

Evaluation of the Consular Affairs Program



Final Report

Diplomacy, Trade and Corporate Evaluation Division (PRE)

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This report outlines the main findings and recommendations of the Consular Program Evaluation. The findings identify strengths and areas for improvement in the delivery of consular services and assistance to Canadians travelling, working and living abroad.

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Acronyms

CBS	Canada Based Staff
CBSA	Canada Border Service Agency
CCWG	Consular Communications Working Group
COMIP	Consular Management Information Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCF	Distressed Canadian Fund
DMA	Associate Deputy Minister
DMCO	Deputy Management Consular Officer
DRAP	Deficit Reduction Action Plan
EAC	Evaluation Advisory Committee
eTA	Electronic Travel Authorization
FTE	full time equivalent
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GC	Government of Canada
GCF	Global Consular Forum
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
JFM	Consular, Security and Legal Branch
JPD	Consular Policy Bureau
JPP	Consular Policy and Program Division
JLA	Criminal, Security and Diplomatic Law
JLD	Legal Affairs Bureau
JND	Consular Operations Bureau
JNO	Case Management Division
JNOF	Case Management Division Family Unit
JSD	Security and Emergency Management Bureau
JSW	Emergency Operations and Planning
JUS	Legal Services Bureau
LCD	Strategic Communications Bureau
LDD	Corporate, Digital and Consular Communications Bureau
LDWT	Consular and Travel Communications
LCM	Public Affairs Branch
LES	Locally Engaged Staff
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
MCO	Management Consular Officer
MFSA	Minister of State
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MRAP	Management Response and Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OGD	other government department
PS	Public Safety
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
ROCA	Registration of Canadians Abroad
SCM	Corporate Planning and Information Technology Bureau
SIA	Business Solutions Bureau
SIAC	Consular Systems
SID	Information and Management (Office of the Chief Information Officer)
TAA	Travel Advice and Advisories
TB	Treasury Board
TIP	Travel Information Policy
VCCR	Vienna Convention on Consular Relations
VCCU	Vulnerable Children Consular Unit

Executive Summary

This report provides the main findings and recommendations from the 2017 Consular Affairs Program Evaluation. The Consular Affairs Program is mandated to help Canadians prepare for safe and responsible travel abroad by providing up-to-date travel information and advice and to provide routine services and emergency assistance to Canadians in distress abroad. The Program also coordinates the Government of Canada's response to international emergencies and crisis situations. This mandate is delivered through the Consular Policy (JPD) and the Consular Operations (JND) bureaus and a network of over 250 points of service abroad. The Public Affairs' Consular and Travel Communications unit (LDWT) and the Corporate Planning and Information Technology Bureau (SCM) also provide support in the delivery of the consular mandate.

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide Global Affairs Canada (GAC) senior management with a neutral and evidence-based assessment of the performance of the Consular Affairs Program over the five-year period since its last evaluation in 2012, to identify Program strengths and areas for improvement and make respective recommendations. Following the 2016 Treasury Board *Policy on Results*, this evaluation was calibrated to focus on issues of primary interest or concern to the Program. A mixed-method approach was applied using qualitative and quantitative data to respond to the identified evaluation questions.

The Consular Affairs Program is managed and delivered by highly professional and dedicated consular staff both at GAC missions and Headquarters (HQ). The functional and physical separation of the main consular elements (i.e. policy, HQ operations/consular assistance and service delivery at missions, consular communications and IM/IT systems) among three GAC branches and various divisions has impacted the efficient and effective management of Consular Affairs as a Program.

The 21st Century Consular Plan (CCP), developed in 2013, outlined a four-year vision and strategy for modernizing Canada's Consular Program and Services. The CCP was reported to have helped consular staff at HQ and missions, in particular, to identify and streamline priorities and justify outreach activities. Nonetheless, the full implementation of the 21st CCP commitments was not always feasible for some missions due to a lack of additional human and financial resources.

The evaluation was not able to compare and quantify actual resource needs across missions due to the lack of a resource allocation strategy and reliable performance measurement data. The absence of a formal coordination mechanism for resource allocation between the Geographic and Consular program was identified as an impediment for the timely response to emerging consular pressures at missions.

Finally, the absence of a comprehensive external communication and outreach strategy, as well as the lack of tracking and feedback mechanisms, impacted consistent communications and strategic outreach both in Canada and the field.

The following recommendations were derived from the evaluation findings and conclusions:

Evaluation Recommendations

1. Update the 21st Century Consular Plan (CCP) or develop a new Consular Strategy reflective of the evolving consular environment and growing need for further modernization of consular service delivery.
2. Revise the Consular Resource Allocation Model to ensure that consular sections at missions are adequately supported and resourced to respond to both temporary and longer-term needs for consular services.
3. Review the current consular governance and organizational structure to ensure sound program management and coordination of the main consular functions: policy development, case management and operations, travel advisories and awareness building, and consular internal and external communications.
4. Develop a comprehensive Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan, reflecting both internal and external communication goals and objectives with specific timelines and targets.
5. Improve and develop performance measurement and financial tracking systems to support reliable data collection that informs management decisions.

Program Overview

Consular Program Overview

Consular service delivery is a people-driven process: directly involving clients and consular staff at missions abroad and HQ. It is the only GAC service delivered directly to Canadians and their families. The provision of consular assistance to Canadians abroad is a function of the *Foreign Affairs Royal Prerogative*, set out in the *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Act R.S.C.* (1985). Under this Act, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is empowered to provide consular services and assistance to Canadians abroad on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has the right to exercise discretion with regard to the level of consular assistance provided. Canada's consular services are also guided by the Canadian Consular Services Charter and a series of departmental consular policies and service standards.

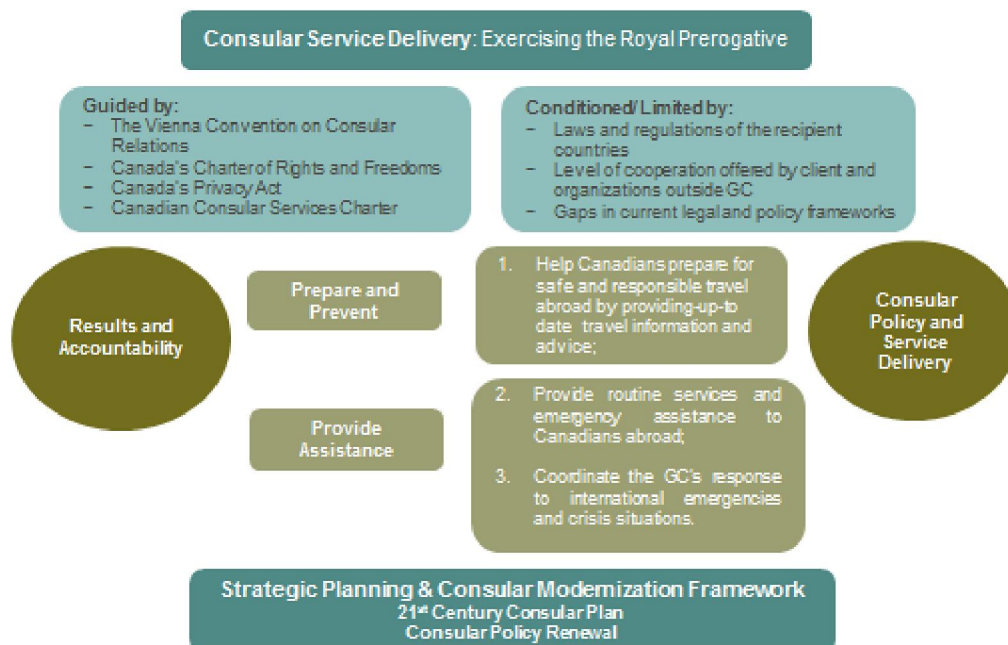
The Consular Affairs Program at GAC is mandated to:

- Help Canadians prepare for safe and responsible travel abroad by providing-up-to date travel information and advice;
- Provide routine services and emergency assistance to Canadians abroad; and
- Coordinate the GC's response to international emergencies and crisis situations.

This mandate is delivered through the Consular Policy Bureau (JPD), the Consular Operations Bureau (JND) and a network of over **250** points of service, such as embassies, high commissions, consulates and honorary consuls in over **150** countries.

Key partners in the delivery of the Program include the Public Affairs Branch (LCM) and the Corporate Planning and Information Technology Bureau (SCM). Several other bureaus also support the delivery of the Program, including Emergency Operations and Planning (JSW), Security and Emergency Management Bureau (JSD), Legal Affairs Bureau (JLD) and Legal Services Bureau (JUS).

The Consular Program works with a large number of domestic partners. Key federal departments are Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) which includes the Passport Program, Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Justice Canada and Public Safety (PS). Depending on the nature of the case, Canada also engages provincial and territorial governments, child protection services, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector both nationally and internationally in the provision of consular services.



Program Overview

Consular Program Delivery

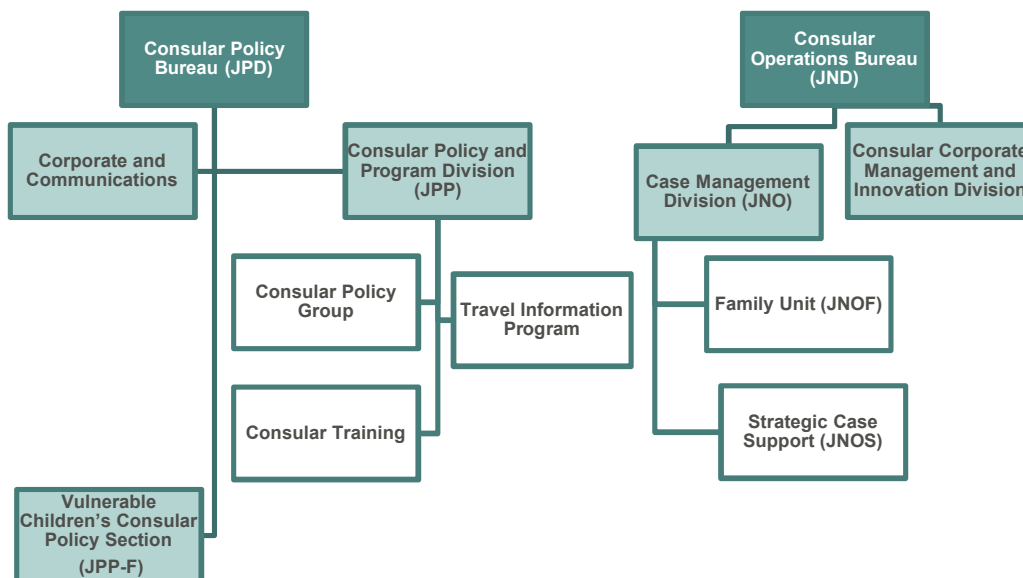
The following bureaus at GAC Headquarters are directly involved in the management and delivery of the Consular Program:

- **Consular Policy Bureau (JPD):** With a total of **29 FTEs**, the bureau delivers on a dual mandate, emphasizing both prevention and assistance across its consular policy development and program delivery responsibilities.
- **Consular Operations Bureau (JND):** With **29 FTEs**, the bureau is the front-line of consular assistance to Canadians and manages the delivery of the Consular Program and the provision of case management support and operational policy direction to missions.
- **Security and Emergency Management Bureau (JSD) :** The Emergency Operations and Planning Division (JSW) is responsible for providing after-hours consular services.
- **Legal Affairs Bureau (JLD):** The Criminal, Security and Diplomatic Law Division (JLA), specializes in providing advice related to international law issues and questions; and
- **Legal Services Bureau (JUS):** Staffed with lawyers from Justice Canada, the bureau provides advice on domestic law questions.

As a result of the 2014 Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP), two functional teams supporting the work of consular services were centralized within the department, namely:

- The **Consular Communications and Partnerships Team** became part of the Public Affairs Branch (LCM) and responsibilities were divided between the **Strategic Communications Bureau (LCD)** and the **Corporate, Digital and Consular Communications Bureau (LDD)**, responsible for the Travel.gc.ca website and consular-related publications; and
- The **Consular IT team** moved to the Corporate Planning, Finance and Information Technology Bureau (SCM) under the **Business Solutions Division (SIA)** in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (SID)
- **Geographic Branches (GEOS)** play an important role in the delivery of consular services to Canadians abroad, as they manage the bilateral relations of Canada with other countries. Their engagement is of particular importance for the successful resolution of complex consular cases.

