

# 2011



Report of the  
**Auditor General  
of Canada**  
to the House of Commons

## FALL

**Chapter 2**  
Issuing Visas



Office of the Auditor General of Canada

*The Fall 2011 Report of the Auditor General of Canada comprises Matters of Special Importance, Main Points—Chapters 1 to 5, Appendices, and five chapters. The main table of contents for the Report is found at the end of this publication.*

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Chapter

# 2

Issuing Visas

## Performance audit reports

This report presents the results of a performance audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada under the authority of the *Auditor General Act*.

A performance audit is an independent, objective, and systematic assessment of how well government is managing its activities, responsibilities, and resources. Audit topics are selected based on their significance. While the Office may comment on policy implementation in a performance audit, it does not comment on the merits of a policy.

Performance audits are planned, performed, and reported in accordance with professional auditing standards and Office policies. They are conducted by qualified auditors who

- establish audit objectives and criteria for the assessment of performance;
- gather the evidence necessary to assess performance against the criteria;
- report both positive and negative findings;
- conclude against the established audit objectives; and
- make recommendations for improvement when there are significant differences between criteria and assessed performance.

Performance audits contribute to a public service that is ethical and effective and a government that is accountable to Parliament and Canadians.

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# Issuing Visas

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## Main Points

### What we examined

People from other countries—foreign nationals—who want to enter Canada as permanent residents must obtain a Canadian visa. Foreign nationals who want to enter Canada on a temporary basis must also apply for a visa, unless they are from a visa-exempt country. To obtain a visa, foreign nationals must meet all requirements for the category under which they are applying and must be deemed to be admissible. In 2010, 1.36 million visas (including 317,000 permanent resident visas) were processed at Canadian missions in foreign countries.

Admissibility of foreign nationals into Canada falls under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. The Act defines various situations where a foreign national would be inadmissible—for example, if the individual presents a risk to the health, safety, or security of Canadians. Administering the various provisions of the Act is a shared responsibility between Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

Before issuing a visa, CIC officials must determine that the applicant is admissible to Canada. They are supported in making this determination by the CBSA, which—with the help of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)—coordinates and provides intelligence information related to the applicants.

We examined whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency have managed the risks associated with determining admissibility before issuing a visa, in line with the objective of the Act to protect the health, safety, and security of Canadians.

Audit work for this chapter was substantially completed on 29 April 2011.

**Why it's important**

Global events in the last decade have changed the nature of threats to Canadian society. Diseases prevalent in other countries that can be transmitted rapidly worldwide, incidents of terrorism, and organized crime around the world have shown the importance of identifying individuals who present a risk and preventing their entry into Canada.

Identifying visa applicants who are inadmissible to Canada is a highly complex process that relies heavily on the judgment and experience of CIC's visa officers in missions overseas and on the information made available to them. Visa officers are expected to make the best decisions they can with that information in the time they have available. It is critical that visa officers receive from their security and medical partners timely and reliable information on applicants.

**What we found**

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency have taken some measures to address long-standing weaknesses in the process of determining whether visa applicants are admissible to Canada. However, deficiencies still exist in the measures used to identify foreign nationals who may be inadmissible for health, safety, or security concerns. CIC and the CBSA lack the necessary tools and information to provide assurance that risks related to the admissibility determination process are properly managed.
- Some of the tools and risk indicators that visa officers use to identify inadmissible persons, and to know when to seek advice from security partners, are not kept up to date, nor are they always available. Furthermore, many CBSA analysts who provide security advice to visa officers have not received the necessary formal training to do so. Documentation to support the advice sent to visa officers offered little insight into how the analysts made their assessments, and in many cases not all the checks that should have been done were completed.
- CIC lacks guidance on the use of two key criteria used in medical screening—danger to public health and danger to public safety—although it has undertaken some work to explain what they mean. Medical screening to determine danger to public health has focused mainly on the same two diseases for the past 50 years—syphilis and tuberculosis. Although today 56 diseases require national surveillance in Canada, CIC has not reviewed whether foreign nationals should also be subject to mandatory testing for some of these diseases.



- CIC and the CBSA do not have systematic quality assurance practices or performance measures in place to know how well they are identifying individuals who are inadmissible because of health, safety, or security concerns. Most quality assurance practices that do exist focus on supporting decisions to refuse a visa. Because those decisions represent a very small percentage of applications each year, this means that the quality of decisions on the vast majority of applications is not reviewed.

**The entities have responded.** The entities agree with all of our recommendations. Their detailed responses follow the recommendations throughout the chapter.



## Introduction

### Legislative framework governing admissibility

**2.1** The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, which came into effect in 2002, governs immigration to Canada. One of its objectives is to protect the health and safety of Canadians and maintain the security of Canadian society. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) are jointly responsible for administering the Act and can deny entry to Canada for many reasons, including health, safety, or security concerns.

**2.2** Citizenship and Immigration Canada enables foreign nationals to enter Canada as permanent or temporary residents by issuing visas. Under the Act, all applicants for permanent residence must obtain a visa before they can travel to Canada. A visa is also required for anyone applying for temporary residence, except citizens of countries where the Canadian government has granted a visa exemption. The temporary visa requirement applies to citizens of more than 140 countries. To obtain a visa, foreign nationals must meet all conditions for the category under which they are applying and must be admissible under the Act.

**2.3** Officials of the Canada Border Services Agency are responsible for coordinating, with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), information related to foreign nationals seeking entry into Canada and providing it to CIC officials to use when determining admissibility. Exhibit 2.1 shows the responsibilities for administering the key inadmissibility provisions of the Act related to health, safety, and security.

**2.4** In 2010, CIC's **visa officers** abroad processed visa applications for 1.04 million people seeking temporary residence and for 317,000 people seeking permanent residence. These officers assess the information provided by applicants, collect additional information if needed, seek health and security advice from federal partners, and make a final decision based on their knowledge, judgment, and use of the tools available to them. Exhibit 2.2 shows the process for determining admissibility.

**2.5** Visa officers work in a very complex operational environment. The type of applications they deal with and the risks to be assessed vary from one country to another. In addition, these officers can have a heavy workload. Meeting annual immigration targets and having service standards of a few days to issue temporary resident visas can make the application review process very demanding.

**Visa officers**—Either Canada-based officers or locally engaged visa officers. Canada-based officers are CIC employees sent abroad from Canada who have the designated authority to issue visas. Locally engaged visa officers are foreign nationals who are employed by a mission and have similar responsibilities to Canada-based officers, except that they don't have the authority to make security-related admissibility decisions.

