

MEMO

Finland's Representation Abroad: Means and Models



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

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INTRODUCTION

The foundation for the operations of the Foreign Service encompasses tasks arising from legislation and norms, the foreign and security policy pursuant to the Government Programme including its strategic focus areas, and the subsequent annual operating and financial planning. The network of Finland's foreign missions also provides services to other administrative branches.

As the field of activities of the thinly manned – but broad – network of mission's is varied, it is essential that the operating profile and tasks of each mission be balanced with its resources and operating conditions. This balance is continually being sought by means of developing the division of responsibilities, steering, resource allocation and concrete instruments.

Diplomacy is about public relations between people, ergo no web presence nor information found by means of the Internet can replace it. This fundamental reality remains unchanged even though advances in information technology have improved communications and it is now easier and faster to obtain information. Still, this poses increasing challenges for the Foreign Service as to prioritising and excluding tasks so as to achieve the proper balance between activities and resources.

The special feature of the Foreign Service, i.e. there being a network of small missions around the world, requires more than the average amount of administrative and support functions. The annual rotation system, as well, wherein at least 20% of the public servants change their tasks and post, demands sufficient input for human resources. Locally employed staff comprises the largest segment of personnel and, owing to individual host country legislation, the terms of employment also vary country by country. One of the most challenging tasks is to maintain communications for the network of missions. This duty, resources included, was transferred to the Government Administration Department, which was established in March 2015.

For nearly a decade already the central government has centralised financial administration at the Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR. The Foreign Service also participates in this process. Yet again, the fragmented and extremely varied field of activities of the Foreign Service places great demands on the success of such centralisation. This being the case it must also be possible to take decisions on a case-by-case basis. Both physical and IT security solutions have come to the fore as regards planning the functions of missions. This trend will only continue.

The Foreign Service remains responsible for implementing the Consular Services Act at its network of missions. The amended Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2015, makes it possible to develop consular services on the basis of demand. At the same time the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) must improve services and seek synergies through IT solutions. The service function of the Foreign Service, as part of the Team Finland network, calls for streamlining the service package and the missions' profiles on the basis of Team Finland's work as well as Finland's country-branding communications.

The present Government, inaugurated in March of 2015, has decided against closing any more missions during its term. During the past five years the MFA has closed 13 missions and opened two new offices. During the past ten years or so personnel cuts equivalent to 243 person-years have been made. This corresponds to approximately 17% of the Foreign Service's total person-years in 2015.

The Foreign Service is now in the situation where reforms no longer materialise from 'cheese slicer' solutions, i.e. cuts across the board. Rather, they must be generated through genuine structural changes. In order to meet the challenges Finland needs an increasingly effective network of missions which can adapt to an operating environment in flux. When missions are thinly manned, solutions must be sought from opportunities and synergies created through digitalisation, and centralisation must be sought from viable areas. Moreover, non-essential processes must be eradicated. This report endeavours to answer these questions.

1.0 Tasking and goals

The abovementioned needs spawned the task whose aim was to evaluate the Ministry's structures, resources and processes in a way that allowed the limited resources to be better focused on implementing the core functions. The themes for the tasking were selected on the basis of current development needs. For this reason the implementation of and reporting on foreign and security policy, trade policy and development cooperation were excluded from the development goals. The reforms proposed in this document aim at releasing resources for the policy areas.

In October 2014 Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs, set up a project for establishing the guidelines for the means and models of Finland's representation abroad. On the one hand the goal of the project was to optimise the structure and approach of Finland's representation in different host countries by utilising any prospects for cooperation with, among others, the other Nordic and EU countries and the European External Action Service. On the other hand, the goal was to achieve cost savings by reforming present structures and functions of representation, and by reallocating existing resources. The transformation project's end result will be an even more effective network of missions.

Also sought during the process were ways to lighten the missions' administrative responsibilities and to strengthen the prerequisites for Finnish export promotion and obtaining investments in Finland. Yet another goal was to improve the organisation of statutory consular services pursuant to the new Consular Services Act. All of the above also facilitate the development of new models for Finland's representation, i.e. 'light' missions.

On the one hand, the project stems from the savings requirements imposed on the Foreign Service, on the other hand, from the identified needs for developing the structures and processes of Finland's representation abroad.

While the focus of the working group was to specifically evaluate the Ministry's structures and support services, the analysis also provides some substance on external services such as consular services, Team Finland and Finland's country branding. The point of departure was to examine all of the sectors in light of the basic goals and focus areas. The increasingly dire state economy added a distinct tone to the activities of the working group, which resulted in budget cuts in the Foreign Service's substantive functions such as development cooperation, in particular, and in the financing of operational expenditures. This called for the working

group to focus on identifying savings through reforms. Nonetheless, the working group did not concentrate primarily on savings as the goal was to foster a ministry which can meet the challenges of the 2020s.

1.1 Working methods, the composition of the working group and subgroups

The 'Means and Models' project was implemented as a wide-ranging, inclusive endeavour to guarantee across-the-board commitment within the Foreign Service, and to ease the converting of the project into practice. A working group, chaired by PirkkoHämäläinen, Under-Secretary of State, was set up for this purpose. The working group included representatives from the Administrative Services, the Financial Management Unit, Consular Services, all regional and political departments, the Department for Communications, the Legal Service, Policy Planning and Research as well as employee associations. The secretary of the project was Virpi Kukkasniemi-Leino, Adviser to the Under-Secretary of State. The working group convened 15 times. In addition to project meetings, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra facilitated a brainstorming session attended by the members of the central steering group, the extended steering group as well as the members of the main working group. Furthermore, related to the topic, an honorary consul brainstorming session was organised to develop the functions of honorary consuls.

Four subgroups were established to deal with the following topics:

- Properties: Questions associated with premises and real estate such as, among other things, categorisation of official residences and the usability of office premises.
- Administration: the development of administration and the intensification of efforts by, especially, centralising and outsourcing functions.
- Consular services: The development of consular services and the optimisation of services enabled by the revised Consular Services Act.
- Team Finland and country branding: TF and country branding in the everyday activities of missions.

The subgroups convened among themselves and reported to the main working group.

The Ministry's central steering group provided overall guidance for the project. Representatives of stakeholders were also informed of the objectives of the project and their opinions were registered. The Draft Report was widely promulgated among Finland's missions for comments.

2.0 OPTIONS FOR REPRESENTATION

- Whenever new premises are being sought, possibilities for cooperation between the Nordic Countries, other EU countries and the EU delegation will be considered.
- Normally, a 'laptop' model will suffice only as a temporary solution.
- Whereas missions manned by one diplomatic officer may be viable in Europe, the profile of the mission must be very limited.
- In the future, as well, the norm for manning the network of missions will be two career diplomats and one career administrative official.
- The system of using roving ambassadors can be a viable solution in lieu of side-accreditations.
- Cooperation with the network of honorary consuls must be intensified.

The smallest missions can operate under one diplomatic officer. The typical mission has two career diplomats and one career administrative official. At the largest missions there may be more than ten diplomats. In addition to Foreign Service diplomats and administrative officials, experts representing the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other administrative branches as well operate at many missions. In addition, all missions employ locally hired staff. When it comes to partner organisations, the representatives of Finpro and Tekes, among others, can be located at missions. Even though they are independent actors they engage in close cooperation with the mission, under the head of the mission. The personnel profile at each mission reflects Finland's focus areas for the functions to be implemented in the host country or region. Moreover, Finland's scientific and cultural institutions abroad engage in close cooperation with missions, however, as a rule, they do not operate as part of the mission.

Additionally, there are presently three roving ambassadors operating from the Ministry as well as an Ambassador accredited to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Roving ambassadors can be accredited to several host countries, which is the situation at present. Many missions are also 'side-accredited' to countries where no missions have been established or to which no roving ambassadors have been assigned. Side-accreditations are taken into consideration as best as possible in the given mission's resources.

2.1 Tasks of missions

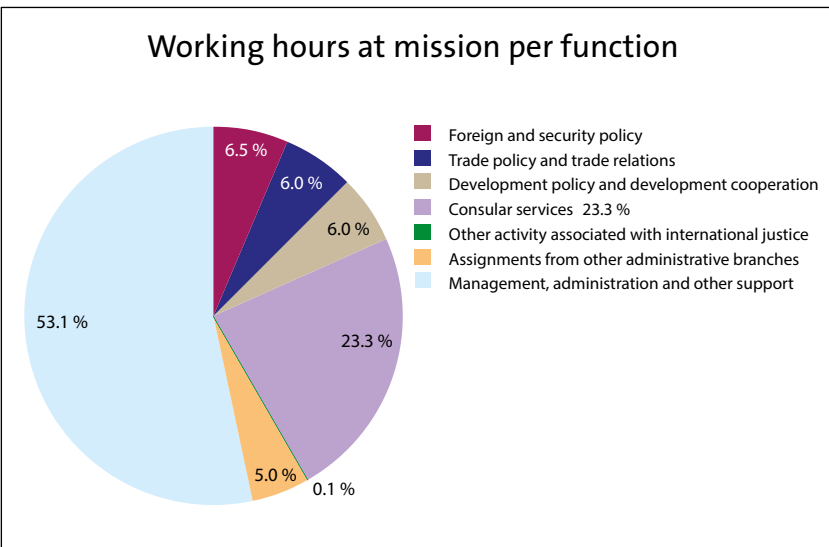
The tasks of missions can be divided in two: 1) General political tasks which include topics under foreign policy, trade policy and development cooperation as well as Finland's bilateral and multilateral representation, and 2) Official duties which include consular services in a wider sense, the issuance of passports and visas included.

