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# **ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**ISTC REVIEW**

**JULY 1990**

Canada 



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the April, 1990 release of the Report of the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service entitled *Beneath the Veneer*, Industry, Science and Technology Canada (ISTC) quickly formed a Steering Committee, a Working Group and an Advisory Group to study the issue within the Department. The Steering Committee for the ISTC Review on the Advancement of Women presented its initial findings to the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) on June 26, 1990. The support and commitment shown by the Deputy Minister and senior management in launching this initiative and the extensive feedback received from all areas of the Department have been particularly important in the success of this first stage.

The findings were based on views expressed by employees during an intense three-week consultation process throughout ISTC. The Department responded well to the request for opinions, with over 350 employees attending the workshop sessions held across the country, almost 200 questionnaires returned, numerous calls received, and over 50 employees volunteering for the Advisory Group.

Statistics on ISTC's work force show figures comparable to the Public Service in general. Female employees constitute 48% of ISTC's total staff, but 68% are concentrated in the CR, ST and AS occupational groups. Women are not well-represented in the Management Category or in the main professional group (CO), and within most groups, women are over-represented at the lower levels.

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The ISTC Review revealed that there are a number of systemic and attitudinal issues which affect both men and women in their advancement but impact most strongly on women. These issues and the recommendations presented to the DMC are summarized below and are detailed more fully in the remainder of the report.

## SYSTEMIC ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Career Development Opportunities

#### Issues

- An overwhelming need for more career development opportunities for support staff, officer or management feeder groups was identified. Opportunities, such as assignments, allow employees to gain the experience and visibility which often result in promotion.



- The issue may affect women more than men at all levels because of the informal processes used for such assignments. Support staff are particularly affected, because of the lower mobility and lack of formal bridging mechanisms in these groups.
- Current mechanisms are not adequate, not used, and not systematic across ISTC.

### **Recommendations**

- Examine the feasibility of an ISTC corporate assignment program for all staff which would allow employees to gain the experience necessary for advancement.
- Examine the feasibility of a program, in addition to an assignment program, which would allow formal education to be combined with on-the-job experience for selected employees.

## **Staffing and Development Requirements**

### **Issues**

- Over-specification of basic requirements for a position occurs where highly technical degrees (engineering), university degrees (without regard for experience) and imperative language requirements are required.
- Staffing without competition is used frequently as a result of assignment opportunities.
- Both issues affect women particularly because they usually have more general degrees. Support staff may lack university degrees or opportunities for French language training. In addition, informal assignment and staffing processes may favour men.

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct a general review of staffing to determine the extent to which restrictive requirements are used.
- Review individual staffing actions for requirements that are too restrictive.
- Hold more competitions and ensure female representation on all selection boards.
- Examine the feasibility of generic competitions for some positions to streamline staffing procedures.

## **Support Mechanisms for Family Responsibilities**

### **Issue**

- Lack of support mechanisms for family care affects women more than men since women usually carry the primary family responsibilities for child care and health or elder care.

### **Recommendations**

- Examine the feasibility of providing high-quality daycare facilities paid for by employees that are convenient to the workplace.
- Examine the feasibility of an emergency care brokerage service paid for by employees to assist in short-term arrangements on short notice arising from illness, overtime or travel.

## **Other Systemic Issues and Recommendations**

- Appraisal Process
  - Examine more positive use of the appraisal process to identify potential candidates for development opportunities and to hold constructive discussions between managers and employees to address career development rather than training only.
- Career Counselling
  - Package available information on activities of different occupational groups, their qualification requirements, and counselling services offered to employees, and make this information readily accessible to managers and employees.
  - Monitor PS 2000 proposals for the establishment of a central career counselling service.
- Flexible Work Arrangements
  - Examine current use of flexible work options within ISTC and develop "best practices" awareness for managers.
- Changing Role of Support Staff — Impact of Technology
  - Investigate/analyze private and public sector responses with respect to changes in work procedures, retraining and human resources development.

- Statistics
  - Develop a more comprehensive human resource database within the parameters of the *Privacy Act* and similar legislation, which will allow a better identification of the existing ISTC staff profile and organizational needs, better long-term planning to meet these needs and better monitoring of individual issues.

## ATTITUDINAL/CORPORATE CULTURE ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Issues

- Perceptions of whether barriers to the advancement of women exist differ sharply between men and women and therefore need to be better reconciled before change can take place.
- Men and women perceive that they are treated differently within ISTC, and these perceptions vary by Responsibility Centre. The following examples illustrate such differences in treatment:
  - different types of project and work assignments are given
  - ongoing responsibility for a project is switched
  - women are supervised more than their male colleagues
  - it is assumed women cannot fulfill certain work requirements due to family responsibilities
  - managers "buy" existing expertise rather than develop capable women
  - less attention is paid to women's comments or capabilities than men's
  - support staff is treated in a condescending fashion
- Due to family responsibilities women are often perceived as not being serious about their careers. Consideration is often not given to their concerns when planning work, scheduling meetings or overtime for late in the day and/or on short notice.
- A male-dominated culture is perceived to create a difficult work environment for women who are often caught between being considered too aggressive or too passive.
- The majority of both men and women within ISTC, as in the Public Service, do not desire quotas but rather measures which will ensure that women and men are considered equally for all opportunities.