**Exhibit 2.1** Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency share responsibility for the inadmissibility provisions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*

Section of the Act	Responsibility for developing related policies
Section 33: The facts that constitute inadmissibility under sections 34 to 37 include facts for which there are reasonable grounds to believe that they have occurred, are occurring, or may occur.	CIC and CBSA
Section 34 (Security): Applicants have engaged in spying, subversion, terrorism, or acts of violence, or they belong to organizations that have engaged in, or will engage in, these activities.	CBSA
Section 35 (Human or international rights violations): Applicants have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity. They are or were senior members or officials of a government that has committed acts of terrorism, major human rights violations, genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity.	CBSA
Section 36 (1) (Serious criminality): Applicants have been convicted of, or have committed, a crime punishable in Canada by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least 10 years. Section 36 (2) (Criminality): Applicants have been convicted of an offence punishable in Canada or have committed an act that is an offence in Canada.	CIC
Section 37 (Organized criminality): Applicants belong to an organization that is believed to take part in organized criminal activity or to engage in transnational crimes such as people smuggling, trafficking in people, or money laundering.	CBSA
Section 38 (Health): Applicants' health conditions are likely to be a danger to public health or public safety or may cause excessive demands on Canada's health or social services.	CIC

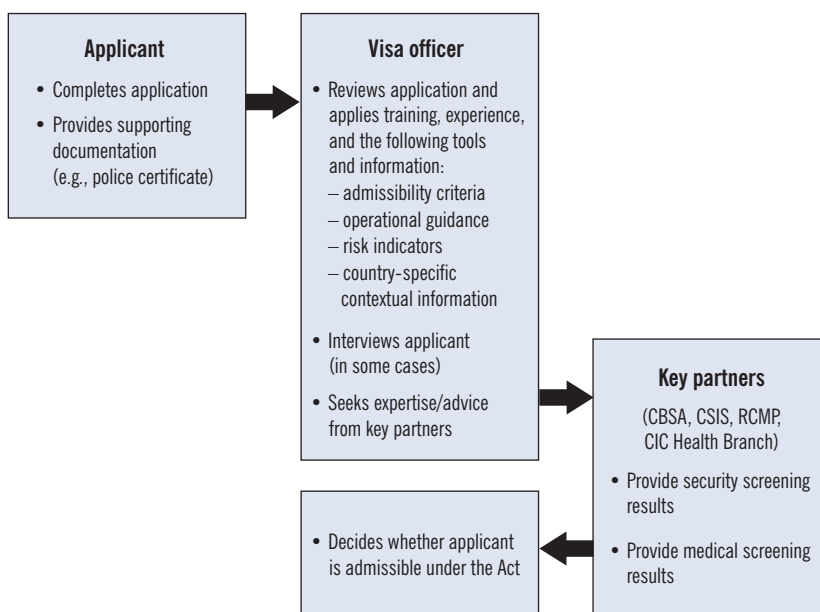
Note: Other provisions related to inadmissibility, such as misrepresentation and financial reasons, were not addressed in the audit.

Source: Adapted from the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*

**2.6** Visa officers must also ensure that negative decisions they make are well documented, since their work can be subject to appeals before the Immigration and Refugee Board or judicial reviews by the Federal Court.

**2.7** During the audit, immigration services abroad were provided through 86 Canadian **missions** where about 270 Canada-based officers, 12 medical officers, and 1,305 locally engaged staff—including about 160 locally engaged visa officers—worked.

**Mission**—An office of the Government of Canada outside Canada. This includes an embassy or high commission, consulate general, and consulate.

**Exhibit 2.2** Process for determining admissibility when issuing visas

### Our previous audit and subsequent events

**2.8** In our April 2000 Report chapter, The Economic Component of the Canadian Immigration Program, we found that visa officers had little information and support to determine whether applicants were likely to engage in criminal activities or endanger the safety of Canadians. In addition, we identified a need for training to improve visa officers' decision-making skills. The audit also found weaknesses in the management of the medical admissibility process. We noted the need to define danger to public health and public safety and excessive demand on health care or social services to ensure that the Department was able to comply with the medical inadmissibility provisions of the Act—a need that we had also noted in our 1990 audit.

**2.9** Since our 2000 audit, there have been major changes in the delivery of the immigration program. In 2002, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* replaced the *Immigration Act* of 1976 and modified the criteria for admissibility.

**2.10** The Canada Border Services Agency was created in December 2003, and responsibilities for intelligence, interdiction, and enforcement were transferred to it from CIC. In October 2004, the CBSA also became responsible for the immigration program at the ports of entry.

**2.11** In July 2008, CIC and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) signed a memorandum of understanding outlining the Department's responsibilities for health in immigration. The PHAC is responsible for providing technical support to the Department on national public health issues, while CIC is responsible for policy development related to its mandate in immigration.

**2.12** Global events in the last decade have also significantly changed the threats to Canadian society. For example, health risks originating in other countries can be transmitted rapidly worldwide by travellers, and terrorist attacks around the world have heightened Canadians' awareness of security risks.

### **Focus of the audit**

**2.13** The primary objective of our audit was to determine whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency have managed the risks associated with determining admissibility under the Act's provisions related to health, safety, and security before issuing visas to foreign nationals. We did not look at other inadmissibility provisions of the Act, such as misrepresentations or financial reasons, nor did we examine exemptions or means to overcome inadmissibility. Furthermore, we did not examine other strategies used by CIC or the CBSA to deny access to foreign nationals who could be a threat to Canada: for example, the interception overseas of improperly documented travellers en route to Canada, screening at ports of entry, or enforcement activities.

**2.14** Our audit work was conducted primarily at the national headquarters of both organizations as well as at CSIS and the RCMP. We also visited six missions overseas that issued visas. Finally, we conducted a survey of all CIC visa officers involved in admissibility decisions overseas.

**2.15** The audit focused on the process followed by visa officers overseas to make an admissibility decision before issuing a visa. The period covered by this audit was mainly from January 2010 to April 2011, and the audit work was substantially completed on 29 April 2011.

**2.16** More details about the audit objective, scope, approach, and criteria can be found in **About the Audit** at the end of this chapter.

## Observations and Recommendations

### Determining admissibility

**2.17** Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) visa officers are responsible for determining the admissibility of applicants to Canada before issuing visas. This process requires an understanding of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, which governs immigration to Canada. The admissibility determination process relies heavily on information provided by the applicant, who is legally obligated to respond honestly to questions on the application form. Some applicants, however, may provide false information or fraudulent documentation. The admissibility determination process, therefore, relies on visa officers' judgment, training, and experience to analyze and validate information they receive from applicants. Visa officers also take into consideration the information provided by key partners. They are expected to make the best decisions they can with the information they have available. According to CIC data, of the applications processed in 2010 for 317,000 people seeking permanent residence, close to 69,000 applicants were refused, including 817 for health, safety, or security concerns. In 2010, CIC also processed applications for close to 1.04 million people seeking temporary residence and rejected about 189,000 applicants. At the time of our audit, information indicating which of these cases were rejected for health, safety, or security concerns was not available.

