



**AUDIT OF THE
CANADIAN EMBASSY
OUAGADOUGOU**

MAY 2005

**Foreign Affairs Canada
International Trade Canada
Office of the Inspector General
Audit Division (ZIV)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The audit of the General Relations, International Business Development, Consular Services and Administration programs was limited to interviews and the review of certain files from April 26 to 27, 2004. The Administration, Consular Services and International Business Development programs had previously been audited in February 1997.

The Head of Mission is doing excellent work in difficult conditions. He is leading a team of two Canadians and eight locally engaged staff, in addition to local employees in the Support Unit. Despite renovations that have dragged on too long, he has been able to maintain good employee morale.

The next Summit of La Francophonie, which will be held in Ouagadougou next November, will require considerable efforts from Mission staff and will require additional resources from Headquarters. Logistical issues, including accommodations, will need to be examined carefully.

The renovations will result in the physical separation of the Mission from the Support Unit. However, certain human resources—as described in the Service Agreement between the Mission and the Support Unit—are still shared. For example, a local contract employee paid by the Support Unit keeps the Ambassador apprised of any developments of interest to Canada and supports Canadian businesspeople who use our services, and the Support Unit employs and pays a driver who works exclusively for the Mission. The same goes for the security guards.

Generally, the administration is doing good work, but it would be wise to make more use of the local Administrative Assistant and provide her training at our Mission in Abidjan.

Financial management is sound and the controls are effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains 12 recommendations for the Mission. According to the responses received, the Mission has completed implementation of seven recommendations and has set reasonable time lines for the five recommendations that remain.

SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, MISSION RESOURCES

Audit scope and objectives

The scope of the audit included a review of Mission management and the Political, Economic and Administration programs. The length of the audit was limited to two days, and with the team reduced to two members, a full audit could not be conducted, as mentioned in the Executive Summary.

The audit objectives were to:

- assess management controls and the systems, procedures and activities that make up the programs;
- determine the extent of compliance with legislation, regulations and operating policies;
- assess the reliability and adequacy of information available for decision-making and accountability purposes;
- ensure resources are judiciously used and that the Department is receiving value for money; and
- make recommendations, where warranted, to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

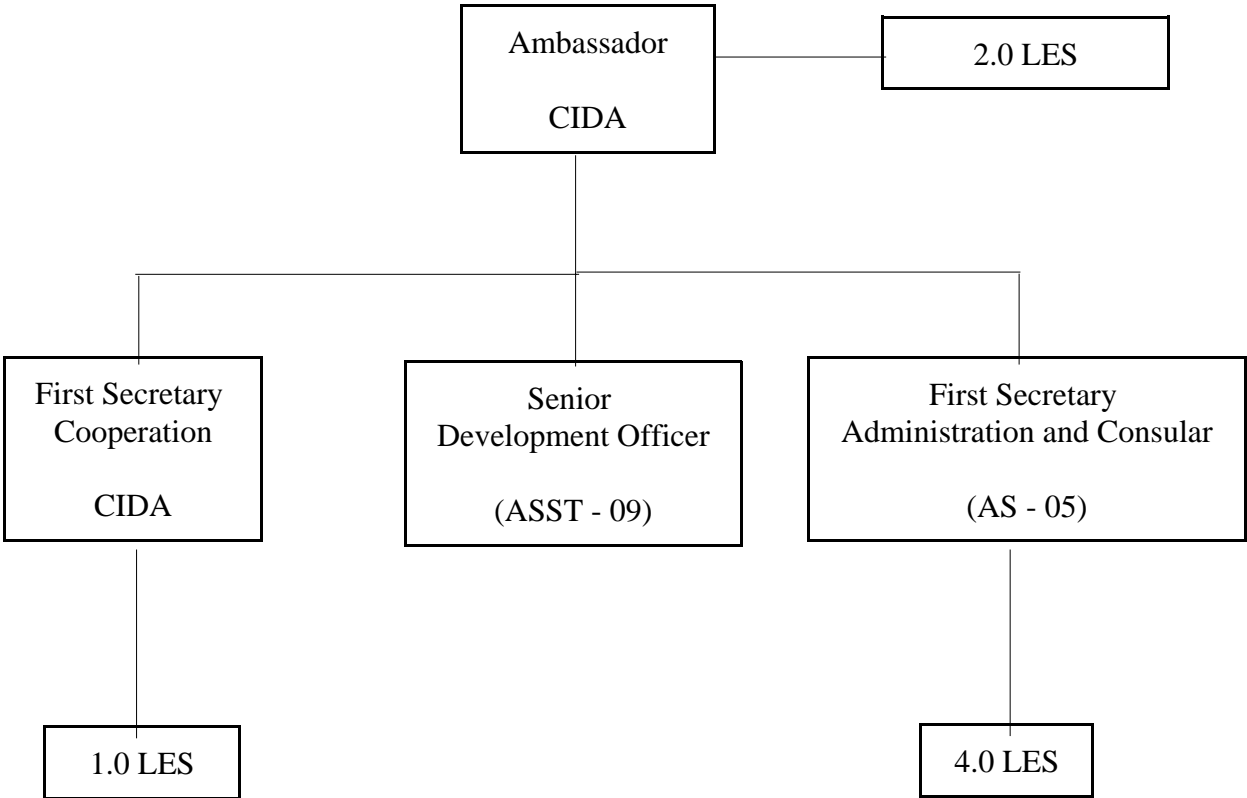
Physical resources

Assets	Crown Owned	Crown Lease
Chancery		1
Warehouse		1
Official Residence	n/a	
Staff Quarters (SQ)		3
Vehicles	3	