Consular Policy and Operations Structure



Consular Context/ Program Resources

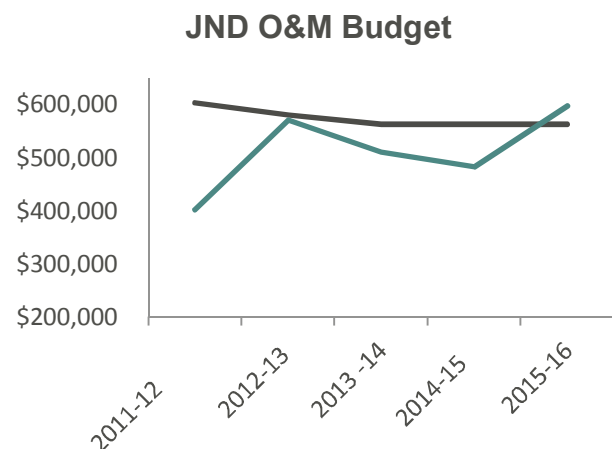
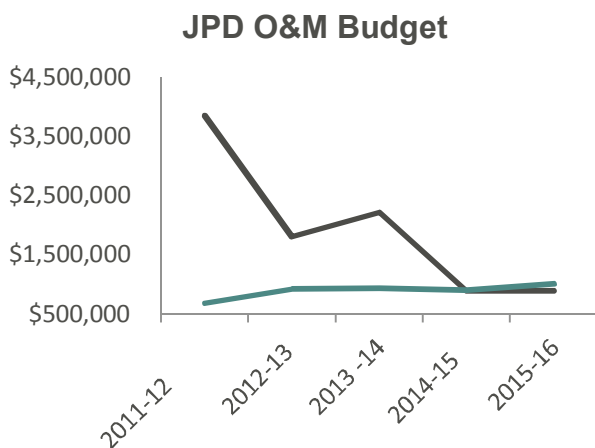
Consular Resources

The cost of the Consular Affairs Program and delivery of Consular Services and Emergency Management in fiscal year (FY) 2015-16 amounted to approximately \$137M, including direct and indirect costs at missions and HQ, and excluding \$17.5M recovered through fees for the provision of specialized consular services as well as services on behalf of IRCC for the Citizenship Program and Passport Program, and recoveries from the Distressed Canadian Fund (DCF). With an annual revenue of \$96.4M (as per the Departmental Performance Report (DPR)) deposited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF), the deficit for FY 2015-16 was \$40.7M. This is a notable increase of \$19.9M compared to FY 2014-15, partly due to a \$7.8M decrease in collected Consular Service Fees (CSF). (Source: GAC – Cost of Consular Services and Emergency Management Report FY 2015-2016).

A major challenge for consular funding is the transition to the ten year passport. Already 70% of new passport applications have been for this passport (based on the 2013-14 data). The impact of the ten year passport (if the CSF remains the same) will start in 2018-19, when the number of new issued adult travel documents and related revenues for GAC are expected to start decreasing. This will also affect the Program's ability to access the departmental frozen allotment (\$36.7M) that is part of GAC's base funding which is directly linked to the revenue collected from adult travel documents. GAC and Treasury Board, in consultation with IRCC, are trying to assess how best to maintain a source of revenue to cover the cost of the Consular Affairs Program.

Consular Resources at HQ

The Consular Program at HQ is funded through budgetary allocations. [See Annex B for budget tables] The spending trends for JND and JPD operations over the past 5 years are presented in the graphs below.



Note 1: JPD amounts until 2014 include Emergency Preparedness and Response, as these activities were part of the same Bureau - "Consular Services and Emergency Management"

Note 2: JPD Ops decreased in 2014-15 due to an reorganizational structure

— Reference level — Actual

Consular Resources at Mission

The Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) policy, introduced in 2016, is a new entry requirement for visa-exempt foreign nationals flying to or transiting through Canada. Citizens from countries other than the U.S must apply for an eTA when flying to Canada by air. This new policy has posed additional pressure on the already stretched missions' resources. At the end of FY 2016-17, IRCC provided \$2.9M to GAC in recognition of the fact that the passport program abroad was underfunded, and to help eTA-affected missions deal with the surge in demand. IRCC also undertook to provide additional funding for 2017/18 and both departments agreed, as part of the review of the existing MOU on the delivery of passport services abroad, to negotiate a funding model that would appropriately compensate GAC for the costs of delivering the program.

Consular Trends

The number of Canadian citizens travelling and working overseas has grown by 21% over the past decade posing added challenges for the consular function. This trend continued up until 2012 at which point the total number of Canadians travelling abroad began to decline, due primarily to a steady reduction in the number of Canadians travelling to the U.S. Nonetheless, the evolving consular environment and the growing complexity of consular cases have led to increased visibility of the Consular Program not only within GAC and the Government of Canada (GC), but also among Canadians and the media.

While **most consular cases are considered routine (97%)** and largely administrative, some assistance cases can become highly complex and time-consuming. A number of trends are impacting the growing demand for consular services, as well as the complexity of consular cases:

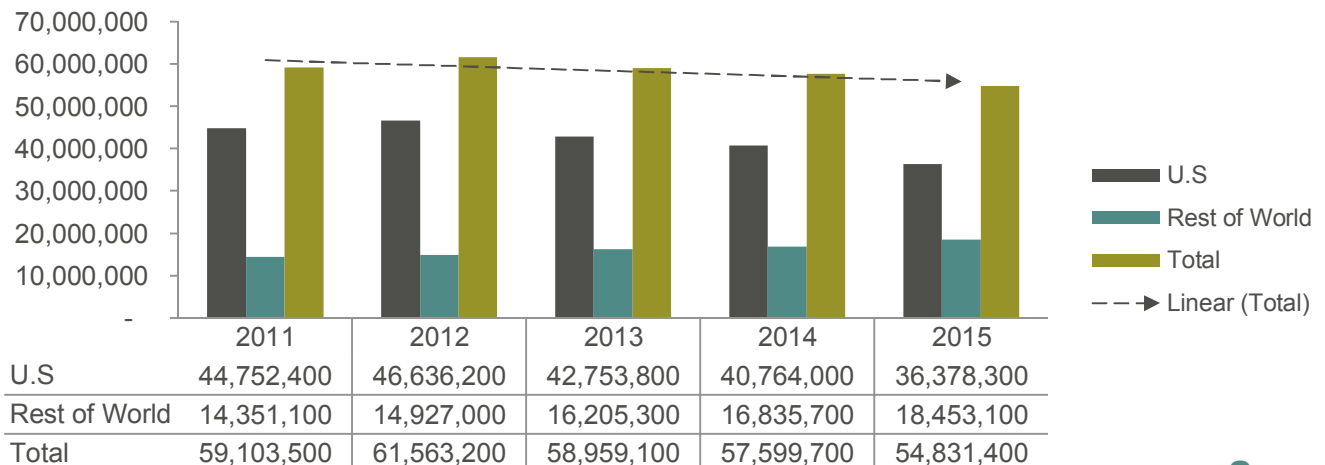
- The demographic characteristics of Canadians travelling abroad are changing with a growing number of Canadians travelling to exotic and high risk countries or pursuing studies abroad, as well as aging citizens seeking retirement opportunities in foreign countries;
- The diversity of Canada’s population has also grown leading to more Canadians carrying dual citizenship and maintaining stronger contacts with their countries of origin;
- Canadians with mental health challenges are travelling to countries that may not have adequate services or supports in place;
- Canadians who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQ2) are travelling to countries that may not recognize their rights; and
- Rapid technological changes, enhanced citizen inter-connectedness and media scrutiny are further impacting the complexity of consular work.

55M trips abroad by Canadians in 2015

From 2014 to 2015, visits to the U.S. decreased by 11%, while visits to the rest of the world increased by 10%. Overall, the total number of Canadians travelling abroad slightly decreased over the five year period from 2011-2015. (See chart below)



**Number of Trips by Canadians Abroad
(to the USA and Rest of the World)**



Consular Context (Cont'd)



64,893 consular cases opened in 2016 (excluding passport cases)

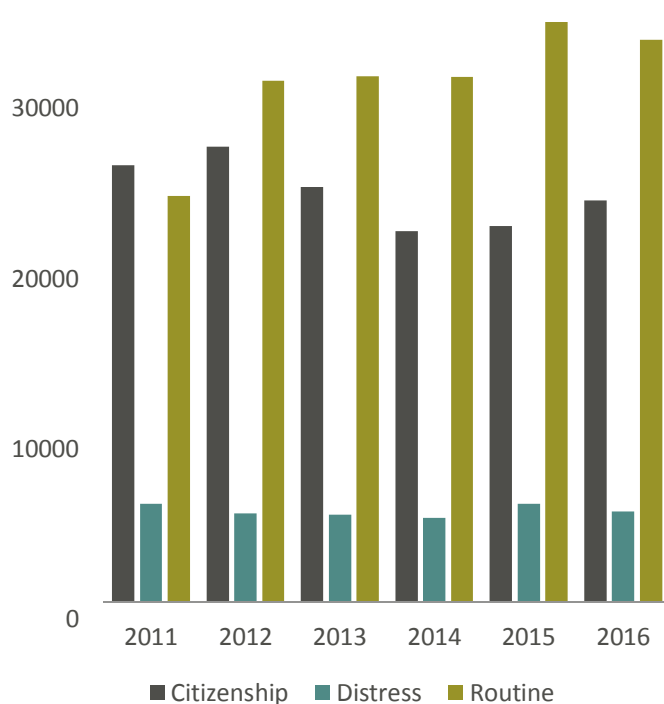
- The total number of consular cases (excluding passports) **increased by 12%** from 2011 to 2016, despite the slightly decreased number of trips by Canadians abroad.
- The total number of cases **fluctuated** year to year over this period of time, with some years experiencing a decrease in the number of cases. It has been difficult, however, to attribute these fluctuations to particular factors across the mission network.
- Routine cases experienced the **largest increase (37%)** over the evaluation reference period.

205,617 passport services in 2016

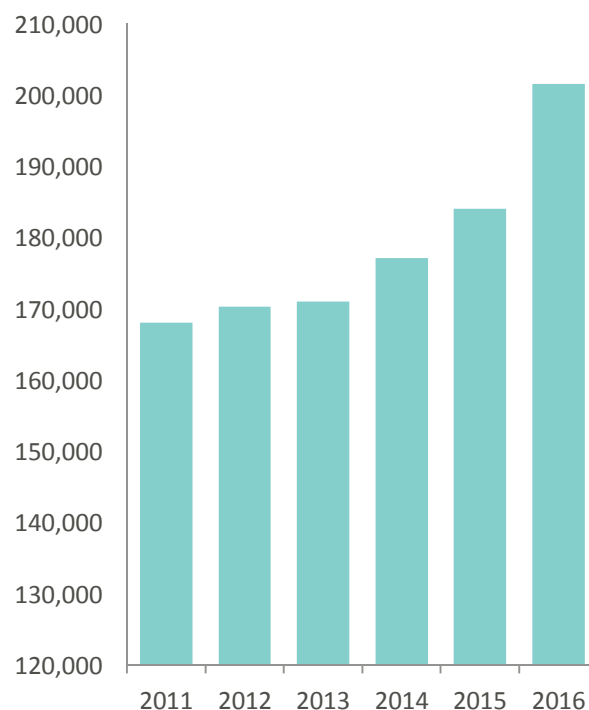


- The number of passport cases **increased by 20%** from 2011 to 2016.
- There has been a steady increase in passport cases over the years.
- From 2015 to 2016, passport cases **increased by 10%** with 17,494 additional passport cases

Consular Cases 2011-2016



Passport Cases 2011-2016



Evaluation Purpose and Scope

This evaluation is part of the Five-Year Departmental Evaluation Plan approved by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide GAC's senior management with a neutral and evidence-based assessment of the performance of the Consular Affairs Program over the five-year period since its last evaluation in 2012. The focus of the evaluation was on the efficiency and effectiveness of consular assistance and service delivery to Canadians travelling, working and living abroad. Program gaps and challenges were identified based on which respective recommendations for program improvement were made based on identified program gaps and challenges.

