



AUDIT
OF
THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION

BRIDGETOWN

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Audit Division (SIV)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An audit of the General Relations (GR), International Business Development (IBD), Consular, and Administration Programs was conducted in Bridgetown during the period May 20 to 24, 2002. A previous audit of the Administration and Consular Programs was carried out in October 1993. The Mission represents Canada's interests in seven countries and three British overseas territories and offers trade and consular services in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

MANAGEMENT OF THE MISSION

The Head of Mission's (HOM) efforts have contributed to raising Canada's profile and to facilitating delivery of Mission Programs to their clients. Management of the Mission, however, has been difficult in the past year, with strained relations between the Administration Program and new Program Managers. A more pro-active approach to these issues is having positive results. The HOM has had to increase efforts to improve management cohesion and enhance communications across the Mission. Reorganisation of the Administration Program with the creation of a Deputy MCO position by consolidating the two CR positions would also help address this issue.

GENERAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

Present planning efforts are to be encouraged with more emphasis on Public Affairs. Regular monitoring and direction by the HOM are also required. The Program is effectively covering a very wide-ranging territory, but more regular travel is required of the Program Manager. The Program would benefit from the reclassification of the Public Affairs Assistant to an Officer level.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (IBD) PROGRAM

The IBD Program is well managed, with a comprehensive planning and follow-up structure recently put in place. The new Program Manager has managed to create an effective team and to revitalize the IBD Program.

CONSULAR PROGRAM

The Consular Program is functioning well, although reporting relationships need to be clarified. The recommended creation a DMCO position would better balance the workload. Consular services are effectively delivered.

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

There is a need for more structured management and an improvement in communications. Clients have not been fully satisfied with the level of services delivered, brought on in part by an inadequate reference level and the poor performance of the Property Section. Only recently have steps been taken to address the issues facing Administration. New staff have been added to the Property Section and an increase to the budget from HQ allowed for the upgrading of certain staff quarters. Service standards are to be introduced which will make clear to clients the roles of each member of the Program, the service limitations, and the time lines for service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION STATUS

A total of 33 audit recommendations are raised in the report, 32 are addressed to the Mission and one is addressed to Headquarters (HQ). Management has responded to each recommendation indicating action already taken or decisions made, as well as future action. Of the 33 recommendations, management has stated that 18 recommendations have been implemented. For each of the remaining 15 recommendations, management has indicated the initiatives in progress or the intended future action.

MANAGEMENT OF THE MISSION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 The Mission is headed by an experienced and engaged Head of Mission (HOM) who has contributed to the tradition of excellent bilateral relations with the Government of Barbados and the other countries and territories of accreditation. Program Managers and staff appreciate the level of involvement, support and interest shown by the HOM for their Programs. Difficulties exist due to a lack of teamwork and cohesion at the management level which are, at the same time, affecting staff morale and communications in the Mission.

1.2 Management Cohesion

1.2.1 The Mission has experienced a difficult time in the past year. Administration Program difficulties in responding to and accommodating three new Program Managers have resulted in a lack of confidence in Administration and strained relations with Program Managers. This, combined with overly demanding Program Managers, has had a continuing negative effect on the Management team and has required excessive involvement of the HOM in routine administrative and operational matters. The HOM had proposed a management retreat but conditions for success were not considered optimal at the time. Efforts to foster team building and trust are required to establish effective management cohesion.

Recommendation for the Mission

1.2.2 In consultation with CFSI, the Mission should develop a team building strategy.

Mission Response

1.2.2 Working with CFSI, the Mission held a management retreat at the Official Residence on November 12 and an all-Mission retreat at the Almond Bay conference complex the following day. For both retreats we arranged via CFSI for a consultant to be made available to act as a facilitator and to work closely with the Mission in organizational analysis and in developing team building skills. We feel the retreats were a good starting point in our efforts to establish effective management cohesion.

1.3 Communications

1.3.1 Communications and teamwork at the staff level need to be improved. Staff do not feel that they receive enough information regarding the Mission's direction, decisions made and activities, events and results, particularly of other Programs. They therefore do not feel involved and do not have a sense of being part of a team. This in turn affects morale and motivation and ultimately productivity. Improvements cited include more general staff meetings to share information, discuss problems, and highlight successes, more interaction of staff with management, i.e. involvement in meetings, copies of e-mails, notification of up-coming events, etc., and the circulation of CMM minutes.

Recommendation for the Mission

1.3.2 The Mission should make efforts to improve communications. Consideration should be given to holding more frequent and structured staff meetings, allowing more staff involvement at the management level, and circulating CMM minutes.

Mission Response

1.3.2 We discussed means to improve communications at the retreats. All Program Managers are now debriefing their staff regularly on discussions held both at the weekly Program Managers Operations and the monthly CMM meetings. In addition, all-staff meetings are now being scheduled on a bi-monthly basis while the practice of monthly meetings between the LES Executive and the MCO has been maintained.