**2.18** Given the challenging context in which visa officers operate, they need to be supported with adequate training and tools to do their job effectively, particularly in situations where the visa officer has not yet had job experience to draw upon.

#### **Visa officers' initial training is good and a support network exists**

**2.19** At the time of our audit, about half of the Canada-based officers posted abroad and responsible for determining admissibility had less than five years of experience in issuing visas. We examined whether CIC developed and implemented training to ensure that its officers have the competencies to do their jobs.

**2.20** We found that the initial mandatory training on the Act offered to officers at the beginning of their careers is well structured and rigorous. In addition, refresher training is mandatory for officers who are returning to overseas positions after being in Canada in positions that did not involve processing visa applications.

**2.21** Once posted at missions overseas, visa officers are expected to maintain their knowledge and keep up to date through self-training, consultation with peers, and experience gained while processing files. They may also receive formal and informal training overseas, although we found that this training is offered on an ad hoc basis and varies across missions. The annual completion of appraisals and learning plans can help identify training needs. However, there is no assurance that all visa officers receive the additional training they need to maintain and build on their knowledge. In their responses to a survey we conducted as part of our audit, visa officers indicated that the top sources of additional training in admissibility decision making were self-training (87 percent) and coaching by supervisors or colleagues at the mission (65 percent).

**2.22** Visa officers also have access to a support network of colleagues and supervisors within the mission and can consult officials in Ottawa if necessary. In our survey, visa officers stated that they use the network often.

#### **Visa officers need better tools to help identify potentially inadmissible applicants**

**2.23** We examined whether the tools visa officers need were developed and updated and whether the officers were informed of any updates and changes. We looked at

- operational guidance,
- screening manuals and risk indicators, and
- country-specific risk profiles.

**2.24** Operational guidance, risk indicators, and country-specific risk profiles are the primary tools to inform visa officers of what risks to look for; therefore, these tools need to be kept current so that they are useful for identifying people who may be inadmissible. See our overall recommendation at paragraph 2.36.

**2.25 Operational guidance.** We noted that operational guides and bulletins on procedures for applying the Act were available electronically to visa officers who, for the most part, found them useful and sufficient. However, the limited search capability within the hundreds of various manuals and bulletins hampered officers' ability to find the right information quickly or to ensure that they were complying with procedures, especially if officers were inexperienced. We also found that guidance was not always developed in a timely manner to reflect the impact that some court decisions have had on the processing of applications.



**Security concerns**—Risks of espionage, terrorism, and subversion (national security issues as outlined in section 34 of the Act); human or international rights violations (section 35); and organized crime (section 37)

**2.26 Screening manuals and risk indicators.** Canada-based officers are provided with three different screening manuals that define the risk indicators to help them identify applicants who may be inadmissible for **security concerns** and to determine when to refer a file to security partners (the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) for advice. In their responses to our survey, 97 percent of Canada-based officers indicated that they rely on these manuals to assess risks.

**2.27** The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is responsible for updating risk indicators, but we found that two of the screening manuals had not been updated for several years; one of these was last updated in 1999. The third manual, which focuses on national security, had been updated more frequently and was going through another review at the time of our audit. However, despite the CBSA's responsibility under the Act for the inadmissibility provisions related to security concerns, the Agency was not directly involved in the review, which could lead to inconsistency between the three manuals.

**2.28** We noted that very few applicants, referred by visa officers using the current risk indicators, were found to be likely inadmissible by security partners. In many cases, there may be no information or concerns related to applicants. Of the cases security partners worked on in 2010, only about 1 percent of applicants for temporary residence and 0.1 percent of applicants for permanent residence were found to be likely inadmissible (Exhibit 2.3). We noted that there has been no analysis to determine whether the current risk indicators to help identify potentially inadmissible applicants are appropriate or properly applied.

**Exhibit 2.3** Only a small number of applicants who were referred to security partners were identified as likely inadmissible in 2010

Applicants*	Cases finalized by security partners	Applicants identified as likely inadmissible
<b>Temporary residence</b>		
946,000	74,000	622
<b>Permanent residence</b>		
257,000	42,000	46

\*Applicants subject to criminal and security checks include those 18 and over, or someone younger if concerns exist.

**2.29 Country-specific risk profiles.** We also found that, upon visa officers' arrival at a new mission, information on country-specific risks is not systematically provided to them. For example, during our site visits, we noted that some missions provided newly posted visa officers with important contextual information specific to the country. At other missions, officers commented that a lack of country-specific information was affecting their ability to make admissibility decisions.

**2.30** The CBSA produces country assessment reports that provide another source of information to visa officers to help them identify risks. We found that these reports are not systematically produced and distributed to visa officers at missions abroad. They are produced based on emerging events or on an ad hoc basis to address a specific request by CIC and CBSA officials.

**2.31 Measures for validating information from applicants.** The reliability of information provided by applicants can be validated through measures such as

- interviewing the applicant,
- verifying documents with the issuing authorities,
- seeking further documentation and clarification from applicants, or
- conducting site visits.

**2.32** These measures, however, require time and resources. For example, visa officers at missions we visited told us that face-to-face interviews were rarely conducted. Since CIC does not systematically track when interviews are conducted, data on interview frequency was not available. At the end of our audit, CIC was implementing a case management system that could allow it to collect interview data.

**2.33** In response to our survey, 65 percent of visa officers indicated that the inability to validate applicant information was a challenge in determining admissibility. About half of the Canada-based officers indicated that they often did not have sufficient information from applicants to assess whether an applicant was inadmissible due to security concerns.

**2.34** Similarly, assessing inadmissibility due to criminality concerns can be challenging. For example, applicants who intend to stay in Canada for a minimum of six months must submit a police certificate from an official issuing authority of each country where they have resided for longer than six months in the last ten years. We were told by visa officers at missions we visited that the authenticity of police

certificates was often difficult to validate, depending on the country of origin. Unless visa officers can confirm the information with reliable issuing authorities, few other mechanisms exist to verify that the applicant has not been convicted of any crimes.

**2.35** At the end of our audit, CIC had developed and approved a Program Integrity Framework that highlights the need to conduct antifraud activities, such as verification of applicant information. CIC plans to phase in this framework over the next five years.

