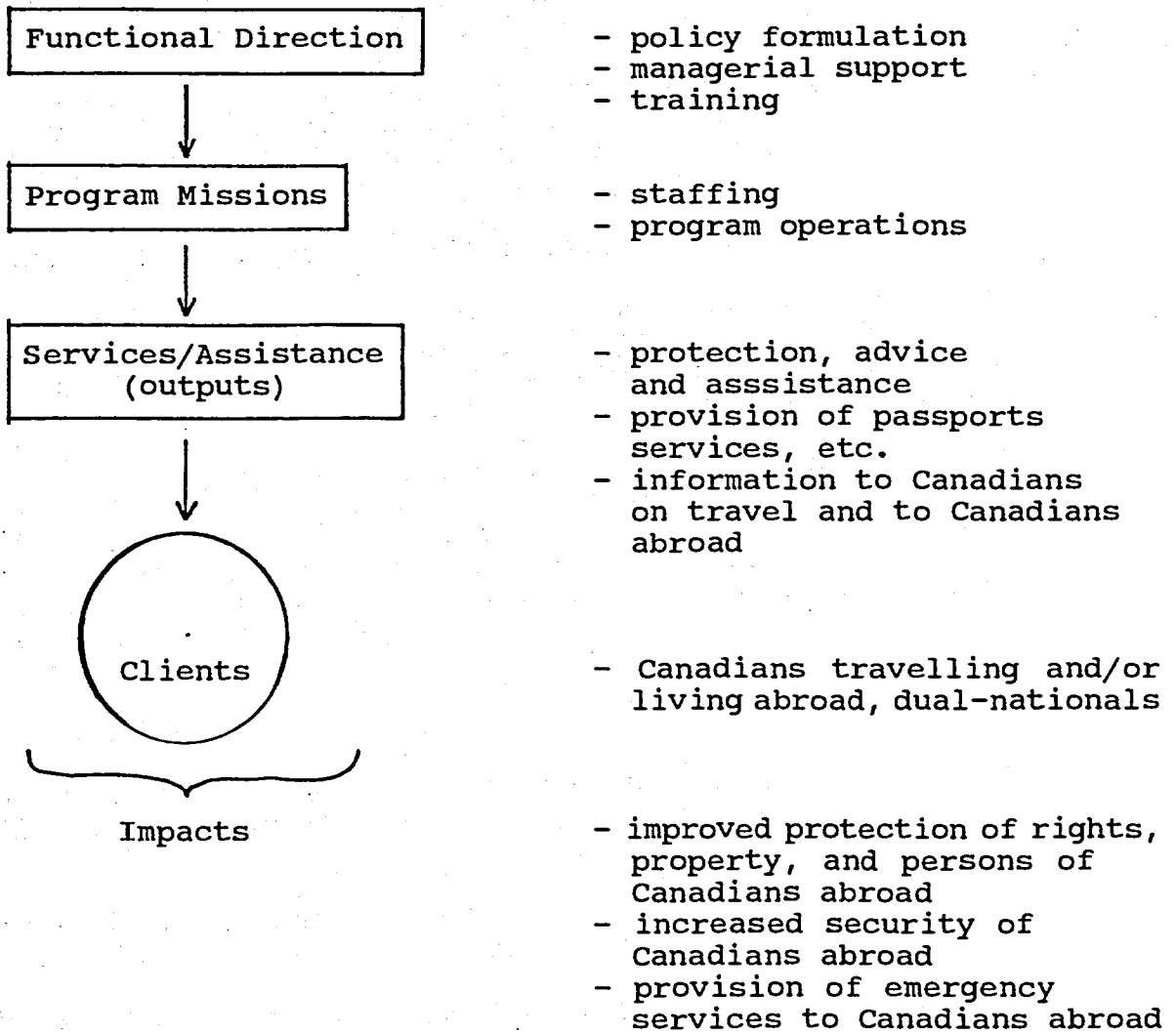
The last formal evaluation of the Consular Program was carried out by the then Office of Internal Evaluation and Audit, in 1981. It had three goals:

- . To clarify the mandate and objectives of the program;
- . To consider certain broad aspects of program design; and,
- . To identify specific goals and thrusts for the subsequent more detailed evaluations.

The majority of the eight major recommendations (Appendix A) emanating from that review have been implemented. In summary they included: establishing a basic policy for the Consular Program; implementing a reporting system on the services provided; and taking steps to increase the public awareness

Table 1.1

CONSULAR PROGRAM: LOGIC MODEL



of the service. As a result the management information system, Consular Operations Management Information System (COMIS), for tracking case loads at posts was developed. Also, based on that report, a formal training program for consular officers and honorary consuls was instituted. To date over 400 officers have taken the course.

1.3 The 1988/89 Auditor-General Audit

The Auditor General of Canada commenced a "value-for-money" audit of the Consular Services Program in September 1988, as part of the review of the Consular and Immigration Affairs activity. This audit which had originally been planned to commence in the winter of 1989 was accelerated and as a consequence was carried out in parallel with the CME Evaluation. CME provided the overall coordination for the two reviews.

The findings of the Auditor General (AG) released this fall in his 1989 Report were taken into account in shaping the recommendations from this Evaluation. In summary the major conclusions of the AG's review relevant to this evaluation are:

- . The Department should specify the range and extent of consular services that it will provide for each post. In their opinion each post should determine, in response to local conditions, what amount of service is obligatory and what amount is discretionary.
- . The Department should define the target groups for its public awareness program and ensure that appropriate information is communicated well.
- . The Department should clearly define the consular responsibilities of Honorary Consuls and properly supervise the delivery of services provided by them.
- . The Department should confirm the legality of "unofficial consular representatives."

1.4 Evaluation Model

The program logic table (Table 1.1) gives a conceptualization of these elements/activities and shows the flow of the program. It consists of four key elements or activities: functional (direction), program delivery, services/assistance, and impacts/results.

The functional (direction) is the managerial aspect of the Consular Program and is based at Headquarters. This would include the policy formulation and consular agreement negotiations, as well as training.

The second key activity or element is the program delivery, handled primarily though not exclusively through the missions abroad, including program operations and staffing.