Pursuant to the Act on Foreign Service the task of missions is to:

- 1) Represent the State of Finland and to oversee Finland's political, economic and cultural interests (including services to other administrative branches).
- 2) Further the knowledge and understanding of Finland abroad.
- 3) Inform the Ministry for Foreign Affairs about matters of significance to Finland, and
- 4) Undertake other duties assigned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Separate provisions regarding consular duties shall be issued.

The following graph provides a rough illustration on the missions' person-years divided per task/function, in accordance with the 2014 final accounts.



Management, administration and other support functions consume a considerable portion of the missions' working hours. Therefore, this report aims at finding ways to free this time for the core activities. The report also delves into Team Finland and country branding as well as consular services, since compared to policy activities they have more effect on the structures of representation, i.e. the office and the official residence. In the future, as of 2017, the allocation of working hours to different functions will be achieved through the Kieku information system. At that time it will be possible to evaluate and compare the allocation of, and variation between, working hours for different functions.

2.2 The Foreign Service of the future

The outlook for the administrative branch is challenging because the ongoing transformation of international policy and the global redistribution of power only provide some glimpses into the future. Still, it is already safe to say that the geopolitical trends, climate change, international conflicts, the growth of extremism, the shifting of political and economic focus to Asia, the changing role of the EU, migrations and their root causes as well as the trends in Russia's development constitute major factors for the future field of activity of Finland's Foreign Service. New technologies, including the subsequent revolution in practices, increasingly impact the manner in which the Foreign Service plans and implements activities. Simultaneously, the questions associated with hybrid threats such as network attacks and cyber-espionage will impose restrictions on the generation and utilisation of information and technologies. The well-being of personnel and the security aspect must also be taken into consideration in the ever-changing operating environment.

The question is: what are the requirements for the Foreign Service in these conditions? Practices have already changed remarkably over the course of the past decades, and this change will only continue. The development of Finnish society will inevitably resonate in the functions and structures of the Foreign Service. Better agility and flexibility in facing the challenges is expected of the administrative branch. Advances in technology, practices and structures will also promote changes in working life. The opportunities offered by communications, information management and ancillary digital solutions will continue to evolve and therefore also demand more robust information security. Moreover, the increasingly strained international situation poses mounting challenges to comprehensive security.

The Foreign Service must strive towards future-oriented solutions that fully utilise the opportunities created by digitalisation in the reorganisation of structures, work practices and the workplace; at the same time the challenges generated by the working environment in different parts of the world must not be forgotten. The Foreign Service must aim far into the future when planning these changes. Hence, careful preparation and cooperation with close partners are invaluable. By developing the network of missions it is also possible to advance the principles of sustainable development and promote the basic tenets of Finland's international action and influencing. The future network of missions, at its finest, will showcase our national fortes by, for example, tapping into Finnish technologies.

Personnel are the greatest resource of the Ministry. This is why it is imperative to see to the well-being and ability to cope of personnel during the course of reforms. Change demands an inclination for flexibility and new thinking. The instruments of foreign policy ten years from now may be quite different from those of today.

The security risks for the Foreign Service have grown. Changes in the European and global operating environment also impact the security environment of the Foreign Service. Approximately 20 Finnish missions are located in areas where, owing to their surroundings, there is, among other things, a constant threat to their security. Moreover, the situation with missions in safer areas may fundamentally change through social disruption, for example. A large number of Foreign Service personnel regularly or occasionally works or travels in areas where the security situation is quite dissimilar to that of Finland. In the next phase of the escalating migration to Finland the increasing workloads, for instance due to family reunification processes, at the network of missions must be prepared for. Security factors must also be taken into consideration in the ever-growing consular services.

As the means and models of representation are being modernised, the development of information management will play a key role in the success of the reform. Mobility, freedom from time and place constraints, and security are some of the key elements of change. The Foreign Service will always be vulnerable to external threats because the essence of its activities demands an extensive external interface with other actors. That the administrative branch is an interesting target for intelligence and cyber threats, social media hacking included, only adds to the overall picture of traditional threats.

Information management has achieved good results in consular services when functions and processes have been developed from a fresh outlook by relying on IT. This may also serve as a model for reforming the entire administrative branch; inputs, first and foremost, must be made on reforming the functions gradually.

2.3 Missions – the vanguard of Finland

Finland's network of missions is relatively comprehensive, albeit thinly manned. There are altogether 85 missions manned by Finnish diplomats. Of these, only 43 missions are manned by two diplomatic officers, at the most.

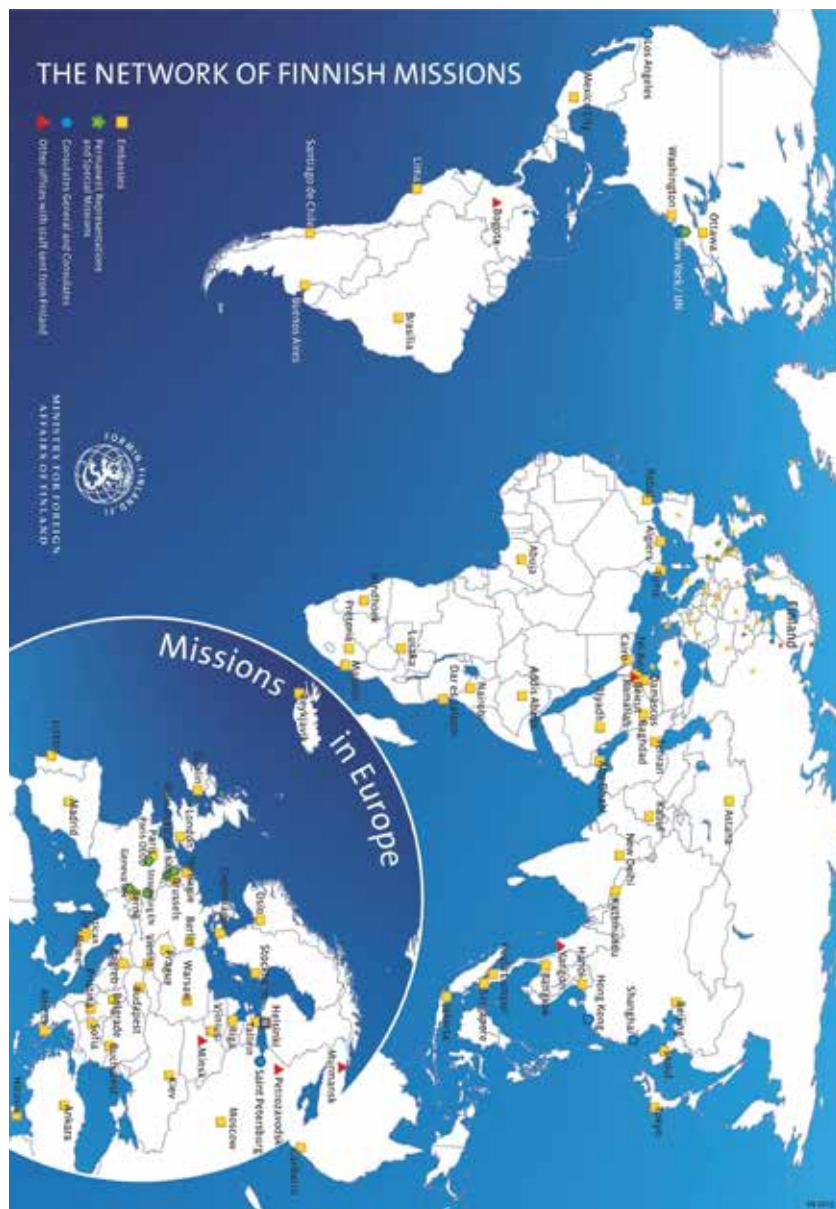
Whenever Finland establishes a diplomatic mission in a host country it is always a great effort in terms of resources. The mission per se requires technical support and security arrangements for taking care of matters associated with security, consular services and administration that must be taken into consideration from the outset. Any changes in the international situation, hybrid threats and a deteriorating general security situation demand careful planning in respect to the missions' security arrangements and the premises where public services are provided. Certain criteria must be met when constructing the mission's office spaces; these structural solutions are expensive as well.

Missions are Finland's business cards. In the future we must increasingly focus on how missions can advance Finnish exports and investments in Finland, and promote the image of Finland as well as Finland's country brand. Missions always function as windows into Finnish society. Therefore, we must also consider what salient points we, through the network of missions, want to communicate to the international audience in the host countries or at Finland's missions to international organisations. Do they exhibit sophisticated Finnish technological industry, clean-tech solutions, start-up activities or Finnish top design? The Foreign Service, together with its partners, must invest in these topics to a much greater degree in the future. Finland should also consider how to best utilise its missions to international organisations (UN, EU, OECD, OSCE) in export promotion.

In seeking creative solutions for having a local presence, the Ministry has used the one-diplomat-mission solution. In such cases the diplomat in question works at the premises of another country's mission or of an EU delegation. A 'limbo' solution such as this has been available in the tool bag of instruments when the need

to establish a mission has been identified but it is still too early or too expensive to establish an embassy. This type of mission is in Bogota and Minsk. In addition to the diplomatic officer these missions employ one or two persons, at most, to support the activity. A separate office such as this does not hold the status of an embassy or consulate.

Experience shows that the greater the distance to Finland, the less effective the 'laptop' mission is. Outside of Europe communications, the local administrative culture and even trivial issues such as banking can cause extra work and be time-consuming. It seems that the farther the office is established from Finland, the more resources it needs just to run it. On the basis of lessons learned the 'laptop' model can only be considered a short-term solution and it probably only functions properly in Europe where the operating culture and conditions resemble those of Finland. Even then the roles and responsibilities must be determined in such a manner that they facilitate the functioning of the office.