The evaluation was completed under the 2016 TBS Policy on Results, optimizing the changes it introduced in terms of flexibility regarding the scope, coverage and methodologies used.

Following consultations with senior management in the Consular, Security and Legal Branch (JFM) and the Corporate, Digital and Consular Communications Bureau (LDD), the scope of the evaluation was calibrated to cover six main issues. The evaluation team developed relevant evaluation questions and associated indicators, data sources and evaluation techniques.

In support of the Government of Canada's (GC) objective to enhance the understanding of results achieved by programs, the Evaluation Team presented the evaluation findings and identified areas for improvement of the Consular Affairs Program in a new report structure and layout. The new format emphasizes conciseness, ease of reading and use of visual communication elements.

Evaluation Issues of Focus

Issue 1: Relevance of current domestic and international legal and policy frameworks

Issue 2: Efficiency and effectiveness of consular operations: Service delivery and case management at HQ and at mission

Issue 3: Effectiveness of the current consular governance / decision making structure

Issue 4: Efficiency of consular resource allocation (financial and human)

Issue 5: Consular communications and outreach: Relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of current communication strategies

Issue 6: Performance Management: Relevance and use of current performance measures and risk mitigation strategies.

The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach using qualitative and quantitative data collected through various techniques and data sources to respond to the evaluation questions. Analysis identified program strengths, key issues and areas for improvement, as well as good practices and lessons learned. Data was collected between September 2016 and May 2017. The following methods/data sources were used to answer the evaluation questions:

Key Stakeholder interviews n= 130



Semi-structured in-person and telephone interviews were conducted with **130** key stakeholders. Interviews focussed on the efficiency and effectiveness of the consular governance structure and service delivery. Key interviewees included:

- Program staff at HQ;
- Consular staff at mission;
- Stakeholders within GAC ;
- OGDs (RCMP, IRCC, Justice, CBSA, Shared Services);
- Representatives from like-minded countries (U.K, Australia, Germany, New Zealand)

Survey of consular staff at missions n= 402 (response rate = 62%)



An online survey was commissioned to **657** consular staff at Canadian missions, to obtain more comprehensive data and feedback from CBSA and LES consular staff across various classifications on the management of the Consular Affairs Program at missions and the delivery of consular assistance to Canadians abroad. The majority of questions used Likert Scales. Several questions also included open ended text boxes for participants to provide additional feedback. The survey had a 62% response rate with a total of 402 contacts responding.

Document and Data Review



The evaluation analysed various data source to complement and triangulate information received through the interviews and the survey. The following documents and data/reporting systems were consulted:

- Consular strategic and operational plans;
- Corporate reports;
- Strategia reports;
- Statistical data/ COMIP reports;
- Performance reports;
- Mission inspection reports.

Field Visits



Field visits were conducted at **12** missions with the purpose of observing the management of the consular program and delivery of assistance to Canadians in distress abroad. The missions were suggested and selected by the Consular Program senior managers, and missions experiencing various consular challenges, namely:

- **Trip 1:** MXICO, SJCRA, WSHDC
- **Trip 2:** ABDBI, DUBAI, LDN, NROBI
- **Trip 3:** BNGKK, BRLIN, CNBRA, SYDNY, WLGTN

Methodological Strengths

- The evaluation team devised a strong methodological approach which took into consideration the complexities of consular programming and service delivery involving various stakeholders. The use of multiple lines of evidence mitigated the associated risks by capturing the perspectives of stakeholders from both a headquarters and mission perspective. Furthermore, the survey of consular officers generated findings that were representative of the network of missions abroad in their delivery of consular services.
- While remaining objective and independent, the evaluation was conducted in an environment of trust and close cooperation with the Program which contributed to enhanced information sharing and increased relevance of the evaluation to the needs of the Program.
- The evaluation team kept program managers abreast of specific challenges identified during field visits or observations of consular work at HQ which allowed for a timely management reaction to pressing challenges and issues outside the scope of the evaluation.

Limitations

- The evaluation team conducted field visits to only 12 out of the 250 points of service delivery. While these field visits assisted in identifying some of the strengths and challenges of consular work in the field, these could not be extrapolated to the entire network.
- The speed and scope of changes in the consular environment over the data collection period required some ongoing adjustments in formulating the evaluation findings.
- The evaluation could not directly assess client satisfaction and the impact of environmental trends and conditions on client expectations for two reasons: 1) The Privacy Act protection requirements and need for prior consent of the client; 2) Lengthy procedures and accessibility challenges for meeting or having phone interviews with Canadians imprisoned abroad.
- A comprehensive assessment of the economy and efficiency of the Consular Program spending was limited because consular resource allocation is attributed to several branches/groups (Consular and Emergency Management, Geographic Group, Communications and Information Management/Information Technology).

Mitigation Strategies

- To mitigate this, the evaluation team commissioned a survey of all consular staff at missions abroad. Follow-up interviews were conducted with Management Consular Officers (MCOs) and Deputy Management Consular Officers (DMCOs) with multiple postings across the mission network to solicit their experience by comparing the challenges at different missions.
- The need for specific adjustments and additional clarifications were communicated with program management and additional evidence was provided to the evaluation team.
- Extensive interviews were conducted with the communications/client relations team and consular officers at missions to identify the extent to which client expectations are being met in terms of operational standards and consistency of service delivery across the network, and whether client expectations were realistic or outside the consular mandate and jurisdictional authority. Information about the effectiveness of the “prevention” aspect of the consular mandate was gleaned from the 2017 Travel Survey commissioned by the Consular and Travel Communications Team.
- The evaluation relied on the annual reports from the Planning and Resource Management Bureau (SWE) on the “Cost of Consular Services and Emergency Management Program,” as well as on information about the salary and operational budgets for the two main consular bureaus (Operations and Policy). A growing program budget deficit was identified in the annual Consular reports by comparing the annual budget allocations and the revenues from consular fees and special services.

Evaluation Findings

Finding 1: While the foundational international conventions continue to guide consular relations among countries, some may no longer be reflective of the evolving consular trends and global security risks. Canada and like-minded countries are working together through various international forums to share best practices and find ways to fill potential policy and legislative gaps through new bilateral or multilateral agreements.

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR)

The 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), ratified by 179 countries, is the foundational framework guiding states in the delivery of consular services to their citizens abroad. Developed over 50 years ago, the VCCR no longer reflects the current consular environment, the emerging consular issues and situations affected by specific political crises or relations among states. For instance, cases involving transfer of offenders, international child abductions, dual nationals, or victims of terrorist attack are not addressed in the VCCR. The lack of an enforcement mechanism for the VCCR in certain countries has also led to its uneven application, especially in countries where local traditions, customs or political climate prevail over the provisions of the Convention.



Other International Conventions and Provisions

A number of international legal instruments have been developed over the past decades to provide guidance for dealing with specific consular cases, such as the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction (1980), the Malta Process, the International Transfer of Offenders Act.

Canada has also negotiated bilateral agreements and/or MoUs with some countries to mitigate the absence of international instruments and guidance on certain topics, such as the recognition of Canadian citizenship form dual nationals, e.g. MoU with China.

Common Challenges for Consular Staff

Consular staff have reported challenges in providing assistance to Canadians in countries in which local customs, traditions or religious beliefs override or strongly impede the implementation of international conventions and legal frameworks. Similarly, consular challenges have been reported for countries where local enforcement authorities, such as police and prosecutors, are not aware of the specifics of international consular conventions, and their related obligations in dealing with cases involving foreign nationals.

Canada is not yet a signatory to some consular-related international conventions, such as the Apostille Convention, which at times impacts the efficient delivery of services, the 1996 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Protection of Children, the 200 Hague Convention on the International Protection of Adults.

To compensate for some gaps in the existing international conventions, Canada along with other like-minded countries is working on the development of supporting documents to help achieve consensus among states on common interpretations of legal provisions or possible actions. Canada has played a leading role in the Global Consular Forum (GCF) and the international Consular Colloque – two of the main venues for countries to share best practices and to collaborate on ways to modernize consular services. Canada also engages on consular issues through the Canada-European Union (EU) Informal Consular Dialogue and supports the development of common international approaches to the resolution of complex consular cases in the evolving political and security environment. These international forum are discussed in further detail in Finding 14.

Finding 2: The Consular Program has developed mechanisms and procedures for sharing personal and consular-case related information among federal government departments, agencies and provincial and territorial government, however, receiving and coordinating the information in real time among multiple partners involved in the resolution of complex consular cases continues to be a challenge.



One of the most commonly quoted consular challenges relates to the collection, use and disclosure of personal or consular case-related information when managing complex consular cases. While the Program has developed mechanisms and procedures for sharing information, the involvement of multiple partners, each with different information (or requests for such), makes the coordination and consolidation of such information in real time a major challenge. Information exchange among Federal government departments follows established procedures and protocols. GAC has ensured a 24/7 response system, however, not all other government departments (OGDs) have the capacity to provide an immediate response. Communicating consular-related information in real time outside the government, e.g. to provinces and territories, while respecting privacy considerations, was reported to cause difficulty.

Canada's Consular Program has been successful in offering consistent assistance for routine consular cases throughout the mission network. However, applying the same consistency in the resolution of complex and high-profile cases has not always been possible or feasible due to the uniqueness of each case and the host country legislative environment. In dealing with complex cases, the Consular Program relies to a considerable degree on the experience and professional judgment of the consular officers in the field and the CMOs at HQ, especially in the absence of specific guidance in the Consular Manual. The escalation of some cases to the attention of the Minister and the involvement of MPs or politicians in their resolution, may provoke at times perceptions of unequal treatment of consular clients, create precedents or trigger requests for similar treatment, compensations or litigation claims.

The evaluation found that many consular officers, both at HQ and missions, consider at times the **Privacy Act** as an impediment to the resolution of consular cases. In particular, the restriction for sharing personal information with relatives of Canadians in distress or with main partner departments without the consent of the client was seen as a major impediment for the quick resolution of specific consular cases (e.g. cases involving children, mentally ill or physically incapacitated clients).

While the **Privacy Act** allows the disclosure of personal information under certain circumstances (e.g. if the information can help protect other Canadians or prevent potential security-related incidents), not all OGD representatives at missions are aware of the official procedures for sharing or obtaining such information. GAC provides regular training for consular staff and OGD representatives going on postings abroad, however, it may not always ensure full coverage of OGD staff.

Despite the existence of clear and strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for sharing of information, there are ongoing challenges related to the handling of private and sensitive information. Evidence from high profile consular cases indicates the potential risks and consequences of improper information sharing for the departments (e.g. complicated trials and substantive litigation claims). Such cases usually help consular staff derive lessons learned, but may also make officers become overly protective about information sharing. The lack of established practices to document the decision-making process and record lessons learned from complex cases was identified by many interviewees as a loss of valuable corporate memory and a programming gap, especially in an environment of high staff turnover.

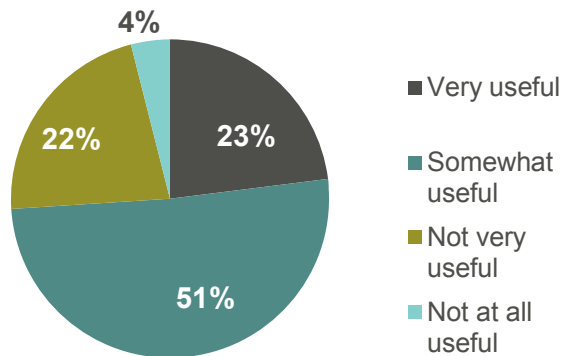
Finding 3: GAC’s 21st Century Consular Plan (CCP) has helped missions streamline their priorities and justify outreach initiatives, however the lack of relevant training and adequate levels of human and financial resources has prevented some missions from implementing planned activities and delivering on commitments made in Strategia.

The 21st Century Consular Plan (CCP) was launched by the Consular Program in 2014 with a three year mandate scheduled to sunset in 2017. The main objectives of the CCP are: **1) reducing routine consular workload** at mission by empowering Canadians to help themselves, and **2) focussing resources on complex consular cases**. The plan was organized around four main initiatives aimed at modernizing the delivery of consular services:

- focus on children;
- targeted outreach;
- going digital; and
- strengthen the consular response network.