The third key activity could be defined as the services/assistance themselves, such as protection, advice, passport services, and information to Canadians abroad or going abroad.

The fourth key element within the Consular Services Program would be the program's impacts or results. The results or impacts include:

- . The improved protection of rights, property and persons of Canadians abroad
- . The increased security of Canadians abroad, and
- . The provision of emergency services to Canadians abroad.

Several factors complicate the evaluation of consular services, in particular the environment in which it operates and the nature of the service provided. The provision of consular services operates in a variety of environments differing from one country to the next, and within various regions of a country as well. The evaluation of the level of quality and timeliness of consular services is complicated by the nature of the service itself, being subjective in nature in many respects. For example, the question of client satisfaction, as noted in the 1981 Consular Evaluation, is inherently difficult to measure. What may be considered by one client as a suitable response to an enquiry/problem may be considered totally inadequate by another client. While the first may be satisfied simply to have a consular official listen to a complaint, the second may expect full and total rectification of the problem at hand.

This Evaluation was limited to survey analysis and observations and concerns expressed by both the Working Group and Consular staff.

1.5 Emerging Issues

The Evaluation Working Group met several times during the course of the Evaluation. In its deliberations the Group focussed not only on the current status of the Consular Program but also on the challenges in the future. They stressed that the provision of services to Canadians travelling and/or living abroad and in particular assistance to Canadians in distress will continue to be a mandatory obligation of EAITC under the Vienna Convention on Consular Services. Therefore appropriate departmental priority must be assigned to this activity in future.

The Evaluation Working Group identified several both immediate and long term issues which were subsequently included in the Evaluation. These issues flow from a range of emerging changes including an increased number of Canadians travelling, increased risk to them, and resource constraints and organizational problems in adjusting to the new conditions. The immediate issues are addressed in terms of improvements to the program while the long term ones are discussed in developing a strategic response.

1.6 Methodology and Post Survey

The Evaluation included the following activities:

- . file review
- . in-house data/surveys
- . analysis of data base
- . survey of selected missions and their honorary consuls
- . familiarization visit to missions in Mexico City, three of its honorary consuls and San Jose.

A survey of 16 consular posts and their honorary consuls was carried out to generate information on the following areas: the services offered, resourcing practices, training, staffing, and information systems. The posts selected were considered to be representative of Canada's missions abroad. Their selection was made in cooperation with JIC.

1.7 Structure of the Report

The Evaluation Report commences with an Executive Summary followed by the main report which consists of six sections. Section 1 provides an overview of the background related to this evaluation. Section 2 summarizes the Consular Program mandate and describes the current demands, services offered, and program administration and resources. Section 3 reviews the level and quality of services as determined through the Mission surveys and interviews with the travel industry. The increasing demand is also discussed. Section 4 provides an overview of the changing consular environment and its implications for future consular demands. Section 5 sets out a number of proposed improvements to the program. Section 6 identifies four strategic issues which must be addressed if the Consular program is to be effective in the nineties.

2. THE CONSULAR PROGRAM

2.1 Mandate and Objective

The legal authorities for the Consular program are contained in the Department of External Affairs Act (1983), the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations which came into force for Canada in 1974, and specific authorities and instructions in the Canadian Citizenship Act (1977), the Immigration Act (1976), the Diplomatic and Consular Privileges and Immunities Act (1977), and the Canadian Passport Order (PC 1981-1472) of June, 1981.

The objective for the program is to protect the rights and interests of Canadians travelling or living abroad, and to provide them with passport and other government services.

2.2 The Demand for Services

Table 2.1 presents a summary of relevant travel and related statistics showing the numbers of Canadians both travelling and living abroad as well as other consular related data.

Table 2.1
Consular Services and/or Assistance in 1987/88

Canadians registered abroad	50,142
Canadians resideing abroad, including dual nationals (estimated number)	3 million
Passports (1987-88 fiscal year)	
Valid passports in circulation	4,464,342
Total issued	980,000
Issued by missions abroad	60,000
Increase in total issued by missions abroad over that of the previous year	1.2 per cent
Travel (calendar year 1987)	
Total visits abroad	40.4 million
United States (of which approximately 10.8 million stayed at least one night)	38.1 million
Countries other than the United States	2.3 million
Europe (preliminary estimate)	1,119,000
Bermuda and the Caribbean (preliminary estimate)	481,000
Total number of cases or services rendered (approximate)	
	627,498
Cases:	
Repatriation	264
Hospitalization or medical treatment	2 227
Deaths	1 386
Detainees	844
Services:	
Passport	201 971
Citizenship	46 750
Legal and notarial	33 378
Requests for financial assistance or transfers	4 080
Well-being and whereabouts	9 301
Registration of Canadians	23 125
Advice and assistance	276 727
Child custody	1 573

2.3 Consular Services and/or Assistance

An appropriate definition of consular activities as stated in the Vienna Convention appears in the document titled Consular Policy for the Eighties: Bureau of Consular Services (5:1981). They are summarized as being the following activities:

- a) protecting in countries abroad the interests of Canada, of Canadian citizens and protected persons, both individuals and bodies corporate;
- b) Promoting commercial, economic, cultural and scientific relations between Canada and countries abroad, and reporting to the Canadian government on these aspects of life in countries abroad;
- c) Helping and assisting Canadian citizens and protected persons;
- d) Issuing passports and travel documents to Canadians and visas to persons wishing to visit Canada who require visas to do so;
- e) Performing in countries abroad certain notarial, legal and administrative functions concerning individuals, bodies corporate, property, shipping and aircraft.

2.4 Program Administration and Delivery

The responsibility for consular services within the Department's matrix-based organization is divided between the Consular and Immigration Affairs Bureau in Headquarters and the 144 diplomatic and consular missions located around the world. The Bureau is responsible for the formulation of consular policy and guidelines and their implementation. It provides the missions with guidance on consular matters in general and instructions and assistance on specific problems. The diplomatic and consular missions, along with 50 Honourary Consuls, are responsible for the day to day provision of the services.

The departmental organization for the delivery of consular services is indicated in Figure 2.1.