### **Recommendations**

- Develop an ongoing, professional and consistent awareness program for both men and women that addresses the differences in perceptions and treatment of the genders.
- Foster leadership and visible commitment, in word and deed, by ISTC management at all levels to create an environment that allows both genders to contribute fully to the goals of ISTC.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Departmental Management Committee fully endorses the preliminary findings of the Steering Committee. It confirmed that activities concerning the advancement of women at ISTC would be kept on a separate track from other corporate development activities in order to guarantee that the critical needs associated with these issues are focused upon by all managers in the Department. The Steering Committee has therefore been instructed to oversee the development of a more comprehensive plan of action by September 1990 which will address individual issues and recommendations.

## 2. CONTEXT

The Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service tabled its final report, entitled *Beneath the Veneer*, on April 23, 1990. Within Industry, Science and Technology Canada (ISTC), the Departmental Management Committee decided, on May 29, 1990, to undertake an internal review on the Advancement of Women.

Recognizing the importance of equitable participation of women in support of the Department's mandate of competitiveness and excellence, an ISTC Steering Committee, a Working Group and an Advisory Group were quickly formed to study the issue and complete an interim report by the end of June, 1990.

Specific terms of reference for the review were as follows.

To examine, consult and report on how ISTC ensures:

1. recognition of women in the work of the Department and their participation in departmental activities including conferences, workshops and seminars;
2. a working environment conducive to the full and equal participation of women and consistent with existing government policies;
3. opportunities for advancement that are equally available to women and men at all levels; and
4. recognition of the female workforce and its importance to Canada's competitiveness agenda and to the effectiveness of the Department.

To recommend short and medium-term measures which will provide:

1. specific actions to remove any procedural or structural barriers to full participation of women;
2. processes to address any attitudinal obstacles among women and men;
3. means to improve working relationships among women and men at all levels of the organization; and
4. procedures for continuous monitoring of ISTC's progress in these areas.

In conducting the review, the findings of *Beneath the Veneer* were to be utilized. As well, several other initiatives were likely to be of value. The Public Service 2000 recommendations which may impact on this issue include improved human resource management in education, career development, career counselling and classification. Within ISTC, working groups under the umbrella of the Corporate Development Steering Committee have been addressing issues on participative management, internal communications and human resources. Finally, a study on ISTC support services in headquarters and in the regions will be completed during the summer.



### 3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

To carry out the review, the following three groups were formed on May 30, 1990:

- a Steering Committee, composed of senior departmental management (both genders) to oversee the review;
- a full-time Working Group to carry out wide-ranging consultations and to complete a preliminary report by end of June, 1990; and
- an Advisory Group of volunteers from across the Department, all levels, to discuss the issues and potential recommendations and to draw upon as a resource pool for the next phase.

Co-chairing the Steering Committee were Cliff Mackay, Assistant Deputy Minister, Industry and Technology Sector, and Audrey Doerr, Director General, Science Strategy and Federal Research Branch, Science Sector. Appendix 1 lists the members of the Steering Committee and Working Group. The Advisory Group currently includes over 50 volunteer employees and is still increasing in size.

In carrying out the consultations, it was decided that, because the subject matter is so important, it would be necessary to identify perceptions, issues and potential recommendations quickly, through wide-ranging consultations in which all departmental employees could participate. Several means were used concurrently to consult with employees:

- open workshop sessions in Ottawa and in each of the 10 Regional Offices, directed by members from both the Steering Committee and Working Group;
- open-ended questionnaire intended to solicit as many comments as possible;
- suggestion boxes for questionnaires or any additional comments; and
- informal contact with individual members of the Steering Committee and Working Group.

In total, over 350 employees (38% male) attended the 20 workshop sessions, and 194 questionnaires (41% male) were returned. Numerous calls were received by members of the Steering Committee and Working Group, and informal meetings were held with interested employees or groups of employees, including one with senior ISTC women. Finally, a meeting was held June 22, 1990 with the Advisory Group of volunteers, to discuss the issues and recommendations prior to presentation to the Departmental Management Committee on June 26, 1990. Appendix 2 details the schedule of events since formation of the Steering Committee.

The Working Group was disbanded on June 29, 1990 with the tabling of its interim report. The Steering Committee and the Advisory Group will continue beyond June with the following critical role defined: to develop specific action plans on individual issues and return to the DMC for decisions in early Fall, 1990.

## 4. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

*Beneath the Veneer* spoke of three indicators of how women stand in the Public Service: representation, concentration and compression. Representation is defined as the proportion of women relative to men in the Public Service, as a whole. Concentration refers to the fact that the majority of women in the Public Service are to be found in only four occupational groups. Compression shows that, within occupational groups, the majority of women occupy the lower levels relative to men. The conclusions reached, in studying ISTC, parallel those for the Public Service. Appendix 3 sets out the same indicators for the major groups of employees within ISTC for 1990 and also compares the situation to 1987, shortly after the last major reorganization.

Representation of women is not a problem within ISTC as a whole. Women account for 48% of the 2 528 employees within ISTC, compared to 43% in the Public Service and to 44% in the Canadian labour force. Within management and the main professional groups, however, women are under-represented (Management Category 10% and CO group 22%). In the other large occupational groups, women constitute the majority (AS 81%, CR 78% and ST 98%).

With respect to concentration, women within ISTC are concentrated in only three groups. Of the 1 221 women within ISTC, 68% are in the CR, ST (SCY and OCE) and AS groups. This is similar to the Public Service as a whole.

Compression of women at the lower levels of individual occupational groups also exists within ISTC. Within the main professional group (CO), only 14% of the higher levels (CO-3 and CO-4) are women, while 50% of the lowest level (CO-1) are women. Similarly, in the AS group, despite the fact that 81% are women, only 53% of the higher level positions (AS-5, 6 and 7) are filled by women as opposed to 87% of the lower levels (AS-1, 2 and 3). Within the CR group, compression does not seem to exist; however, 78% of that group are women.