Interviews with MCOs and DMCOs indicated that while the 21st CCP helped them to streamline and prioritise consular work, as well as justify outreach activities in their budgets, **it did not significantly assist in reducing the routine consular workload at mission.**¹ In addition, the actual implementation of the plan was not always feasible for some missions. Reasons for difficulty in implementing the 21st CCP included: the lack of staff and financial resources, guidance from HQ on conducting outreach and absence of relevant training. The challenges in fully implementing the 21st CCP were particularly evident for missions affected by the eTA and missions in countries requiring travel to remote destinations (e.g. islands in Oceania or accredited to missions in Australia and New Zealand).

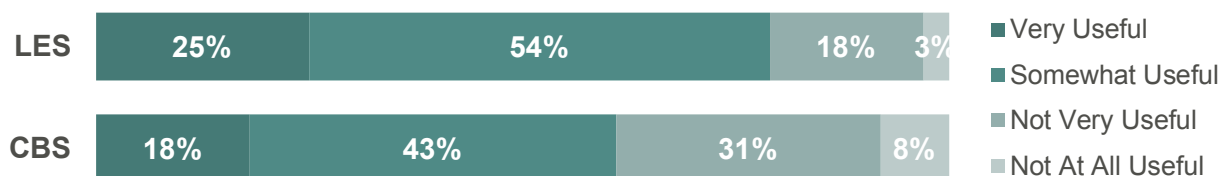
Usefulness of the 21st Century Plan



*2017 Consular Survey

According to the 2017 survey of consular staff at Canadian missions, **23%** of respondents indicated that they do not use the 21st CCP as a guiding document. Of the 77% of respondents that do use the 21st CCP, over half (**51%**) found it “somewhat useful,” **23%** considered it “very useful” and **26%** stated that it was “not very useful,” or “not at all useful.” The percentage of those who did not find the 21st CCP useful was much **higher among CBS employees** - 39% vs. 21% for locally engaged staff (LES).

Usefulness of the 21st Century Plan by CBS and LES



*2017 Consular Survey



1. Focus on children: Results achieved

The 21st CCP supported the creation of the **Vulnerable Children's Consular Unit (VCCU)** in November 2013, with the purpose of creating a centre of policy and case management expertise for the delivery of consular services to Canadian children and their families abroad. A number of ambitious goals and objectives were outlined for the VCCU, mostly to fill in policy gaps for consular cases dealing with forced marriage and child detainees abroad. Initially, the VCCU brought together case management officers dealing with children cases and deliberately recruited policy officers with legal background and experience in child protection, child welfare, domestic violence and forced marriage. Responding to policy gaps in the operations side of the consular work was only one part of the work of the VCCU. A lot of effort was put in the analysis of international policies and existing gaps with regard to the prevention of forced marriages and child abduction. VCCU staff advocated and lobbied for the ratification of international consular instruments and children-related conventions by more countries. (e.g., the 1980 *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The Malta Process, etc.*). Strategies and policies were developed for multilateral cooperation abroad, awareness raising and relationship building with provinces and territories, Canadian child protection agencies, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), teacher associations.

The VCCU was given project (O&M) money but not funding for permanent positions, which ultimately affected the sustainability of the unit and led to high staff turnover. Even though the VCCU was identified as a main priority and one of the four pillars of the 21st CCP, it never received funding for permanent positions. This affected the sustainability of the unit and the morale of its highly qualified experts, ultimately leading to a high staff turnover and a shift from the initial mandate and vision. In 2016, during a Program Review, the VCCU was identified in the low 5% priorities for the Consular Program, which may soon result in the abolishment or major restructuring of the unit.

2. Targeted outreach

According to interviewed MCOs and DMCOs, the CCP has provided them with the means to justify the need for consular outreach activities and to request the necessary budget be included in the mission plans. The lack of sufficient resources, both human and financial, has prevented many missions, particularly those affected by the new eTA requirement, from accomplishing their planned outreach activities.

- **82%** of survey respondents indicated that they conduct "some form" of consular outreach with Canadians. Of those who conduct outreach, 75% have conducted in-person outreach, while 69% have used social media.
- When asked what tools they consider to be the most effective in communicating with Canadians, **social media (85%)** is seen as most effective, followed by Registration of Canadians Abroad (**ROCA**) - (60%).
- Respondents also indicated that time spent for "Outreach" cannot be reflected in COMIP.*

**The Consular Management Information Program (COMIP) is a data collection tool used by consular officers to record daily consular activities and services provided. It also assists in operational planning and resource allocation at mission.*

According to the 2017 Consular Survey, 79% of consular staff find complex cases involving children to be among the most challenging.



3. Going Digital

While technological progress has generally facilitated the work of the consular officers over the past five years, the 21st CCP was not found to have significantly helped with reducing the routine consular workload at mission, which accounts for the majority of the consular workload.

Interviewees at HQ and surveyed staff at missions indicated a number of reasons why the “Go Digital” pillar of the 21st CCP had lower success:

- Poor infrastructure in countries of accreditation (i.e. slow or interrupted wireless network, firewalls, small bandwidth);
- Common communications vehicles widely used by other missions and local government authorities in some countries, such as WhatsApp and Skype, are not supported by GAC’s systems;
- Challenges with older generations of Canadians accessing digital media;
- Challenges with IT equipment at Canada’s missions (i.e. older computers, limited number of scanners and copiers, etc.). In the 2017 Consular Survey, **15%** of respondents felt they did not have the necessary equipment to conduct their consular work efficiently and effectively.



4. Strengthen our response network

The goal of this pillar was to assist Canadians through different points of access and types of services abroad, as well as through bilateral agreements with allies where Canadian representation does not exist or Canada’s resources are limited.

One of the main accomplishments under this pillar was the implementation of the Consular Regionalization Project in the U.S. and the opening of the **Canadian Citizen Services Contact Centre** in Washington DC in October 2016. The purpose was to create a single point-of-contact for all Canadian citizens in the U.S who are seeking consular assistance while also freeing up time consular staff at the 13 missions to focus on complex cases and invest time in value-added activities. The monthly activity reports of the Contact Centre indicate a progressively growing number of general email and phone-call inquiries handled by the Centre on behalf of the US-based missions. For example, in April 2017, the Centre responded to 2,329 calls and 467 emails, 71% of which were resolved by Contact Centre agents.

One of the reported benefits of the regionalization project in the U.S is the standardization and streamlining of consular services. Previously, service delivery and handling of consular cases across the 13 missions differed considerably, resulting in multiple complaints for inconsistent treatment of clients. The Contact Centre system also allowed for more reliable statistics gathering, performance tracking and reporting. The Consular Program should be encouraged to assess the feasibility of replicating the U.S regionalization experience in other countries, where the consular network is stretched for resources, e.g., China, India, and Australia.

The evaluation team visited the U.K Regional Call Centre for North and South America in Ottawa (one of the three U.K call centres covering the globe). The benefits of creating regional call centres for consular inquiries were confirmed by British consular officers in the field. The most positive result reported was the reduced amount of routine consular work, (e.g., responding to hundreds of general phone call inquiries), ability to concentrate on cases that required personal involvement and assistance, as well as more time for networking with local authorities and organizations.

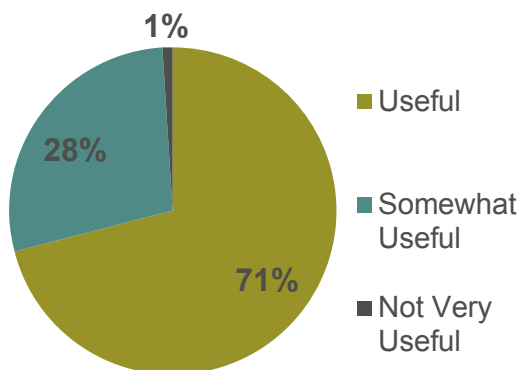
Finding 4: Consular operations and the delivery of consular assistance at missions is guided by the Consular Manual, an ever-green document that provides policy guidance and operational instructions. While there is a general consensus that the Manual has been considerably improved over the past years, gaps remain and some of the guidance is not always applicable to specific country contexts or complex case situations.

The Consular Manual is an ever-green document developed by the Consular Policy Bureau (JPD) in collaboration with the Operations Bureau (JND) and updated on a cyclical basis through consultations with missions. The majority of interviewees at missions and 71% of survey respondents viewed the consular manual as a **useful policy framework that provides guidance for resolving routine cases but may not always be helpful in certain country contexts and complex consular cases.**

There was a general consensus among interviewees that some Consular Manual chapters have been considerably improved in recent years.

A few interviewees noted that the use of the Manual would be more efficient and easier to use if further upgrades were introduced, such as a **search function** allowing consular officers to quickly find needed information. A good example witnessed by the evaluation team was the U.K.'s case management system which automatically displays the relevant consular standards and procedures when an officer opens a consular case.

Usefulness of the Consular Manual



*2017 Consular Survey

Complex and High Profile Case Management

- The majority of consular cases (97%) are considered routine cases and require the standard level of mission and HQ involvement.
- Around 4% of cases are considered complex and require advanced mission and HQ involvement.
- Less than 1% of cases are considered high profile cases requiring Ministerial and GAC Senior Management involvement.

Complex consular cases can be very specific and their resolution may require different approaches depending on the host country's legislation, traditions and religious beliefs, as well as on the availability of specific bilateral agreements with Canada (e.g. on the Recognition of Dual Citizenship). Some complex cases may require senior-level involvement and/or political engagement. JND has developed special case alert criteria and "early warning sign system" to ensure Heads of Missions and Senior Managers at HQ are informed on a timely basis about potential escalation of a case, increased media attention or probability of MPs' involvement.

The evaluation found, however, that there are no practices or formal procedures for documenting the "early signs" and the events or circumstances that may trigger a case escalation. Due to the unique circumstances under which some complex cases develop, consular staff often rely on their own experience and sound judgment. Their actions taken by individual consular officers, as well as the involvement of Ministers, MPs, even Premiers, may sometimes contribute to perceptions of uneven treatment of Canadians in similar situations.

Besides the CAMANT notes which reflect the questions and answers between mission staff and CMOs no records of the decision making, lessons learned and/or best practices were being recorded and kept.

ISSUE 3: Effectiveness of the current consular governance structure

Finding 5: The organizational structure of the Consular Affairs Program has undergone some positive changes over the past five years, however, the physical separation of Consular Communications and the IM/IT functions from the Program and their placement under separate branches has impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of information sharing and the management of these consular-related functions as integral elements of one Program.

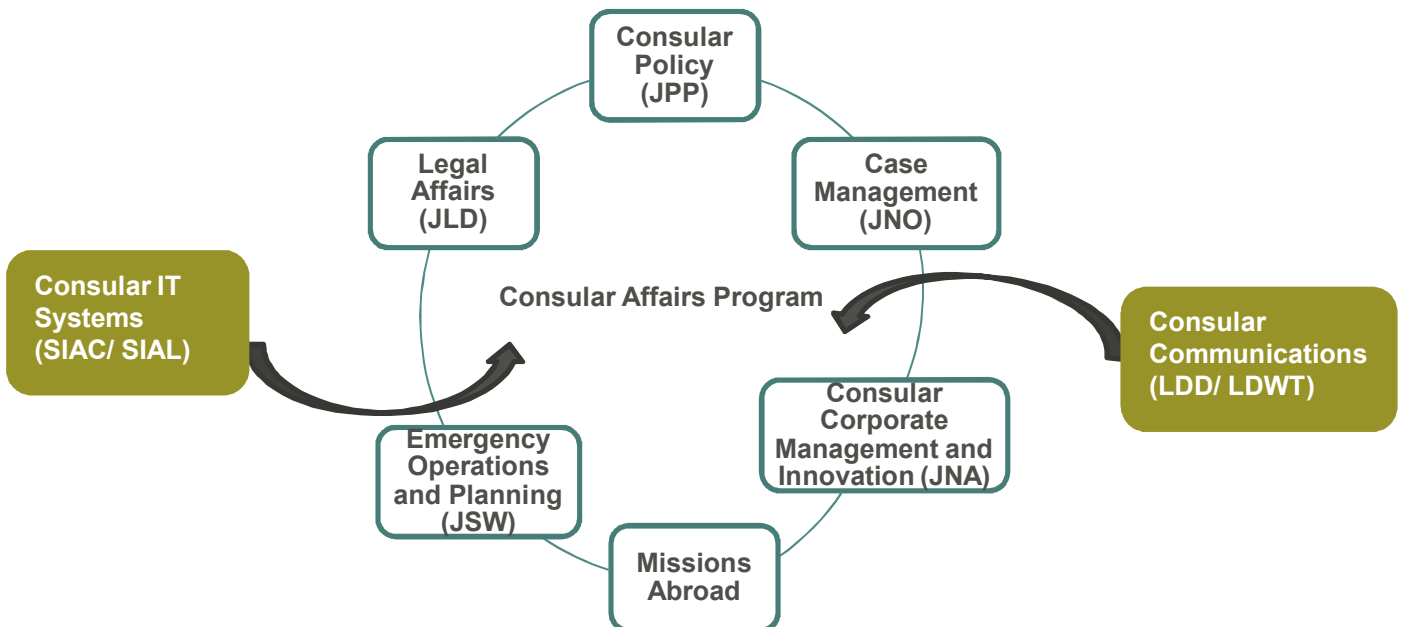
Consular Program Management Structure

The Consular program is managed and delivered by highly professional and dedicated program managers, MCOs, DMCOs and locally engaged staff (LES) at missions and Case Management Officers (CMOs) at HQ. While the current divisional and reporting structure supports clearly defined roles and responsibilities, it has also been identified by interviewees as one of the factors leading to reduced efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of the consular mandate, namely its prevention and assistance aspects. The physical and functional separation of the main consular functions under three branches and several bureaus has reportedly impacted the consistent management of all consular-related activities as integral elements of one Program.