Finland's network of missions, September 2015

The one-diplomat embassies that have the necessary infrastructure are in a slightly better position. These posts already have the functional prerequisites in place and their resources make it possible for them to better focus on their core function, compared to the laptop offices. Finland's embassies in Nicosia and Reykjavik are such missions. In any case, some of the locally employed staff must be Finns so as to properly take care of things like accounting and consular services. In practice, in order for this kind of mission to guarantee the preconditions needed for operating, its tasks must be reduced so that the sole diplomatic officer can focus on the core functions. The one-diplomat model places a lot of responsibility on these public servants and, at the end of the day, they are solely responsible for prioritisation. If this model is the recourse then, for the same reasons as the laptop model, it is best suited to Europe. This solution is altogether unsuitable for certain regions, such as Africa. When it comes to one-diplomat missions one must take into consideration the fact that they cannot function the same way as 'standard embassies' do; their tasks must be curtailed and their functions have to be dramatically prioritised.

One-diplomat missions are functionally vulnerable. Holidays and sick leaves easily interrupt the functioning of the mission or necessitate sending back-ups from home. A concern Ambassadors have is the fact that when they are absent from the post they still hold the overall responsibility for the functioning of the mission. Correspondingly, the question of how the locally employed staff can work at a mission when the career diplomat is not present needs to be resolved. One simply has to accept the fact that, occasionally, functions and opening hours will be limited. At the same time competence and security aspects must be addressed.

Information security aspects, in particular, must be carefully considered for this type of solution. The responsibility for information security lies on the shoulders of the lone diplomatic officer. When it comes to one-diplomat solutions one must also consider whether Nordic cooperation could further the functioning of a mission. After all, successful cooperative solutions are already in place.

The experiences of peer countries largely parallel those of Finland. Sweden has held that for a mission to be viable it should have two diplomatic officers at a minimum. As a savings measure the Netherlands thinned down, but did not close, some of its missions. Because of this, the Netherlands, much like Sweden and Denmark, operates one-diplomat missions. Even during its economic crisis Ireland did not close its missions in the Member States of the European Union, believing that a one-diplomat mission is preferable to not having a mission at all.

Each host country is unique. The farther it is from Finland, the more challenges seem to arise for the upkeep of a mission. In most cases this translates into having to earmark more resources to support services.

Since, due to economic constraints, the size of Finland's embassies will not increase in the future, when missions or offices are being opened they must be furnished with the necessary wherewithal. At that juncture one must pay attention to the following issues:

1. How Finland's goals and focus areas are reflected in the mission's operating profile and responsibilities.
2. The requirements posed by the operating environment, and the cost level.
3. A properly functioning division of responsibilities between the Ministry, the Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR, the Government Administration Department and the mission itself.
4. The possibilities for organising the mission's support services – financial and human resources management and consular services included – by centralising functions.
5. The possibility for utilising eServices in internal and external services.
6. The role of the steering department must be clear; the regional department must have a stronger role in providing guidance to the mission.
7. The effects of the abovementioned elements on human resources and total funding.

The four sectors of the project 'Finland's Representation Abroad: Means and Models' will impact the manner in which the missions' functions are organised in the future. These will be discussed in more detail further on in conjunction with the presentation of the subgroups' substantive work and results.

Table: The size of missions ranked by the number of officers sent from Finland

Number of officers sent from Finland	Missions	Total
More than 20	Perm. Rep. to the EU (Brussels), Moscow, St. Petersburg	3
10-19	Berlin, Perm. Mission of Finland to Geneva, London, New Delhi, Beijing, Washington, D.C., Vienna, Perm. Mission of Finland to the UN (New York)	8
6-9	Abuja, Addis Ababa, Ankara, Bangkok, Dar es Salaam, Hanoi, Kabul, Cairo, Kiev, Maputo, Mexico, Nairobi, Mission of Finland to NATO (Brussels), Consulate General of Finland (New York), Perm. Del. of Finland to the OECD/UNESCO (Paris), Paris (Embassy), Pretoria, Rome, Tallinn, Tokyo, Stockholm	21
4-5	Astana, Brasília, Buenos Aires, Haag, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Lima, Lusaka, Madrid, Petrozavodsk, Riyadh, Riga, Shanghai, Soul, Teheran, Tel Aviv, Warsaw	17
3	Abu Dhabi, Alger, Athens, Beirut, Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest, Canberra, Dublin, Kuala Lumpur, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Oslo, Ottawa, Prague, Pristina, Ramallah, Santiago de Chile, Sofia, Strasbourg PE, Tunis, Vilnius, Windhoek, Zagreb, Yangon	25
2	Bern, Brussels (Embassy), Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Murmansk, Rabat, Singapore	7
1	Bogota, Minsk, Nicosia, Reykjavik	4
No sent officers	Baghdad, Damascus, Manila, Vatican City State	4

The abovementioned human resources cover all diplomatic officers, including experts from other administrative branches, development cooperation experts and employees under contractual employment relationship. The table excludes defence attachés stationed at embassies as well as the representatives of Finnish Customs, the Police and the Border Guard. This is because they are not in a public-service employment relationship with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

2.4 Roving ambassadors – alternative for side-accreditation?

The experiences from using roving ambassadors have been favourable. However, in practice, it is challenging when there is no mission in country. This is especially true with regard to larger countries. A roving ambassador can benefit from a resourceful honorary consul and the local chamber of commerce, if there is one. The Finnish community's contacts can be a good network in the host country. Also, the Nordic and EU countries and the EU delegation can support the activities. The envoy can concentrate on the very themes important to Finland in the region/host country without having to be responsible for the administration of a mission or other support functions. Consular services can be taken care of at the representations of other EU countries.

To a degree, roving ambassadors require support services from the Ministry to expedite their activities. Normally, operating units make secretarial, etc., services available. Trips to the countries of accreditation, preparations and follow-up included, take the lion's share of the roving ambassador's time. Owing to long distances and inconvenient flight connections the trips can be exhausting.

The attitude of the country of accreditation often dictates the operating conditions. Most countries, however, prefer the status of a roving ambassador to a side-accreditation. It seems that roving ambassadors can spend more time on relationship-building in the country of accreditation than side-accredited ambassadors can. When it comes to certain cases the roving ambassador solution can help avoid politically sensitive combinations, potentially caused by side-accreditation. On the other hand, experiences also show that not all countries accept roving ambassadors, nor will they give agrément to them during their entire term. The post of a Roving Ambassador to Western Balkans was discontinued in 2011 because, due to the short distances and closely-related languages in the area, side-accreditation worked better than a roving ambassador traveling from Finland.

At present the Foreign Service has three roving ambassadors: an ambassador accredited to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives; an ambassador accredited to the states in South Caucasus; and an ambassador accredited to three states in Central Asia. In addition, an ambassador has been accredited to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

In the group of our peer countries Sweden has increased the number of its roving ambassadors. Sweden has noted that the arrangement is appropriate and benefi-

cial. Four of its ten roving ambassadors focus on countries in Europe, three in Africa, two in Central Asia and South Caucasus, and one in the Caribbean.

The status of a roving ambassador lies somewhere in the middle between that of a side-accredited ambassador and one stationed in the host country. Financially speaking, it is much more economical to sustain a roving ambassador than to operate a mission in the area. If there is not enough money to open a representation in country, it would be beneficial to study the roving ambassador option before any other decisions on managing the country's affairs are made. The Ministry should more closely study this option and chart its utilisation, for example, during diplomats' rotations when decisions on side-accreditations are being made. The option of side-accrediting the head of the mission of Finland's representation to an international organisation to nearby states should also be studied.

Increasing the number of roving ambassadors should be considered in some instances where there are many side-accreditations. Finland has ten embassies where the ambassador is accredited to at least three other states or organisations. They are: Canberra, Pretoria, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Mexico, Abuja, Lima, Lusaka, Riyadh and Dar es Salaam. In addition to these, the ambassador at many an embassy is side-accredited to a nearby country.

2.5 Honorary consuls supporting the network of missions

Honorary consuls are a resource worth motivating and taking good care of so as to promote Finland's economic and financial interests, to assist Finns and to advance Finland's visibility. The operating profiles of the countries must be taken into consideration when selecting honorary consuls. In the future the Foreign Service must increasingly invest in the selection and guidance of honorary consuls. The right sort of honorary consul is, for example, a valuable resource in export promotion. The mission and the regional department, working together with the Department for Communications, the Department for External Economic Relations and Administrative Services, will draw up a profile determining which criteria the honorary consul must meet in the country in question. Businesses must be made aware of the possibility for cooperating with the honorary consuls.

In order to commit the honorary consuls to their duties and to guide them they must be included in the sphere of Team Finland's planning at missions and in

departmental performance management. Close contact should be kept with the honorary consuls. For example, meetings and various events to which the honorary consul is invited as well as newsletters and Internet information can act as the means of communication.

When preparing for crisis situations at consulates one must take into consideration the cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and honorary consuls. Contingency planning must keep in mind the importance of clear tasking during a crisis, motivating the honorary consuls by temporarily including them in the team of the Ministry and the mission, supporting and guiding them throughout the course of an occurrence, and rewarding the consuls.

Honorary consuls should be seen as an investment. A follow-on task for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is to update the instructions for honorary consuls and activate the departments and missions to further intensify their cooperation.

2.6 Nordic and EU cooperation

Public servants from all Nordic countries engage in active administrative cooperation, especially as regards joint office projects and related practical questions such as information and security management and topics associated with the status of locally employed staff. Discussions on a joint Nordic representation ‘toolbox’ are ongoing. For instance, the question of whether there should be a framework agreement for cooperation which would cover more ambitious joint projects than the present Nordic-Baltic (NB8) regional co-operation format has been raised. The same applies to templates for joint office premises. Talks about more systematic report promulgation among the Nordic countries have also been ongoing.