Comparisons in ISTC between 1987 and the present show that there have been some slight improvements at all levels of CO and AS groups, as well as SM group. Women have lost ground, however, in the higher level EX and CR groups.

The statistics, though general, show that there is further room for improvement within ISTC.



## 5. MAJOR ISSUES

Many issues were raised during consultations, some of which are not gender-specific. However, even when issues are not necessarily restricted to women (e.g. the lack of career development opportunities), the perception is that women are more affected than men both at the professional/managerial and support staff levels.

The issues have been classified into the following two groups:

- systemic issues which address formal mechanisms or procedures;
- attitudinal/corporate culture issues which address more subtle and difficult to define aspects.

### SYSTEMIC ISSUES

#### Lack of Career Development Opportunities

An overwhelming need for more career development opportunities was identified for support staff, officer and management feeder groups. Opportunities can take many forms such as short or long-term assignments, transfers, secondments, acting assignments, exchanges to industry, etc. They are regarded as crucial, since the experience and visibility gained often results in promotion.

The problem is quite different between officer/management feeder groups and support staff. In the former groups, wide experience is often a prerequisite for promotion, yet assignments that allow employees to gain additional experience are often given through an informal process. As discussed in *Beneath the Veneer*, informal processes may favour male candidates over women, simply because most decision-makers are male.

For support staff, changing groups (e.g. between SCY, CR, AS and FI) is very difficult due to lack of experience; yet assignments to gain experience are not as commonly used in these groups as in the CO group. Many women cannot apply for competitions in other groups, because they would be screened out due to lack of experience. The problem is particularly evident in Regional Offices, where, for example, there might be a total of nine support staff with six different classifications. For those aspiring to enter the CO group, the problem is even greater, because of the lack of bridging mechanisms which would allow employees to gain experience on industry issues rather than internal administration. Even where limited bridging mechanisms exist, such as the CO-1 Developmental level, employees have confirmed that these mechanisms are seldom used.

A related issue, which affects support staff particularly, is the lack of formal education and training possibilities during working hours, which would allow competent women to balance their work and family responsibilities and still acquire the basic knowledge for advancing their careers. Such education could encompass formal university or community college education as well as language training even where the particular position filled does not require such qualifications.

Although the lack of career development opportunities affects all employees, particularly in a time of human resource constraints, it may affect women more than men at all levels, and is most problematical at the support level where the majority of staff are women. Current mechanisms are not adequate, not used and not systematic across ISTC. The Department as a whole can only benefit by ensuring its employees are well-rounded, flexible and continually meeting new challenges.

### **Restrictive Requirements for Staffing and Development**

Over-specification of basic requirements for a position is perceived as a major problem within ISTC. Consultations showed that three types of restrictions are considered barriers for women:

- specification of highly technical degrees (e.g. Engineering) versus a more general degree (e.g. Commerce, Economics or M.B.A./M.P.A.);
- specification of university degrees only, without allowance for equivalent experience; and
- specification of bilingual imperative rather than non-imperative language requirement.

On the issue of highly technical degrees, the engineering discipline has until recently been predominantly male, while graduation with the more general business degrees has been about equal for men and women for the last 15 years. While it is generally accepted that specialist degrees may be necessary in certain circumstances, it is also perceived that a balanced distribution of technical versus more general degrees benefits the Department in terms of greater flexibility. As one male civil engineer pointed out, his particular specialty is not of use in his current job as a sector specialist, and one can quickly acquire the knowledge necessary for a particular position.

Most CO positions now specify only university degrees and do not account for experience, a factor that may particularly affect women aspiring to a CO development position. It is a particular barrier to those women who may have 10 to 20 years experience in the Department, but cannot break into the CO Group.

Many women, particularly support staff, expressed frustration at not having the opportunity to compete for bilingual imperative positions, although they know and have been told they could perform well. These women continue to be blocked in their advancement since, in their current positions, they are "too valuable" to be sent for full-time French language training.

Finally, staffing without competition is used frequently within ISTC and is related to assignment opportunities, particularly in officer and management groups. It may affect women more than men since their access to informal mechanisms may not be as good as for men. When formal competitions are held, women are very successful, as confirmed in *Beneath the Veneer*.

### **Lack of Support for Family Responsibilities**

Women may be hindered in their advancement by the lack of support mechanisms for family care, whether for children or elders. The private sector has long recognized that on-site daycare facilities or other mechanisms to assist with family care facilitate higher productivity, enhance employee morale and lower absenteeism.

With regard to daycare for children, it is important to note that women are generally requesting well-run facilities convenient to their workplace, not paid daycare.

Equally important is the issue of care in the event of emergency, illness, overtime or travel. Even when normal care arrangements are very satisfactory, it is difficult to find alternative arrangements for such eventualities, especially on short notice. There was a strong demand for an "emergency care" service, such as bonded sitters, who could be called upon at short notice, for short periods of time.

Finally, low Treasury Board allowances for child care when in travel status were noted as a problem for professional/manager level employees. Current provisions allow amounts far below market rates, and are available only for single parents. As a result, parents suffer financially each time they travel when they are unable to make arrangements within their own families, an occurrence that may be frequent among professional couples.



## **Appraisal Process**

The appraisal process tends to be an annual rather than an ongoing exercise and is rarely used for career development purposes. Recommendations on training tend to focus on technical or specific job-related skills rather than long-term development objectives. While this issue affects both men and women, appraisals could be used both as an identification and discussion tool for employees who should receive more development opportunities.