1.4 Reorganization of Administration

1.4.1 Recent difficulties with certain aspects of the management, operation and services being provided by the Administration Program highlight the need for reclassification and realignment of the existing structure. The need for two CR positions, a Vice-Consul and an Office/Property Manager, is questionable. The Vice-Consul position is under-utilized and the level of service provided by the Property Section has been inadequate. With the MCO's position being reclassified from an AS-04 to an AS-06 level, savings could be realized by collapsing the two CR positions into a Deputy MCO position. The job package would be enriched by including both Administration and Consular responsibilities and would serve as an ideal developmental position for a junior Administration/Consular Officer.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 1.4.2 In consultation with LGD and HPF, the Mission should consider converting the two existing CR positions into a DMCO position.**

Mission Response

- 1.4.2 The Mission agrees with the recommendation to convert the two existing CR positions into a DMCO position and to this end both incumbent CRs whose postings are scheduled to terminate in the summer of 2003 have been advised that extensions on their assignments will not be entertained. We are now in the process of submitting a job description for a DMCO position, including a revised organization chart incorporating this change. We are as well reviewing the job packages of the other CBS and LES staff members who will be required to accept portions of the duties of the one CR position being deleted.**

GENERAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

2.1 Management

2.1.1 The General Relations (GR) Program is headed by an FS-02 Program Manager acting in an EX-01 position. The Program Manager (PM) is supported by a Secretary (LE-06). As the PM is in the first year of his assignment, Program objectives have only recently been developed and documented. Until now the Program has been primarily reacting to priorities and engaged in areas such as security, which are related to the PM's expertise and interest. The Program's objectives include bilateral and multilateral political relations, public affairs and media relations, and security reform. For each objective, activities, desired outcomes and performance measures have been identified. As well, specific travel and hospitality events and costs have been identified and linked to each objective. For Public Affairs, a \$10,533 Public Initiatives Fund (PIF) has been allocated to 13 projects.

2.1.2 More focus is required to ensure that the plans in place are used to provide direction to the Program and to report on-going activity, achievements and changes. In particular, increased visits by the Program Manager to the many countries and territories of accreditation is essential to establish and maintain contacts, and to promote Canada's interests. By adhering to these plans under the guidance and coordination of the HOM, the Program will enhance the support and back-up to the HOM that was formerly lacking.

Recommendation for the Mission

2.1.3 The Mission should ensure an increased level of involvement and participation of the GR Program Manager in bilateral activities.

Mission Response

2.1.3 Agreed. Detailed travel, reporting and hospitality plans are in place and being implemented which will ensure a high level of participation by the GR Program Manager in bilateral activities (including visits to all states of accreditation). An integrated Public Affairs Program, now supported by the upgraded GR program officer (LES) position, should enhance the effectiveness of Mission outreach and assist in the achievement of program, HOM and Mission objectives. In addition to regular reporting on issues of interest, specific trends and problems have been identified for detailed analysis by the GR program.

2.2 Resources

2.2.1 Program resources are limited. The Secretary position is held by an expatriate spouse whose experience and knowledge allow support above the substantive level of LE-06. Plans are underway to formally enhance the job description and reclassify the position to officer level. An officer level position will allow the Program to develop a more comprehensive and professional public affairs and media relations capability to support both the GR Program and the Mission. With an officer level position, some level of support resource would be required, perhaps one that could be a shared position with the IBD Program. Consideration should also be given to having the education file, currently handled by the IBD Program, become part of the GR Program where it traditionally is part of public affairs activities.

Recommendation for the Mission

2.2.2 The Mission should reclassify the GR support position to an officer level and consider sharing an IBD support position with the Program.

Mission Response

2.2.2 The Mission has reclassified the GR support position to an officer level and employed the Commercial Officer who has been laterally transferred from the IBD Program. The cost of the reclassification in question has been significant adding BBD 75,708 to the budget.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (IBD) PROGRAM

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The IBD Program is headed by an experienced Senior Trade Commissioner (STC), supported by a Commercial Officer (LE-09), a Commercial Assistant (LE-06), and a Secretary (LE-06). For one year until the summer of 2001, the Program was without a STC, with the Commercial Officer in effect heading the Program.

3.1.2 The IBD Program has an extensive territory to cover, including 12 countries and territories. This places heavy demands on the travel and hospitality budgets, making it necessary to rely on contact through alternative avenues. In addition to provision of the six core services, the Program is involved in the Trade Policy issues regarding the double taxation agreement and the Canada-Caricom Free Trade Agreement. The region is a large recipient of Canadian investment, with more than 1400 Canadian companies having an offshore presence in Barbados. Canada has a positive image in the region and is considered a reliable supplier of expertise and equipment. The Program prepares regular reports on economic and commercial trends and developments in the region, coordinates visits of Canadian business and government officials and conducts outreach through visits and involvement in trade shows and conferences.

3.2 Management

3.2.1 Since arriving in the summer of 2001, the STC has focussed on positioning the IBD Program more strategically for the opportunities that exist, with specific attention given to telecommunications, general trading, construction, agri-food and services. The STC has also committed to developing more of a team approach and collegial atmosphere amongst the staff, and has developed personal objectives which have been presented to and discussed with the HOM. Weekly meetings are held with all staff of the Program to provide updates, share information, allocate work and discuss issues. The Program has been instilled with a sense of direction along with the structure required to ensure success.

Planning

3.2.2 The Program has developed key objectives and, for each objective, specific strategies are identified along with associate means to assess outputs achieved. In addition, major trade and education shows and fairs, outgoing missions, market information/intelligence gathering activities and outreach activities are documented and described in a workplan. Development of workplans involves all staff and the HOM. Reports are prepared on the Program's Client Service Fund (CSF) Plan,

industry sectors, Canadian companies exporting to the region, shipping statistics and updates of the Mission WIN system.