Interviewees at HQ indicated a **disconnect** at the working level between policy and operations.

The current governance and decision-making structure has also been described by consular staff as inefficient. The effectiveness of the work of some steering committees was questioned, especially with regard to decision making. The existence of multiple working groups was also seen as an ineffective way of discussing important policy and operational issues.

Communications between missions and HQ were also impacted by this separation, and further complicated by the **lack of a designated contact point** (group or division) to respond to general (not case-specific) policy, operational and/or communications questions.



Finding 5 (Cont'd)

Role of Missions

While JNO and JPP are making efforts to improve communications with missions, gaps continue to exist with regard to the consistent sharing of messages from HQ with missions. Interviews at missions revealed that there are delays, at times, in receiving guidance from HQ which in turn impacts the ability of missions to respond to time-sensitive cases. In addition, no division at HQ holds primary responsibility for updating mission contact lists, including consular staff and local contacts, which leads to **inconsistent sharing of information**. The evaluation found that the existing distribution list used by the Program to communicate with missions was **missing 187 consular staff** and a few missions were left off the distribution list all together.

Role of other Internal GAC Stakeholders

The international delivery of consular services requires close cooperation and coordination between the Consular Affairs Program and other GAC branches and divisions. In general, communications between the Program and other internal stakeholders at GAC, such as the geographic divisions, emergency management and legal, was **found to be sufficient**. For example, JND works closely with the Geographic divisions, legal affairs and emergency management. JNO and JSW managers have weekly meetings and officers from both divisions are in regular contact for daily transfer and cooperation on files (e.g. calls received or expected overnight). JSW is also participating in the Consular Policy Working Group and the Consular Policy Steering Committee.

Consular Communications

In FY 2012/13, the Consular Communications and Partnerships Team moved from the Consular Affairs Program in JFM to LCM to better align with communications' best practices, integrate planning with ministerial communications needs and enhance innovation. Consular communications was further divided into two divisions in LCM: the Strategic Communications Division (LCF) and the Corporate and Electronic Communications Bureau (LDD). The Travel Information Program (TIP), primarily responsible for creating and maintaining Travel Advice and Advisories (TAA), remained under the structure of the Consular Affairs Program. As a result of DRAP in 2014, consular communications resources, both financial and human, were significantly reduced. In 2016, with fewer resources, the two travel-related units in Public Affairs were merged to become what is LDWT today.

Consular communication involves strategic outreach and information sharing with Canadians which are core elements of the consular mandate. LDWT staff are not trained consular officers making consultation and collaboration between bureaus important for product development. Interviews at HQ noted that the **physical and organizational separation** of communications from the Consular Affairs Program, combined with ongoing restructuring within the Communications Branch, has created challenges for internal communications and information and data sharing between bureaus, particularly at the senior management level.

Working relationships have considerably improved over the past year with the creation of the Consular Communications Working Group (CCWG) which provides a forum for discussion and information sharing at the director-level. In addition, consular communications officers and consular program officers have started to more regularly liaise at the working level and closely collaborate for the delivery of the TIP program. Nonetheless, the consular communication unit (LDWT) reported that they still do not receive regular information and data from JNO and missions which prevents Communications from precisely tailoring messages to specific client groups.

Finding 6: The lack of clear duty of care guidance from HQ, combined with gaps in international conventions on consular immunity, may place consular officers at undue risk when dealing with complex cases such as child protection cases or arrest and detention cases.

Limited Duty of Care Guidance



GAC has a duty of care with respect to the personal safety and security of departmental employees at Canadian missions abroad, as well as of departmental employees undertaking temporary travel or duties abroad. This requirement is outlined in the *Canadian Labour Code*, *DFATD Act* and *Policy on Government Security*.

While duty of care is a responsibility of the Department, there are **no detailed standards or directives** in place to ensure consular duties and responsibilities are delivered in a manner that respects the safety and security of consular officers. Decisions on whether to place consular officers in certain situations in the field falls to the **discretion and judgement of the HOM**, who may not have the necessary health and security knowledge to make such calls. It also leaves the Program open to uneven application of duty of care procedures across the mission network.

Interviews with consular staff both at missions and HQ revealed several instances where consular officers have been asked to provide assistance in environments where their personal safety has been put at risk.

In terms of prison visits, the Consular Manual does stipulate that, “when possible, consular officers will conduct prison visits in conjunction with a second consular officer” to mitigate potential risks to personal security. However, the evaluation noted instances where resource constraints at missions, human and financial, have led to **uneven application** of this clause. It is also not a strict requirement for consular officers to conduct prison visits in pairs. In the absence of other security standards in place to guide prison visits, officers could be exposed to high risks and abuse.



The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Relations provides consular officers with limited immunity from local prosecution. However, the immunities and privileges outlined in the Convention do not equally apply to all consular roles. For instance, assistants to Honorary Consuls (Hon Cons) are not exempt from local jurisdiction. Cases of Hon Con assistants being placed at unnecessary risk were brought to the attention of the evaluation team. The most commonly quoted cases were of assistants being tasked with arrest and detention cases and conducting prison visits alone.

ISSUE 4: Efficiency of consular resource allocation

Finding 7: In general, missions are adequately staffed for routine consular workload; however, certain missions are not equipped to meet surge capacities. The lack of a formal mechanism for coordination of funding and resource allocation between the Geographic branches and the Consular Program makes it difficult to compare and quantify workload discrepancies between missions, as well as between actual staffing needs and perceptions.

The Consular Affairs Program has tried to develop a “Resource Allocation Methodology”, however, the evaluation did not find evidence of its actual application. While the methodology uses special mathematical formulas, the lack of consistent and reliable quantitative data sources does not allow for the practical application of this resourcing model. Also, it does not reflect the evolving consular context and the need for an overall revision of Canada’s consular footprint, especially in new travel destinations for Canadians.

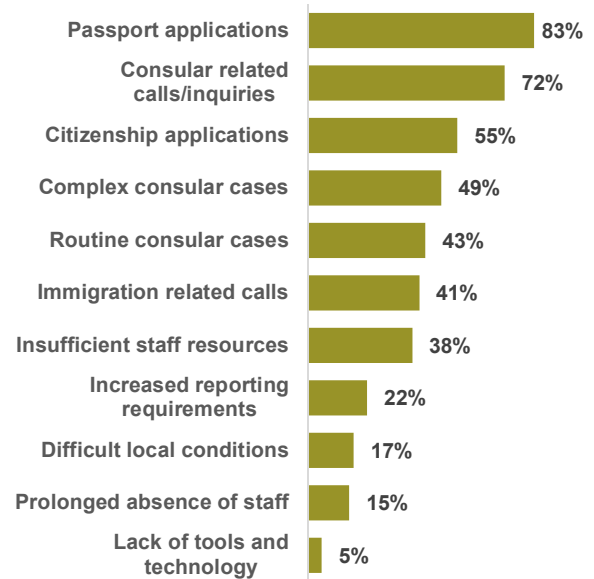
The Corporate Management and Innovation Team (JNA) is reviewing a combination of information and data sources, such as Strategia, COMIP and direct reports from missions to identify consular staffing and workload pressures. The actual implementation of and response to staffing needs has to be coordinated with and approved by the geographic bureaus, which in turn need to prioritize all workload pressures (Heads of Mission, foreign policy and diplomatic services, trade, and consular) and urgent staffing and funding requests from missions.

Even when resource deficiencies are recognized at some missions, the Consular program is not always in a position to implement permanent solutions and go beyond the practice of sending temporary duty (TD) officers. This is mostly due to the complicated mission resourcing model and staffing processes led and managed by the geographics. While all 12 missions visited by the evaluation team indicated that additional resources would be helpful, the actual consular workload differed considerably among these missions, with the situation being most critical at the eTA affected countries.

Among Canada-based Staff:

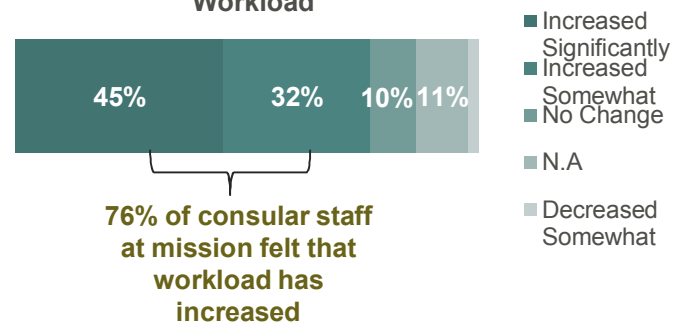
- 52% say they have hired casual/emergency employees (not including TDs)
- 10% indicated that their mission had received temporary duty (TD) support

Perceptions on Increased Consular Workload



*2017 Consular Survey

Perceptions of Changes in Consular Workload



*2017 Consular Survey

Finding 8: The implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) requirement for people visiting Canada had a particularly strong impact on small missions with no surge capacity and on missions in countries with large numbers of Canadians with dual citizenship. Temporary duty (TD) assignments to eTA affected missions, arranged by IRCC and GAC, have provided only temporary relief and reduction of the passport application backlogs, without offering longer-term solutions to the problem.

The eTA is a new entry requirement for visa-exempt foreign nationals flying to or transiting through Canada. It was initially launched by IRCC in March 2016, however, a leniency period was extended until November 2016 to facilitate greater awareness raising among affected travellers.

The evaluation team had an opportunity to directly observe the impact of the eTA on missions in countries with a large number of Canadians with dual citizenship. The eTA initiative was initially believed by IRCC to cause a minor increase in passport applications and only during the first few months after its introduction. GAC senior management anticipated that the eTA would pose a medium, if not longer-term problem for many of Canadian missions in the 51 affected countries.

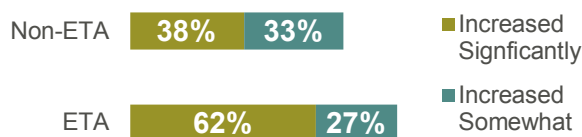
Interviewees at some of the affected missions expressed a major concern with the increasing passport workload, their inability to meet the IRCC's standards and reluctance on behalf of IRCC to change the advertised standards. When asked to rank consular related duties by the most time consuming, **45%** of survey respondents ranked passport issuance as the first or second most time consuming duty. Processing citizenship applications was ranked as the first or second most time consuming duty by **19%** of respondents.

In total, **64%** of respondents felt that their time was primarily consumed by duties related to another department's mandate. This is in contrast to a mere **36%** of respondents that ranked working on consular cases as the most time consuming duty. Several interviewees expressed frustration with the time diverted from consular cases to deal with passport and citizenship inquiries.