## **Career Counselling/Information**

Many women, particularly support staff, identified a need for career counselling and information. Although information may exist, it is not systematically packaged and made known to managers and employees. For employees considering, for example, changing groups, knowledge of the type of work performed and of specific education or training requirements would allow a clear definition of personal goals. As well, employees expressed a need to be counselled concerning the extent to which their knowledge, abilities and experience match their expectations, in order that realistic goals can be set.

## **Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements such as flexible hours, a compressed work week, work at home, etc. are already established in union contracts as a right of employees, but this right is seldom exercised. Where economically feasible, both men and women might choose to use these mechanisms more actively to balance family responsibilities or to attain higher education levels. On the one hand, some women made the point that they would not ask for flexible work arrangements, as managers and colleagues would assume that they do not take their careers seriously. On the other hand, where women have requested and been granted flexible work arrangements (rare occurrences), they perceive such arrangements as highly career-limiting.

## **Changing Role of Support Staff Technology**

Insecurity, confusion and uneasiness exist, particularly among support staff, because of the technological changes taking place in the Department. Some support staff see technology as an exciting new challenge for career development (e.g. as a LAN administrator), but no formal re-training program or bridge exists to help them. Traditional secretarial roles are disappearing and being replaced to some extent by the assumption of more administrative duties. Yet, position

descriptions, classification levels and training have in many cases not been adjusted to reflect these changes. Similarly, new procedures to increase the effectiveness of both officers and support staff and to assist in the transition period have not been systematically introduced.

### **Lack of Statistical Data/Monitoring**

Only limited statistical analysis could be done, as a comprehensive data base of relevant information does not currently exist. Within the parameters of the *Privacy Act* and similar legislation, factual information on ISTC employees (e.g. education, career progression, age, use of educational leave, labour force availability, experience, etc.) and cross-tabulations would assist the Department in defining problems, developing short and long-term recommendations on potential solutions and devising an effective monitoring system on the advancement of women. Nevertheless, it must also be recognized that perceptions can be more important than facts in the efficient functioning of an organization and the compilation of a good data base is of assistance only in combination with other factors.

## **ATTITUDINAL/CORPORATE CULTURE ISSUES**

*Beneath the Veneer* noted that barriers to women fall into three general categories: stereotypes; corporate culture; and balancing work/family responsibilities. It also cited anecdotes to illustrate the issues more vividly. In general, the comments made during the ISTC consultation process reflect the same concerns as the Public Service as a whole.

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### **Sharply Divergent Perceptions by Men and Women**

Perceptions within ISTC of whether barriers to women exist differ sharply between men and women. Results of the ISTC questionnaire (Appendix 4) showed that only 34% of male respondents believe there are barriers to the advancement of women, whereas 78% of women noted barriers. This striking disparity in perceptions implies that, to facilitate change, general awareness of specific concerns should be raised for both men and women.

### **Different Treatment for Men and Women**

Consultations within ISTC also showed that different treatment for men and women does seem to exist. Variable by Responsibility Centres, it is sufficiently widespread to be considered an issue. Examples of recurring themes are used here to illustrate the issue.

With respect to project and work assignments, a number of different situations might occur:

- First, the type of work assigned may differ. Given two colleagues with the same level of experience, the man may be asked to attend important meetings with clients or management, while the woman takes notes, makes all the arrangements and writes the final report.
- Second, ongoing responsibility for a project might be switched. A woman may be given an important project which requires establishing contacts, developing the background, working with industry associations and negotiating with other organizations. Yet, when it is time to travel, meet with senior business representatives or be seen by senior management, the project is passed to a male colleague.
- Third, levels of trust may differ. Managers sometimes supervise women more, while leaving their male colleagues to develop projects themselves.
- Fourth, it is often assumed, without asking the individual concerned, that a woman who is pregnant or has young children will be unable to accept more work, certain types of assignments or travel associated with certain kinds of work.

These types of situations, whether they are created consciously or unconsciously, can work to the disadvantage of women in that the opportunities lost may be precisely those that will give an individual the visibility, exposure and experience necessary to advance. The same factors can also play a role in the long-term assignment opportunities given to women (e.g. task forces, secondments, job rotation, acting assignments and exchanges to private sector or industry associations).

With respect to development and education opportunities (including language training), managers often decide to "buy" the expertise required rather than foster the development of their own employees. In the Commerce Officer group, this may take the form of hiring specialist engineers (traditionally male), rather than allowing those with less technical degrees to acquire the expertise either on-the-job, through crash engineering courses or through an exchange with the private sector. In the administrative and support groups, women are sometimes not given development assignment or training opportunities because they are too good at their jobs. This is an entirely paradoxical pattern since the normal marketplace reaction would be to reward such employees, rather than to keep them tied to their positions.

The respect accorded to opinions can differ between women and men. In meetings, a woman's comments may be entirely disregarded, yet male colleagues making comments may be given greater scope for expression. Similarly, if a woman wins a competition, it is sometimes assumed by her male colleagues that she won because of her gender, not her competence. Finally, women often feel that they must consistently outperform male colleagues simply to gain equal acceptance.

Support staff (primarily women) may be treated in a condescending and demanding manner with the assumption that they have no ideas to offer. A complete lack of freedom often exists, where support staff have no input into decisions regarding their hours of work or other conditions, and must simply conform to the demands of their superiors. On the one hand, this fosters a corporate environment that is not conducive to team-building. On the other hand, management should also allow and encourage team-building among support staff in order that team work-sharing arrangements outside core hours can be organized.