Financial information (2003-2004)

Operating budget (N001)	\$579,900
Capital budget (N005)	\$52,200
CBS salaries budget (N011)	\$74,866
LES salaries budget (N012)	\$131,200
Total	\$838,166

Organizational chart



MISSION MANAGEMENT

1.1.1 The Head of Mission (HOM) manages his various HOM duties very well, taking care of his main responsibility as Head of Cooperation, as well as political reporting, support for commercial and consular issues, and sound administration of the Chancery. There is close contact between him and the members of his team. He cooperates closely with several of his ambassador colleagues on various projects and stands out through his leadership role in the implementation of an education program.

1.1.2 The management committee is made up of most of the Mission staff and operates somewhat informally. An agenda is set but there are no minutes. The committee does not play its traditional decision-making role; instead, it is a forum for sharing ideas and information.

Recommendation for the Mission

1.1.3 Establish a formal management committee and draft minutes of the decisions made at committee meetings.

Mission action and time frame

1.1.3 The Mission has taken steps to set up its management committee. The committee is already up and running.

GENERAL RELATIONS

2.1.1 Political reporting is timely and regular. It is of high quality and carried out in full by the HOM, who has no other support in this endeavour.

2.1.2 The Public Affairs Program is particularly active; one LES supports the HOM in delivering this program. In addition to an interesting program geared towards the media, our presence can be seen in the field of filmmaking (Burkina Faso is a filmmaking leader among African nations), at the Ouagadougou International Book Fair, through our participation in prizes for the winners of the radio spelling bee, visits by Canadian artists and various project launches.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1 Although the volume of our trade remains modest, a certain number of Canadian companies, including more recently SMEs, are interested in Burkina Faso, several in the areas of service and investment. This includes mining companies, transportation companies and service companies.

3.1.2 The injection of capital by the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank is closely monitored by a local contract worker paid by the Support Unit. He keeps the HOM apprised of any developments of interest to Canada and seeks his intervention when required, while supporting Canadian businesspeople who use our services. See the recommendation in the Administration section about normalizing services provided to the Mission by the Support Unit.

CONSULAR SERVICES

4.1.1 Management of this program poses no particular problem and is assured by the Management Consular Officer (MCO), who is supported by the Receptionist, who does excellent work. The Receptionist efficiently takes care of reception duties, immigration applications, consular issues, general inquiries and some clerical work. There are 257 Canadians registered with the Mission.

ADMINISTRATION

5.1.1 Administrative services are provided by an experienced MCO, supported by a local Administrative Assistant, an Accountant and the Receptionist who, among other things, does clerical work for the Administrator.

5.1.2 Generally, the administration is doing good work but it would be wise to make more use of the local Administrative Assistant. A training period at our Mission in Abidjan would help mitigate various deficiencies, including an urgently needed review of the working conditions of our local employees, based on the drafting of a new LES Handbook, which dates back to 1991.

5.1.3 It would be to the advantage of locally engaged staff (LES) to form an LES committee to monitor their interests more closely and to pursue regular discussions with Mission management. Along the same lines, we asked the MCO to meet once a week with his staff to keep them informed of any developments, update them on delegated activities and indicate the priorities for the week.

5.1.4 We note that those responsible for supervision at the Mission must endeavour to develop specific objectives every year for each employee, review them mid-year and prepare their appraisal report within the prescribed time frames.

5.1.5 As noted in the Executive Summary, several positions reporting to the Support Unit also provide services to the Mission. It would be wise to normalize the situation because there is considerable risk that an employer-employee relationship already exists.

5.1.6 Renovations on the Chancery are finally being wrapped up after too long a wait and numerous problems, which were not without effect on employee morale. However, with the end of the work, morale has improved. We will have premises that

are highly suitable, modern and functional. The three-storey building is in a good location downtown. We share the building with Denmark, which occupies the third floor.

5.1.7 The Official Residence is suitable for official hospitality, but it is old, dark and in a less secure neighbourhood. We should perhaps think about replacing it. The MCO's residence is suitable, while that of the Cooperation Officer, though acceptable, deserves to have its walls stripped and a new paint job.

5.1.8 Provisions should be made now to replace the official vehicle (which is more than three years old) since the roads are not in good condition.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.1.9 Provide training to the local Administrative Assistant.