The survey also showed that **89%** of respondents from eTA-affected missions felt their workload has increased compared to **71%** of respondents in non-eTA affected countries. To validate these perceptions, the evaluation reviewed the number of new passports per fiscal year over the reference period. It was revealed that new passports increased by **41%** in eTA-affected countries from FY 2015/16 to 2016/17 which corresponds with the rollout of the eTA. In comparison, new passports in non-eTA affected countries decreased by 2%.

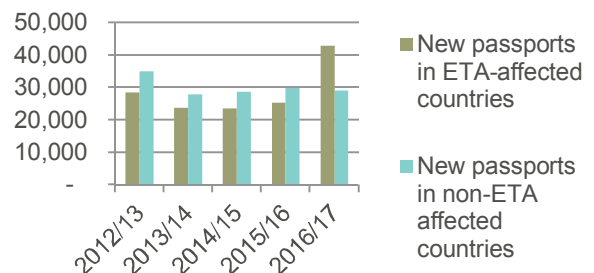
Consular staff at missions shared their frustration with communication challenges between GAC and IRCC and the **lack of formalized contact channels at mission** which impacts the clarity of departmental roles and responsibilities. For instance, several interviewees noted difficulty in finding information on the IRCC website and noted that there are no direct IRCC contacts at mission to clarify questions which creates delays in passport service delivery.

Respondents from eTA-affected missions were more likely to say their workload has increased



*Responses from 2017 consular survey

New passport numbers increased by 41% in eTA-affected countries from FY 2015/16 to 2016/17



Finding 9: Traditionally, there has been limited formal mental health and wellbeing support in place for consular staff both at missions and HQ. The sensitivity and emotional burden on consular staff dealing with complex cases has often impacted their psychological well-being, and potentially, the efficiency and effectiveness of consular operations, especially in small missions. Only lately, the Department has started developing specific training programs and mental health support measures, however, covering the entire mission network remains a challenge.

The evaluation found that there are limited formal mental health supports in place at both missions and HQ to support the mental health and wellbeing of consular staff. While all GAC FTEs have access to counselling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), interviews at HQ and open-ended survey responses from mission noted that the EAP is not tailored to the specific needs of consular employees and can be difficult to access at mission. Interviews at HQ and mission revealed that consular officers often **debrief informally** with one another after challenging cases rather than seeking out formal mental health supports through the department.

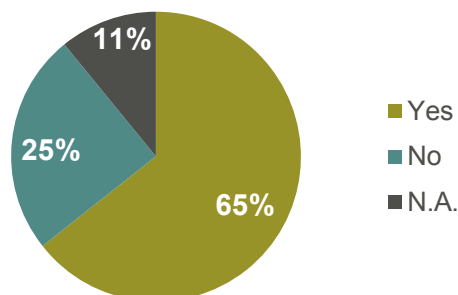
While there are limited formal supports in place, the majority of survey respondents at mission (65%) felt that they had access to **adequate mental health and wellness support** to carry out their duties effectively.

Those that felt they did not have adequate support (25%) raised several concerns including a perception that managers did not appreciate the **extreme stress** consular officers encounter on a daily basis and a feeling that mental health is **not taken seriously** by management at HQ or mission. Several respondents noted that a contributing factor to feelings of stress is a perception of inadequate staffing and resourcing at mission which impacts work-life balance. Several interviews with consular staff both at mission and HQ highlighted a risk for burn-out and compassion fatigue among staff.

When asked what could be done to improve their mental health and wellbeing, a majority of survey respondents felt that they would benefit from **enhanced training** on both managing personal mental health and wellbeing and training on how to handle clients with mental health challenges which can be emotionally tolling. A majority of respondents also cited a need for regular **access to trained mental health professionals** in-person at post, rather than via telephone through the EAP in Ottawa.



“Do you feel you have adequate mental health and wellness support to carry out your duties effectively?”



*2017 Consular Survey

In response to calls for enhanced mental health training, JPP recently piloted a 2-day mental health training workshop and counselling session, in collaboration with the Counselling Unit (ZIBC), for consular mission staff in Bangkok, Beijing, and Los Angeles in 2017. The course provides more detailed mental health training with concrete examples on how to respond to cases and a full day counselling session with a trained professional. Feedback received from participants has been positive and there are plans to roll out the program to more missions in the future.

Finding 10: The Consular Program is in the process of reviewing its training plans, however, over the evaluation reference period, training across the consular network was found to be uneven, in terms of coverage and timing. Gaps were identified in the training delivered to both Canada-Based (CBS) and Locally Engaged staff (LES).

In 2015, the Consular Affairs Program developed the Consular Learning Ecosystem to capture the full scope of the consular training cycle. It provides a holistic approach to learning that includes both in-class, on-line and mobile platforms.



Coverage and Timing of Training

The coverage and timing of training were found to be uneven in terms of regions, thematic areas and types of training. While the number and variety of consular-related courses have increased over the past five years, a large number of interviewees indicated that they had not received refresher training for **more than 10 years**. This is particularly prominent with cross-posted CBS and long-standing LES staff.

Mission staff underlined the need for enhanced training on challenging consular issues, such as torture, child abductions, human rights abuses, and in countries where working with local authorities might be particularly challenging. In a few cases, staff at missions shared high satisfaction with courses on specific themes delivered by like-minded countries. In other cases, some missions within a region have started organizing informal workshops and discussions on best practices with cases typical for the region. At HQ, interviewees expressed that even when training is available, there are limited opportunities to attend sessions due to the high volume of the workload.

Examples of Thematic Areas Covered by Training

- Introduction to the Consular Manual
- Client-centered service delivery
- Consular Case Management Systems
- Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP)
- Information Sharing
- Passport Services
- Notarial Services
- Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA)
- Honorary Consuls and Assistants

Finding 10 cont'd

Satisfaction with Training

Interviews noted that training has considerably improved over the past year with the introduction of a designated training coordinator in JPP. A training plan is also in the process of being developed by JPP to ensure a more standardized approach to training.

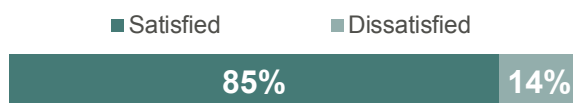
According to the Consular Survey, the majority of survey respondents who received training over the reference period were satisfied with the level and quality of training received (85%) In general, respondents felt that in-person training provides an important opportunity for consular officers to learn from one another through role playing and sharing of lessons learned. It also allows for immediate discussions and feedback on complex case management. Several respondents noted that an added benefit to in-person training is the establishment of personal relationships which promotes greater sharing and collaboration across the consular network. Respondents felt that on-line training was generally helpful for learning technical issues, such as passport service delivery, but found in-person training more useful for discussion on complex consular cases.

Those who responded that they were dissatisfied with training most often cited **insufficient detail** on case management issues as their main reason (44%), followed by dissatisfaction with a lack of discussion and sharing (40%), that the training was too brief (38%) and that it lacked simulation exercises (38%).

Training Needs

Training needs are determined by JPP through review of training requests and information input by missions in Strategia. When asked what training would be most useful in the future, a majority of survey respondents felt that a **refresher course** on changes in consular policy and procedures would be beneficial for MCOs and consular officers. In addition, several respondents felt that **regional consular meetings** would provide important opportunities to share best practices on case management in certain regions. A few respondents recommended that consular officers receive training on how to conduct effective **outreach and networking**.

How satisfied were you with the level and quality of consular training you received?



*2017 Consular Survey

Finding 11: The Distress Canadian Fund (DCF) is a valuable mechanism to assist Canadians in distress abroad. The absence of a comprehensive system for tracking requests, combined with uneven communication to missions, has undermined accountability for the fund.

The Distress Canadian Fund (DCF) provides loans to Canadians in distress abroad who require financial assistance. It is meant to be used as a last resort, after all other avenues are exhausted, and only under exceptional circumstances. Interviewees, both at mission and HQ, noted that the DCF is a **useful tool** that can prevent distress cases from becoming complex and requiring additional resources. The average loan dispersed over the reference period was \$1,360.

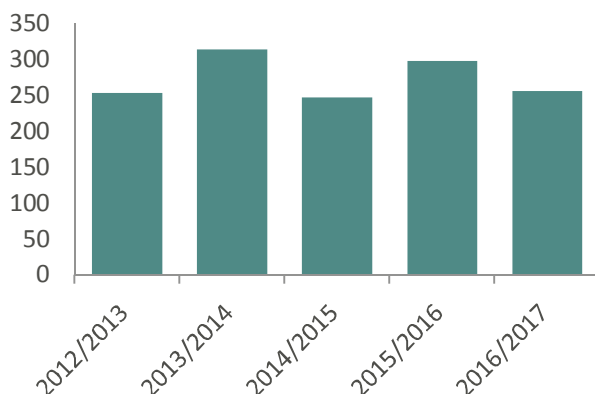
Consular officers at missions were previously permitted to authorize DCF loans under \$250 without approval from HQ to enable rapid dispersement of funds in critical cases. This policy was changed to provide greater financial comptrollership at HQ. A few interviews at missions noted that the decision to remove this discretionary funding was **not clearly communicated** to missions leading to confusion and uneven application of the policy across the network. For instance, the section of the Consular Manual which provides guidance on the use of the DCF has not been updated since 2015 and still states that missions have this discretionary funding.

Interviewees also noted that the requirement for HQ approval for all DCF loans has **created delays** in providing rapid assistance to clients in distress. The evaluation noted several examples where MCOs provided out-of-pocket money to assist Canadians in distress rather than waiting for approval to use the DCF.

A second challenge with the delivery of the DCF is the recovery of funds. Passport Canada previously withheld recipient client's passports until repayment of the DCF loan to incentivise repayment. There is a general sense within the Program that the recovery rate of DCF loans has significantly decreased since the decision by Passport Canada in 2013 to cease this practice. However, the evaluation was unable to confirm this assertion due to a **lack of existing data** on the total amounts disbursed and recovered by fiscal year over the reference period. The Consular Program forwards outstanding loans, that have not been repaid after 120 days, to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) for collection. Once these requests are forwarded to the CRA, there is no systematic tracking of the recovery of these funds by the Program.

A third challenge with the DCF is that there is limited recording of the decision making process for approval or denial of funds. It was difficult for the evaluation to determine the exact number of DCF cases approved over the reference period. This stems from the fact that there is no separate category in CAMANT for officers to code these type of cases in the system and no roll-up of decisions at HQ. At the request of the evaluation, a manual search was done to determine the total number of DCF cases entered in the system over the reference period but the Program was not able to determine the total number of cases that were approved or denied for funding. These issues relate to the fact that **no division holds primary responsibility** for tracking of DCF requests at HQ. The number of cases requesting DCF loans fluctuated over the reference period with an average of 273 cases per FY. It is important to note that this figure **does not indicate** that 273 DCF loans were actually granted on average per FY.

Total Number of DCF Cases Entered in System by FY



Finding 12: The Program has developed a number of innovative tools and products to engage with Canadians travelling, living and working abroad. Nonetheless, the absence of a comprehensive external communication and outreach strategy for specific target groups with respective performance indicators has contributed to inconsistent communications and strategic outreach both in Canada and the field.

Consular communications play an important role in the delivery of the consular mandate with regard to assisting Canadians to be better prepared for safe travel, studies and work abroad. In collaboration with the Consular Affairs Program, the Public Affairs Branch (LCM) leads with:

- developing communications strategies;
- promoting smart travel by managing social media accounts, developing outreach tools and updating web content on travel.gc.ca;
- responding to consular enquiries from the media and Canadian public;
- conducting outreach through various mediums including presentations, webinars and private sector events;
- establishing partnerships with external partners such as travel agencies.