### **Lack of Consideration for Family Responsibilities**

Although both men and women bear family responsibilities for child, health or elder care, women traditionally undertake the greater proportion of these responsibilities. Greater consideration for such responsibilities in planning work would alleviate some of the perceptions that women are not serious about their careers. Greater care in planning would benefit not only women but all employees.

Examples of problem situations are scheduling meetings for the end of the day, calling for meetings or briefings on short notice for late in the day or requesting overtime or work on weekends at short notice. It is recognized that not all such circumstances can be avoided; however, chronic and consistent requests of this nature may simply be the result of poor planning and organization of work. In addition, despite the technology that now exists, provisions for work at home are not always made or, indeed, considered as an option.

In raising this issue, it must be realized that it is particularly difficult, if not impossible, for women with young children to make alternative arrangements, especially on short notice. Yet it is highly career-limiting, for example, to leave meetings at a prescribed time. What is perhaps not fully understood is that child care arrangements are expensive, difficult to find and usually already involve 10 hour days on the part of the care-giver, and in particular hinge upon



timeliness. But, by no means should this imply that women are less ambitious in their careers than men. As confirmed in *Beneath the Veneer*, men and women expressed a similar degree of interest in promotion possibilities and similar career plans.

### **Male-Dominated Culture Creates Difficult Work Environment**

Current management style is dominated by male tradition. Male managers who advance rapidly may be considered agreeably assertive. Women trying to advance in that environment may be expected to adopt the same style. However, women may then be caught between being considered too aggressive on the one hand, or too passive on the other. Moreover, those women who attempt to emulate male management styles may not be accepted by either men or women because of the stereotypes we have all grown up with. Female role models, however, especially at higher management levels, are difficult to find since there are so few women in these positions. The environment must change toward greater diversity in the work force, teamwork and participative management. More women at management levels may also help to change the work environment for other women.

### **Concerns Regarding Targets/Quotas**

The majority of both men and women within ISTC are opposed to targets and quotas (84% of male and 75% of female respondents to the questionnaire). The same findings were made for the Public Service, as reported by the Task Force. Men do not desire reverse discrimination or the promotion of potentially unqualified women and women wish to be recognized on the basis of their competence, not gender.

Although Treasury Board targets do exist and ISTC is close to achieving them, neither men or women wish to see targets elevated to a point where they create an adversarial environment. Nevertheless, active means should be used to ensure that women are considered equally with men for potential development and promotion opportunities, as discussed in the recommendations.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations outlined below follow the individual issues identified in the previous section. They are preliminary recommendations which must be detailed more fully in the next phase. Potential human resource and financial costs and benefits must be included to ensure that well-founded decisions can be made by departmental management. Nevertheless, the broad parameters have been presented to and accepted for further examination by the Departmental Management Committee.

### RECOMMENDATIONS-SYSTEMIC ISSUES

#### Career Development

An overwhelming need for development opportunities was identified, suggesting that a formal ISTC corporate assignment program is warranted. Many potential solutions were proposed, but the existing model which appears to offer the most flexibility is the Corporate Assignment Program of Statistics Canada. Within the ISTC Corporate Development process, the Human Resources Working Group has been studying this model and will be submitting a detailed proposal to the DMC in early Fall, 1990.

The Statistics Canada model is very flexible in that it can be used for all groups and levels; allows for assignments between occupational groups, up or down levels, for varying time periods, or within or outside the organization. It incorporates a data base of employee-initiated requests and managers' offers of opportunities. The coordinating unit assists in matching and negotiating agreements. In Statistics Canada, the Program has been used successfully since 1983, with over 200 assignments per year of which 50% have resulted in permanent transfer or promotion. Several other government departments, PS 2000 and the private sector are studying this model for adaptation to their own organizations.

In addition to an assignment program, the feasibility of a program which would allow continued formal education in combination with on-the-job experience for selected employees should be examined. Such a program could be made available to a small number of employees per year who have consistently demonstrated excellent abilities, performance and interest. Several proposals were made, including:

- Re-establishment of an Administrative Trainee program;
- establishment of an apprenticeship program, such as that used in the construction industry, which alternates periods of full-time formal education with work experience;

- negotiations with universities/colleges for a correspondence/video series of courses leading to a degree, such as that being tested by the ISTC Service Industries and Consumer Goods Branch with Duke University; and
- flexibility in working hours to allow for part-time formal education at local universities/colleges during the day.

A Working Group formed from the Advisory Group on the Advancement of Women should examine the feasibility of a formal education program. When examining the possibility of an ISTC assignment program, they should liaise with the Human Resources Working Group.

### **General Review of Staffing and Development Requirements**

A general review of staffing and development by Human Resources Branch is proposed to address the issue of restrictive requirements.

First, more flexibility may be necessary in the definition of job requirements to include non-technical degrees, experience and non-imperative language. A general review by Human Resources Branch could ascertain the extent to which restrictive requirements are currently used, while reviews on individual staffing actions could ensure that balance is maintained between detailed and more general specifications.

Second, with respect to competitions, more should be held on the assumption that more opportunities are open for everyone, particularly women. Selection boards should have at least one female representative from an area other than Human Resources Branch. Generic competitions for some positions could be held to create eligibility lists and thereby streamline staffing procedures.