**2.36 Recommendation.** The Canada Border Services Agency and Citizenship and Immigration Canada should ensure that operational manuals, risk indicators, and relevant country-specific information are complete, up to date, and made available to visa officers in a timely manner to help them identify foreign nationals who may be inadmissible.

**The entities' response.** Agreed. A review of current risk indicators has begun in consultation with security partners. Also in consultation with security partners, a strategy will be developed to ensure that necessary country-specific information is available in a timely manner to support admissibility decision making. In addition, a review and update of policy manuals will be undertaken to ensure that accurate operational guidance is in place for all staff and management involved in the admissibility screening process. These measures will be completed by June 2012.

### **Quality assurance for issuing visas needs to be improved**

**2.37** Given the complexity of the process for issuing visas, we examined whether progress has been made in implementing a quality assurance framework to address recommendations we made in previous audits. Structured quality assurance practices can provide assurance on the overall quality of work performed and on how well risks are managed. For example, they can show whether risk indicators are applied as intended, screening is identifying inadmissible persons, and improvements are made as needed.

**2.38** We found that CIC had not yet implemented the quality assurance framework it had developed in response to our 2000 audit. We noted that some missions undertake their own quality assurance activities to review decision making, depending on local priorities and the availability of resources. However, such activities are still not mandatory and are not performed systematically across missions.

**2.39** The Department's 2011 Program Integrity Framework calls for the monitoring of the quality of decision making through random, systematic, and targeted quality assurance activities. We encourage CIC to implement this new framework in accordance with its approved plan and its commitment made in response to a recommendation in our November 2009 Report chapter, *Selecting Foreign Workers Under the Immigration Program*, to apply quality assurance in a consistent and risk-based fashion within two years.

## Security screening

**Security screening**—Procedures used to identify foreign nationals who may be inadmissible because they are, have been, or are likely to be involved in activities related to espionage, terrorism, and subversion; human or international rights violations; or organized crime.

**2.40** Applicants aged 18 years and over are subject to criminal and security checks. (A visa officer can also request checks on someone younger if concerns exist.) First, visa officers examine the information and documentation submitted by the applicant. If they determine that an applicant requires a more detailed investigation, the applicant's file is referred to partners for **security screening**.

**2.41** The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is responsible for supporting the security screening of persons who may be inadmissible. The Agency is the central liaison for the security screening process in partnership with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The results of the security screening are key to visa officers when making a final determination of an applicant's admissibility.

### **The Canada Border Services Agency has not identified all information that may be available from its security partners**

**2.42** We examined whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the CBSA have identified what information is available and useful, from the RCMP and CSIS, and whether they obtain it in a timely manner. Memoranda of understanding between CIC and its security partners state that relevant information held by partners will be provided on a timely basis.

**2.43** We found that neither CIC nor the CBSA has conducted formal assessments to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the nature and type of information that security partners could provide and that all key information needed to support security advice and recommendations is made available.

**2.44** CSIS is the primary partner for security screening; it is involved in all screening requests related to national security. The RCMP has very limited involvement in the screening process. While the CBSA has access to some criminal databases, it does not systematically consult the RCMP to obtain intelligence on organized crime concerns.

**2.45** We also found that since its creation, the CBSA has not signed memoranda of understanding or agreements on service levels with either of its security partners. Agreements related to obtaining information required for security screening date back to 2002 between CIC and CSIS and between CIC and the RCMP, before CBSA was created and given responsibility for security screening. During our audit, three of the organizations—the CBSA, CSIS, and CIC—initiated a review of their sharing of information for the purposes of screening foreign nationals.

**2.46** The results of security screening depend on the information available to security partners and, in almost all cases, they have little or no evidence to suggest that foreign nationals seeking entry to Canada are inadmissible. However, where there is information, it is important that it be made available to visa officers in a usable and timely manner.

**2.47 Recommendation.** The Canada Border Services Agency should ensure that all information that can be obtained from security partners and is relevant to security screening is used to provide advice to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

**The Agency's response.** Agreed. A comprehensive approach will be developed to ensure that all relevant information is available and shared with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). An assessment of information needs will take place in consultation with security partners, identifying any gaps and resulting in an information management strategy to ensure that necessary information can be accessed to support admissibility decision making. In addition, existing information-sharing arrangements between CIC, the Canada Border Services Agency, the RCMP, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service will be reviewed to ensure that they are complete and serve the needs of the security screening program. These measures will be completed by March 2013.

**The Canada Border Services Agency systems and practices need improvement to ensure that sound advice is provided to visa officers**

**2.48** The memorandum of understanding between CIC and the CBSA highlights the need to provide, in a timely fashion, necessary information to staff to perform their duties. We examined whether the CBSA has systems and practices in place to provide information and advice that support the decision-making needs of visa officers. We reviewed a representative sample of CBSA files finalized in 2010—109 temporary residence files and 50 permanent residence files. See our overall recommendation at paragraph 2.63.

**2.49 Quality assurance and effectiveness.** We found that the CBSA does not have a systematic quality assurance process to verify the quality and consistency of the reviews conducted by its analysts. The Agency's officials indicated that senior analysts review all negative briefs (inadmissibility recommendations) before sending them to the missions and that complex cases are often discussed with senior analysts or with management. However, negative recommendations represent less than one percent of the temporary residence workload and eight percent of the CBSA's permanent residence files. In our view, since the risk is that someone will be admitted to Canada who should not be, it is important to do quality assurance on all files and not just on the few where analysts make negative recommendations.

**2.50** We also noted that the CBSA has not reviewed the effectiveness of its security screening process. It has not requested feedback from CIC on the usefulness of the information provided to visa officers, and there is no process to find out how they use the information. In our survey, about 45 percent of the Canada-based officers indicated that one of the challenges in determining the inadmissibility of an applicant is the lack of relevant information from security partners.

**2.51 Timeliness of security screening.** We also examined whether the results of the CBSA's security screening provided to Canada-based officers are timely. We found that, for the most part, the Agency responded in a timely manner for temporary residence cases.

**2.52** The temporary residence screening manual indicates that the CBSA will reply to a visa officer's referral within 10 working days. Our file review showed that the CBSA responded to the missions within 10 working days in 80 percent of the cases. However, we found that in at least 25 percent of those cases, it had not waited for CSIS input before providing the security screening results. Therefore, the results provided to Canada-based officers did not include the CSIS review. This occurred because the CBSA's data system automatically sends a response to the missions after 10 days, unless an analyst has put a hold on the file. We were told, however, that if a concern is identified by CSIS after 10 days, the CBSA would notify the mission to stop the visa issuance. Nevertheless, the current practice allows for the exclusion of potentially important information due to the possibility that CSIS is unable to provide a response within 10 working days.