3.3 New Approach

3.3.1 The New Approach has been well incorporated into the IBD Program. Staff have received training and are delivering the six core services. A sample of core services delivered by the Program were examined, including key contacts completed, visitor information provided, additional services provided, market prospects and face-to-face briefings. As well, a record of trade access issues and their status was reviewed. Enquiries are tracked in WIN and monitored for compliance to the five-day turnaround standard. The Program is using the PSU, IBOC and Horizons, where appropriate, to deal with global enquiries, government tendering and background checks.

3.3.2 The IBD Program initiated a unique trade show with the first ever “Trade Show on Board”, held in March 2002. This event brought together 40 companies in two sectors on a cruise ship in the Carribean, with six shows in six countries over seven days resulting in exposure to 1200 local buyers. The show was extremely successful, with considerable press coverage and a significant increase in local contacts and intelligence. In addition to organizing similar events, the Program has plans to hold a Canadian Information, Technology and Telecommunications showcase in November, to participate in a series of regional and international education fairs, execute outreach to two sector specific events in Miami, and to possibly hold a Virtual Trade Mission for the International Financial Institutions sector.

3.4 Resources

3.4.1 The IBD Program in Bridgetown has minimal resources, a large territory to cover and, with the new STC, an ambitious plan to carry out. The Secretary position is occupied up to 80 percent in education related activities. This workload has evolved over time and coincided with the interests and capabilities of the Secretary. The STC and HOM recognize the need to shift the emphasis on this file to more traditional trade activities while retaining the higher level value-added activities. Consideration also needs to be given to placing education activities under the GR Program, coordinating them with Public Affairs.

Recommendation for the Mission

3.4.2 The Mission should update the position requirements for the Secretary to better reflect Program priorities and activities.

Mission Response

3.4.2 Agreed. Job descriptions are currently being edited for LES IBD staff at the Mission.

CONSULAR PROGRAM

4.1 Management of the Program

4.1.1 The Mission provides effective Consular services to 12 countries and territories. The Consular Program is under the supervision of the MCO, who spends approximately 30 percent of her time managing the Program. The day-to-day operations are officially the responsibility of a CR-05 Vice Consul, who has, according to the organisation chart, a Consular Officer (LE-07) and two Consular Assistants reporting to him. One Assistant is an LE-06 and the other is an LE-05 added in March 2001 under the Consular Program Integrity exercise. The Vice Consul divides his time between Consular and Registry/Communications duties, with approximately 70 percent spent on the Consular Program. His office is away from the Consular staff on the second floor of the Chancery, which limits his ability to provide managerial direction. The Vice Consul is less directly involved than he should be. Often the MCO is the person staff consult with on Consular issues due to the proximity of her office. Staff are well trained, and the LES are taking French language training once per week to enhance the bilingual capability of the Section.

4.1.2 A meeting with the MCO takes place each morning, lasting from 15 to 40 minutes depending on cases and information to review. This is excessive in terms of effective use of management and staff time and the relative routine nature of the caseload. Given this level of management involvement and that case management is a primary function of the Program, Headquarters has commented that response time from the Mission to requests for information is slow. The Mission reports that there can be trouble getting responses from local authorities, but it is important at least to call HQ with an interim response, if that is all that is available. All updates and notes on cases should be input to CAMANT on a priority basis as actions take place. The Consular statistics logs had fallen behind for nearly a year, but were all entered and filed at the time of the audit.

4.1.3 Work plans for the Section have not been written and a Consular budget, particularly relating to travel, has not been set up. The nature of Consular work means it is often reactive, with well established structures to respond effectively. However, an annual plan would provide overall direction and help ensure all staff know what the schedule and milestones are so action can be taken in advance. This would be useful, for example, in the area of contingency planning. There are 13 contingency plans requiring annual updating. There were delays this past year as the Mission had not prioritized this activity and planned enough time to execute the updates. As well, when all staff clearly understand their own individual work objectives, the performance review process should be much smoother and, in cases of poorer performance, less contentious.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 4.1.4 The Mission should prepare a Consular Program annual plan to include specific targets and objectives with time frames for both the section and for individual staff.**
- 4.1.5 The Mission should provide timely responses to Headquarters requests for information or action on Consular cases.**

Mission Responses

- 4.1.4 An annual plan will be prepared to establish a schedule and milestones in the following Consular areas: updating of contingency plans for our 13 countries and territories, including the list of contacts; updating of travel reports for our 13 countries and territories; and updating of ROCA—especially as regards designation of wardens. Other areas of Consular (passport issuance, case management, citizenship service) are reactive, with flexible schedules and milestones.**
- 4.1.5 Agreed. We have instituted corrective action to ensure Headquarters is provided with the kind of response time required to ensure quality service.**

4.2 Service to Canadians

4.2.1 The Consular Program is responsible for the provision of services to Canadian citizens as well as passport and citizenship services in Mission's territory. At the time of the audit, there were eight Canadians in prison. Prison visits take place every two months, while previously the interim was quarterly. There are 100 registered Canadians in Barbados according to the Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) database.

4.2.2 The Mission has an extensive warden system for the islands, with a total of seventeen individuals spread across the territory. More recently, a warden system has been devised for Barbados itself. Last fall, a warden conference was held in Bridgetown, with the goal of informing the group of the latest information on the Program and the recent trends and to show appreciation for their presence and the work they do. Previously, wardens were generally contacted only for emergencies. A busy agenda was planned and executed, and by all reports the warden group benefited from this conference.