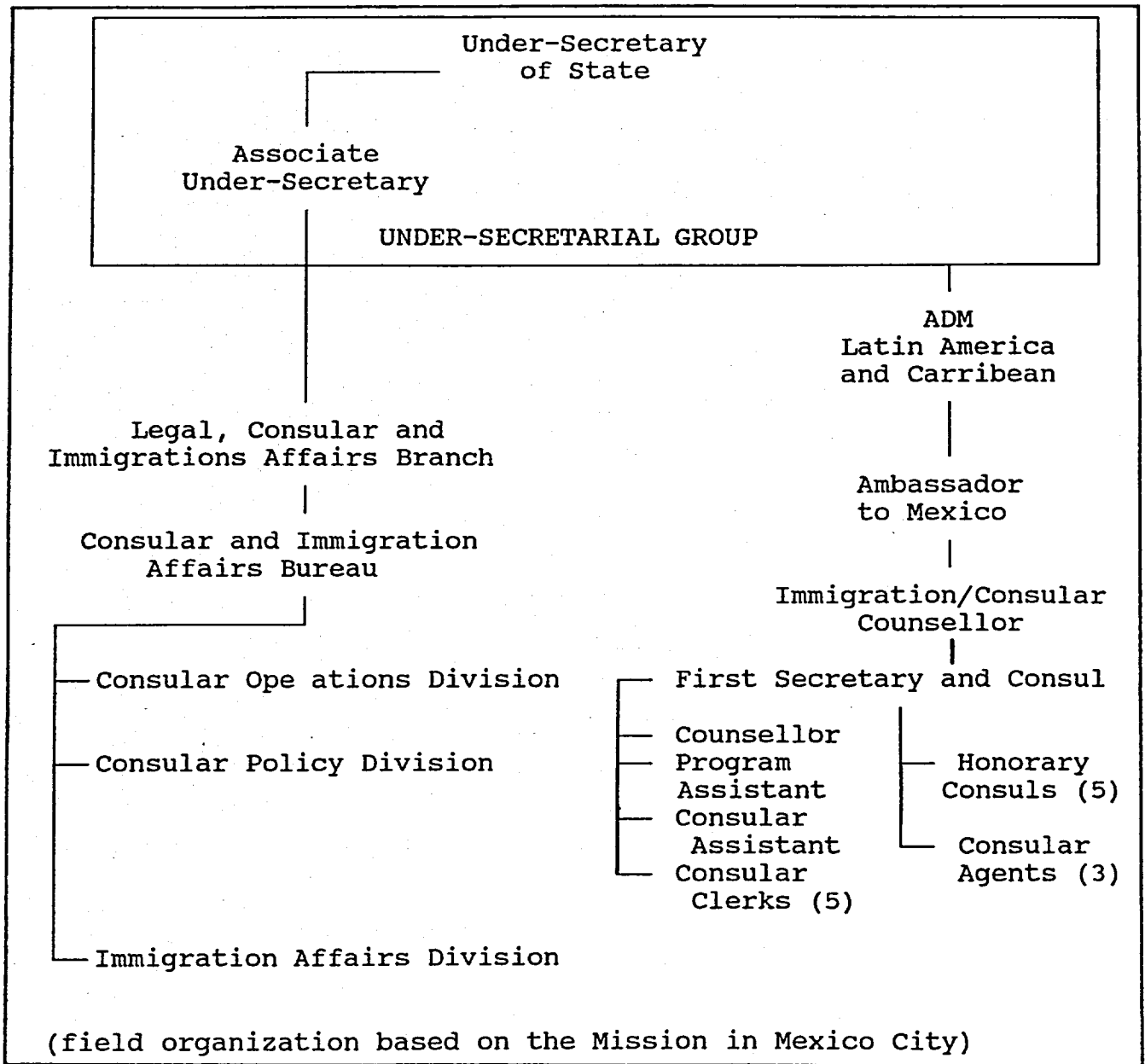


Figure 2.1
Delivery of Consular Services

The Department has also established, pursuant to the Financial Administration Act, a prescribed set of fees for part of its services, particularly those involving legal or notarial assistance.

2.5 Program Resources

The resources allocated for the Consular Policy and Operations division for the fiscal year 1988/89 were as indicated in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3
Program Resources

Operating Funds (including \$7,500 for overtime and \$10,000 for capital)	\$300,000
Hiring of Contract Employee (to maintain the Registry of Canadians Abroad)	\$26,000

The Operating Expenses and PY for the Consular Program are provided in Geographic Branches budgets.

3 LEVEL AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

3.1 Assessing the Services/Assistance

One of the three basic evaluation issues selected for evaluation was the "impact of resource constraints in the effective delivery of consular services." This was then included in the missions survey. Respondents were asked to rate both the quality and the timeliness of services/assistance delivered. As well respondents were questioned concerning the peak periods of demand for consular services and assistance.

The question of the quality and timeliness of the services and assistance delivered through the consular program is a very real concern with this evaluation as well as with the Auditor General. Various trends show a marked increase in the numbers of Canadians travelling and living abroad, and the increasing demands for quality consular services must be confronted by EAITC. As well various geographic regions are experiencing changes in clientele composition and as a result changes in the nature of demand for services.

Section 3 examines both the program clientele and the various aspects of demand for consular services, as well as interprets several questions from the mission survey results. Perceptions of the private travel industry are also examined in this section.

3.2 Program Clientele

Canadians travelling and/or living abroad, as well as dual-nationals make up the clientele for the Consular services abroad. Most clientele groups are experiencing increases, due to increasing world travel, expanding business opportunities abroad and larger numbers of dual-nationals as more Canadians are born abroad. As more Canadians travel, for whatever reasons, this Evaluation foresees an increasing demand on consular services.

The percentage increases between 1985 and 1988 in the number of Canadian visitors at six of the responding missions were as follows: 130%, 100%, 44%, 25%, 37.5%, and 30.4%. Table 3.1 gives a percentage break-down on a mission-by-mission basis of the composition of Canadian visitors in the respective host countries, of the missions that responded to the survey question. Only those countries having kept detailed statistics were able to provide the required information to the missions. Again, this does not indicate the number of visitors who necessarily made contact with the missions, but rather those who visited the country i.e. the potential clientele.

