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# International Comparison of Passport- Issuing Authorities

COMPANION PIECE TO PASSPORT CANADA'S FEE-FOR-SERVICE PROPOSAL

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Canada 

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## Executive summary

Passport Canada is currently undergoing the process prescribed by the *User Fees Act*, as part of its review of fees related to the introduction of a 10-year validity electronic passport. This process is mandatory for all Canadian federal government organizations that wish to modify user fees or the services for which user fees are charged. Among other requirements, the *User Fees Act* states that standards must be established that are comparable to relevant standards in other countries. This provides a means to measure the performance and fees of the Canadian organization against what is done elsewhere in the world.

Passport Canada is therefore pleased to offer this international comparison to provide a clearer picture of current practices in passport services and related fees in relevant countries. It is a companion piece to Passport Canada's fee-for-service proposal.

Overall, Passport Canada's fee-for-service proposal compares favourably with other countries in terms of both fees and service delivery. The organization's extensive network of offices and partner receiving agents ensures that 95% of Canadians live within 100 kilometres of passport services. In addition, when the Canadian ePassport is fully adopted, Passport Canada will start offering adult passport applicants a choice of 5- or 10-year validity. Offering Canadians a choice of validity periods is an additional service that few other countries provide.

Since passport issuance processes, geography and governance systems vary among countries, it is difficult to make direct comparisons. These varying elements all have a major influence on the service channels, processing times, business model and fee structure adopted by each country's passport-issuing authority (PIA). For instance, Passport Canada is one of the only PIAs in the world to operate on a full [cost-recovery](#) basis, which makes direct comparisons challenging. However, there are enough similarities among the countries reviewed to provide a meaningful comparative analysis with Canada's system.

Passport Canada's cost-recovery model is not the only aspect that makes it fairly unique on the international stage. Canada is also the last country among those reviewed here to adopt the electronic passport, or ePassport. The *User Fees Act* process will enable Passport Canada to secure the funds it needs to begin to transition to this higher-security passport before the end of 2012.

This document focuses primarily on the four countries that are the most comparable to Canada in terms of passport issuance. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States make up the Five Nations Passport Group, which is an international forum for cooperation among the PIAs in these five countries. The members of this group share many similarities and therefore provide relevant examples.

In addition, to give a more global perspective, an overview is provided of five other countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and

that share some similarities with Passport Canada, but have different issuance processes. These countries are France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland.

By shedding some light on the international context in which Passport Canada operates, and by exploring the similarities and differences between Passport Canada and PIAs in nine other countries, this document provides a richer background against which Passport Canada's fee-for-service proposal should be viewed.

## Introduction

Passport Canada is preparing to implement the new, more secure electronic passport, also known as the ePassport. When the ePassport is implemented, Passport Canada will begin offering adult Canadians the choice of a passport with 5- or 10-year validity.

Unlike most Government of Canada departments and agencies, Passport Canada does not receive appropriations from Parliament. Instead, it operates on a [cost-recovery](#) basis, which means that it funds its daily operations using the fees paid by passport applicants. In light of the introduction of the new 10-year ePassport, as well as the need to keep pace with technology and international standards and recommended practices, Passport Canada must update its fee structure. To do this, the organization must follow the requirements of the *User Fees Act*.

One of the requirements of the *User Fees Act* is setting standards that are comparable to those established by other countries with which a comparison is relevant and against which the performance and fees can be measured. Passport Canada has therefore prepared this international comparison as a companion piece to the fee-for-service proposal. The goal of this document is to provide a clear picture of services, fees and standards across many passport-issuing authorities (PIAs) around the world, and how they compare to Passport Canada.

Part I of this document presents the international context in which Passport Canada operates. Part II provides a detailed comparison of the PIAs that are most relevant to Canada, namely the other members of the Five Nations Passport Group: Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Part III of the document provides a brief overview of PIAs in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland, which are fundamentally different from Passport Canada.

In the spirit of the *User Fees Act*, this international comparison provides Canadians with detailed information on passport-related systems and practices in other countries. In addition, it demonstrates that Canada is in line with the international community in offering its citizens secure travel documents and excellent service.

Please note that all foreign currency mentioned in this document was converted into Canadian dollars using Bank of Canada average exchange rates for the six-month period beginning in March 2011 and ending in August 2011.