4.2.3 A Transfer of Offenders Treaty (TOOT) has not been concluded for Barbados but negotiations have been underway for over two years. It appears the

Mission is close to settling an agreement, and the involvement of the HOM has been instrumental in advancing this file. This goal should continue to be a top priority.

4.2.4 The Vice Consul maintains a Consular petty cash *** for use in serving clients in emergency situations. This was reconciled. The petty cash is, however, not used often and the need to continue to maintain this fund is questionable given that most clients in urgent need of money can get funds transferred in short order.

Recommendation for the Mission

4.2.5 The Mission should consider eliminating the Consular petty cash fund.

Mission Response

4.2.5 The Mission is reluctant to eliminate the Consular petty cash fund completely. There have been times in the recent past when funding has not been available via mission accounts here (i.e. after office hours and at end of month close off) and we have needed to access some cash. We have accordingly taken steps to reduce the petty cash fund to the equivalent of *, which is the maximum amount which can be distributed on Mission authority to a client in an emergency situation.**

4.3 Passports

4.3.1 There are between 75 and 100 passports issued each month. Passports are delivered within five working days if the application is made in person, and ten working days if mailed in. Revenues are collected by the Consular Assistant and deposited with the Accountant, as required. An official receipt is issued for the full amount of passport and consular service fees. A working supply of passport blanks and labels is kept with the Consular Assistant, with the bulk supply of passports and labels properly secured within the Chancery. No discrepancies were noted in the physical count of passports, although the most recent shipment of 500 blanks, received in December 2001, had not been counted and entered into the PMP. As such, the actual number "On Hand" reflected in the PMP is not accurate.

4.3.2 The Consular Assistant's office is the actual Consular booth and service window. This area was formerly a storage closet and its conversion has very much improved service to clients. The Mission does not have a cash register and instead uses a cashbox for storage of funds. A cash register would improve cash control and could also be used to issue receipts for payment.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 4.3.3 The Mission should count the latest shipment of blanks and enter the figures into the PMP.**
- 4.3.4 The Mission should consider the acquisition of a cash register to better control cash and to issue payment receipts.**

Mission Responses

- 4.3.3 All passport blanks have now been counted and figures entered into the PMP.**
- 4.3.4 The Mission agrees that a cash register would better improve cash control and could be used to issue payment receipts. Action is in process to source a cash register locally.**

4.4 Honorary Consul

4.4.1 There is one Honorary Consul located in St. Maarten. This position technically reports to The Hague but for practical purposes reports to the Mission in Barbados. Administration for the Honorary Consul is thus managed by the Mission. Costs for the office are very reasonable and services are reported to be well delivered. The Honorary Consul also participates in other areas of Program delivery, such as answering Trade related inquiries. The Mission feels another Honorary Consul could be placed in Antigua. This requirement can be pursued through JPD's annual request for Honorary Consul resources.

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

5.1 Management of the Program

5.1.1 The Administration Program is managed by the MCO, an AS-02 acting in an AS-04 position which is being re-classified to AS-06. There are four employees in Administration reporting directly to the MCO: a CR-06 Office/Property Manager (OM), an LE-07 Accountant, an LE-07 Systems Administrator and an LE-05 Administrative Assistant. In all, there are 14 positions within Administration, one of which is currently vacant. The HOM takes an active interest in the Program and confers regularly with the MCO. The MCO divides her time between Administration and Consular in the ratio of 70:30.

5.1.2 There is scope to improve the overall management of the Program. Communication needs to be improved and a work plan for the Program needs to be developed. Much of the work is currently done on a reactive basis. There are no weekly meetings with supervisors and staff meetings are held only quarterly. There are no written objectives for Program staff. Not all clients are satisfied with the quality of services delivered and service standards are only now in the process of being drafted.

5.1.3 The Mission has been constrained by a shortfall in its reference level. This has brought added pressure on Administration, and particularly the MCO, who has had to freeze all discretionary spending and postpone many projects. This situation was aggravated by the MCO not presenting the budget problems to the CMM, but instead communicating only with the HOM on the subject. Program Managers are now aware of the budget limitations. The MCO has communicated at length with AAM concerning this deficit. The shortfall resulted primarily from increases in natural gas costs, protection services, and SQ rents. In the case of rents, decisions on new SQs (costing significantly more) were made without consulting AAM. AAM's Deputy Director visited the Mission in March 2002 and concluded that the reference level was, in fact, \$60,000 under what was described as the "bare-bones" budget proposal. The reference level for 2002-2003 has been increased by \$150,000, yet is \$4,000 less than what was actually spent last year when a freeze on all discretionary spending was imposed. A business case is needed to better present to Headquarters the dilemma this Mission finds itself in. Administration is having to spend considerable time and effort in continuously trying to stretch limited financial resources and, in the process, is being severely criticised for responding negatively to the many demands it receives.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.1.4 A comprehensive work plan should be developed to identify planned activities in relation to the Program's goals and objectives. This

work plan should be used as a control mechanism to monitor performance and as a communication tool to report results.