Table 3.1
Composition of Canadian Visitors in 1988

	Port of Spain	Belgrade	Tunis	Cairo	Singapore	Lisbon	San Francisco	Bangkok
Tourists/Holidayers	10	30	30	90	35	94	25	08
Business People	11.6	5	30	5	20	--	25	61
Perm. Can. Res.	76.6	25	5	3	25	6	20	2
Part-Time Can. Res.	1.5	20	5	2	10	--	20	2
Transients	3	20	30	--	10	--	10	-

Table 3.2
Composition of Consular Clientele in 1988

	Port of Spain	Belgrade	Lima	Santiago	Tunis	Atlanta	Nairobi	Cairo	The Hague	Singapore
Tour./Holid.	5	15	40	55	30	5	45	50	35	30
Bus. people	1	10	5	30	30	20	15	10	10	20
Perm. Can.	90	30	15	16	10	50	25	30	40	25
Part-time Can.	3	35			10	20	10	10	10	10
Transients	1	10		4	20	5	5		5	15
Host Country			40							

	Lisbon	Washington	San Francisco	Bangkok	Rome	Paraguay
Tour./Holid.	33	10	5	70	8	5
Bus. People		80	5	20	2	2
Perm. Can.	66		40	4	80	88
Part-Time Can.		5	40	6	8	
Transients		5	10	2	5	

An increase in flights between various countries and Canada has led to increases in the numbers of Canadians going abroad, and will lead to further increases as more flights are initiated. This will increase the number of both clients and potential clients. An increase from 0 to 10 flights per week between Canada and one host country led to a substantial increase in demand for consular services at the mission in that country. An Asian mission remarked that the holding of large-scale VIP conventions recently in the host country, as well as an increase in package deals for tourists and business people are resulting in an increase in visitors there.

One mission noted that an increasing number of students from the host country studying in Canada as well as more immigrants from that country to Canada would eventually increase the consular workload due to increased travel, and eventually mixed marriages and other consular matters.

Another mission in the USA said there were no significant changes except for continuous growth in the volume of work. However two US missions noted an increase in the number of Canadians living and working in their areas.

An increase in the number of tours to one East European country has led to a substantial increase in the number of Canadians travelling and requiring assistance at that mission. The establishment of an Air Canada office there has also been a factor. Another European country noted that increasing political and economic stability has greatly contributed to growth in the tourist industry there, a trend they predicted would continue. One can only assume that the continuing liberalization of Eastern European countries will lead to increased travel there, including first time travel to countries where access was particularly limited. Those travelling to such areas will include business people, holidayers, and Canadians whose ancestry is Eastern European. This could have a major impact on demands for dual citizenship.

3.3 Perceptions of the Travel Industry

A limited survey of various travel and related organisations was conducted as part of this evaluation. A listing of those contacted as part of the evaluation can be found in Appendix B.

In summary, the overall perceptions of those working in the private sector is that Canada's Consular Services Program is of excellent quality, and that the services delivered merit high marks. Nonetheless certain concerns were expressed by those interviewed.

The general perception held in the industry is that travelling Canadians are not sufficiently aware of the Consular Services Program. While the industry recognizes the importance of consular services, it was suggested that all Canadian officials abroad should be ready to give information to maintain a high departmental image with the public, regarding the delivery of services.

The industry felt that the quality of services delivered abroad was very good, and further noted that the network of services offered is impressive in comparison with several other western countries and in consideration of our population.

The industry predicts substantial increases in the number of travelling Canadians, and they recognize the potential for growth in international travel.

In regards to future needs and the delivery of consular services abroad, the industry notes that people will continue to turn to the government in times of distress. However, there is still room for the industry to play a key role. An example of this is the current Ontario provincial Travel Industry Protection Act placing increased responsibility with the travel agent to inform tourists. The industry survey also suggests a lack of coordination amongst the key players.

A summary of comments from the travel industry on Canadian consular services is found in Table 3.3

Table 3.3

Summary of Comments by Travel Industry on Canadian Consular Services

Key Issues	Comments/Observations
1. Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low, in terms of specifics (amongst Canadians) - industry recognizes the importance of the consular services and places a high priority on it
2. Quality of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - service receives high marks - network good in relation to other countries and population
3. Industry's Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - travel is big business - potential for growth in international travel.
4. Need - Coordination Industry/provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - industry recognizes that Industry/provinces people in distress will still turn to government - Ontario law places increasing responsibility on travel agents - appears to be lack of coordination among key players
5. Delivery of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all Canadian officials abroad should maintain high profile of consular image with public

3.4 Request for Services/Assistance

13 mission surveys reported an overall increase in demand for services and assistance, while just one reported a decrease. One survey reported no changes in demand. The following chart indicates clearly where the growth in demand has been occurring.

Seasonal variations also complicate the delivery of timely quality consular services and assistance. Concerns about the variations in levels of quality and range of services was expressed by the Auditor General in his recent report. However, the mission surveys and industry surveys indicate that overall quality has been maintained. Variations in demand for passport issuance range from a low of 3% to a high of 160%: i.e at one post the seasonal variation in demand for passports, between regular and peak seasons, is 3%, while at another post the seasonal variation is 160%. The average variation in demand for passport issuance at the surveyed missions is 50%.

Variations in demand for services also vary greatly from regular to peak seasons, with a high of 114% and a low of 5%. The average variation in demand between regular and peak seasons was 49.4%. Variation in demand for services had a high of 300%, and a low of 13%. The average was 75%.

Such variations in demands between regular and peak seasons may explain to some degree the differences in time required to produce a passport from mission to mission, a concern noted in the Auditor General's Chapter on the Consular Program. Obviously peak season in the Bahamas is not necessarily the same as the peak season in the Middle East, and a doubling or tripling in demand in a particular season must inevitably result in differing turnaround times for a particular service between regular and peak seasons. Table 3.4 indicates the variations in demand between regular and peak seasons at 14 of the missions surveyed.