**2.53** For permanent residence cases, we noted that there was a formal agreement on service standards in the 2006 memorandum of understanding between CIC and the CBSA, which stated that advice will be provided to visa officers within 9 to 18 months. Through our

file review, we found that the CBSA had completed its analysis in less than 9 months in 67 percent of the cases and exceeded 18 months in 19 percent of the cases.

**2.54** We also reviewed a sample of 10 percent of the 72 permanent residence cases analyzed by the CBSA after CSIS had completed its review for national security concerns. In the cases we examined, we found that CSIS took an average of 34 months to provide its results to the CBSA when there was information requiring further investigation. We noted that the CBSA concurred with the advice provided by CSIS but, on average, it took an additional 9 months to send the advice to the visa officer without adding specific details about the individual.

**2.55** In responding to our survey, 46 percent of the Canada-based officers indicated they were concerned with the length of time it can take to obtain information or advice from security partners. The CBSA has recognized that timeliness is a concern and, at the end of our audit, had initiated measures to improve the timeliness of its screening.

**2.56 IT systems used in security screening.** The CBSA relies on its Secure Tracking System, an automated system that processes and manages temporary residence cases. However, the system does not search through all information available from the Agency, whether in its intelligence products or in other databases.

**2.57** Analysts can consult various other databanks. However, the Agency identified some concerns about these databanks in a 2011 report on the security screening unit. The report identified the following IT system risks:

- The systems were not interoperable with those of security partners, which created barriers to obtaining necessary information in a timely manner.
- Staff lacked complete access to all relevant CBSA systems, which created information gaps resulting in recommendations made by staff based on incomplete information.
- The systems were old and needed to be replaced; the necessary upgrades and changes to modernize the systems were not a priority.

The report also indicated that actions were under way to mitigate the risks. We did not examine the implementation of these actions.

**2.58 Training and support for Agency analysts.** We examined the training provided to CBSA analysts to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties. We found that



there was no formal training curriculum developed specifically for analysts based on required competencies, and that the Agency had already identified gaps in the training that was provided. For example, at the time of our audit, 39 percent of analysts had not received training in the provisions and requirements of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and 74 percent were missing training in research techniques.

**2.59** Analysts told us that in the absence of a formal training program, they rely mostly on guidance material, coaching, and on-the-job training to acquire the knowledge they need to fulfill their responsibilities. We noted that more than 40 percent of staff had two years of experience or less and that there was little stability at the senior levels to provide coaching and on-the-job training. The lack of training combined with staff turnover has contributed to an environment that cannot ensure that analysts are providing the best information or advice to visa officers.

**2.60** Our file review indicated that CBSA analysts did not consistently document the work they performed to provide advice on the admissibility of temporary residence applicants. We found such documentation in only 28 percent of the files reviewed. In those cases, analysts had listed the databases they consulted and indicated whether an Internet search was done but had not described the review performed or the information found. As a result, the Agency could not provide assurance that analysts had followed procedures or had conducted a full assessment.

**2.61** In our review of permanent residence applicant files, we found that they were better documented and the reviews completed were more comprehensive than those for temporary residence. We were able to determine the extent of the review conducted by analysts in 70 percent of the files. Of these files, however, we found that all the mandatory checks were not completed in more than 80 percent of cases. CBSA analysts did not consult the required databases and open sources as per CBSA guidelines. Furthermore, they did not use the checklists that had been designed to guide them in their review to provide some assurance of completeness.

**2.62** At the end of the audit, CBSA senior management confirmed training as a priority and indicated that training needs were being identified for security screening analysts.



**2.63 Recommendation.** The Canada Border Services Agency should

- implement a quality assurance process to ensure the consistency and quality of information and advice provided by analysts to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC);
- ensure that analysts have adequate training, support, and tools to perform their duties;
- establish service standards for the timeliness of security screening based on the needs of CIC and its own capacity and that of its security partners; and
- measure the effectiveness of its security screening to ensure that it meets the needs of CIC in a timely manner.

**The Agency's response.** Agreed. The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has restructured its security screening program to provide more focus on quality assurance and performance management. A review of training requirements for screening officers is under way and a high-level plan has been adopted to provide screening officers with a competency-based training program and supporting tools, to be implemented incrementally. In consultation with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and security partners, the CBSA will review service standards and make necessary program adjustments to ensure that the needs of all partners are met. These measures will be completed by December 2012.

## Medical screening

**2.64** Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, foreign nationals are inadmissible for reasons of health if their health condition

- is likely to be a danger to public health,
- is likely to be a danger to public safety, or
- might reasonably be expected to cause excessive demand on Canada's health or social services.

**2.65** In order to assess an individual's health status, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has 15 medical officers working in 10 regional medical offices worldwide. They oversee a network that includes laboratories, clinics, and more than 1,000 local physicians designated by CIC in 189 countries. Health infrastructure varies greatly from country to country, which adds to the challenge. These medical officers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate **medical examinations** are conducted and that visa officers are provided with any necessary information before making an admissibility determination.

**Medical examination**—A mandatory assessment for all applicants for permanent residence and their family members, whether or not they will accompany the applicant to Canada. A medical examination is required for some temporary residence applicants depending on their country of residence, length of stay, and planned activities in Canada—for example, working in an occupation in which the protection of public health is essential. Visa officers can also request a medical examination if they deem it necessary in other circumstances.

**A better strategy is needed to protect the health and safety of Canadians**

**2.66** We examined the systems and practices in place to provide visa officers with timely and reliable information to assess if applicants are medically admissible. See our overall recommendation at paragraph 2.77.

**2.67 Danger to public health and danger to public safety.** In order to protect Canadians, there must first be a clear understanding of what constitutes a danger to public health and a danger to public safety to ensure that appropriate medical tests are conducted for foreign nationals applying to come to Canada. Although CIC has initiated work on what danger to public health and danger to public safety mean for immigration purposes, we found that the Department has not yet defined these two key provisions of the Act—a concern we also raised in our 1990 and 2000 audit reports.

**2.68** At the time of our audit, the Department had defined only two diseases—syphilis and tuberculosis—as dangers to public health. These same two diseases have defined the screening practice for the last 50 years. We noted that mandatory HIV testing has been implemented since 2002, with the anticipated public health benefit of early detection, treatment, and prevention. Persons with HIV, however, will not be denied access to Canada for public health reasons. They would be found inadmissible only if their health condition might reasonably be expected to cause excessive demand on health or social services.