- 5.1.5 Weekly meetings should be held between the MCO and supervisors, and a monthly meeting should be held with all Program staff to ensure communications are understood and acted upon.**
- 5.1.6 A business case should be developed and presented to AAM rationalizing the need to increase the Mission's reference level.**

Mission Responses

- 5.1.4 A work plan for the Administration Program will be developed identifying planned activities in relation to clearly articulated goals and objectives.**
- 5.1.5 Weekly structured meetings are now being held between the recently arrived MCO and his program supervisors. The MCO is also conferring on a daily basis with all administrative staff to ensure communications are understood by all and acted upon.**
- 5.1.6 This Mission's reference level has been increased by \$145,000 over the last two Fiscal Years. In addition to this the Mission is now provided with Australian co-location funding, which this F/Y has totaled \$69,000, and for capital funding the Mission received a one time infusion of \$75,000 in July 2002. The Mission believes the above cash infusions are about as far as the Americas Branch can go at this time to put operational and capital budgets on track here to meet the many demands with which it is faced.**

5.2 Human Resources

5.2.1 Human Resources management at the Mission is the responsibility of the MCO, with the assistance of the OM and an Administrative Assistant (LE-05). The OM essentially manages enhanced reliability checks for newly engaged LES or emergency employees. These are up to date for all employees after a comprehensive review took place in March 2001. Generally, the personnel files are in good order. The revised LES Handbook had recently been completed and submitted to HQ.

5.2.2 The Administrative Assistant's job description contains a minimal amount of human resources duties consisting mainly of keeping leave and attendance records. In speaking to staff, many felt unclear whom to see for LES issues. The Administrative Assistant does not have any duties related to the provision of human resources advice reflected in her job description but receives many queries on salary and benefits from

staff. She is able to answer some of these but would require training in this area in order to handle more queries. The Mission should identify one resource to act as LES personnel advisor to whom all questions on LES salary and benefits could be addressed.

5.2.3 Many job descriptions in the Administration Section were recently reviewed, updated and signed off. In the case of one Commercial Assistant and the Systems Administrator, the review revealed that the job descriptions need revision to ensure coincidence with actual duties performed. Thereafter, these job descriptions should be reviewed by the Classification Committee.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.2.4 The Mission should review the Administrative Assistant's job description with a view to adding HR advisory duties.

5.2.5 The Mission should convene a Classification Committee to review all recently updated job descriptions.

Mission Responses

5.2.4 All job duties within the Administrative Section, including that of Administrative Assistant, are currently being reviewed—not just in conjunction with the need to provide a LES HR resource, but also to take into account that the Mission will lose a CR-06 OM/Property Manager resource if plans are realized to collapse the two current CR positions into a Deputy MCO position tasked primarily with Consular responsibilities.

5.2.5 All job descriptions will be reviewed by the Classification Committee, once updated.

5.2.6 LES appraisals are up to date, although some had only recently been done. Where appraisals are delayed with justification, employees do not have their increments withheld. In one case, an appraisal covered three years, with narrative comments sent in after departure from the Mission. The new Program Manager (PM) received these notes and then added comments to the previous PM's input. Where one PM departs the Mission, the appraisal should be written up and signed off by that officer, ideally prior to departure. The succeeding PM should appraise the employees for the periods he or she supervises.

5.2.7 Leave and attendance is generally well controlled with the use of a detailed spreadsheet showing opening and closing balances and all activity by month for each employee. Another sheet shows all employees with the totals for the year.

This is managed by the Administrative Assistant, and involves receiving leave and attendance sheets from each employee monthly and verifying these. Sick leave is now non-cumulative, but employees having accumulated credits under the former regulations were permitted to retain these credits.

5.2.8 A review of the leave records at year-end (FY 2001-2002) showed that six employees had small (less than 7.5 hours) negative leave balances, and that two employees were carrying over a full year's worth of annual leave credits. Negative leave balances should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, and large leave balances should be reduced or liquidated.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.2.9 The HOM should ensure performance appraisals are completed by the responsible Program Manager prior to departure from the Mission.

5.2.10 The Mission should attempt to liquidate excessive leave balances within the current fiscal year.

Mission Responses

5.2.9 Agreed. This practice will be instituted.

5.2.10 The Mission will attempt to liquidate excessive LES leave balances as budget allocations will allow.

Arrivals Booklet

5.2.11 The Mission's "Manual of Protocol and Administrative Procedures" is a booklet containing various information for new arrivals at the Mission. It contains service standards for many of the administrative functions managed by the Mission or local authorities. A diplomatic note from the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) from March 2001 details the service standards for a number of services the MFA provides, but some of these are either not mentioned in the arrivals booklet or do not in every case match the service standard noted in the booklet. The Mission has also drafted separate Administration Service Standards, and it will be important for all these sources of information to be consistent to avoid misleading clients. Elsewhere in the booklet, updates are required because some information is nearly two years old, some pages have been inserted twice, and there are other minor errors. It would also benefit from a better layout and organization, such as adding section tabs for ease of reference, which would permit readers to navigate the document more easily.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 5.2.12 The Mission should carefully review the arrivals booklet to ensure consistency and currency of information.**

Mission Response

- 5.2.12 Agreed. Mission has assigned the task of reviewing the arrivals booklet to our recently hired community co-ordinator.**

Australia Co-Location

5.2.13 Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Australia and Canada, DFAIT provides a number of administrative services. For example, the two LES that work within the Australian High Commission (AHC) come under the DFAIT LES Terms and Conditions of Employment. The AHC is planning to eliminate one Driver position because the range of duties now includes office work in addition to driving. It will be important for the Mission to delete the position, to consult closely with HRL and to use all appropriate documentation to ensure there are no unforeseen obligations on the part of DFAIT toward this employee.