Finland actively seeks solutions to intensify diplomatic mission cooperation with the other Nordic countries, the Baltic States and other EU countries, and with the European External Action Service. The advantages of joint Nordic real estate solutions are often interlinked with raising a country’s profile and image; the joint Nordic office premises in Berlin serve as a good example of this. Cooperation with regard to representations also provides opportunities to intensify action, react to changes in the operating environment and to provide services and a political presence in places where otherwise they would not be available. In contrast, none of the Nordic countries sees any significant prospects for savings through joint Nordic

office solutions, at least not in countries where they already have missions. In most of the premises considered, this would entail sizeable investments from Finland and added costs in information networks and security structures, among other things. The challenges of cooperation, for their part, appear when a partner country decides to close its representation in a country where it shares office premises.



The Berlin Pan Nordic Embassy Building

Placing a single ‘laptop’ diplomat in the premises of another Nordic country, Baltic State or EU delegation has proven to be a viable solution when the arguments for a presence exist but the resources do not make it possible to establish a new, full-size mission. Finland opened a laptop Liaison Office in Minsk in 2010 in the premises of the Swedish Embassy, and in the beginning of 2014 a diplomatic mission in Yangon in the premises of the ‘Nordic house’, which hosts the Norwegian and Danish Embassies and the Swedish Liaison Office. In 2014 Finland opened a Liaison Office in Bogota in the EU delegation’s premises. Lithuania, in turn, placed its laptop diplomat at Finland’s Embassy in Zagreb. In certain places (Manila) it has also been possible to mitigate the detrimental effects of closing an embassy by placing an official in the premises of another Nordic embassy (Norway).

At the end of September 2015 Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark moved into new joint offices in Yangon, Myanmar. Norway acts as the employer of all locally hired staff and takes care of all administrative tasks. Nordic cooperation has progressed the farthest in Yangon. After a year's pilot phase the lessons learned from Yangon will be reported. The most recent example of cooperation with the Baltic States is the fact that the Estonian Embassy is co-located in the premises of the Embassy of Finland in Canberra.

The following table lists the locations where Finland engages in cooperation with the NB8 countries or the European External Action Service.

Astana	Finland, Norway and Sweden share embassy premises. Norway is about to leave Astana.
Baghdad	Finland has an office in the premises of the Swedish Embassy.
Berlin	In addition to the Pan Nordic Embassy campus each of the five Nordic states operates its own embassy building. The shared premises, open to the public, house the embassies' reception areas, consular services, exhibition rooms and the staff cafeteria.
Canberra	The Estonian Embassy is co-located in the premises of the Embassy of Finland.
Dar es Salaam	Finland and Sweden share an office building, completed in 1997. Both missions share the entrance hall as well as the conference room and cafeteria.
Jakarta	The Embassies of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are located in the same building, but they do not share functions.
Lusaka	The Finnish and Swedish Embassies are co-located in the premises owned by Sweden. Some of the spaces (conference room and kitchen) and support services are shared.
Manila	A Finnish immigration officer works at the Embassy of Norway.
Maputo	The Finnish and Swedish Embassies are co-located in the premises owned by Sweden. While there are no shared spaces, other cooperation does occur.
Minsk	A Finnish diplomat works at the Embassy of Sweden.
Nicosia	The Finnish and Swedish Embassies are co-located on a jointly rented floor of an office building. They share the reception area, conference room, four offices and social facilities.
Pristina	The Finnish and Swedish Embassies are co-located in the same building. They share the switchboard and the conference room.

Riyadh	An Estonian diplomat operated at the premises of the Embassy of Finland from 2014-2015.
Vilnius	In Vilnius Finland and Norway have missions in the same building, constructed on Finnish-owned property.
Yangon	The missions of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are located in the same office spaces. Norway takes care of all administrative tasks and acts as the employer of all locally hired staff.
Zagreb	A Lithuanian diplomat operates in the premises of the Embassy of Finland.

Cooperation with EU delegations

Bangkok	As of December 2015, the Embassy of Finland is co-located in the same building where the EU delegation works.
Bogota	A Finnish diplomat operates in the premises of the EU delegation.
Hanoi	The Embassy of Finland is co-located in the same building where the EU delegation works.

When new office premise are being sought Finland will, on a case-by-case basis, study the possibilities of co-location with the Nordic or other EU countries. The possibilities for cooperating with EU delegations will also be studied.

2.7 The experiences of peer countries

Most of the Member States of the European Union share the same worry as Finland: how to maintain an extensive network of missions in times of diminishing budgets? The working group studied the solutions of Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland while developing the network of the Foreign Service. This question is topical in all European countries.

Denmark has cut the budget of its foreign service and is strongly emphasising export promotion. All missions have dedicated performance goals. This makes it possible to shift operations to locations that have export potential. Key account managers have been assigned to major companies; they have to dedicate two months of work per year to their companies.

The Netherlands has altogether 150 or so missions. The intention is to increasingly use roving ambassadors and side-accreditations. Consular services will focus on assisting those in distress while at the same time other consular services are being streamlined and trimmed. The validity period of passports will be extended to 10 years. The Netherlands has joint premises with other EU countries, especially with Belgium. Consular and administrative processes have been centralised at regional centres. Office spaces and residences are being downsized. The Netherlands has also invested in activity-based workplace environments.

Sweden is centralising certain administrative functions at home. After having compiled experiences from miniature missions (one diplomatic officer and one locally hired staff member), Sweden came to the conclusion that a large portion of such missions' working hours is spent on administration. Miniature missions operate more effectively the closer they are to Stockholm. On the basis of its experiences Sweden recommends that a mission have at least two officers sent from Stockholm and three locally hired staff. Because of synergies this number can be lower at locations where Nordic cooperation is present – provided that the mission's profile is very limited. Sweden considers roving ambassadors a good system especially to replace side-accreditations: they are free from administrative burdens in the field and can wholly focus on the substance.

Ireland's network of missions (73) is smaller than that of Finland. Ireland commissioned a report on its representation in the Member States of the EU. The conclusion was that, in spite of austerity requirements, no mission will be closed. Ireland provides consular services in each of its missions – even at the one-diplomat offices. Even though Ireland has weathered a tough economy, it has decided that nothing replaces having a presence and the opportunity for communicating about its goals.

3.0 PREMISES – FINLAND’S BUSINESS CARDS

- The goal is to achieve sustainable development: energy efficiency, economy and the efficient utilisation of space guide functions and purchases.
- Missions and official residences are a reflection of the modern and progressive Finland.
- Premises support the focus areas of substantive issues, including the efforts of Team Finland.
- Residences and offices will be given profiles which arise from functional focus areas and requirements set by the operating environment.
- Investments in interior design and art echo the goals of Finland’s country profile and the focus areas of TF plans.

Finland’s representation abroad becomes tangible through official residences and office spaces. Hence, one area of development entails better functioning entities which express all things Finnish as well as our values, design and architecture, and which promote Finnish exports and the country brand.

Missions can be divided into different models on the basis of their functions and the goals of representation. When it comes to official residences the following questions were raised: what is the most important function of the residence; would it be possible in the future to more often organise receptions at the office or in restaurants, rather than at the official residence; how does security affect representation; how to draw the line between the private and public areas of the official residence; what kind of message does the residence give of Finland; how does Finland’s image resonate through the residence; and how do Finnish official residences compare with those of other countries’.

Factors affecting office space include shifting to activity-based workplace environments, zoning and security, the possible effect of the missions’ categorisation to the office’s space utilisation, the possibility for placing conference rooms close to the lobby, and the location of Team Finland’s office.

Up until now official residences have been bought and decorated in accordance with equal, uniform regulations. The presence of representatives from other ad-

ministrative branches or close partners has had some impact on the size, utilisation of space and the interior design of office spaces.

The Foreign Service both owns and rents official residences and office space. The decisions on buying or leasing real estate are taken on a case-by-case basis. Real estate is rarely bought, and will only be bought when owning the property in the host country is a sensible alternative for the state.

3.1 Future premises of the Foreign Service

When premises are being planned, renovated or developed, the following factors, in addition to substantive issues, will affect the Foreign Service's real estate decisions in the future:

- **Sustainable development**

Energy efficiency, economy and the efficient utilisation of space guide functions and purchases.

- **Proudly display Finnish architecture and design**

The official residence and the office are Finland's business cards abroad. They express modern Finland through interior design, furniture and art. The spaces should epitomise Finnish openness, transparency, equality and beauty. Technology supports these goals.

- **Team Finland and export promotion**

The premises should support Finland's efforts in the spirit of Team Finland, facilitating multi-level cooperation between actors.

- **Standards**

Four different size categories have been created for official residences and offices, which stem from functional and regional factors.



Official residence in New Delhi

The criteria for official residences

For the first time the Foreign Service is about to employ a standard in which the prominence and size of official residences will be determined through functional focus areas and the profile of representation. Embassy residences will conform to one of the four established categories (A–D; large to small). This ranking also includes the most architecturally important state-owned residences. In addition to political aspects, the following factors and criteria have also played a role in the standards:

1. The impact of substantive issues in the use of the official residence.
2. Local conditions which affect representation.
3. The possibility for using office spaces for hosting events.
4. Security in the area.
5. The functioning of the real estate market.
6. The volume of hosting events.
7. The possibility for utilising the residence when the office needs to be evacuated, for example, during security incidents.



Official residence in Madrid

Category A includes official residences whose operating profile is wide-ranging, the volume of hosting events high and, possibly, the environmental requirements demanding. This category also includes prominent government-owned real estate and architecturally important premises. The operating profile of category B remains wide, albeit somewhat more limited than that of category A. The environmental demands can still be high. When it comes to category C the focus areas and the environmental demands allow for a more modest official residence. For category D the operating profile is relatively narrow and events are hosted, for the most part, outside the residence.