**2.69** We also noted that the Department has not developed an overall strategy, based on risks, to screen for danger to public health. The Public Health Agency of Canada has identified 56 diseases that require national surveillance in Canada, but CIC has not conducted a review to determine whether foreign nationals should be subject to mandatory testing for some of these diseases in order to protect public health.

**2.70** Some guidance exists on what medical conditions may constitute a danger for public safety. CIC has been focusing its screening on psychiatric conditions and drug/alcohol addiction. However, the Department's medical officers lack guidance to assess whether a person is likely inadmissible under this provision of the Act.

**2.71 Excessive demand on health or social services.** The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* define excessive demand on health or social services as a situation where

- anticipated costs would likely exceed the average per capita cost of health or social services in Canada over a five- or ten-year period, or

- the demand would add to existing waiting lists and increase the rate of mortality and morbidity of Canadians.

**2.72** We examined the systems and practices in place to provide visa officers with timely and reliable information on whether an applicant might cause excessive demand on health or social services. CIC medical officers are required to assess the anticipated costs of providing health care and social services related to the health conditions of applicants. We found, however, that there are limits to their ability to accurately estimate these costs because information on provincial/territorial health care expenditures and wait times in Canada for the numerous health conditions that exist may not be available to them.

**2.73** Furthermore, because of several court decisions, visa officers must also now consider non-medical factors, such as an applicant's ability and willingness to pay for services, or ability to obtain insurance. Visa officers explained to us that it is very difficult to assess the intent or capacity of an individual to pay. Concerns also exist about the unenforceable nature of an applicant's commitments once the person is residing in Canada.

**2.74 Performance management.** We found that, in 2010, CIC conducted more than 545,000 medical examinations resulting in some 1,200 applicants (0.22 percent) being found inadmissible for health reasons. Of those, less than 2 percent were considered a danger to public health or safety (the others were denied due to excessive demand on health or social services). CIC officials explained that persons who initially might not be admissible for public health reasons are able to enter Canada once they have been treated: for example, if they can demonstrate that their tuberculosis is inactive.

**2.75** In our survey, visa officers indicated that they are provided with timely advice on medical admissibility. We found that CIC monitors the processing times only in those cases where applicants are admissible, and not in more complex cases, where applicants have conditions that could make them inadmissible.

**2.76** At the time of the audit, CIC was in the process of implementing a new performance management framework to measure, monitor, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of its health screening process.

**2.77 Recommendation.** In order to meet the objectives of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to protect the health and safety of Canadians, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should

- develop a strategy based on risks to better identify applicants who present a danger to public health or a danger to public safety, and
- examine the methodology and process for assessing excessive demand on health and social services and take corrective measures as necessary.

**The Department's response.** Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has initiated and continues to develop a risk assessment and management strategy to better address danger to public health and danger to public safety in the immigration context. Among the activities conducted are the completion of a discussion paper on defining danger to public health, and the completion of an HIV policy review. CIC will implement a strategy that will result in consistent admissibility criteria, standardized processes, and improved monitoring of its programs. These measures will be completed by September 2013.

CIC has started examining the excessive demand processes and will pursue its collaboration with the provinces and territories to review factors generating limitations and inconsistencies in the evaluation of excessive demands and will address the identified deficiencies. This measure will be completed by June 2013.

### **Better quality assurance is needed to manage and monitor medical risks**

**2.78** In order to ensure the reliability of the medical examination process and to mitigate the risk to program integrity, a robust quality assurance framework is needed to monitor the work of CIC-designated local physicians, laboratories, and X-ray clinics and provide information on results. We examined the quality assurance mechanisms for the medical reports prepared by those physicians and the procedures to monitor the effectiveness of medical screening.

**2.79** We found that activities to assess the quality and reliability of the medical examinations performed by CIC-designated local physicians varied from one regional medical office to another, and a standard approach based on risks has not yet been developed.

**2.80** We also noted that CIC had no standard approach for ensuring the quality or consistency of the work done by medical officers or by their staff when assessing medical admissibility. At the time of the audit, CIC was planning to implement an electronic medical system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of medical assessments and to build in quality assurance mechanisms. The Department had also recently identified best practices in its regional medical offices to develop a standard quality assurance process.

**2.81 Recommendation.** Citizenship and Immigration Canada should implement a standard quality assurance process to protect the integrity of the medical examination system and to ensure consistency and quality in the assessment of medical admissibility.

**The Department's response.** Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has already completed the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for its immigration medical examination and assessment programs. This framework will be integrated into the departmental Program Integrity Framework, providing the tool required to monitor and evaluate the quality of its immigration health program, worldwide, including the designated medical practitioners, other examiners, and CIC employees involved in the health assessment process. CIC is also in the process of implementing eMedical (an electronic medical system), enabling standardization and centralization of the medical examination process. These measures will be completed by March 2013.

#### Governance, risk management, and performance measurement

**2.82** The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* is highly complex, addressing all aspects of the immigration program. While Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) are each responsible for developing policies for different sections of the Act, they share responsibility for the overall delivery of the immigration program. See our overall recommendation at paragraph 2.94.

#### **Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency continue to clarify their relationship**

**2.83** Given their shared responsibility for achieving the Act's objectives, we examined whether the CBSA and CIC have defined their roles, responsibilities, and expectations regarding the admissibility provisions of the Act.

**2.84** After immigration functions previously under CIC's responsibility were transferred to the CBSA, both organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2006 to specify their respective roles and responsibilities. The Agency would provide guidance and support to the Department, and visa officers would be responsible for the final decisions on admissibility.

**2.85** Since 2006, various reviews and senior-level joint committees have identified areas where the working relationship between the two organizations could be further clarified and strengthened. A 2010 joint internal audit on the implementation of the 2006 MOU

recommended improvements to governance and, in May 2011, a revised MOU and a governance annex were signed. Other annexes related to information management and shared services were still under negotiation at the end of our audit.

### **Joint risk management for admissibility determination needs to be implemented**

**2.86** In their policies, both CIC and the CBSA have recognized that risk management is an essential element of public sector operations and provides a systematic approach to the identification, analysis, assessment, treatment, and ongoing monitoring of risks.

**2.87** In their response to a 2010 joint internal audit, CIC and CBSA agreed to develop an integrated approach to manage the risks related to the immigration program. We examined whether the two organizations have developed and implemented a joint risk management strategy for identifying risks and mitigation strategies related to applying the inadmissibility provisions of the Act.

**2.88** We found that CIC and the CBSA have begun to develop a joint risk management strategy for the shared delivery of the immigration program. Although this strategy was not complete at the end of our audit, the Department and the Agency were working on a risk-based strategy for setting joint intelligence and enforcement priorities.