Table 3.4

Variations in Demand of Consular Services
Between Regular and Peak Seasons

	Port of Spain	Belgrade	Lima	Tunis	Atlanta
Passports	33/88	120/195	34/57	2-3/5	395/428
Services	55/73	35/50	739/824	5/10-15	
Assist.	53/71	380/430	12/27	0-2/1-3	15/25

	Nairobi	Cairo	The Hague	Singapore	Lisbon
Passports	50/70	20/40	320/400	130/214	111/114
Services	30/50	140/200	1280/1340	170/266	170/250
Assist.	5/10	5/15		n/a	406/424

	Washington	San Francisco	Bangkok	Rome
Passports	100/150	391/487	31/40	135/185
Services		51/75	260/370	220/450
Assist.		n/a	7.5/11	250/466

3.5 Level and Quality of Services/Assistance Provided

The mission surveys asked each respective respondent to rate both the timeliness and quality of the consular services and assistance offered through the program to Canadians travelling/living abroad.

Chart 3.2 indicates the responses in percentage format to the question of timeliness and level of services/assistance provided through the missions. Overall results show that the timeliness and quality of consular services/assistance is good or excellent in the vast majority of missions, and has been improved or maintained at previous levels in the majority of instances. However 14% of the respondents suggested that the timeliness of passport issuances and services have declined in the past three years while 6% noted a poor quality of passport services in the previous three year period.

3.6 Adjustments to Increasing Demands

The increasing numbers of Canadians travelling, working and living abroad has resulted in an increasing demand for consular services/assistance in an environment of resource constraints faced by all government departments and programs. However, the mission surveys suggest that the missions are adapting to the resource issue in such a manner as to negate the effects of resource constraints and increasing demands.

More experienced staff at several posts has allowed the consular program there to adapt to the changing environment in which it must operate. Better-trained locally engaged personnel also resulted in improvements in the timeliness and quality of consular services. One post noted that better consular work organization and rationalization of consular services, as well as improved management resulted in improved timeliness and quality of consular services.

Several missions noted as well that their respective consular agents had more time to devote to supervising their staff, resulting in better consular services.

A major US post said the computerization of passport issuance resulted in greater time savings, and hence was a factor in improved service. The addition of a fulltime consular program officer was also a factor. Several posts mentioned that excellent Canada-based consular clerks were instrumental in the delivery of improved consular services.

A more efficient and younger staff was cited as the reason for

Chart 3.2
Timeliness and Quality of Services/Assistance Delivered (%)

<u>Timeliness of Service</u>	Now					Change over 3 years		
	E	G	F	P	UNA	BETTER	SAME	POORER
Passports	60%	20%	6%	13%		50%	36%	14%
Services	47	47		6		50	36	14
Assistance	60	40				50	53	
<u>Quality of Service</u>								
Passports	60	33	6			40	47	6
Services	67	33				40	53	
Assistance	67	33				40	53	

(May not total to 100 due to rounding)

A more efficient and younger staff was cited as the reason for improved and better service at one mission, as were more efficient and more flexible work methods. The setting of a deadline for passport issuance was noted by one post along with a consular officer who spent more time working to upgrade the consular support staff.

An Asian mission said a growing and more experienced LE staff and the provision of bilingual services enhanced the delivery of consular services at that mission.

4. THE CHANGING CONSULAR ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Current Operating Environment

The predominant characteristics of the environment for consular services is the wide variability in the need for assistance, due to the difference in conditions in the very diverse host countries in which Canada maintains missions, as well as the growing demand as more Canadians travel abroad. Consular operations at the mission level have often been adapted in accordance with demand and local conditions, as noted in the Auditor General's Consular Services Audit. The environment for the provision of consular services has changed substantially since the adoption of the Vienna Convention. The major forces dictating these changes are:

1. More Canadians are travelling abroad, both for business and pleasure;
2. More Canadians are living abroad, particularly as a result of the growing population of retired people with a substantial disposable income;
3. The recognition of dual citizenship;
4. The continuing decline in personal security in many parts of the world.

4.2 Changes in Demand

One U.S. mission felt that the Free Trade Agreement would result in an increase in business travellers to their region in the coming years, as well as an increase in the number of part-time Canadian residents. A poor economy in one South American country has resulted in a decrease in tourists headed there, although hours per individual increased for security briefings, etc. Increases in the local population seeking immigration to Canada was also a factor. A Caribbean respondent noted that changes in the passport laws of the host country, requiring 6 months validity for Canadian passports, has resulted in a 10% decline in tourists between '85 and '88. Two missions noted in particular that an increasing number of flights between Canada and the host countries resulted in increases in tourists, travellers, and business people. The prevalent trends are towards increasingly greater numbers of Canadian visitors, in most geographic areas. The two African

missions and the Middle East mission all predicted increasing numbers of tourists. The US missions indicated no change in the period 1985-89, but predicted growth in the future. The South American missions and the Caribbean mission indicated poor economic conditions and changing passports laws as deterrents to tourists in that geographic area. One mission noted however an increase of 68% in clientele, but suggested composition had experienced no major changes. The European missions all predicted a growing number of tourists as clientele. Growth is predicted in the travellers category as well as major events in Europe (Seville, 1992) draws more visitors into Europe. One mission also noted an increased interest in visiting the Balkans.

4.3 Changes in International Conditions

The ever changing world environment will always impact upon the provision of consular services in both positive and negative ways. For example, as Eastern Block countries open up more and more to the west, the resulting increases in the numbers of Canadians travelling to those countries will bring an increase in the demand for consular services, creating new demands in areas where delivery mechanisms are not currently operating.

5. IMMEDIATE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

5.1 Identification of the Issues

The Evaluation Working Group in reviewing the findings emerging from the study stressed the need to include two issues which have immediate implications for the Consular Program. Their concerns focus on the departmental priority assigned to the Program, and the lack of career opportunities for officers involved in consular work. In their considered opinion these are core issues which must be addressed if the quality of consular services is to be maintained. Since these are very significant issues, they were included in the Evaluation.

In addition to these issues, other areas of concern include the training of consular officers and the monitoring of the delivery of the services.