### **Support Mechanisms for Family Responsibilities**

Potential support mechanisms to assist ISTC employees in balancing work and family responsibilities should be examined. Daycare, operated efficiently and convenient to the workplace, is one potential option that has been shown to provide benefits in the private sector. Within the Corporate Development process, a Working Group has studied the ISTC needs for daycare (Ottawa only, to date) and has identified a potential site. Further examination needs to be undertaken to develop detailed terms of reference, funding and operation.

Another option, in addition to daycare, is an emergency care or brokerage service (e.g. bonded sitters), which could fill the need for short-term care arrangements on short notice, or for employees when on travel status. Halifax has a community service of this nature, as does Ottawa, but further details should be ascertained.

For both options, a working group should be established from the Advisory Group to develop more detailed proposals.

### **Appraisals**

More positive use should be made of the appraisal process. Systematic identification of candidates for career development and assignment opportunities could be drawn from completed appraisals and the list could be actively utilized by both managers and Human Resources Branch. In addition, more time should be spent throughout the year on constructive career development discussions. Human Resources Branch should examine these options in more detail.

### **Career Counselling**

A career counselling service could assist ISTC employees in setting realistic career goals and advise on concrete measures to achieve them.

Human Resources Branch is currently constrained in the amount of career counselling assistance it can provide, and managers are not well-positioned to assist employees since information is not readily available. PS 2000 is examining the establishment of a central career counselling service, including a hotline. In the interim, Human Resources Branch should gather available information on various career aspects and make them easily accessible to all staff. The information could include activities of different occupational groups, requirements to qualify for those groups and services already offered.

**25**

### **Flexible Work Arrangements**

A working group drawn from the Advisory Group should examine, with the assistance of Human Resources Branch, current use of flexible work options within ISTC such as part-time, flexible time, the compressed work week, work sharing and work at home. To raise awareness, particularly among managers, "best practices" examples could be developed.

## Technology

To ease the changes taking place due to technology, a working group drawn from the Advisory Group should investigate and analyze private and public sector responses to the challenge in terms of changes in work procedures, retraining and human resource development. Companies such as Xerox, IBM and Nova are particularly well known for how they have made the transition successfully with high employee morale.

## Statistics

To identify corporate human resource needs, to develop long-term plans for employee recruitment/development and to monitor specific issues on an ongoing basis, a good profile of ISTC employees must be developed and maintained within the parameters of the *Privacy Act* and similar legislation. Human Resources Branch has already initiated some work in this area. Consideration should be given to statistics (e.g. age, education, career progression, method of entry, expertise, use of educational leave, flexible work arrangements, labour force availability, etc.) and appropriate cross-tabulations should be built. Formal exit interviews should also be considered as a means of ascertaining, in a more subjective fashion, potential problem areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS-ATTITUDINAL/CORPORATE CULTURE ISSUES

Attitudinal issues are more difficult to address because they involve beliefs, experiences and influences which we all grew up with and which are a continuing presence in the environment external to the workplace. They are, however, crucial considerations when addressing these issues. It must also be recognized that, while fundamental attitudes cannot be changed easily, behaviour in the workplace can be influenced. Perhaps most important in dealing with behaviour is the recognition that many actions are not conscious, and differing points of view are often not known and therefore cannot be considered. Better awareness alone can assist in understanding and creating a different environment.

It is therefore proposed that an ongoing consistent awareness program be developed which will better sensitize employees to specific concerns, issues and actions. Such a program for men and women has been utilized in the British Columbia provincial government with beneficial results. Further examination by a working group drawn from the Advisory Group, of this and other potential models is warranted. Since this may become an emotional issue, a professional training and marketing plan should be developed by the group, working with the Tourism Sector (acknowledged for their marketing expertise), to ensure consistency, completeness and acceptance of the messages given.



To effect change within ISTC, it will be important that managers at all levels in the department provide ongoing, consistent leadership, communication and visible commitment. Emphasis must be placed on good management, a visible sustained implementation process, recognition and visibility for employees and managers who excel in their work, and clear consistent messages that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Some of the Corporate Development initiatives already underway on participative management and team-building provide an excellent base. Within these general parameters, separate emphasis should be given to issues concerning women, including regular reporting to the Departmental Management Committee and communication to all staff; conscious effort by managers to include women in work assignments, meetings, candidacies for assignments, development and promotion opportunities; recognition of good work done by women; and informal mentoring arrangements.

## 7. NEXT STEPS

With the report to the DMC on June 26, 1990, the first phase of the process on the ISTC review on the Advancement of Women was completed. This phase essentially included a consultation component, an issue definition component and a series of recommendations to senior departmental management.

The next phase, which is the development of an action plan, will be most critical as the Department defines its activities to bring about change. Organizationally, the Steering Committee will continue to oversee departmental efforts. It has, however, been expanded to include the Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance, Personnel and Administration; and the Director, Corporate Development Secretariat.

The Working Group structured to deal with Phase I of the review was disbanded effective June 29, 1990. Nevertheless, there is a need to provide ongoing operational support to the Steering Committee as the exercise enters its next phase. A small coordinating secretariat has been established to that effect.

During this second phase, working groups will be drawn from the pool of Advisory Group members and other interested employees to develop an action plan for the individual activities that were recommended to the DMC at the end of the first phase. The Advisory Group, comprised of employees from throughout the Department and Regional Offices will be involved in the development of some of these activities. Some of the tasks will be undertaken separately by, or through liaison with, Human Resources Branch and Corporate Development Secretariat. The action plan developed is expected to be submitted to the DMC in September 1990.