**2.89** We are concerned, however, that joint risk management has not been implemented. CIC and CBSA had already identified in 2006 that quality assurance practices, the routine use of screening tools, and applicant interviews were needed as risk mitigation measures. This audit found deficiencies in each of these measures.

### **Performance measurement information is not available**

**2.90** As part of the process to develop a joint risk management strategy, CIC and the CBSA were also developing a joint performance measurement framework. Together, these initiatives were intended to provide officials with a means of understanding how well the two organizations were working together in the shared delivery of the immigration program.

**2.91** We did note that progress had been made on developing a performance measurement strategy, but challenges remain in obtaining reliable performance information on security screening. For example, CBSA officials informed us that their information system was not designed to provide processing times or to identify the number of cases reviewed by an analyst versus those finalized by the automated system.

**2.92** As well, the lack of quality assurance throughout the admissibility process has prevented the Department and the Agency from obtaining data to identify strengths and weaknesses in their systems, or obtaining information on how well their systems work to identify people who may be inadmissible for health, safety, and security concerns.

**2.93** The two organizations have not measured the overall effectiveness of the inadmissibility provisions of the Act. However, during our audit, CIC and the CBSA were conducting a review of Canada's admissibility policy to assess whether it still meets Canadian needs, to identify any gaps, and to recommend amendments to relevant legislation, regulations, or administrative guidelines.

**2.94 Recommendation.** Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency should fully implement their joint risk management and performance measurement strategies and monitor the results.

**The entities' response.** Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will implement and monitor their joint risk management and performance strategies for the shared delivery of the immigration and refugee program, including visa issuance. In this context, CIC and the CBSA will complete a review of Canada's admissibility policy, in collaboration with security partners, in order to assess whether it is continuing to meet the needs of Canada and Canadians; to identify any gaps; and to recommend amendments to relevant legislation, regulations, or administrative guidelines.

CIC and the CBSA will complete a joint priority-setting exercise based on key risks with respect to the intelligence program (including visa issuance) and resulting enforcement priorities. CIC and the CBSA will also complete work on key performance indicators with respect to visa issuance, which will be used to monitor the effectiveness of shared programs and to track the implementation of joint priorities.

These measures will be completed by December 2012.

## Conclusion

**2.95** Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) have taken some measures to address long-standing weaknesses in the process of determining whether visa applicants are admissible to Canada. In our opinion, however, they

have not fully managed the risks associated with determining inadmissibility under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* for health, safety, and security concerns before issuing visas to foreign nationals.

**2.96** CIC and the CBSA do not have systematic mechanisms for quality assurance or measuring performance that would provide a reasonable level of assurance that their processes are working and that practices are appropriate for today's challenges. Furthermore, the organizations have only recently begun to develop a joint risk management approach for their shared delivery of the immigration program.

**2.97** Tools and guidance available to visa officers are not always kept up to date. The screening for danger to public health is still primarily based on the same diseases that have been the focus for the last 50 years. In addition, many risk indicators, key to identifying potentially inadmissible foreign nationals, have not been reviewed or updated for years.

**2.98** Similar issues have been identified in our audits since 2000. There needs to be a sustained effort by CIC and the CBSA to address the gaps in the admissibility determination process so that the related risks are properly managed.



## About the Audit

All of the audit work in this chapter was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set by The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

### Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) have managed the risks associated with determining admissibility under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* for health, safety, and security concerns before issuing visas to foreign nationals.

### Scope and approach

The audit examined how the Act's objective of "protecting the health and safety of Canadians and maintaining the security of Canadian society" was being jointly administered by the two primary entities involved in admissibility decisions—CIC and the CBSA. Our audit covered the process followed by visa officers to make the admissibility decision before issuing visas to foreign nationals seeking entry into Canada as either temporary or permanent residents. We did not look at other inadmissibility provisions of the Act, such as misrepresentations or financial reasons, nor did we examine exemptions or means to overcome inadmissibility.

The issuance of visas is one component of Canada's strategy to deny access to foreign nationals who may present risks to Canadians. Other components include, for example, the interception overseas of improperly documented travellers en route to Canada, screening at ports of entry, and enforcement activities, including investigation, detention, and removals. Our audit did not examine these activities.

At CIC, we interviewed officials at headquarters and at overseas missions involved in processing applications. We held focus groups with visa officers responsible for making admissibility decisions. We reviewed files and reports, and analyzed management information databases. We also met with medical officers who performed medical assessments on behalf of the Department. We conducted audit work at the following missions: Beijing, Buffalo, Damascus, London, Moscow, and Paris. We also met with officials from other organizations during our visits to missions overseas.

A survey was sent to 424 visa officers at missions abroad, and we received an overall response rate of 81.8 percent. Canada-based officers comprised 272 members of the survey population and provided a response rate of 79.0 percent, while locally engaged visa officers comprised 152 members and provided a response rate of 86.8 percent.

At the CBSA, we interviewed officials at headquarters and examined documents, files, and databases. Furthermore, we examined statistically representative samples of temporary (109 cases) and permanent (50 cases) residence cases referred to the Agency for security screening that were finalized in 2010. These

samples are sufficient to conclude on their respective populations with a confidence level of 90 percent and a margin of error of +10 percent.

Audit work was also conducted at RCMP and CSIS offices in Ottawa, mainly through interviews and review of key documents.

## Criteria

Listed below are the criteria that were used to conduct this audit and their sources.

To determine whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency have clarified the expectations and their respective roles and responsibilities under the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> to jointly manage the risks associated with the determination of admissibility, we used the following criteria:	
Criteria	Sources
Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) have clarified the expectations and their roles and responsibilities for the inadmissibility provisions of the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i></li> <li>• <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations</i></li> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between the CBSA and CIC, 2006</li> <li>• Core Management Controls: A Guide for Internal Auditors, Office of the Comptroller General</li> </ul>
CIC and the CBSA have developed and implemented a joint integrated risk management strategy that identifies risks and mitigation strategies related to delivering the inadmissibility provisions of the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between the CBSA and CIC, 2006</li> <li>• Framework for the Management of Risk, Treasury Board, 2010</li> <li>• Integrated Risk Management Framework, Treasury Board, 2001</li> <li>• Citizenship and Immigration Canada Integrated Risk Management Framework, 2002</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Profile, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010–2013</li> <li>• Enterprise Risk Management Policy, Canada Border Services Agency, 2010</li> </ul>
To determine whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency provide visa officers with the necessary training, tools, and support to analyze the information required to make a well-informed admissibility determination before issuing visas, we used the following criteria:	
Criteria	Sources
CIC and the CBSA have identified, developed and provided training, tools, and support to visa officers for the determination of admissibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between the CBSA and CIC, Information Sharing Annex, 2006</li> <li>• Core Management Controls: Guide for Internal Auditors, Office of the Comptroller General</li> <li>• Policy Framework for Information and Technology, Treasury Board, 2007</li> </ul>