The volume and customs of hosting representation vary country by country. The profile, and categorisation, of the mission is based on the focus areas of foreign and security policy, development cooperation and Team Finland's activity in the host country. The category assigned to any given mission may change along with changing focus areas.

Offices

Office space standards take into account the tasks, volume, conditions and the services of the mission as well as the different focus areas and Team Finland activity. Each mission will have office facilities appropriate to its functions and focus areas. The office shall be functional, healthy and safe, and be an efficient activity-based workspace as regards the utilisation of space within certain boundaries. Location, security, connections and access to the property are considered as factors during the acquisition process.

Whenever new office premises are being sought, possibilities for some level of cooperation/joint offices with the Nordic countries, other EU countries and the EU delegation will be studied. The Foreign Service is also bound by the Government Premises Strategy. Moreover, activity-based workplaces, pursuant to the Strategy, are being considered at locations where permitted by the environment and the requirements for the premises. Cost-effectiveness is a cross-cutting criterion in acquiring office premises.



Embassy of Finland in Berlin

The effects of foreign policy, consular services, Team Finland activities and country branding as well as the focus areas of development cooperation resonate in office spaces when it comes to the requirements for different types of premises and conference rooms. Furthermore, consular services demand that the interview rooms, waiting rooms, security arrangements, the entrance and lobby and the back-office space are appropriately arranged.

3.2 Interior design and art as elements of the total experience



Official residence in Madrid

Interior design and art are extremely important for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' communications and public image, and for supporting the promotion of Finland's country image. More emphasis will be placed on the fact that planning, implementation, materials and the sum total be of Finnish origin. The interior should reflect the modern image of Finland, promote the goals of public diplomacy and present Finnish design and art. Elegance, comfort, ergonomic aspects and coherence between the art and architecture will be emphasised in interior design.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for designing and furnishing the reception areas and office spaces. Completed reception areas are an instrument given to the embassy. This applies to furniture and its placement, and art. The art complements the premises and interior design solutions. The Ministry will continue the good cooperation with the parties that manage the state's art collection.

3.3 The missions' premises in supporting Team Finland and country branding

Whenever possible, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will use Finnish products and innovation in the construction, renovation and interior design projects of missions and office premises. Close cooperation with Team Finland will ensure the best possible utilisation of missions, under the legislation on public contracts, in promoting, for example, Cleantech companies in markets important to them.

Since the goal of Team Finland's activities is for businesses to use the services of missions, offices also need to provide small conference rooms for confidential business negotiations. The facilities of honorary consuls can also be used, especially outside capitals and in countries of side-accreditation. It is also possible for companies to hire mission reception areas for promotional and networking events.

4.0 DEVELOPING THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF FOREIGN REPRESENTATION

- There is considerable potential for developing the administrative functions of missions. It is possible to ease workloads and make the missions more efficient through centralisation, outsourcing and clarifying the division of duties.
- The project analysed the missions' internal administration and services. The conclusions were:
- HR and financial management should be increasingly centralised at the MFA and, to an extent, at the Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR.
- The management and steering of technical support should be centralised and services outsourced as much as possible.
- The missions' web administration should be increasingly centralised at the Ministry.
- The reform will have to be carried out through projects and will take several years. In addition to the practical implementation, a plan for focusing human resources on the functions to be centralised at the Ministry is also needed. The centralisation of the government's financial administration calls for rapid progress in the centralising of financial management.



4.1 Recommendations for reforming the administration of foreign representation

The project analysed and determined the missions' internal administration tasks as well as the role and steering mechanisms of the Ministry. Following this, options for carrying out administrative functions were analysed; is it really necessary to process the matter locally at the mission or could the task be centralised or outsourced?

When it comes to the functions associated with missions' HR and financial management, presently a certain amount of decision-making authority lies at the Ministry while some functions are outsourced or centralised at the Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR. The Ministry can provide expert support. In addition, some regional service clusters have been established for missions.

The operating model for technical support is decentralised. Individual missions have to arrange their services locally. There is much potential for improvement in this sector.

Owing to the centralisation of the Prime Minister's Office's administrative services, the technical support staff of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the most part transferred to the Government Administration Department, and from there onwards to the Government ICT Centre Valtori. Only as an exception do missions have local ICT expertise, and it is challenging for the MFA to support the missions.

Along with digitalisation, document services and archives have, by and large, been centralised in Helsinki. Missions are currently maintaining small local archives, and this state of affairs will continue in the future.

As a result of analysing the administrative functions it can be said that there is much potential for developing the internal administration of missions. It is possible to ease their workload and make them more efficient through centralisation, outsourcing and clarifying the division of duties.

It is necessary to take a step towards a more centralised model. The division of duties between the mission and the Ministry must also be clarified. In conclusion, two reforms are recommended:

- 1) HR and financial management should be increasingly centralised at the MFA.
- 2) Technical support should be centralised and outsourced.

4.2 Human resource management

Employer's support for the missions abroad

The Ministry already provides employer's support for the missions abroad through: general guidance, uniform practices and employment counselling. The Ministry coordinates the resources of the missions in terms of HR and spending allocations during the preparation of the operating and financial plan. It is recommended that the division of duties between the Ministry and the missions be clarified as follows: the Ministry settles on the volume of the staff's person-years, models for contract of employment and wage adjustments. The mission remains the local employer, selecting the personnel and signing the contracts.

Unambiguous and transparent practices and guidelines in matters associated with terms of employment (Finnish citizens and foreign nationals) will be prepared for the employer's representatives at missions. The MFA's online information portal 'Employer's support for the missions abroad' is the key conduit for this effort. Moreover, the employer's role will be made more effective by more widely taking into use the e-databank for terms of employment (handbook) which is maintained at missions. The Ministry will issue instructions for drafting the handbook in the 'Employer's support' intranet domain.

The management of the terms of employment will be more uniform, well-regulated and more supportive to the representative of the employer once the reforms have been completed. The maintenance of the HR system for locally hired staff will be centralised at the Ministry, which improves the usability and consistency of report-



ing. Additionally, it improves the agility of responding to changing HR information requirements.

The missions' employer responsibilities will be lightened by creating standard contract templates in the Kieku information system for often-used types of contract. These include, among other things, visa officers in Russia, short-term (less than a year) employees, academic interns and grant/scholarship trainees (CIMO¹, universities of applied sciences such as Haaga-Helia).

Payroll management

The goal of centralising the payroll management of locally employed staff to Finland is to guarantee consistent and professional payroll services. Centralisation aims at better usability of resources and timeliness as well as efficiency and cost savings. The payroll management duties of locally employed staff at missions abroad who are Finnish citizens, and associated reports required by the state, have already been assigned to the payroll experts at the Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR. When it comes to Finnish citizens, there is only one payroll system and all the work is done in one place – at the Shared Services Centre. Later, possibly, foreign nationals' payroll management duties may be incorporated into the system.

The employer's representatives at missions are encouraged to purchase the kinds of HR services from local service providers that cannot be centralised because of insufficient familiarity at the Ministry regarding local legislation and the authorities' practices, among other reasons. Such functions include payroll (incl. taxes and the employer's social security contributions, sick leave pay), administration of absence (annual leaves, sick leaves, leaves of absence, etc.), overtime pay, overtime monitoring, pay sheets and labour legislation services.

Foreign service allowances

Decision-making on foreign service allowances will be centralised at the Ministry as far as possible. For the most part the allowances will be disbursed from Finland during the next pay cycle. Managing the allowances is achieved by means of using a convenient e-form in the Kieku system.

The centralisation aims at reducing the administrative workload of missions and improving the equal treatment of public servants as well as the protection of privacy. The possibility for also centralising the management of applications handled by the M2 system will be studied.

¹ Centre for International Mobility

4.3 Financial management

While financial management is nowadays centralised, many financial processes (e.g. budgeting, invoicing and posting) are quite fragmented at the different departments of the Ministry, missions and regional clusters. The Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR is used, particularly, for domestic functions (payment intermediation in toto), but it is also used for functions abroad.

In the desired end state the entire Foreign Service's financial management will be centralised at a single organisational unit in Finland. This will also include the annual budgeting process for, at the very least, small missions.

In the SEPA area all foreign and domestic functions will be implemented in the same fashion (taking into account different languages). In the USA and Russia, however, regional practices will also be retained because, although their country-specific volumes are great, it is challenging to make payments from abroad to these countries. Elsewhere abroad the aim is to strive towards processes that are similar to those used at home. Local payment transactions will be the biggest difference. The Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR will be responsible for nearly all accounting and other processes in a wider sense, pursuant to the Government Programme.

The reform will be implemented by creating a central facility and an arrangement which integrates the financial administration functions of regional clusters (Europe, especially) and those of the Ministry's departments. The Shared Services Centre will participate in the subsequent planning and implementation phases of the 'Means and Models' project. In the future the Shared Services Centre, as per the Government Programme, will bear the main responsibility for accounting, some process expertise and the key responsibility for IT systems. The reform facilitates the centralisation of duties, improves the utilisation of resources, promotes uniform practices and reduces the risk for error. Most accounting tasks and some purchase-to-pay (P2P) duties are to be transferred to the Shared Services Centre. Furthermore, investments in, and the centralisation of, procurement services will also streamline the P2P cycle.

Owing to the overall transformations in the central government, and centralising tasks at the Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR, the reforms must be completed expeditiously. Centralisation must commence from functions which immediately yield resources to substantive issues. This means that the functions

of existing clusters must be moved to Finland, into an even larger cluster. For the most part the centralisation in Europe will be carried out from 2016–2017, which includes shifting the present clusters in Europe to Finland. The final centralisation in Europe will be implemented in 2018, followed by the functions at other missions. The MFA, like other government agencies, is required to hand over tasks and resources to the Shared Services Centre in 2017. Preparations will be made to shift the labour input of approximately 3–5 person-years from the missions' accounting and other financial management functions to the Centre, pending the details of the new operating model.