5.1.10 Complete the Locally Engaged Staff Handbook.

5.1.11 Form an LES committee.

5.1.12 The MCO should hold a weekly meeting with his staff.

5.1.13 Develop specific objectives for all employees and prepare appraisal reports within the prescribed time frames.

5.1.14 Examine the feasibility of normalizing services provided to the Mission by employees of the Support Unit by integrating them into the Mission.

5.1.15 Paint the Cooperation Officer's residence.

5.1.16 Plan to replace the official vehicle.

Mission actions and time frames

5.1.9 The local Administrative Assistant received two weeks of onsite training in Abidjan in June 2004, had a visit from an SRMP officer for one week in November 2004, and took a two-week course in Ottawa on goods and services management in February 2005. She is now registered for the two-week course in Ottawa for office managers.

5.1.10 Revision of the Staff Handbook has been completed and will be submitted to HRL by the end of May 2005.

- 5.1.11** The employees meet regularly with the MCO and as required with the Ambassador to discuss various issues concerning them. To formalize and systemize an employee/mission dialogue process, employees have set up a committee to represent them. The meeting schedule and procedures are mutually agreed upon.
- 5.1.12** The MCO meets with his employees as needed. However, as of now he is going to systemize these meetings.
- 5.1.13** Appraisal reports are prepared for the anniversary date of each employee's entry into duties and include specific objectives.
- 5.1.14** Discussions have been held with GAM and HRL to normalize the situation of Support Unit employees seconded to the Embassy. The Mission anticipates that these situations will be normalized by September 2005.
- 5.1.15** This residence was completely repainted upon the occupant's arrival. Unfortunately, the paint did not hold well. The administration and the occupant mutually agreed that they would wait until the occupant left in the summer of 2005 to re-do the work.
- 5.1.16** Because of insufficient budget resources, the Mission was not able to make this purchase under the 2004-05 budget. It will be made under the 2005-06 budget. The order form will be sent to Ottawa by the end of May.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 6.1.1** Under the responsibility of the MCO, the accounting section is made up of a level-6 Accountant who is quite familiar with the IMS, having received training in Abidjan and Ottawa.
- 6.1.2** Financial management is sound and the control mechanisms are effective. Tasks are adequately divided between the Accountant, the Property and Material Manager and the MCO for processing payment requests and distributing cheques. The Mission has also set up good controls for managing vehicle use and gas consumption. Furthermore, the Mission makes use of several suppliers for maintenance and minor renovations in order to get the best service at the best price. The contracts committee meets when necessary and there is an agreement with the Support Unit for sharing common expenses.
- 6.1.3** Management of hospitality expenses is excellent. The HOM regularly uses the Official Residence to host his guests. The Mission has established unit costs for

hospitality activities. The hospitality files contained journal vouchers supporting claimed expenses.

Safeguarding revenues and other valuable documents

6.1.4 Consular and immigration revenues are collected by the Receptionist. She issues an official receipt and keeps the revenues in a lockable metal box. This is stored in a cabinet that also locks but is not secure. She gives incoming revenues to the accounting section once a week. Blank official receipt books, passports and cheques for distribution are also stored in this cabinet.

Recommendation for the Mission

6.1.5 Acquire a safe for the Receptionist.

Mission action and time frame

6.1.5 The Mission locally acquired a small safe, which has been installed in the Receptionist's office.

Bank reconciliations

6.1.6 Bank reconciliations are completed in the prescribed time frames and reviewed by the MCO and HOM monthly. An explanatory note is provided for all adjustments, which are put in order quickly, except for three adjustments dating back to 1999. These three adjustments, worth 3,726,000 CFAF (approximately C\$8,900 at the 2004 rate), represent payments made for the Support Unit that were not recorded in the IMS accounting system by Abidjan. At that time, Abidjan was responsible for doing the data entry for Ouagadougou's financial transactions. The three payments were apparently recorded by the Support Unit. However, CIDA is having difficulty finding them in their accounting system. The Mission recently followed up with CIDA and informed SMFF of its steps to try to resolve this problem.

Recommendation for the Mission

6.1.7 Together with SMFF, the Mission should continue efforts to put the three adjustments dating back to 1999 in order.

Mission action and time frame

6.1.7 Thanks to SMFF's intervention, these three entries were put in order and no longer appear in our bank reconciliations.

Accountant's replacement

6.1.8 The Property and Material Manager (PMM) replaces the accountant during his absences. However, she has not taken the training that enables her to enter accounting data in the IMS. This increases risk since payments are made before the data is entered in the IMS, which circumvents the financial and budgetary controls of the IMS system.

Recommendation for the Mission

6.1.9 **The PMM should take the required course to enable her to enter accounting data in the IMS before making payments.**

Mission action and time frame

6.1.9 **The Mission will organize IMS distance training for the PMM. Late June seems to be a realistic deadline, that is to say, before the Accountant takes his annual vacation.**