To determine whether Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency have systems and practices in place to make available to visa officers useful and timely information as well as advice to help them assess admissibility, we used the following criteria:	
Criteria	Sources
CIC's Health Branch has systems and practices in place to provide visa officers with reliable and timely recommendations on medical admissibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OP 15 Medical Procedures, Citizenship and Immigration Canada</li> <li>• Designated Medical Practitioner Handbook, Citizenship and Immigration Canada</li> </ul>
CIC and the CBSA define and obtain, in a timely manner, useful information available on applicants from the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between CIC and CSIS, 2002</li> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between CIC and the RCMP, 2002</li> <li>• Policy on Information Management, Treasury Board, 2007</li> </ul>
The CBSA has systems and practices in place to provide intelligence and advice that support the decision-making needs of visa officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorandum of understanding between the CBSA and CIC, 2006</li> <li>• A Vision for the Intelligence Program at the CBSA, October 2006, CBSA</li> </ul>

Management reviewed and accepted the suitability of the criteria used in the audit.

### Period covered by the audit

With the exception of the audit work related to the memorandum of understanding between the CBSA and CIC, which came into effect in 2006, the period audited for this chapter is January 2010 to April 2011. Audit work for this chapter was substantially completed on 29 April 2011.

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## Appendix List of recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations found in Chapter 2. The number in front of the recommendation indicates the paragraph where it appears in the chapter. The numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs where the topic is discussed.

Recommendation	Response
<p><b>Determining admissibility</b></p> <p><b>2.36</b> The Canada Border Services Agency and Citizenship and Immigration Canada should ensure that operational manuals, risk indicators, and relevant country-specific information are complete, up to date, and made available to visa officers in a timely manner to help them identify foreign nationals who may be inadmissible. (2.23–2.35)</p>	<p><b>The entities’ response.</b> Agreed. A review of current risk indicators has begun in consultation with security partners. Also in consultation with security partners, a strategy will be developed to ensure that necessary country-specific information is available in a timely manner to support admissibility decision making. In addition, a review and update of policy manuals will be undertaken to ensure that accurate operational guidance is in place for all staff and management involved in the admissibility screening process. These measures will be completed by June 2012.</p>
<p><b>Security screening</b></p> <p><b>2.47</b> The Canada Border Services Agency should ensure that all information that can be obtained from security partners and is relevant to security screening is used to provide advice to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2.42–2.46)</p>	<p><b>The Agency’s response.</b> Agreed. A comprehensive approach will be developed to ensure that all relevant information is available and shared with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). An assessment of information needs will take place in consultation with security partners, identifying any gaps and resulting in an information management strategy to ensure that necessary information can be accessed to support admissibility decision making. In addition, existing information-sharing arrangements between CIC, the Canada Border Services Agency, the RCMP, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service will be reviewed to ensure that they are complete and serve the needs of the security screening program. These measures will be completed by March 2013.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p><b>2.63</b> The Canada Border Services Agency should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement a quality assurance process to ensure the consistency and quality of information and advice provided by analysts to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC);</li> <li>• ensure that analysts have adequate training, support, and tools to perform their duties;</li> <li>• establish service standards for the timeliness of security screening based on the needs of CIC and its own capacity and that of its security partners; and</li> <li>• measure the effectiveness of its security screening to ensure that it meets the needs of CIC in a timely manner. (2.48–2.62)</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Agency's response.</b> Agreed. The Canada Border Services Agency has restructured its security screening program to provide more focus on quality assurance and performance management. A review of training requirements for screening officers is under way and a high-level plan has been adopted to provide screening officers with a competency-based training program and supporting tools, to be implemented incrementally. In consultation with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and security partners, the CBSA will review service standards and make necessary program adjustments to ensure that the needs of all partners are met. These measures will be completed by December 2012.</p>
<p><b>Medical screening</b></p> <p><b>2.77</b> In order to meet the objectives of the <i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> to protect the health and safety of Canadians, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a strategy based on risks to better identify applicants who present a danger to public health or a danger to public safety, and</li> <li>• examine the methodology and process for assessing excessive demand on health and social services and take corrective measures as necessary. (2.64–2.76)</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Department's response.</b> Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has initiated and continues to develop a risk assessment and management strategy to better address danger to public health and danger to public safety in the immigration context. Among the activities conducted are the completion of a discussion paper on defining danger to public health, and the completion of an HIV policy review. CIC will implement a strategy that will result in consistent admissibility criteria, standardized processes, and improved monitoring of its programs. These measures will be completed by September 2013.</p> <p>CIC has started examining the excessive demand processes and will pursue its collaboration with the provinces and territories to review factors generating limitations and inconsistencies in the evaluation of excessive demands and will address the identified deficiencies. This measure will be completed by June 2013.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p><b>2.81</b> Citizenship and Immigration Canada should implement a standard quality assurance process to protect the integrity of the medical examination system and to ensure consistency and quality in the assessment of medical admissibility. (2.78–2.80)</p>	<p><b>The Department's response.</b> Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has already completed the development of a Quality Assurance Framework for its immigration medical examination and assessment programs. This framework will be integrated into the departmental Program Integrity Framework, providing the tool required to monitor and evaluate the quality of its immigration health program, worldwide, including the designated medical practitioners, other examiners, and CIC employees involved in the health assessment process. CIC is also in the process of implementing eMedical (an electronic medical system), enabling standardization and centralization of the medical examination process. These measures will be completed by March 2013.</p>
<p><b>Governance, risk management, and performance measurement</b></p>	
<p><b>2.94</b> Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency should fully implement their joint risk management and performance measurement strategies and monitor the results. (2.82–2.93)</p>	<p><b>The entities' response.</b> Agreed. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will implement and monitor their joint risk management and performance strategies for the shared delivery of the immigration and refugee program, including visa issuance. In this context, CIC and the CBSA will complete a review of Canada's admissibility policy, in collaboration with security partners, in order to assess whether it is continuing to meet the needs of Canada and Canadians; to identify any gaps; and to recommend amendments to relevant legislation, regulations, or administrative guidelines.</p> <p>CIC and the CBSA will complete a joint priority-setting exercise based on key risks with respect to the intelligence program (including visa issuance) and resulting enforcement priorities. CIC and the CBSA will also complete work on key performance indicators with respect to visa issuance, which will be used to monitor the effectiveness of shared programs and to track the implementation of joint priorities.</p> <p>These measures will be completed by December 2012.</p>

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