5.2.14 LES training is offered to staff in a variety of areas, especially those positions requiring official languages ability. Section training requirements are known to Program Managers, but this information is not rolled up into a Mission training plan. A Mission-wide survey could be done to collect information on what training staff have received and in what areas training is required. A training plan would allow for coordination between sections for similar training and could thus identify areas where costs could be shared. The training history of staff would all be in one document as well, allowing for easy reference and for new Program Managers to see clearly what training their staff have had.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 5.2.15 The Mission should draw up a Mission-wide training plan based on a survey of all employees.**

Mission Response

- 5.2.15 Agreed. The Mission has asked all LES employees to complete a Training Needs Assessment Survey. The next steps will be to have these surveys reviewed by Program Managers and the Mission Training Co-ordinator and finally to roll them into a Mission training plan. The Mission will continue efforts already underway to reach this objective.**

LES Association

5.2.16 The LES Association was only formed in November 2001, although encouraged by management since 1999. It currently meets monthly with the MCO and quarterly with the HOM. There are a number of issues of concern to the LES all of which are currently under consideration by management. These include:

- **Career Management:** This is a priority item because there has been little movement of LES although several vacancies have occurred over the years.
- **Training:** The Association believes the Mission should apprise staff of potential openings well in advance, identify potential candidates to fill the position, have these individuals trained, and, in the interim, give these individuals the opportunity to fill the position while the incumbent is on leave.
- **Consistency of Work Environment:** The LES raised issues concerning work consistency with the changeover of CBS.
- **Personnel Issues:** LES believe there should be one LES responsible for HR issues, thereby providing continuity and resident expertise. They believe that currently the HR function is diffused amongst too many staff, which causes confusion and is not effective.

5.3 Physical Resources

5.3.1 The Physical Resources function falls under the responsibility of the OM who reports to the MCO. The OM has an LE-05 Property Assistant, a Receptionist and two Drivers reporting to him. Reporting to the Property Assistant is a Maintenance Assistant, a Gardener and two Cleaners. Another Cleaner position is vacant and the intent is to fill it with a handyman.

5.3.2 The Mission Property Management Plan for 2002-2003 is up to date. Overall, the quality of SQs is good. There are currently no accommodation deficiency adjustments (ADAs). The rental market is tight, quality housing is expensive and the Mission is restricted to certain areas of the island due to various factors. The three recent acquisitions are all three-year leases within an easy commute of the Chancery.

5.3.3 The OM, the Assistant and the Maintenance Assistant meet daily to review the workload, including new work orders received. The MCO attends this meeting once a week as part of overseeing the function. The Property Assistant and Maintenance Assistant have only been with the Mission for six months and their performance, by all accounts, is far superior to their predecessors.

5.3.4 Chancery space is becoming crowded. The Australians share space on the mezzanine where they have four employees. Air quality in the Chancery is poor and, at the time of audit, the Mission was awaiting a report on an evaluation conducted by the PPMO from Haiti. Air quality studies were previously conducted in 1997 and 1998. A building condition assessment was also carried out in March and the Mission is awaiting this report as well.

5.3.5 The Official Residence (OR) offers suitable representational facilities with the main reception area being the patio. The perimeter wall to the grounds needs to be repaired as the fence has fallen, presenting a security risk. The cottage contiguous to the OR, which serves as a guest house, requires total upgrading and renovation. The grounds are in poor condition and the Mission believes a complete re-landscaping and investment in an irrigation system are required to bring them to an acceptable standard. SRSF have provided funding to repair the perimeter fence (\$40,000) and to construct a barrier-free washroom (\$40,000) in this year's work plan. The landscaping project has not been programmed within SRSF's five year work plan. A building condition assessment of the OR was also conducted in March.

5.3.6 Property management came under intense pressure following the arrival of three new Program Managers in the summer of 2001. There were complaints that their SQs were not properly prepared when they arrived. There was also no Community Coordinator at the time to greet the newcomers to the Mission. Because many of the complaints were valid, the Program has taken a number of corrective steps to remedy the situation. The MCO has become much more engaged in property issues, the Property and Maintenance Assistants were replaced, property files were re-built, preventive maintenance visits involving several contractors have been introduced, and significant monies were spent on upgrading these properties. Funding was largely provided from SRSF following a visit to the Mission in March 2002.

5.3.7 The volume of work orders is now declining but between January 1 and the time of audit, there were 142 written orders and an estimated 100 others received orally. The large majority of these requests came from the three new Program Managers. The Section has recently re-introduced the electronic work order and is using Outlook to track them by SQ. A more systematic arrangement is needed whereby occupants submit a work order listing all the items that need attending to, say, once a month. This would allow the Property Section better to plan and organize the workload. Emergency situations would be attended to immediately.

5.3.8 The Section carefully monitors the electricity consumption at SQs, as electricity is very expensive. A record is maintained showing the average monthly charge at each SQ. Charges at two SQs stand out because they are double the average of the others. The Section suspects this is a function of all air conditioners running continuously. Notwithstanding that this information is collected, it is not being communicated to the occupants of these SQs in an attempt to make occupants aware of the high cost and hopefully to reduce the consumption.