4.4 Centralising and outsourcing technical support

At present, each mission arranges its own technical support locally and individually. The number of personnel sent from Finland for these duties has been reduced due to the high costs.

An entirely new kind of comprehensive approach is recommended for technical support. Overall functions as well as guidance and responsibility will be centralised at the Ministry while local functions will be outsourced through global competitive bidding. The following includes the salient points of the recommended reform.

The Ministry would be responsible for the management of purchased services, monitoring and developing the sector as well as for contractual cooperation with selected vendors. Certain missions would have service managers responsible for cooperation at the operational level with the service providers – both for their own mission and for missions in nearby countries. The organisation would resemble a cluster of satellites: there would be close cooperation among the partners and with the top level management at the Ministry.

The shift, for the most part, would entail a move from doing things oneself to outsourcing and managing. According to this model the services would be managed and organised as an entirety. The structure would generate information for indicators, along which the productivity and efficiency of services and cost-savings could be monitored. This would make it possible to further improve the system.

For the purposes of this reform, technical support could incorporate the following functions:

- Property management, facility services, gardening and landscaping, annual renovation planning.
- Office services, reception services, cleaning services, switchboard.
- Transports, logistics.
- Security and guarding, local security services.
- Catering services.
- Other support?

There are already global actors in this field (e.g. ISS is in 53 countries). Large Finnish companies have signed these kinds of contracts.

The Ministry would carry out the competitive bidding. Regional service managers would be responsible for carrying out quality control over the service provider and for operational level management (regional service managers or those stationed at the Ministry). This would eliminate the problem associated with substitutes and ease the requirement for additional workforce. Missions would use the services and the Ministry would control the purse strings. As the external service shoulders the required investments, this solution would not necessitate any investments from the Ministry. Companies in this field also possess sound expertise on different countries' labour laws.

This model does not envision any major changes in the number of personnel sent from Finland. The administrative burden will lighten and the freed resources can be focused on the substance.

It is realistic to assume that global outsourcing will not apply to all missions. It will most likely take place in high-cost countries as there will be many users for the services and the total benefits are the highest.

4.5 Web page management at missions

Web page management reform was included as a topic in the administrative segment of the 'Means and Models' project. Presently, missions mostly construct their own web pages in a dispersed manner. The challenges include overlapping efforts and a burdensome task for smaller missions as it requires a good deal of training.

Web page construction could be done in a more coordinated fashion. The goal is to increasingly centralise functions at the Ministry.

Centralisation would especially benefit small missions for whom web page construction is quite arduous. Large missions, whose resources are abundant, could continue producing their own web content.

4.6 Implementing the administrative reforms

The implementation of the abovementioned reforms has to be carried out through projects that will take many years and will require sufficient resources. Since some of the needed reforms are urgent, the implementation must already begin in 2016. It is paramount to conduct proper HR policy in the reforms, which also underscores the need to launch pragmatic projects in a realistic schedule.

When it comes to centralisation at the Ministry the implementation of the reforms demands sufficient human resources at the implementing sector. The end result must be efficient and productive and achieve cost-savings in human resources. This being the case, in addition to the practical execution, the completion of all of the reforms will require a more detailed HR reallocation plan for these functions.

An essential feature in the HR reform schedule is the introduction of the HR part of the Kieku information system on 1 October, 2016. The centralisation of administrative services also necessitates adequate resources for technical support.

Although global IT infrastructure is constantly improving, network bandwidth capacity may impose limitations on the development of functions. This is especially the case in using centralised services which are not optimised for low bandwidths.

5.0 THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR CONSULAR SERVICES

- The revised Consular Services Act and the Decree facilitate an increasingly efficient division of duties between foreign missions. The missions can be divided between those that only provide the necessary consular assistance to citizens in distress, those that provide focused services and those which offer the whole spectrum of services. The goal is to provide sufficient services everywhere and to improve practices by utilising digitalisation and regional teamwork.
- The Ministry's 24/7 service and the Web consul, available on Facebook, are now open. They make it possible to provide the maximum amount of consular services from the Ministry.
- Migration to the Schengen area, including the future family reunification procedures and an increasing workload on consular services, will become a rapidly growing challenge for consular services in the coming years.

The operating environment of consular services has been in a strong state of flux throughout the 2000s. The demand for consular services by Finns traveling and living abroad has significantly increased. During the past ten years the number of Finns traveling abroad has nearly doubled. The rise in the number of travellers directly reflects on the demand for consular services and the workload. In addition to the overall demand, the relative share of challenging consular cases is also growing.

Finland's missions will retain their significance as providers of consular services during the 2016–2020 planning period. It is unlikely that the EU will significantly increase its joint consular services in the coming years. The dramatic increase in the demand for consular services necessitates continual improvements in communications. The void created by the growth in demand and diminishing resources must be filled by means of social media, ICT technology and media cooperation.

At the national level the Security Strategy for Society highlights major accidents abroad, such as natural disasters and terrorist attacks. They are the purview of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Cooperation and joint exercises with other national authorities, and the EU and Nordic countries, will increase.

The huge migration flows, caused by the international situation, impact consular services directly. With regard to consular services, irregular migration particularly impacts the demand for legalisation services and increases the number of cases related to consular assistance and international family law cases.

Applications for family reunification will increase the tasks of immigration authorities and result in a demand for additional resources. The statutory implementation of family reunification requires that the processes be reformed, and smooth cooperation between the authorities will gain increasing stature. The effects of migration will become evident as soon as the first residence permits are being issued; it is estimated that this will already by the end of 2016 translate into increasing family reunifications and, soon after, into consular services.

Reforming the European visa regulations continues. The purpose of the reform is to make it easier for people regularly traveling to the Schengen area to get visas, and to boost the economy of the EU. Yet another goal is to improve security. Security will especially be improved by the EU's Visa Information System (VIS), whose roll-out was completed in the early 2016. During 2015 the system was introduced in Russia, Ukraine, China and India, among others. By the end of 2015 the VIS will have become operational everywhere, excepting some external borders. Because of this reform, however, the visa system will have to be revised, which will incur additional costs.

The right to lodge an appeal to the administrative court against the refusal of visa will enter into force in 2016. This will increase the workload of the Foreign Service and the administrative courts. However, the EU's seasonal workers directive will lighten the Foreign Service's burden on visa services to a degree. In the first phase it will apply to fruit and berry pickers working on farms, for instance. For the moment, however, the status of wild berry pickers arriving from abroad is determined by the Finnish 'everyman's right'.



Visa Service Centre in Kouvola

5.1 The functioning of consular services

The revised Consular Services Act which entered into force in the beginning of 2015 makes it possible that in future some Finnish missions may not offer all consular services themselves. At present, for example, consular services can be concentrated regionally pertaining to their need and demand. The following pilot project on regional concentration was launched on 1 September 2015: the Finnish Embassy in Brussels is responsible for providing consular services in the Benelux countries and the Finnish Embassy in Ankara for the region of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. When the services are being planned the number of Finns in the area and their needs, as well as the regional demand for immigration services, are taken into account.

The amended Consular Services Act facilitates the provision of services, irrespective of location, in situations where the service does not necessarily have to be offered in any given country, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can also offer such consular services in Finland. All of Finland's missions will continue providing services to Finns in distress.

Consular services have already been rationalised in line with the Ministry's consular service strategy. In order to develop its services the Ministry will closely cooperate with different authorities in improving processes and by attempting to influence legislation. Consular services aim at better agility in responding to changes in demand and at reallocating the diminishing resources by reforming practices and utilising new technologies.

Already implemented reforms

The Ministry's 24/7 service was launched in October 2015: the lion's share of missions' consular services entails advice which can be offered from the capital. As of 2016 the advice-providing Web consul service (Nettikonsuli) which is available on social media will operate alongside the 24/7 service.

Other projects which the Unit for Consular Assistance has completed in recent years include the termination of providing assistance to the Finnish social authorities in maintenance issues and outsourcing the logistics of advance voting in foreign countries to the Finnish Post

By the end of 2015 Finland has partially outsourced the visa application process in the countries with the largest visa application counts: Russia, Ukraine, Thailand, China, Turkey and India. Most visa applications are filed in these countries. Partial outsourcing process will continue: in 2016 the goal is to outsource the service at 2–3 missions. This, and digitalisation of the application process, improves customer service at missions and frees up time for making decisions on issuing visas. In 2012 a location-independent visa processing concept was introduced which has made the visa application process more efficient.

The Aliens Act was amended in 2015 regarding residence permits. Pursuant to this, the reception of residence permit applications is now permitted by representation agreement or outsourcing.

Pending and planned reforms

The greatly increased migration flow will result in more and more applications for family reunification; this will particularly impact missions in the migrants' home countries. In order to be able to take care of family reunification tasks it will be necessary to develop new practices and arrangements.

According to the amended Aliens Act, which entered into force in April 2016, it is now possible to appeal to the administrative court against visa decisions of the Finnish missions. Also regarding to this, a project has been launched under which the quality of visa decisions and the competency of staff will be improved. The aim of the project is to reduce the number of complaints.

5.2 Improving consular services

It was recommended by the consular services that missions be considered in three categories in accordance with the range of their future consular services. The categorisation takes into account the scope, volume and/or complexity of the given mission's in the present situation and in the foreseeable future.