5.2 The Importance of the Program

The Evaluation Working Group stressed that the protection of the rights and interests of Canadians abroad is a basic and continuing responsibility of EAITC. Further they noted that consular services is the major point of contact between EAITC and the Canadian public. In their professional view this activity has been overshadowed during the past decade by other concerns including national security, trade and technology and immigration. As the Department became more involved in these areas, the importance assigned to consular services has declined.

The culture of an organization, particularly the perceptions and values of its senior managers, is a central force in how it responds to its clients and the environment. In the opinion of most consular officers, EAITC is not in tune with the new realities which are driving the demands for consular services. These include increased travel, dual citizenship, more drugs and violence.

Consular work is often seen as too demanding, coupled with low job satisfaction and few career opportunities. In the mission survey respondents asked to rate the importance of the consular functions with other areas of mission work rated it as the last function, even after administration. This undoubtedly has a negative impact on the morale of both the staff performing consular duties as well as of the quality of the consular services delivered.

The implications of this situation for the maintenance of effective consular services are significant. Firstly, it makes it difficult to attract good people into the Consular Program. Secondly, it makes it difficult to obtain resources for the Program. And thirdly, it leads to low morale since the staff perceive that their work is of secondary importance.

In assessing this situation it is important to remember that the success of the Consular Program lies in being prepared to respond to personal crises of Canadians abroad and to disasters, either political or natural. Failure to adequately prepare for such events puts the Department at risk to criticisms from the public and central agencies, as well as threatening the security of Canadians abroad. Therefore it is recommended:

That the Department reaffirm the importance of the Consular Program by including the establishment of a policy by which all officers from the streams involved in consular work would be given an introductory one-year assignment.

5.3 Lack of career Paths for Consular Officers

This concern flows from the lack of an appropriate classification system for consular officers and its implications for career aspirations and paths. Consular experience is not recognized as an important factor for promotion boards. The result is that foreign service officers dedicated to consular work are not promoted whereas foreign service officers dedicated to only political, economic or trade for example, are promoted. The Evaluation Working Group stressed that this practice is recognized across the Department and has a very negative impact on officers assigned to the Consular Program. Further they stressed that action to correct this practice is fundamental to improving the Consular Program. Considering these factors it is recommended:

- . That action be taken to recognize the performance of officers involved on consular work by ensuring that these officers can legitimately expect career advancement on the basis of consular work through established departmental promotion exercises.

5.4 Improved Training

An Evaluation of the Consular Training Course at External Affairs and International Trade Canada was effected by a private consultant in late 1987, with the report submitted in January 1988. The mission survey which was used as an element in this Evaluation posed several questions concerning training received by consular staff, both through the courses at Headquarters and on-the-job training at the posts.

Course training usually involved 5 days or less of instruction. The mission survey results suggest that this is inadequate. It was described as both too theoretical and concentrated. The minimum course duration suggested for formal training was 2 weeks, to be supported by a 2 to 3 week session of on-the-job training.

The development of a professional service ethic would improve the status of the Consular Program within both the Department and amongst those working in the program. The definition of a clear and precise service ethic would necessarily be built into any and all training undertaken by consular staff, and the bureaux's staff at headquarters.

Therefore in respect to the current training it is recommended:

That the formal training of consular officers be expanded to 2 weeks supported by a 3 week on-the-job training session.

5.5 Updated COMIS

COMIS (Consular Operations Management Information System) was a result of a recommendation from the 1981 Consular Services Audit. Based on the mission surveys this Evaluation determined several areas within COMIS that are subject to improvement, in particular the definition of a "case."

Several respondents said that the time consumed by different individuals within a single mission and certainly between missions, on the same case, varies greatly. Subsequently the data gathered does not reflect inherent difficulties in the local contexts. As well, the hours spent in each activity as reported in COMIS are only approximations "that are often far from the reality."

As one mission wrote,

COMIS does not reflect the degree of difficulty involved in various types of cases. This problem prevents the system from understanding or analyzing the amount of time consumed by cases of different types.

The mission survey results still suggest that the missions feel the system is clear, efficient and cost-effective, notwithstanding the very obvious limitations that it possesses or concerns on its utility. It was stressed that while the system is suitable for certain comparisons of the types of services offered at each mission, it is only a general element amongst others.

Therefore it is recommended:

That COMIS particularly be upgraded in regard to the definition of a "case" and the provision of training on its use to improve its effectiveness.

The utility and function of COMIS should also be explained to the missions to prevent disillusionment and ensure successful compliance in reporting. The possibility exists that consular staff who are ignorant of the utility of COMIS may not ensure the accuracy of their reporting.

It is worth noting that COMIS was unable to supply various data sought as a part of this evaluation, and that the data obtained was often inaccurate. For example, COMIS data shows a small but steady decline in the number of consular cases abroad over the past several years. However, the mission survey and other reports suggest the very opposite. This confirms the need for clarification of a "case," as suggested earlier. As well the headquarters staff often were not fully conversant on the COMIS data, either in respect to problems with accuracy or otherwise. It appeared obvious to evaluation team members that the consular staff at Headquarters should be well-acquainted with the data - such was not the case.

5.6 Service Auditing

Part of this consular evaluation included a mission survey sent to 16 of the missions to enquire concerning the consular services, delivery, and other related issues as discussed throughout this evaluation report.

While the consular personnel at each mission are required to submit monthly COMIS reports, these do not deal with the less tangible issues such as the level and quality of services/assistance, training issues, or perceived trends in clientele composition as did the mission survey. There exists no format for the periodic review of such questions as enunciated in the mission survey used in this evaluation.

Therefore this evaluation recommends the periodic use of questionnaires/surveys as a form for auditing the consular services/program. This would, of course, be done in conjunction with less periodic on-site inspections to validate mission survey responses and permit other observations. This would serve to provide management with further program indicators and receive general observations from the missions that otherwise would not be discernable. Therefore it is recommended that a service auditing procedure be established whereby the quality of the service provided by the various missions would be periodically monitored.

6. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC RESPONSE

6.1 Need to Prepare

Perhaps the most important question and also the most difficult to be raised during the evaluation is, "what should be the consular services provided by the Government of Canada in the Nineties?" Unfortunately since the Nineties are almost here, this question takes on considerable urgency.