## **APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX 1

## MEMBERS OF ISTC STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP

### A. STEERING COMMITTEE

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#### Co-chairs

Cliff Mackay,  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Industry and Technology Sector;  
and

Audrey Doerr, Director General,  
Science Strategy and Federal  
Research Branch,  
Science Sector.

#### Members

Glenn Fields,  
Acting Regional Executive  
Director, Alberta;

Andrei Sulzenko, Director General  
Industries Policy Branch,  
Policy Sector; and

Ellen Fry, Senior General  
Counsel, Legal Services;

Jean Van Loon, Director General,  
Services to Business Branch,  
Operations Sector.

Tom Stewart, Director,  
Management Category and  
Personnel Programs,  
Human Resources Branch;

### B. WORKING GROUP

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#### Manager

Victor Landry,  
New Brunswick  
Regional Office, Moncton;

#### Members

Astrid Prud'Homme,  
Services to Business Branch,  
Operations Sector;

Pat Parent,  
Planning, Coordination  
and Control Branch,  
Industry and Technology  
Sector; and

Mariette Therrien,  
Surface Transportation  
and Machinery Branch,  
Industry and Technology  
Sector;

Valerie Bachynsky,  
Nova Scotia  
Regional Office, Halifax.

Rosslyn Caiger-Watson,  
Information Technologies  
Industry Branch,  
Industry and Technology  
Sector;

## APPENDIX 2

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS — 1990

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Departmental Management Committee (DMC) decision to review issue of advancement of women within ISTC                  | May 29          |
| 2. Formation of ISTC Task Force, composed of Steering Committee and Working Group  | May 30          |
| 3. Invitation to all ISTC staff to attend workshop sessions, complete questionnaires and volunteer for an Advisory Group | May 31 & June 7 |
| 4. Workshop sessions throughout ISTC (total 20, one in each of 10 Regional Offices and 10 in Ottawa)                     | June 7 - 19     |
| 5. Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to Advisory Group  | June 22         |
| 6. Presentation to the Departmental Management Committee   | June 26         |
| 7. Deputy Minister's information circular to all staff   | June 27         |
| 8. Planning of next phase  | June 26 - 29    |
| 9. Management and Advisory Group debriefings, publication of report  | July            |
| 10. Individual Working Groups to develop action plans on specific issues   | July - Sept.    |
| 11. Presentation of overall action plan to the DMC   | Mid-Sept.       |



# APPENDIX 3

## HOW DOES ISTC LOOK? — 1990

### REPRESENTATION

TOTAL EMPLOYEES	WOMEN	% OF WOMEN
2 528	1 221	48%

- NOT A PROBLEM IN ISTC, EXCEPT WITHIN GROUPS

### CONCENTRATION

TOTAL WOMEN	TOTAL WOMEN IN CR, ST AND AS	% OF WOMEN IN CR, ST AND AS
1 221	832	68%

- CONCENTRATION IN ONLY 3 GROUPS

### COMPRESSION

	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	WOMEN	% OF WOMEN
MANAGEMENT			
EX	132	15	11%
SM	148	15	10%
CO-GROUP			
CO-3&4	361	53	14%
CO-2	451	114	25%
CO-1	57	29	50%
AS-GROUP			
AS-5,6,7	26	14	53%
AS-4	18	12	66%
AS-1,2,3	183	160	87%
CR-GROUP			
CR-5	87	75	86%
CR-4	203	157	77%
CR-2&3	71	51	71%

- WITHIN GROUPS AND MANAGEMENT, THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN ARE AT LOWER LEVELS

# ISTC — THREE YEARS AGO AND NOW

% WOMEN — 1987

WOMEN — 1990

## REPRESENTATION

---

49%

48%

- SOMEWHAT LOWER, NOT A PROBLEM, EXCEPT WITHIN GROUPS

## CONCENTRATION

---

(CR, ST, AS)

73%

68%

- STILL IN ONLY 3 GROUPS, BUT SOMEWHAT BETTER

## COMPRESSION

---

### MANAGEMENT

EX

13%

11%

SM

6%

10%

### CO-GROUP

CO-3&4

10%

14%

CO-2

18%

25%

CO-1

50%

50%

### AS-GROUP

AS-5,6,7

43%

53%

AS-4

60%

66%

AS 1,2,3

84%

87%

### CR-GROUP

CR-5

89%

86%

CR-4

83%

77%

CR-2&3

72%

71%

- WOMEN STILL AT LOWER LEVELS WITHIN GROUPS,  
BUT SOMEWHAT BETTER

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE**

In order to gain a fuller appreciation of employees' views and to allow for anonymity of response, all staff were invited to complete a questionnaire (attached). The questionnaire was not meant to be a full survey that is statistically correct and methodologically sophisticated. Its intent was simply to gain some preliminary insights into perceptions, issues and potential solutions to problems within ISTC.

In total, one hundred and ninety four (194) questionnaires were returned, of which 59% were from women and 41% from men. The following summary highlights the responses and draws a number of conclusions.

#### **BARRIERS FOR ADVANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

The responses to questions related to barriers were quite different for male and female respondents. This pattern continued for almost every question throughout the questionnaire. As interesting as the actual numbers, which indicated that 34% of men and 78% of women believe there are barriers, were the narratives describing the specific types of barriers.

At the top of the list were attitudes. Many, particularly female respondents, but also a substantial number of males, believe that stereotypical beliefs about the traditional roles of men and women are still very entrenched within ISTC, and as a result, women's skills and abilities are undervalued and under-utilized.