From the perspective of consular services the missions can be divided into three categories:

1) The mission provides the urgent consular assistance to those in distress

- The mission provides the urgent consular assistance to Finns in distress, such as handwritten emergency passports.
- The mission will assist the citizen to necessary hospital treatment.
- The mission will represent individual citizens' vital interests when they are not in a position to do so themselves.
- The mission will not independently monitor non-urgent consular cases.
- The mission will not receive residence permit applications.

2) The mission provides focused consular services

- In addition to the urgent consular assistance the mission will, in a focused manner, also provide other consular services defined in the Consular Services Act, such as notarial services (the mission may focus on providing immigration or consular assistance, or the services may be seasonally limited, for example, the complete range of consular services may only be available during the tourist season, etc.).

- The services provided by each individual mission (rather than at another nearby mission or in Helsinki) depend on the mission, the connections or the demand for services, etc.
- The mission may also pursue non-urgent consular cases, supported by the MFA.
- The mission will receive entry permit applications.

3) The mission provides all consular services

- The mission will provide all statutory consular services (except the advisory functions centralised at the Ministry's 24/7 service in Helsinki)
- The mission will provide all passport services.
- The mission will handle all entry permit matters.
- The mission will support other nearby missions, when necessary.

The goal is to centralise the consular services of all the three abovementioned categories at home when feasible, and to support the missions from the Ministry.

Customer service in consular issues will be provided by the Ministry. The Ministry's 24/7 service, which was launched last October, will offer non-urgent advice (loss of passport, petty theft, etc.). The 24/7 service is also responsible for recognising urgent emergencies and alerting the Ministry and the appropriate mission when needed. As of 2016, the Web consul service (Nettikonsuli) available on social media will also offer advice.

The Unit for Passports and Visas advises missions in complex entry permit and travel document related questions during office hours.

The Ministry may send additional personnel to mission, when needed; for example in crisis situations. The Ministry may also offer seasonal assistance for missions, for example for processing entry permit applications.

Ideas for improving consular services:

Influencing the practices and legislation associated with entry into Finland:

- Study whether it is possible to partially outsource the reception of residence permits and/or whether it is possible to establish residence permit processing centres at the busiest locations; it is possible to remotely interview people by video, how would it be possible to expedite the interviews, etc. This is important in view of increasing family-unification interviews, but also from the perspective of other migrant groups. Any changes have to be coordinated with the Finnish Immigration Service.
- By means of intersectoral cooperation also try to make electronic identity verification possible for those residing abroad, and in association with this:

Study the possibility for issuing identification cards at missions that issue passports. Present legislation already allows this, and the reform would be beneficial, should the remote services permit identification by means of ID cards.

Study the possibility for ceasing the reception of notifications from the Finnish Population Information System. It is already possible to make the notifications on the Internet. However, e-notifications require identity verification. Electronic identity verification would solve this problem as well as the reception of nationality notifications.

Reforming practices and procedures:

- Study the possibility for increasing the mobility of consular services provided by the missions.
- Make work more effective through 'lead state' thinking. Each mission in a given region will take its turn in leading the cooperation on producing shared material, disseminating best practices, exchanging information, organising training, etc.
- Study the possibility for initiating the processing of the residence permit applications outside the missions where they are lodged, and whether this would bring added value to the whole process.

Utilising new technologies:

- The cost-efficiency of location-independent visa processing will be improved by digitalising and further streamlining the processes.

Other means:

- a. Study the possibilities for organising consular services in other ways including outsourcing. Re-evaluate the need for charging fees for the services. Evaluate the possibility for honorary consuls providing a wider range of services.
- b. Study the possibility for broadening the mobile passport services. Honorary consulates with Finnish staff have good potential for this.
- c. Study the possibilities for the missions to cease providing some services such as acting as public purchase-witnesses or searching for a document concerning a person or for an address abroad. However these revisions would require amendments to the national law.
- d. Study the possibilities for requiring authentication of the content of the foreign documents before legalisation.

6.0 TEAM FINLAND AND COUNTRY BRANDING AT MISSIONS

- Develop foreign networking services for companies in close cooperation with TF actors.
- Productise the MFA's Team Finland services.
- Focus the communications and country branding to support the goals of the mission and the implementation of the Team Finland plan.
- Define the most important target countries for country branding.
- Focus the honorary consuls' profiles in such a manner that they better serve TF and country branding.

6.1 Taking the economic and financial potential into account in the models of representation

In its analysis of the missions' Team Finland and country-branding communications the subgroup used the Government's Team Finland guidelines (TF Strategy Update 2015) as a point of departure. According to these, government-funded internationalisation services will henceforth be grouped into a coherent, cross-organisational service structure.

The TF subgroup of the 'Means and Models' project analysed the economic and financial significance of the target countries on the following criteria: 1) the size of the target country's economy; 2) its trade relations with Finland; and 3) the growth potential of the target country's economy.

In addition, working together with regional departments and missions, the subgroup charted the public sector's Team Finland resources in the target country (Tekes, Finpro, honorary consuls, cultural institutes), and the countries of side-accreditation for which the given mission is responsible. As a result, the group formulated four different models for representation.

The operating profiles illustrate the extent to which missions, within their resources and their environment, can offer Team Finland services. Some of the missions' deliverables are government services that all missions must provide. Other services are

limited by the mission's resources and the special features of its operating environment. Companies' interest also varies, which resonates in the demand of services.

The profiles of missions range from large, multi-actor centres offering lots of TF activities, such as the Embassies at Beijing, Shanghai, Moscow and Washington, D.C., to very small missions where the demand, and the prospects, for Team Finland action is limited.

A	All TF services offered and great demand for services; Finpro, Tekes and other actors present	Prioritised target country for country branding; the mission has a Finnish press / cultural secretary	Many Finnish companies present; considerable trade; large economy; significant trade potential; important target country politically, economically and for country branding; great power
B	All TF services offered and much demand; Finpro has a large office	Prioritised target country for country branding; the mission has a press /cultural secretary/ locally hired resource	Important target country for political, economic and country branding (language group or geographical position) reasons; sizeable trade; quite large economy; many Finnish companies present
C	All TF services offered proactively; Finpro has a small office	No press /cultural secretary/possibly a locally hired resource	Considerable economic potential; politically important / growing regional importance
D	TF services offered reactively; Finpro may have a local representative	Country branding as needed (limited resources)	Trade relations not so significant, potential for growth exists; economic prospects for individual companies/ sectors; politically relevant

6.2 Team Finland services offered at missions

The MFA's Team Finland activities centre on all actions that promote trade and investments. These are traditionally part of everyday work at all missions. Finland's country-branding communications constitute a support and backdrop – a fresco of a kind – for the aforementioned activities.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has 85 missions abroad which have diplomatic staff. Finpro operates at more than 40 locations, and Tekes at seven. Finpro's services include assistance and advice to companies and business sparring, marketing support (for 0–2 years), networking and sales consultation in the promotion of investments as well as acquiring 'customer leads'. Tekes, in turn, is responsible for providing medium-term market analyses on business opportunities and trends (Future Watch 3–5 years), and innovation cooperation.

In accordance with the division of duties agreed within the Team Finland network, the missions will offer the following services to businesses:

1. Market opportunities

1.1 Identifying business opportunities: Through its contacts with the authorities and the business community the mission will seek, identify and analyse new business opportunities for Finnish companies, and relay them onwards for verification.

1.2 Country information: The mission will provide updated social and economic information on the host country for the use of businesses and partners. Furthermore, the country information will include open economic and commercial as well as political reports generated by the mission in question.

2. Financing

2.1 Development policy financing instruments (TF service category: Financing): Finnfund offers long-term investments and financing. The Public Sector Investment Support Facility, to be completed in 2016, will support such public sector investments in developing countries which tap into Finnish technology and expertise. Finnpartnership supports economically viable and sustainable projects in which Finnish and the target country's businesses participate. An altogether new instrument is the joint development innovation programme BEAM of Tekes and the MFA, which emphasises the role of the private sector in supporting development.

3. Social connections

3.1 Contacts with the authorities: The mission identifies the appropriate authorities as regards Team Finland services and advises businesses in making contacts with the correct parties in the local market. The goal is to expedite and improve the company's access to local markets, and to diminish missteps and risks.

3.2 Prestige services: The mission will open doors and, together with the company, define the required level of instruments and prestige. This, among other things, means that the head of the mission or some other public servant (or a senior official at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) is present at the company's event (bringing prestige by opening the event or by making a speech), or participates in the company's meetings with local high officials.

3.3 Access to markets and proactive influencing: The MFA's or the missions' actions bilaterally, in the European Single Market, or in different international organisations either bilaterally or through the EU. The goal is to improve the companies' entry into the market or to enhance their business and trade opportunities. The mission will identify the proper channels of influence and actively promote the companies' goals as regards entry into the market.

3.4 Problem-solving: The mission/Ministry will identify the authorities that are crucial to solving a problem; contact said authorities and, if needed, visit them together with, or on behalf of, the company to resolve the issue. The mission/Ministry will also provide assistance through all available means and contacts in solving the problem.

4. Visibility

4.1 Making the mission's premises available for promotion and networking events: The mission makes its premises available for companies to hire for promotional and networking events.

4.2 Media contacts and communications support: The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and missions relay media contacts to companies, cooperate in communications and offer electronic country-branding tools. However, the primary responsibility for making contact with the media remains with the company. By means of the mission's contacts companies gain media visibility, the communications support complements the companies' own public information. Companies will get the opportunity to tap into Finland's country branding through e-services.

Immigration and notarial services: Missions issue visas and entry permits to the customers of companies and their foreign workforce. They also provide the official documents needed by companies.

Country branding at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and missions is all about influencing and communicating which helps relay information to focus groups, opinion-makers and people in positions of authority. The range of actions and instruments is quite broad and the work is often a cross-cutting activity at missions.