This section focuses on several important dimensions of this concern: the range and extent of services; demand management; future concerns in delivering services and the training of consular officers. These are strategic issues which must be resolved if EAITC is to continue to provide high quality consular services.

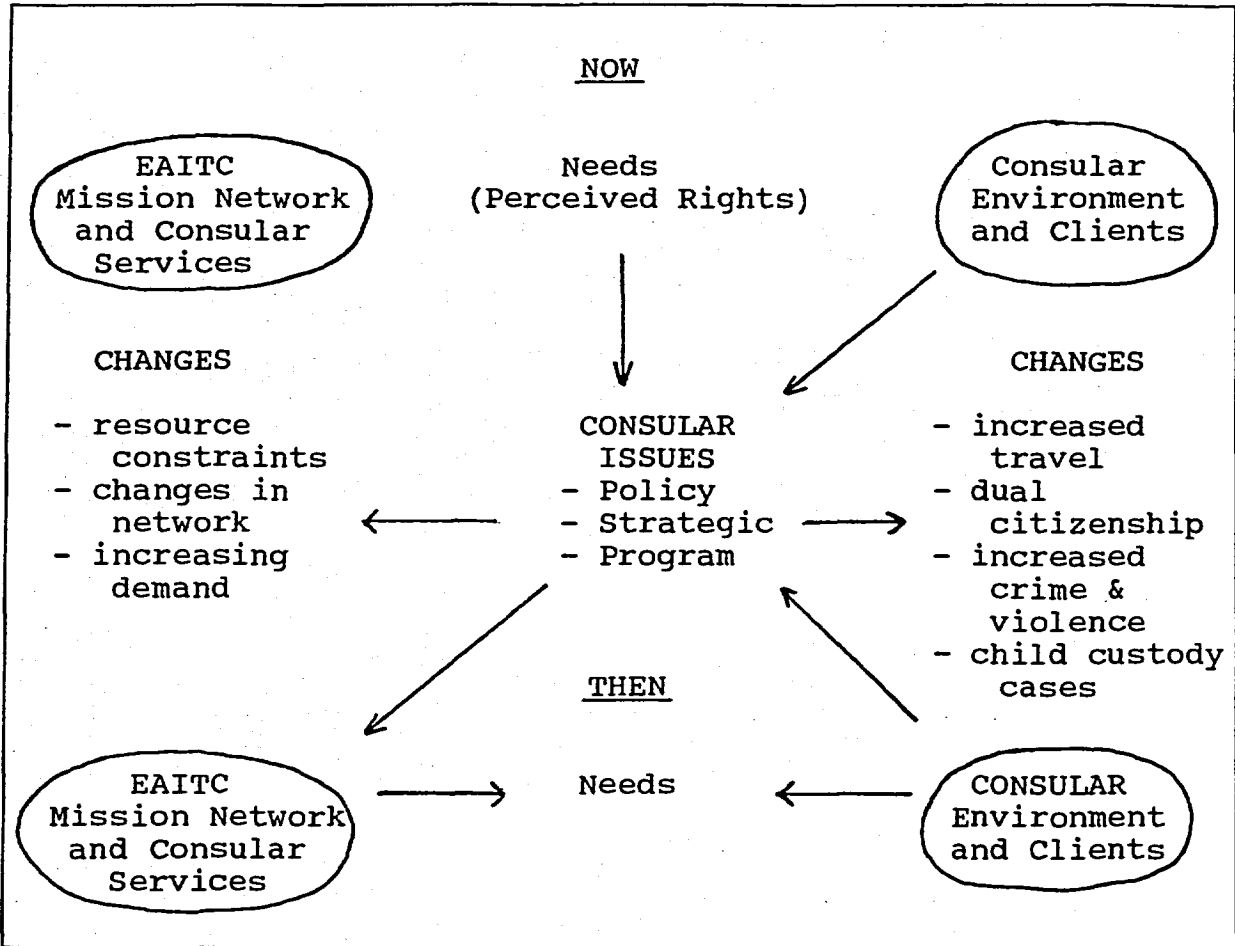
6.2 Strategic Issues

Futurists predict that the world as we know it today will undergo major changes in the Nineties. The driving forces behind these changes which include the globalization of markets and improved communications, have already had their impact.

The coming changes in the consular program are illustrated in Figure 6-1. As illustrated, changes in the foreign environments around the world as well as the Program clientele will lead to adjustments in consular policy, strategy and the Program itself. It can also be anticipated that significant changes will occur in the EAITC's network of missions due to resource constraints. Changes in this infrastructure will require that new and innovative ways be found to provide the services. While it can be predicted with a reasonable degree of confidence that major changes will occur, the determination of when they will occur and what their impact will be is difficult. The issues addressed in the balance of this section are considered essential in adapting the Consular Program to the Nineties.

6.3 Adapting EAITC's Consular Services

As has already been noted, the Auditor General's Report has recommended that EAITC more clearly define the range and extent of services provided to Canadians abroad. Concern was also expressed by the Auditor General that the general description of the range and extent of consular services as provided in the Manual of Consular Instruction left too much to the judgement of the local consular officers. It was further stated that:



Changes in Consular Services
Figure 6-1

"complete reliance on the individual judgement of consular staff in interpreting the manual heightens the risk of inconsistent treatment of Canadians."

The Auditor General's findings were based on on-site observations at selected posts.

The projected increases in the number of Canadians travelling and working abroad in the nineties will generate substantial increases in demand for consular services. Several of the missions surveyed during the Evaluation predict substantial increases over the next three years.

Interviews with the travel and insurance industry indicated that there are several areas where the Canadian public travelling abroad could obtain adequate protection and/or insurance in medical and crime related incidents. Depending upon the extent of industry's coverage and the level of development of the host country's medical and police services, the involvement of the private sector could help to reduce the demands for consular services at the missions. At the same time EAITC's consular responsibilities will continue in less-developed countries or in specific situations where private industry is unable to meet the needs of consular clients.

Action to limit consular services of a discretionary nature and to encourage greater private industry involvement would involve several elements. These include directives to the consular officers at each consular post, additional training on how to tactfully handle the changes, and efforts to educate the travelling public on the services available and not available within the Consular Program. Failure to handle significant changes in services in a responsible manner could have serious political repercussions.