The following lists the more common barriers cited by the respondents:

- attitudes of male senior managers who undervalue women's skills whether in professional or support categories;
- inadequate training and development opportunities for women at professional as well as support levels;
- lack of opportunities for proper career planning and development;
- not enough women in senior positions to develop networking;

- lack of recruitment of female officers from outside the Department;
- prejudiced male views that "women cannot do my job";
- belief that women have inadequate training, education, qualifications and/or experience in industry;
- an organizational structure which inhibits movement from support staff positions to officer positions;
- no allowance given for "equivalent experience" to access CO group even though it is permissible;
- operational requirements that dictate that someone is too valuable to be spared for secondments, yet not valuable enough to be recognized;
- no commitment to training and development of support staff except in technical skills;
- perception that clerks and typists don't have the ability to do more meaningful work;
- inappropriate classification levels;
- automatic assumptions made regarding women's abilities to travel, especially those with young children;
- having young children and family obligations;
- lack of respect for female clerical staff;
- women belittle their own abilities;
- insecurity on the part of men, fear on the part of women;
- child care problems;
- the male-oriented culture within ISTC; and
- lack of flexible work arrangements, including job-sharing, work hours, etc.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR REMOVING BARRIERS

There was generally a negative response from both men and women to the establishment of targets or quotas. About 78% of men and 69% of women felt strongly that quotas or targets were counter-productive. Nevertheless, there was strong support for other measures. Many of the responses pointed to the need to attack attitudes first.

While it was recognized that training and development are important, a number of respondents pointed out that, without positive attitudes toward the advancement of women on the part of management and all staff, all the training and development will be for naught. The following were the more common suggestions for change:

Mandatory gender awareness/sensitivity training for all ISTC staff, starting with management:

- formal mentor arrangements with carefully selected managers;
- succession planning for the SM/EX group;
- increased emphasis on professional development;
- managers rated on ability to develop their human resources;
- mandatory training in communications, leadership and management for everyone before they are promoted to manager;
- team building between officers and support staff;
- establish a corporate assignment program;
- view the advancement of women as a "policy issue";
- establish an "ombudsman" to review staffing actions to ensure equal opportunity is provided;
- arrange for "bridging" assignments that allow women to cross ranks;
- rotational secondments and assignments;



- competitions held without pre-selected candidates;
- develop a listing of post-secondary courses for support staff that would help them bridge the gap between support and officer levels; develop specific courses related to skills needed for higher levels; and
- reinstate the AT program.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

There was a marked difference between male and female responses on the question of discrimination. Only about 27% of men believe they have been discriminated against, versus 53% of women. A number of men felt they had been discriminated against because unqualified women had been promoted ahead of them, this in addition to other factors such as bilingualism.

A number of women claimed that discrimination within ISTC takes many forms. One respondent claimed that, to her, it meant not filling a male manager's perception of what a woman should be or do. Another pointed out that discrimination is done so "well" within ISTC that it is not always identifiable.

## **WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The majority of respondents reported they do have children, yet a greater number of women than men believe family responsibilities inhibit their advancement.

Regardless of how respondents answered the question relating to family responsibilities and the advancement of their careers, an overwhelming majority of respondents think the Department should provide support for employees with young children or other family responsibilities (60% of men and 70% of women).

Elaborations on the type of support that should be given include on-site daycare facilities, the option to work at home a prescribed number of days a month or when children/elders are sick (this would involve the purchase of computers for home use) and training and development programs during working hours. In addition, higher allowable expenses for babysitting while travelling (not only for single parents), provision of bonded sitters for those who travel, and to a lesser extent, flexible work hours and job sharing, were mentioned.



# QUESTIONNAIRE

## ISTC REVIEW ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

We would encourage both men and women at all levels to answer this questionnaire. Please note that this questionnaire is not meant to be a full survey that is methodologically sophisticated. The intent is to gain some preliminary insights into perceptions, issues and potential solutions within ISTC.

Male ☐

Female ☐

Group/Level\_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Are there barriers for the advancement and development in ISTC that are specific to women.**

Yes ☐

No ☐

Don't know ☐

If yes, name the barriers/give anecdotes

- 2. Is ISTC doing for advancement and development of women?**

too little ☐

enough ☐

too much ☐

don't know ☐

Can you elaborate?



**3. Would you favour establishment of quotas or targets for women?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

**4. Instead of quotas or targets, would you favour explicit programs (e.g. development, rotation, training) and/or policies to support the advancement of women?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, do you have any specific suggestions for programs/policies to support the advancement of women.

For support staff

For officers

For managers



**5. Do female employees in your area participate equitably in the full range of ISTC activities:**

- |                              |                              |                             |                                     |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) field trips               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) negotiations with clients | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) senior level meetings     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) conferences               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) seminars                  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) workshops                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |

**6. Do you think attitudes of**

- |          |                              |                             |                                     |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) women | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) men   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |

contribute to barriers to women?

If *yes*, how?

**7. Do you feel you have been discriminated against?**

Yes ☐      No ☐

If yes, how?



**8. Are female candidates in your responsibility area actively recruited for:**

- |                              |                              |                             |                                     |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) assignments               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) competitions              | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) development opportunities | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) training opportunities    | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |

**9. Do you have young children/family responsibilities?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**10. Do you think these family responsibilities inhibit you in your advancement?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how?

**11. Should the Department provide support for employees with young children/family responsibilities to allow them to pursue development and promotional opportunities?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐



**12. If yes, what kinds of support should the Department provide  
(e.g. training opportunities during normal work hours, daycare, etc.)?**

For support staff

For officers

For managers

**13. Comments/Suggestions:**