The goal of further development in the spring of 2016 is to more patently productise the services offered at missions. This means that, for example, different models of prestige services will be defined so that the customer company will know in more detail what the prestige service offered by the mission entails. While the models will have sufficient latitude, productisation will not fit all services. One must also evaluate the means through which the missions can do their best in obtaining investments in Finland.

The basic principles for the division of responsibilities in services between government-funded organisations will be agreed under the auspices of Team Finland cooperation. The division of duties between Finpro and Tekes is relatively straightforward in countries where Finpro and/or Tekes have their own offices. The situation is challenging for missions in countries where Finpro is not present or where it only has a country representative. The role of Finpro's country representatives is presently being modernised; they will have fewer resources available for advising companies than previously. This begs the question of how the missions can fill the service gap caused by the absence of a Finpro office.

Missions can provide general advice on a host country's business climate, its key business sectors and on the country itself and its markets as well as its political and business culture, and basic information on local consumer behaviour. When needed, missions can redirect the companies' questions to the centralised TF service in Finland, directly to local experts and consultants or to the authorities. Moreover, missions can create or relay business opportunities and network with companies or the value chain, albeit in a more limited scope than Finpro. Missions are not able to provide any in-depth advice on actual business activity.

Under the Government's key project the Foreign Service will recruit business experts for a period of three years in Singapore, Teheran, Ottawa, Los Angeles/Palo Alto, New York and Istanbul. Their responsibility is to develop Team Finland services,

support the export-promoting efforts of Finnish companies and, together with other Team Finland actors, assist them in the local markets. The experts are also tasked to obtain investments in Finland and engage in innovation cooperation.

6.3 Cooperation and division of duties between the other public Team Finland actors

The work of the subgroup for Team Finland and country-branding in the 'Means and Models' project focused on profiling the missions. Simultaneously, service processes and associated instruments have been developed together with the closest Team Finland partners:

- In June 2014 Finpro and the consulting agency Digia clarified the division of duties between the MFA's missions and Finpro, and Team Finland published its new shared service package in September 2014.
- A domestic service model, i.e. a 'one stop shop' was developed together with Tekes, Finpro, ELY-centres², Finnvera and the MFA in the autumn of 2015. As promised by the Government, companies were given a single service number through which they could obtain all of the needed internationalisation services.
- The new Customer Relations Management (CRM) system is a key instrument in TF cooperation. It is expected to be completed during 2016. Through this system missions obtain companies' basic information and find out about the actions and services the companies have received from other TF actors.
- A shared electronic platform for the TF network was designed under the leadership of Tekes. Any identified medium-term business opportunities and marketing opportunities, Future Watch data and the MFA's public country reports can be recorded on the platform.

It is possible to improve the honorary consuls' Team Finland efforts by profiling the honorary consulates in more detail. This being the case, the honorary consuls could,

² Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

when possible, participate in Team Finland activities in their host countries, and in other promotional and country-branding events. At best, the honorary consuls can be included in the range of services that the MFA offers to companies. Missions and other TF actors are committed to providing honorary consuls with up-to-date information and background data required by the aforementioned activity.

6.4 The goals, contents and means of country branding at missions

Country branding at missions focuses on communicating about Finland's fortes. The long-term objective is to influence such decisions at the individual, company and state level where impressions matter (places to study, tourism, investments, procuring products or service, partnerships, etc.). The significance and content of country branding varies country by country. In some cases it translates into small-scale, albeit goal-oriented, events. For some it involves constant efforts against the marginalisation of Finland's international position and Nordic solidarity.

At home the organisation of country branding has been revised to also meet the goals of the 'Means and Models' project. The Finland Promotion Board (FPB), consisting of representatives from different organisations and outside experts, is responsible for country-branding coordination at the national level. The task of the Board is to provide guidelines, express opinions, obtain information and coordinate country branding, and to define the spearhead themes for country branding. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs acts as the FPB's secretariat, taking care of the fact that the information on the needs of country branding flows both ways between domestic actors and foreign missions.

Reforms at the Department for Communications aim at reducing the workload of country branding, especially at smaller missions. These reforms include the 'one stop shop' principle according to which each mission has a Reference Unit and a desk officer at the Department for Communications, supporting the mission's communications and country branding. The missions' web page reform and the 'Finland's position' project aim at guaranteeing that everyone has access to up-to-date information on fundamental foreign policy questions. Other instruments include the Country Branding Manual, the 'ThisisFinland' web page and channels on social media as well as the Finland Toolbox and the theme calendar for country branding.

To coincide with the 'Means and Models' project, and to complement its spirit, the following were selected as target countries for country branding for the three-year period 2016–2018: Russia, China, Germany, the United States, Britain (new), France, Japan (new), India, Turkey, Mexico (new), Egypt, Poland and South Korea (new). The lion's share of 'country-branding project funding' is earmarked for the target countries; it is annually applied during the operating and financial plan process. A smaller sum is reserved for the other missions' country-branding projects which must support the achievement of the goals of the mission's operating and financial plan and/or the country's Team Finland plan.

From the country-branding perspective Finland's honorary consuls are a useful vehicle for promoting Finland's image abroad. While many honorary consuls regard country branding as one of their main duties, it cannot, however, be required of them. Hence, Finland must provide tools, information and education to the honorary consuls which they can tap into should they so desire. The aforementioned country-branding toolbox and the newsletter are also available to the honorary consuls.



6.5 The mission's operating profiles in communications and country branding

Missions can roughly be divided into four profile categories, depending on their operating environment, available resources and the focus areas of the mission.

A Target country. The mission has a Finnish press/cultural secretary who is a professional in country branding and/or communications. The mission is highly autonomous and capable of strategic planning and implementation. There are many TF actors in country, which facilitates versatile opportunities for cooperation. Many Finnish companies are established in the country. They relay the country image and lay the foundation for cooperation and sponsorship. The country is politically and economically important; therefore, political country branding is particularly important. There is less demand for support to communications and country-branding, and it is for the most part strategic, produced along with country-branding content. Web communications are autonomous. Project funding for country branding belongs to the standard range of instruments and the target-country status facilitates more extensive projects and long-term planning together with local partners. Media opportunities and opinion-maker visits are tailored.

B Target country or a prospect target country. The mission has a Finnish press/cultural secretary or a locally hired professional resource who concentrates on communications and country branding. While the mission is highly autonomous, from time to time it may need support in strategic planning or in the implementation of communications. There are at least some other TF actors in country and opportunities for cooperation. Major Finnish companies are either established locally or they keep an eye on the market area from Finland. Cooperation and sponsorship with companies is possible. The country/region is politically and economically important – possibly a regional great power where political country branding is also justifiable. The need for support in communications and country branding is sporadic, yet great at times. The mission's web presence is professional and visible. Project funding for country-branding is important, and it facilitates larger projects as well as long-term planning (if the country is a target country) together with local partners. Media opportunities and opinion-maker visits are tailored.

C Communications and country branding is the part-time duty of a staff member or a locally hired resource. The mission needs support from the Department of Communications both in planning and implementation. The country, first and foremost, offers great economic potential. There are only few other TF actors in

country and the mission also needs support for TF efforts from home. Few Finnish companies are locally established but there is clearly growing interest in the business community. The country may be a current or a past partner in development cooperation, and development policy financing instruments aimed at companies are important. When it comes to project funding for country branding the mission has been instructed to apply for discretionary appropriations for particularly beneficial or sizeable projects. Media opportunities and opinion-maker visits are focused. The mission's web communications occur at a reduced intensity.

D Other than the head of the mission nobody else has earmarked resources or working hours for communications or country branding. Separate country-branding projects are only implemented when necessary, at which time support to communications and country-branding from the Department of Communications is vital. Apart from the embassy there are no other TF actors in country. Only a very few Finnish companies, or none whatsoever, are established locally. The mission clearly needs TF support from home. The country may possess periodic economic potential. Since some of the poorest development cooperation partners belong to this group, normally the country brand is already good and the existing cooperative structures and development policy funding instruments are important and available. When it comes to project funding for country branding the mission has been instructed to apply for 'discretionary appropriations' for particularly beneficial or sizeable projects. Media opportunities and opinion-maker visits are focused. The mission does not communicate much on the Internet, rather, it concentrates its efforts on social media.

**SUOMI
FINLAND**

SUMMARY

The Ministry's leadership approve the recommendations, guidelines and profiles included in the report. Following this, the projects required by the practical implementation phase will be launched. They will be implemented over the course of several years because the goal is to develop functions gradually. A couple of projects were already approved and launched before this report was published. One of them is the VIISKE project on developing electronic visa service processes, which will rapidly create synergies. Another project involves the centralisation of financial administration. Judging from prior development projects the latter is ready to proceed rapidly and, pursuant to the Government Programme, is a part of the urgently needed change in central government that is to be implemented as early as 2016–2017. The profiling models presented in the report will be evaluated and, if necessary, revised on the basis of focus areas during the Foreign Ministry's annual planning process.

During the ongoing government term the administrative branches have been urged to digitalise, try something new and eradicate norms. The projects which are about to be launched also conform to this Government policy. The responsible parties and steering groups will be designated later. Cooperation between the Ministry and the network of missions is at the core of development. The grass roots will be continually consulted during the course of the reform.

The comments on the Draft Report provided by the network of missions also confirmed the fact that the Foreign Service's structures and processes surveyed by this report are but a part of the elements that merit developing. Good targets for further fine-tuning include the management system as well as the reporting and influencing processes. The question related to the division of responsibilities between the Ministry and the mission as regards policy sectors is also worthy of study.

How to best strengthen Finland's international position and clout? How to optimise the future HR tasks through increasing cooperation and by improving the division of duties? How should reporting be improved? These questions remain for the next project to answer.



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