5.3.9 Much has been accomplished by the Property Section leading up to the audit. Distribution accounts for all SQs were recently completed and Occupancy Agreements were signed. An auction was held to dispose of surplus furniture that was stored in the Chancery Annex, a large building that sits on the grounds of the Chancery that was formerly used by CIDA as office space during CIDA decentralization in the early 1990's. The Chancery carpets were cleaned for the first time in three years and the hallways and basement were re-organized. An arrival/removal checklist, which had not been used the previous summer and which would have averted some of the problems, is now mandatory. The distribution accounts for the Chancery and the storerooms in the Annex remain to be done.

5.3.10 Building condition reports for the Annex (Ambleside) and for one SQ (Applegrove) will be completed this summer. There are many options that the Department can consider with respect to the Ambleside property. These include disposing of the property, retrofitting the building (but this would be costly), or razing it and building a number of SQs on the site. The Department plans on evaluating these options in the near future.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.3.11 A business case should be submitted to SRSF to secure funding for re-landscaping the grounds and installing an irrigation system at the OR.

5.3.12 Occupants of SQs should submit a work order at the beginning of each month embracing all the repairs that are needed in order that the Property Section can better plan and organize its workload.

5.3.13 The distribution accounts for the Chancery and the Chancery Annex should be completed.

5.3.14 Measures should be taken to impress occupants of SQs of the high electricity costs and the need to reduce these costs, where possible.

Mission Responses

5.3.11 The business case for re-landscaping of grounds and installing an irrigation system at the OR was sent to SRSF. The Mission is basically at the maximum limit of capital projects which it can realistically take on between now and the end of the current F/Y. We propose to postpone the re-landscaping/irrigation system at the OR until next F/Y, by which time the rainy season here would have finished, and the above work could be programmed to be undertaken in conjunction with a planned HOM changeover.

- 5.3.12** The recommendation on submitting work orders at the beginning of each month was implemented here starting with November. The new system seems to be working well.
- 5.3.13** We will continue to work on bringing all distribution accounts up to date.
- 5.3.14** We will be communicating electricity consumption and cost by SQ to all occupants shortly. We do not, however, remain confident that costs will be significantly reduced. Please remember, BDGTN is a tropical post and there is a need to run A/Cs virtually everyday. There has been a recent outbreak of dengue fever here and staff are more inclined than ever to keep windows to their SQs closed (many do not have screens) and A/Cs on to avoid mosquito infestations.

Official Vehicles

5.3.15 The Mission has five official vehicles. Vehicle trip logs have been kept since January 2002 but are not being filled out consistently. For this important element of internal control to be effective, Drivers must be properly instructed on what to do. Logs must be reviewed by Mission management on a regular basis. Management can then draw conclusions on vehicle usage and on gas consumption. The LES Property Assistant has been on the job working only four months and has been busy clearing a backlog of work requests. It will be important for the OM to perform a regular analysis of vehicle logs.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 5.3.16** The Mission should ensure Drivers are filling out vehicle logs consistently. A regular analysis should also be performed.

Mission Response

- 5.3.16** Mission drivers are now filling out vehicle logs and these are being analyzed by both the LES Property Assistant and the MCO.

5.4 Finance

5.4.1 Financial management at the Mission is very good. The MCO oversees the Accounting Section which is staffed by an Accountant (LE-07) and an Assistant Accountant (LE-05). The LES are competent, having many years experience at the Mission. Full IMS training was provided to both staff, and both work regularly with the system. Monthly travel and hospitality reports are produced for each Program Manager to see where their portion of the Mission allocation stands.

5.4.2 A full month of accounts was reviewed in detail by the Audit Team, and was found to be in good order. Revenues are all accounted for, and deposits are made in a timely manner. Expenditures are explained and justified. The used official receipt booklets and encashed cheques are stored in the Accounting office, whereas they should be stored in the Mission vault.

5.4.3 The Mission produces 10-15 cheques daily, which are brought each day to the MCO for signing. It was suggested to group them and thus present cheques to the MCO for signature twice weekly. There is a petty cash held by the Administrative Assistant ***. It was reconciled and balanced. The Mission should investigate the practicality of obtaining an acquisition card for local purchases, with the aim of having one monthly invoice for many purchases and reducing the need for the petty cash.

5.4.4 LES pay is processed twice monthly, with printed cheques distributed to each employee. An improvement would be to have pay directly deposited, but there are some technicalities to address prior to implementing such a system. The Mission needs to consult closely with SMFF to ensure all Departmental regulations and security considerations are adhered to before proceeding with such a system. The payroll itself is signed by the OM, who, according to the EXT53 Signing Authority Form, does not have signing authority for staffing and pay. The payroll form can only be signed by the Mission Financial Officer (the MCO) or the HOM. Delegating signing authority to the OM is an option the Mission can consider.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.4.5 The Mission should investigate the idea of direct deposit for LES pay in close consultation with SMFF.