The Consular Affairs Program, in collaboration with TIP, LDD (through LDWT) and the IT sections - Consular Systems (SIAC) and Web Content Management Systems (SICW), are leveraging social and digital media to engage Canadian travellers abroad through the development of innovative communication products. For example:

- The **Travel Smart App** was launched in December 2015 to provide Canadians living and travelling abroad with quick access to up-to-date travel advice and advisories and emergency contact information. Since launching, the app has been downloaded more than **63,000 times**. LDWT and SIAC were recognized for their contribution to the app and awarded the 2016 Government Technology Exhibition and Conference (GTEC) Distinction Award Medal in Excellence in Public Service Delivery.
- In 2012, the consular communications team launched **Travel.gc.ca** integrating content from 20 partner departments and providing the public with access to consular publications, fact-sheets and essential information for travelling abroad. Visits to the website steadily increased over the reference

period, reaching over 14M hits by 2016/17 and becoming the third most visited section of Canada.ca. The Consular and Travel Communications Division (LDWT) was awarded the GTEC Distinction Medal in Excellence in Public Service Delivery in 2013 for their work on travel.gc.ca. **Ask Travel** was also launched in Spring/ Summer 2017 as a complement to the website which provides answers to common questions and access to specific information and local service providers, however, the evaluation was not able to assess its effectiveness at this time.

- **Social media accounts** (Facebook and Twitter) provide timely information to the Canadian public which is regularly picked up by media outlets during crises. LDWT statistics captured from monitoring online traffic indicates that social media counts have increased steadily since FY2015/16 reaching over 300,000 followers.

A Strategic Communications Strategy for Travel.gc.ca and Consular Outreach, last updated in 2016, was developed by LDD as an evergreen document which outlines the key objectives of consular communications and highlights opportunities for public outreach. The strategy provides a good overview of the broad objectives of consular communications, however, it is missing a **detailed strategy** on engaging specific stakeholders, related key activities, timelines, targets and expected outcomes. The strategy also does not include a consolidated **performance measurement strategy** with clear and detailed indicators to measure progress on expected outcomes. This hampers the ability of LDD and the Consular Affairs Program to capture robust data to ensure analytics inform strategic planning. There are currently no tools in place to measure whether outreach tools are meeting the needs of Canadians or reducing the number of consular enquiries. There is also no **implementation strategy** that accompanies the communication strategy which outlines timelines and required resources.

Finding 12 (Cont'd)

Outreach with Key Stakeholders

Canadian Public

There is a perception both at missions and HQ that more work is needed to **promote awareness** about the consular services delivered by the GC to Canadians travelling, working and living abroad. A particular challenge noted by several interviewees relates to the difficulties in navigating the consular online interface, which impacts the dissemination of important information to Canadians. It was also noted in interviews that there is a need to more precisely target the messaging to specific groups rather than providing general information.

While digital platforms are in line with the GC's objective of modernizing the delivery of consular services, they also present certain challenges. For instance, certain population groups, and particularly senior citizens, may not be familiar with, or have access to new technologies and require additional assistance (including in-person). Another highlighted challenge was the limited access to technology in certain foreign countries due to poor tech infrastructure, security firewalls or incompatibility of government tools with new technologies. For example, GAC's blackberries do not support popular local applications such as WhatsApp, widely used by other countries' embassies and host governments in Mexico and Central America for travel advisories and consular communications with the public. These technological restrictions need to be taken into consideration as GAC develops new consular communication tools and programs to ensure all population groups are reached.

The overall impression is that the prevention function of the Consular program is still not at the desired level. Missions continue to reiterate the fact that many Canadian travelers are not familiar with travel advisories, are poorly informed about potential travel hazards in some countries, and travel without insurance.

The Media

Communicating with the media provides another opportunity to better inform Canadians about their responsibilities while travelling abroad and the range of consular services available. The relations with the media can, however, present challenges. While Consular does not have special funding for positive media announcements, it is the high-profile cases that easily make the news. In 2015, the communications team received **933 media requests** related to consular issues, accounting for roughly 33 per cent of all media inquiries received. Responding to the media can pose a unique challenge due to the specific legal and operational context in which consular officers work. Interviewees at HQ and missions indicated that the role of consular officers is often misrepresented in the media and highlighted the need to raise awareness about the consular function with both the Canadian public and the media.

The Privacy Act was noted in several interviews as a particular challenge when communicating with the media. A backgrounder on the limitations of the Privacy Act was developed by JPP, in collaboration with JNO and the consular communications team, and is shared with media representatives. Alternatively, the insufficient understanding of the limitations of the Privacy Act have often caused negative reactions from relatives of Canadians in distress, MPs, the media and some civil society organizations. The Consular program has developed and distributed fact sheets that provide more information on consular services for MPs and media representatives.

Finding 12 (Cont'd)

International Engagement

The Consular Program leads and participates in a number of international initiatives with bilateral and multilateral partners to enhance international consular engagement.

- Canada plays a leading role in the **Global Consular Forum (GCF)** which brings together 37 countries to discuss consular issues and enhance cooperation and sharing of best practices.
- Canada regularly participates in the **Consular Colloque** which brings together senior consular officers from like-minded partners, the U.S., U.K, Australia, and New Zealand, to discuss timely consular issues. In May 2017, the Public Affairs' Corporate, Digital and Consular Communications Bureau (LDD) hosted the first Consular Communications Colloque which was considered a great success among participants.
- The **Canada- EU Informal Consular Dialogue** meets twice a year to discuss consular and emergency management issues of mutual interest to Canada, the EU Presidency, EU External Action Service and the EU Commission.
- Canada also engages bilaterally with countries such as Australia, the UK, China, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, France and Israel in the provision of consular services.

It was brought to the attention of the evaluation team that the Corporate, Digital and Consular Communications Bureau (LDD) rarely gets exposed to these international forums and has limited opportunities to engage with international partners on best consular communication practices.

Engaging the Private Sector and NGOs

Partnerships with the private sector provide opportunities to promote consular services but also present challenges as private sector companies have their own business interests that may not always be in line with GC's interests and priorities. Several initiatives have been undertaken by LDD, LCM and the Consular Affairs Program to conduct outreach with the private sector:

- The Consular Communications Working Group developed a video for travel insurance in 2016 to be shown onboard flights.
- Table-top exercises were conducted with Canadian private sector companies to educate them on consular responsibilities and raise awareness.

The evaluation noted, however, that due to resource constraints, opportunities to increase outreach and collaboration with the private sector may have not been fully explored especially with regard to the prevention aspect of the consular function. It was also noted in interviews that the process of consultations with NGOs is not always clear, especially abroad where consular officers often rely on the support of NGOs for complex cases (e.g. children-related cases in countries where the security situation prevents consular staff from direct involvement.)

International Best Practices

The evaluation team noted potential opportunities to further modernize consular outreach and education with the Canadian public by harnessing new and innovative tools that are being explored by like-minded counter-parts.

- Australia promotes travel advice through government-sponsored television ads and a popular television series that offers a behind the scenes look at a day-in-the-life of a consular officer.
- The U.K promotes travel advice through the dissemination of products such as pens and stress balls at airports and tour agencies. The U.K also releases a list of the top ten bizarre requests consular officers have received over the past year to raise awareness about what services consular officers can provide.

Finding 13: While consular performance against established service standards (citizenship, passport and arrest and detention standards) has been consistently positive over the evaluation reference period, the lack of performance measures, targets, indicators, benchmarks and adequate performance tracking systems prevented the Program from reporting on achievements and positive outcomes in other areas, such as outreach and awareness building, and increased efficiency in delivering services to clients at missions.

The delivery of consular services at mission, and in particular the provision of assistance to Canadians in distress is a reactive service i.e. a service that cannot be planned or foreseen. However, consular staff at missions need to be prepared to respond to accidents, natural disasters and stressful situations involving Canadians, when and as they happen, by providing adequate assistance. Developing a sound performance measurement and risk mitigation system would allow the program to measure both its successes and deficiencies, and identify proper mitigation measures.

Except for processing of passport and citizenship applications, consular work abroad is often influenced by environmental factors, political and economic trends, as well as by the level of awareness, preparedness and expectations of Canadian travellers. International conventions, bilateral treaties, cooperation from local authorities, host country security environment, legislation, customs, religious beliefs, local support networks also play a role in the effective delivery of consular assistance abroad.

A regularly updated consular strategy and implementation plan would help the Program better plan and identify feasible targets commensurate with its financial and human resources, while taking into consideration the evolving complexity of the consular environment. For example, the U.K and Australia update their consular strategies every 3 to 5 years.

In order to develop an effective performance measurement system, the Consular Program has to identify the main types of information needed to demonstrate its achievements, as well as its resourcing and performance gaps.

The development and implementation of a rigorous performance measurement system for the Consular Program has been an ongoing recommendation of previous evaluations. The Corporate Management and Innovation Division (JNA) continuously compiles data from various sources (COMIP, CAMANT, Strategia, Client Satisfaction Surveys) and uses this information to inform decision-making. However, the apparent deficiencies of some of the data collection systems (COMIP), as well as the difficulty in comparing and referencing data across the current systems (e.g. COMIP and Strategia) undermines the robustness of the current performance measurement system.

Finding 14: Deficiencies in data collection systems, combined with inconsistent data input at missions, undermines the reliability of current consular-related statistics and performance measurement information.

The Consular Management Information Program (COMIP) is a data collection tool used by consular officers to record daily consular activities and services provided. It also assists in operational planning and resource allocation at mission. CAMANT is a shared case management tool used by consular officers at HQ and mission to record and manage cases. Both systems make up a part of the Consular Management and Operations System (COSMOS).

Roughly 35% of interviews at field missions and HQ felt that COMIP data is **not consistently inputted** at mission and **statistics are not reliable**. For instance, it was noted that cases are usually categorized under the first service provided to a client but the system does not allow officers to capture whether other services were provided which undermines the reliability of statistics.

Interestingly, the majority of survey respondents at mission found COMIP data **very reliable or somewhat reliable (75%)**. LES, who are primarily responsible for entering data in COMIP, were only slightly more likely to say the data was very or somewhat reliable compared to CBS at mission (75% compared to 73%).

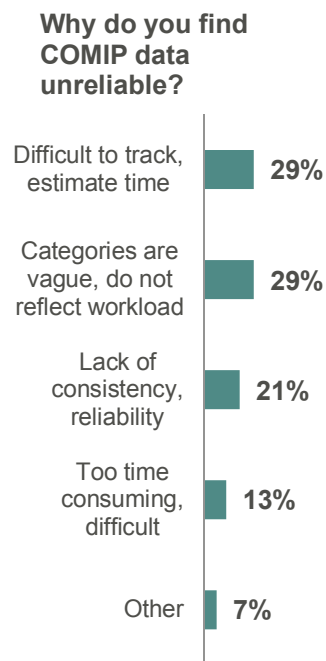
CBS and LES who found COMIP data unreliable (17%) cited several reasons, including: **difficulty tracking and estimating time** (i.e. numbers are approximations, difficulty accounting for every minute of the day), **limitations in categorizing cases** (i.e., broad and overlapping categories, subjectivity of categories), **lack of consistency** (i.e. consular officers may not enter data on daily basis), and that it was **time consuming** to populate. Other issues raised by survey respondents were a lack of oversight or quality check for data entered and deficiencies in the hardware of the system itself.

Consular staff's experience with CAMANT was slightly more positive with **85% indicating a very positive or somewhat positive** experience with the system.

When asked what changes to existing tools, including COMIP and CAMANT, would be useful for carrying out consular duties and responsibilities, respondents suggested:

- clearer and more detailed categories;
- enhanced compatibility of different data management systems;
- incorporating a system to track cases for follow-up; and
- implementing a prompt to remind officers to enter data at the end of the day.

There are plans in place to update the COSMOS system to respond to its deficiencies.



*2017 consular survey



Conclusions

Canada's Consular Affairs Program provides vital services and assistance to Canadians in distress who are travelling, working or studying abroad. The Program also plays an important role in preparing Canadians for international travel, raising awareness and providing travel alerts. GAC's Consular Affairs Program has achieved major progress in modernizing its services through the implementation of the 21st CCP in 2013, which has helped missions streamline and prioritize their consular related activities, expand outreach and introduce more digital services. The experience of the 21st CCP over the reference period has also highlighted some gaps and potential areas for improvement, which along with the evolved complexity of the consular environment, calls for an updated strategy and vision for the future of the Program.

Over the past five years, GAC's Consular Affairs Program has undergone structural and organizational changes which have helped consolidate and streamline some of its functions with those of the Department (e.g. Communications, Legal and IM/IT services). These organizational changes, however, were not always supported with the creation of respective governance mechanisms and decision-making procedures. As a result, the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the entire Program has been affected. Program staff reported lack of effective coordination mechanisms between policy and operations, and internal communications challenges with the Communications and IM/IT services branches. The effectiveness of some Steering Committees and the multiplicity of Consular Working Groups were also questioned.