More attention should be paid in focusing effort on higher priority activities. This will require more careful planning and greater operational control at the missions and more functional supervision from Headquarters. Therefore it is recommended:

That the missions be directed to focus on the services considered to be of higher priority and to limit discretionary services such as the provision of general information. That the implementation of this recommendation be monitored as a part of the mission planning exercise.

6.4 Demand Management

The demand for consular services is strongly influenced by the historical role which EAITC has played in looking after the interests of Canadians abroad. However, opportunities exist for limiting these demands for services by improving the public awareness of potential problems in travelling abroad and making greater use of services now available through the private sector, as suggested in the previous sub-section. This was the conclusion reached after consultation with officials in the travel industry and provincial governments.

Officials in the travel industry noted that while the booklet "Bon Voyage" has been very helpful, more should be done. Suggestions included the issuance of special bulletins on problem areas or situations which travel agents could use to advise their clients or insert into the travellers' information hand-outs. They also noted that more attention should be paid to keeping the travel industry informed and expressed concern that the Department had ceased to send out representatives to travel conventions.

The intervention of provincial governments in the travel industry varies from province to province. Ontario, for example, has taken action to make the travel agents accountable for fully advising overseas travellers on conditions in the country of their designation. Officials in the Alberta government said that to date the government prefers to let the travel industry regulate itself.

The approach by Ontario and possibly other provinces would help to reduce the demand for consular services.

Action by EAITC to limit the growth in demand for services should be developed through a process of consultations with the provinces and travel industry. Therefore it is recommended:

That EAITC institute a process of consultations with the provincial governments and the travel and related industries to encourage greater use of private sector services.

That EAITC take a more active role in improving the public's awareness of potential travel problems through such mechanisms as travel bulletins and a "hot line" for travel agents.

6.5 Development of Future Consular Officers

The changing environment in which consular officers work will generate the need for a different mix of abilities and skills. Particular factors that will cause this are the increasing complexity of citizenship, legal and notarial cases. Child custody cases are also expected to increase significantly in the next decade. Questions which need to be addressed with regards to the development of consular officers include:

.should the consular officers be generalist or specialist?

.what type of skill inventory should be developed for assigning officers (at present EAITC does not have a skill inventory)? and

.what combination of training, both formal and on-the-job, should be developed?

Answers to these questions will require substantial inputs from the personnel knowledgeable in the field. Therefore it is recommended:

That the Consular and Immigration Affairs Bureau (JID), in cooperation with the Training and Development Division (HPF), establish a small task force to prepare a long term training program for the future consular officers

6.6 Future Difficulties in Delivering Services

The growing restraints in resources can be expected to lead to significant modification in EAITC's global network of missions. The need for representation which is already provided in many tourist areas and smaller countries beyond the main missions by honorary consuls can be expected to increase. In recent years EAITC has increased the number of honorary consuls to 50 to meet this demand. Also the Department has developed reciprocal arrangements for providing consular services with Australia in some 12 locations. Time did not permit the kind of thorough investigation required to deal effectively with the relative merits of these arrangements during the Evaluation. However it is clear that there is a need to develop innovative ways of providing consular services. Therefore it is recommended:

- That JID continue to explore and develop innovative ways of delivering consular services.

In making this recommendation it is noted that it is important to launch the process and that the changes in delivery will probably be a series of adjustments as opposed to major organizational changes. Such a process should include expanded consultations with organizations in the private sector offering related services and other like-minded agencies or countries such as the United States.

Answers to these questions will require substantial inputs from the personnel knowledgeable in the field. Therefore it is recommended:

That the Consular and Immigration Affairs Bureau (JID), in cooperation with the Training and Development Division (HPF) establish a small task force to prepare a long term training program for the future consular officers.

APPENDIX A

Specific Recommendations, 1981 Program Evaluation

- (a) The Department should seek to establish a basic policy for the Consular Program carrying Ministerial judgement and support.
- (b) The Bureau of Consular Services should upgrade its training procedures by expanding and enriching the pre-posting training in Canada, by providing orientation material for newly appointed locally-engaged staff abroad, and by seeking ways to increase the transfer of knowledge from experienced to neophyte staff.
- (c) The Bureau of Consular Services should upgrade its reporting system for Consular work to the point where the Bureau knows the major activities at each Post; approximately how much time is spent in each, and how the work is apportioned.
- (d) The Bureau of Consular Services should institute and maintain the practice of keeping up-to-date 'Post binders' giving an overview of the Consular Program as practiced at each Post.
- (e) Consular Awareness should form a recognized part of the Consular Program at Posts, and materials should be prepared and regularly revised to serve this end.
- (f) The availability of the booklet "Bon Voyage, But ..." should be advertised on a trial basis through travel agents and in selected newspapers. If a significant demand for the booklet results, consideration should be given to repeating this regularly.
- (g) A more detailed cost/benefit study should be undertaken to assess the merits of centralizing passport services in the United States and separating this operation from the Consular Program. This study should include as one alternative the use of two locations, one in the East and one in the West (New York and Los Angeles).

APPENDIX B

Interviews with Travel and Related Organizations

1. M. Assanta Uffer-Marcolongo, President, Foundation for the Support of International Medical Training.
2. Edward Browlee, Executive Director, Great Lakes Hostelling Association.
3. Helga Schnider, Manager, Youth Hostel Association Travel.
4. Jill Wykes, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Tour Operators.
5. Penn Lewis, Director, Travel Industry Sales, Hilton International.
6. D. McMillan, Vice-President, Operations, Holiday Inns.
7. Alan Rimmington, Director of Sales, Thomson Vacations.
8. Cheryl A. Watson, Marketing Manager, Direct Travel Plans, Blue Cross.
9. Daniel R. Burns, Manager, Insurance Services (Global Assist) American Express.
10. Bruce J. Erskine, Director, Cardmember Financial Services American Express.
11. John Ingle, President, Normad International Travel Insurance.
12. Robin Ingle Jr., President, Travel Insurance, M.H. Ingle & Associates, Insurance Brokers Limited.

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