5.4.6 The Mission should ensure that the payroll form is signed by the MFO or the HOM, or delegate authority to the OM.

Mission Responses

5.4.5 We will investigate direct deposit of LES pay and, should it prove feasible, implement this practice.

5.4.6 The payroll form is now being signed by the MFO.

5.4.7 Mission hospitality files were reviewed and found to be in good order. It was noted that the HOM and the Program Managers retain the originals of the documentation supporting expenses attached to the EXT52s and the EXT904s. Originals must be kept by Accounts, with copies retained by the Officers if they wish. It was noted as well that the guidelines and hospitality unit costs for official functions have not been reviewed since 1999.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 5.4.8 The Mission should ensure original receipts for hospitality are retained by the Accounting Section.**
- 5.4.9 Hospitality guidelines and per capita costs should be reviewed to ensure their currency.**

Mission Responses

- 5.4.8 All original receipts for hospitality are now being retained by the Accounting Section.**
- 5.4.9 The hospitality guidelines and per capita costs were reviewed at CMM and new unit costs were established.**
- 5.4.10 Consular revenues have been increasing in recent years, and are now approaching ***. Official receipts are issued only for the Consular service fee and not for the full amount paid. An unofficial receipt is used for the passport fee portion. The Mission commented on the fact that with the recent fee increases, the amount required for deposit *** is reached very quickly ***. It would be more efficient to make deposits less frequently, but the Financial Management Manual is quite clear on this point. SMF should see if it might be possible to raise the limit. The addition of a cash register would further increase internal control and would also eliminate the need for a receipt to be written out for each payment received.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 5.4.11 The Mission should issue an official receipt for the full amount paid for the Consular service and the passport fees.**
- 5.4.12 The Mission should consider the acquisition of a cash register for Consular revenues.**

Mission Responses

- 5.4.11 The Mission now issues an official receipt for all passport fees received. The practice of issuing an unofficial receipt for passport fees received has been discontinued.**
- 5.4.12 As already indicated for recommendation 4.3.4 the Mission agrees that a cash register would better improve cash control and could be used to issue payment receipts. Action has been initiated to source a cash register locally.**

5.5 Information and Technology Management

5.5.1 Information and technology management is the responsibility of the MCO, with the assistance of one LE-07 Systems Administrator (SA). The function is well managed. The SA has been in the position for eight years, and had the full in-Canada training in 1999. The job description, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, requires review to ensure coincidence with the actual duties performed.

5.5.2 The SA has a clear understanding of the duties assigned and prioritizes work effectively. The TechServe listing is updated on a regular basis. A proposed budget was drawn up early in the fiscal year that details items to be purchased and costs. Back ups are done according to schedule, with tape copies of all data stored off-site. Basic training is offered on the suite of desktop tools available to users, as well as “awareness sessions” that inform clients on how to do other tasks such as clearing printer jams and changing printer cartridges.

5.5.3 According to clients, service is very good. Requests for service are made either by e-mail or by telephone and the turnaround time is usually within the day. This high level of service has meant that clients are generally very satisfied. The SA logs service requests in a date book, and no volume reports or other analysis is done that might prove useful in identifying trends for planning purposes. While the SA is not responsible for information management, the SA nonetheless monitors the “H” and “I” drives, reminding users to “house-clean” on a regular basis. A recent initiative is the development of an electronic version of the Mission events calendar.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.5.4 The SA should consider logging service requests in order to identify and analyse trends.

Mission Response

5.5.4 The SA has agreed to implement the practice of logging service requests in a manner which will facilitate identification and analysis of trends.

5.5.5 The Mission has an Information Technology Committee, which deals primarily with web site issues such as design changes or content updates. The Mission web site is in keeping with the Department’s standard and resides on the DFAIT server. The Committee does not consider hardware or software requests. This would be a useful role for this Committee to play.

5.5.6 The Mission has one “mini-M” satellite telephone for emergency use. It replaced the PSAT unit previously issued to missions. It has been tested recently, and

a number of staff are trained in its use. After Y2K, instructions were issued from HQ for the re-programming of these communication units so that they could be used in emergency circumstances as necessary. Apart from that, a broader directive is necessary for missions to understand more clearly the use and state of readiness of these units. At the present time, such a directive does not exist.

Recommendation for SXT

5.5.7 SXT should develop and issue a directive with respect to the use and readiness of the mini-M units.

SXT Response

5.5.7 A policy has recently been developed that will increase missions' awareness of the operational and test procedures necessary to ensure the PSAT equipment (Mini-M) is always functional and in a state of readiness.

5.5.8 The Mission has three SIGNET Remote Access (SRA) connections. The installation and configuration of these newer systems went well, and the maintenance is straight-forward. The use of laptops makes maintenance and upgrades easy to perform as the client simply brings in the unit that requires servicing from home. Access is a little slower than users would like due to the limited data transmission capability of the modem. A dedicated line would improve service quite a bit, but this is very costly and is not available on all parts of the island. More of the island is being equipped with these sorts of lines, but it will be a few years before widespread coverage exist.

5.5.9 Telephone usage is monitored using MS Access. The reports are reviewed by the MCO with the assistance of the Receptionist who classifies calls and groups them according to the source extension, call destination, duration and cost. With increased vigilance, long distance costs have dropped due to fewer calls being made and increased recovery for personal calls. Local cellular phone service is costly but the Mission is investigating new plan options that offer savings.

MISSION RESOURCES FACT SHEET

Personnel (FTEs)

	CBS	LES	Total
HOM Office	2	4	6
General Relations	1	1	2
International Business Development	1	3	4
Administration/Consular	3	15	18
Development	3	5	8
Total	10	28	38

Physical Resources

ASSETS	OWNED	LEASED
Chancery + Annex	2	0
OR	1	0
SQs	3	6
Vehicles	5	0

Financial Information 2002/2003

Operating	\$1,094,000
LES Salaries	937200
CB Overtime	9500
Capital	118300
Total	\$2,159,000