The lack of a sound resource allocation model to help identify and prioritize mission pressures was also brought to the attention of the evaluation team. While attempts have been made to develop a Resource Allocation Strategy based on Time and Motion studies and COMIP data, the resulting formulas were found to be neither feasible nor reliable. The overall lack of reliable data and performance tracking mechanisms continues to affect the Program's ability to make justified requests for additional human or financial resources.

The Communications Bureau, in close Coordination with the IM/IT Services, has achieved considerable success in launching helpful travel applications for Canadians. However, the development of a Comprehensive Consular Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan with respective targets, timelines and related costs is still outstanding.

Last but not least, the Consular Affairs Program lacks reliable reporting and data collection systems to justify its resourcing needs and pressures. The lack of performance measurement indicators for activities that are not captured through established consular standards also prevents the Program from identifying areas for management improvement. The development of sound financial data tracking mechanisms for revenues collected from special services and services delivered on behalf of IRCC will support the overall departmental revenue reporting and prudent financial management.

Recommendations



Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Update the existing 21st CCP or develop a new Consular Strategy reflective of the evolving consular environment and growing need for further modernization of the Consular Program.

The 21st Century Consular Plan (CCP), developed in 2013 outlined a four-year vision and strategy for modernizing Canada's Consular Program and Services. The 21st CCP was reported to have helped consular staff at HQ and missions, in particular, to identify and streamline priorities and justify outreach activities. It also helped identify areas for improvement and the need for further improvements of the Program and modernization of consular services both at mission and HQ.

Recommendation 2: Revise the Consular Resource Allocation Methodology to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to consular sections at missions to respond to current and future needs for consular services, in both permanent and temporary circumstances, and supported by HQ.

The growing need for consular assistance and services delivered on behalf of other government departments have resulted in major financial and human resource pressures for some missions and uneven distribution of workloads across the network. The absence of a reliable Resource Allocation Model has created challenges for the Program to identify these pressures, justify the need for additional resources to the Geographic branches that control mission resources, and undertake quick actions to mitigate the impact on consular staff.

Recommendation 3: Review the current Consular governance and organizational structure to ensure sound program management and coordination of the main consular functions: policy development, case management and operations, travel advisories and awareness building, and consular internal and external communications.

While defining clear roles and responsibilities for all branches and divisions involved in the delivery of consular services is important, there is an outstanding need for relevant governance, decision-making and communication systems that ensure the consistent and efficient management of all consular-related functions and activities, across HQ and missions.

Recommendation 4: Develop a comprehensive Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan, reflecting both internal and external communication goals and priorities, with specific timelines and targets.

The Consular Communications Division has initiated the development of a number of short-term communication plans, however, the development of a more comprehensive Consular Communication Strategy, outlining both internal and external communication goals, priorities and targets is missing. The Strategy should ensure better information flows within GAC among policy, operations, missions abroad and , IM/IT services. It will also help identify needs and strengthen external communication tools for the Canadian public.

Recommendation 5: Improve data collection to support enhanced performance measurement and financial tracking systems that inform management decision making.

While sound performance measurement and reliable performance and financial tracking tools are often identified as a systemic challenge across the Department, Consular should focus on improving the reporting systems directly related to its activities, such as COMIP. It will be helpful for the Program to introduce tools for tracking the collection of revenues for special services and services delivered on behalf of other departments, as well as the DCF loans and their recovery rates. Better performance measurement indicators would help the Program identify outstanding resource pressures, systemic trends or occasional performance challenges, as well as increased workloads on mission staff as a result of external policies or political priorities.

Management Response and Action Plan (MRAP)

Recommendation 1

Update the existing 21st CCP or develop a new Consular Strategy reflective of the evolving consular environment and growing need for further modernization of the Consular Program. (Linked to F3)

Management Response & Action Plan (MRAP)	Responsibility Bureau/ Division	Time Frame
<p>Agreed. GAC is continually seeking to adjust to the changing international context and is updating the current consular strategy to continue to improve services to Canadians. Work is underway to advance this renewal, including in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved service delivery – ongoing modernization of key tools, including through implementation of the Going Digital vision and strategy, modernization of the Case, Consular and Emergency Management system, development of an online booking system and improved data monitoring and analytics. • Enhanced communications with Canadians – an updated communications strategy and broader range of tools to reach more Canadians with the information they need to make empowered and informed travel decisions. Outreach to key travel industry stakeholders and clients will inform this strategy. • More flexible mechanisms to assist vulnerable clients – Based on an assessment of existing agreements and tools, new arrangements will be identified (including cooperation and partnership agreements, new service arrangements and new flexible funding mechanisms) in order to support distressed Canadians. • Review and update of the consular response network – This will include assessment and adjustment as required of the location of points of service, the types of services provided by Honorary Consuls and wardens, and the tools and training they are equipped with. • Emerging areas of action – Use analysis of case data to update the strategy and associated tools in regard to emerging areas of concern to Canadians abroad. This could include, for example, recent developments related to family cases, treatment of dual citizens and emerging trends in cases of detention. <p>The consular strategy renewal will strengthen support to our consular network to ensure that consular officers have the necessary resources in the current international context to provide timely and appropriate services to Canadians. It will address some of the new challenges presented by the changing consular landscape and will guide Canada's consular priorities for the next three to five years, building on the success of the current 21st Century Consular Plan.</p>	<p>Consular Policy Bureau (CPD) in consultation with Consular Operations Bureau (CND)</p>	<p>Q2 FY2018-19</p>

Recommendation 2

Revise the Consular Resource Allocation Methodology to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to consular sections at missions to respond to current and future needs for consular services, in both permanent and temporary circumstances, and supported by HQ. (Linked to F7 and F8)

Management Response & Action Plan (MRAP)	Responsibility Bureau/Division	Time Frame
<p>Agreed. The variety of ways in which consular resources at missions abroad are allocated will be reviewed with the goal of ensuring that future resource allocation is both appropriate and sustainable. This review will include:</p> <p>1) A comprehensive analysis and resultant process map of the current consular resource allocation process including identification of the full range of decision makers and stakeholders, as well as identification of any gaps in the current allocation methodology.</p> <p>2) Evaluation of options for a way forward with regards to consular resource allocation abroad.</p> <p>3) Further refinement of the quantitative collection and comparison portion of the resource allocation methodology (the “model”).</p>	CND/ CNA	Q4 FY 2017-18
<p>Governance: Given the multiple responsibility centres providing support for consular services, governance among all stakeholders will be strengthened in the areas of program and common services support. New governance mechanisms will be set up to focus on Program Support (Geographic and Consular program) and on Common Services Support (International Platform and Consular program). These mechanisms will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the ideal future state of consular resource allocation based on forecast demand (passport, citizenship, emergency preparedness, consular caseload) and analysis of mission data to inform global rebalancing recommendations. • Improve integration of consular program and geographic considerations in decisions around the resourcing of missions and staffing of management consular officers abroad. • Standardization of consular resource allocation procedures across regions. 	CND/ CNA	Q4 FY 2017-18
<p>Resourcing Model: Analysis will also be conducted in regard to how to expand the resourcing model to take into account the headquarters component that is currently supporting mission consular service delivery. This will be done with the goal of having quantitative indicators that can assist in assessing appropriate levels of external support to mission consular activities in order to identify gaps and optimize resource allocation.</p>	CND/CNA	Q1 FY 2018-19

Recommendation 3

Review the current Consular governance and organizational structure to ensure sound program management and coordination of the main consular functions: policy development, case management and operations, travel advisories and awareness building, and consular internal and external communications.
 (Linked to F5)

Management Response & Action Plan (MRAP)	Responsibility Bureau/ Division	Time Frame
<p>Agreed. The Consular Program governance structure will be reviewed to ensure that accountabilities are clear and that objectives are aligned with departmental priorities.</p> <p>CFM will undertake the following activities to enhance program management and coordination of the main consular functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and validate the current Consular Program governance and organizational structures with a view to recommend adjustments, eliminate redundancies and enhance collaboration between the main consular functions. 2. Identify any gaps and/or opportunities for synergies in the Consular Program governance and organizational structure, taking into account existing modernization processes such as, for example, Going Digital. 3. Strengthen support to our consular network by developing and implementing a strategy for improved internal communications between Headquarters bureaux, including geographic bureaux, and missions abroad. 	CPD/CND	FY2017-18

Recommendation 4

Develop a comprehensive Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan, reflecting both internal and external communication goals and priorities, with specific timelines and targets. (Linked to Finding 12)

Management Response & Action Plan (MRAP)	Responsibility Bureau/ Division	Time Frame
<p>Agreed. The Consular Communications and Travel.gc.ca unit (LDWT) will develop a comprehensive communications strategy and implementation plan, outlining specific external communications goals and priorities over a multi-year timeframe, as well as timelines and targets for key campaigns and projects.</p> <p>The strategy will leverage current communications strategies and tools, integrate mechanisms to ensure performance measurement through the analysis of user metrics and data, and introduce best practices based on consultations with consular stakeholders both internal and external, and international consular counterparts.</p> <p>The strategy and implementation plan will be consulted and developed in time for deployment and execution starting in Q1, 2018-19. In addition, the strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to allow continued refinement of objectives, tools and approaches.</p> <p>Within the context of enhanced communications to Canadians, the Consular Policy and Programs division (CPP) will proactively engage and exchange with our consular network to inform the new communications strategy. Efforts will also be deployed to promote the broader range of tools and products available to consular officers to reach more Canadians with the information they need to make empowered and informed travel decisions.</p>	<p>Digital Communications/ Consular and Travel Communications (LDD/LDWT)</p>	<p>Q2 FY 2018-19</p>

Recommendation 5

Improve data collection to support enhanced performance measurement and financial tracking systems that inform management decision making. (Linked to F11, F13, and F14)

Management Response & Action Plan (MRAP)	Responsibility Bureau/ Division	Time Frame
<p>Agreed. A comprehensive data strategy is under development with a focus on improving performance measurement and the tracking of cases and services. The strategy will support results and delivery of services to Canadians and will inform the modernization of the current case management system to ensure it is both agile and adaptable to evolving operational and management/corporate needs.</p> <p>The data strategy will focus on four core elements:</p> <p><u>Data quality:</u> As part of the Go Digital initiative, case management system modernization business requirements are under development and will include measures to improve data quality as well as expanded capacity for data analysis and reporting.</p> <p><u>Data integration:</u> A business intelligence tool is currently in development to facilitate the integration of case management data. This new tool will improve capacity to report and monitor performance, both at missions and at HQ.</p> <p><u>Data visualization:</u> Collaboration with data visualization specialists will increase capacity of the consular program to assess and communicate the services provided and results achieved.</p> <p><u>Data Analytics:</u> Data analytics capacity will be enhanced through targeted training and additional support from data science specialists. Training plans are being developed for current staff.</p> <p>The Consular Bureau will continue to engage with the Results and Delivery Unit to ensure that both departmental and program performance needs are addressed. We will also continue our collaboration with other programs such as trade to share best practices related to analytics and data integrity and to increase data sharing.</p>	CND/ CAN	Q2 FY2017-18

Icon References

- Title page- “Around the World”, Sierra Pennala
- Pg.9- “Travel Abroad”, Chanut Industries, TH
- Pg.10- “Arrow”, Esin, TR
- Pg.10- “Passport”, Adrien Coquet, FR
- Pg.12- “Application Interview”, www.ygudesign.com
- Pg.12- “Document Tracking”, Vectors Market
- Pg.12- “Online Survey”, Thomas Marijnissen, DK
- Pg.12- “Plane”, Icons fest
- Pg.15- “Contract”, Bastien Delmare, FR
- Pg.16- “Scale”, Erik Vullings, NL
- Pg.18- “Happy Children”, Gabriele Malaspina, IT
- Pg.18- “Target”, Maxim Kulikov
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- Pg.23- “Find Missing Piece”, Thomas’ designs, US
- Pg. 23- “Three Way Split”, Mike Rowe, AU
- Pg.26- “Mental Health”, Gemma Evans, GB
- Pg.35- “Check Mark”, Karthik Srinivas, IN
- Pg.37- “Check Mark”, Karthik Srinivas, IN