## Methodology

Because of differences in passport issuance systems and governance structures, a direct comparison between passport systems is difficult to achieve. However, Passport Canada has devised an international comparison methodology that provides the basis for a comparison of passport-issuing authorities (PIAs) that is as consistent and objective as possible.

To achieve this, the compared countries must meet the following basic criteria:

- The countries must be members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an international organization that brings together governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy. Membership in this organization provides a clear benchmark and ensures a comparable level of development and democracy with Canada.
- The countries must currently be issuing ePassports that comply with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) specifications for electronic machine-readable travel documents.
- The compared PIA must rely partially on user fees.

The countries that are most similar to Canada in terms of passport issuance are the participants of the Five Nations Passport Group. However, to ensure an adequate and comprehensive overview, the analysis was extended to include PIAs in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland. All these countries meet the basic criteria listed above.

### **The Five Nations Passport Group**

Part II of this document focuses on the Five Nations Passport Group, which is an international forum for cooperation among passport issuers. The participating countries are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Canada is the only participating country that does not yet issue ePassports to all passport applicants.

The PIAs in these countries are comparable to Passport Canada. They receive a significant part of their funding through user fees, thereby ensuring a certain level of cost recovery. Their passport issuance systems are mostly centralized, and their service channels are similar to those of Passport Canada. However, it is important to note that only the New Zealand passport program operates on a nearly [cost-recovery](#) basis, much like Passport Canada.

Like Canada, none of the Five Nation countries have a compulsory identity management system, which means that citizens' personal information is not available in a central citizenship database or registry.

It should be noted that there are also a number of differences among PIAs in the Five Nations countries. Geography and demographics greatly influence service delivery models, as do the processing times adopted by each country, both domestically and abroad. The differences in the machinery of government and funding models also impact the passport fee structure in each country.

Since the *User Fees Act* places emphasis on the services provided in exchange for user fees, this comparison focuses on passport services, processing times and associated fees. The Five Nations comparison is organized as follows:

- **Organizational overview:** This section provides an overview of each country's PIA, their funding mechanisms, when they introduced the ePassport and any fee adjustments that may have occurred following the adoption of the ePassport.
- **ePassports and other travel documents:** This section examines the types of ePassports issued by the Five Nations, including their size and validity period, as well as the various other travel documents that are issued.
- **Services:** This section includes information on the service offerings of the compared states, including processing times and associated fees.

Brought together, these elements provide a thorough comparative analysis, based on the international PIAs that are most comparable to Passport Canada.

### **Other passport-issuing authorities**

There are as many different passport issuance systems as there are countries. To present a clear international picture, Part III of this document provides an overview of PIAs in countries that are politically and economically comparable to Canada, but have fundamental differences in their passport issuance processes. These countries are France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland.

The information on these countries is presented in a concise fashion, focusing on the regular adult passport only, issued domestically. It should be noted that this overview is provided to inform Canadians of the different passport systems that exist. However, because of the fundamental differences in the approach to passport issuance, the PIAs in these countries are not directly comparable to Passport Canada.

## The international context

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, establishes standards, specifications and recommended practices for the issuance of passports and other travel documents. Headquartered in Montreal, ICAO was created in 1947, and now has 190 member countries, including Canada.

ICAO's mandate is to ensure interoperability, promote efficient facilitation, increase confidence in the reliability of travel documents and contribute to national and international security. Annex 9 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) includes standards and recommended practices on travel documents, while Document 9303 on machine-readable travel documents includes more detailed specifications. ICAO members have an obligation to implement the standards included in Annex 9, and are strongly encouraged to implement best practices and specifications.

The work of ICAO since 1998 has led to the development of a new generation of passports: the ePassport. The higher-security ePassport includes an electronic chip that stores information from the passport's data page, as well as a biometric measure of the passport holder. ICAO identified the facial image as the biometric measure of choice, to achieve global interoperability. Some countries also include fingerprints as a secondary biometric measure. However, Canada's ePassport will not include fingerprints; the facial photo will be the only biometric measure used.

At the date of publication of this document, around 95 countries were issuing ePassports. This includes almost all European Union countries and all G8 countries except Canada. However, Canada has been issuing diplomatic and special passports as ePassports since 2009, as a pilot project in preparation for the national implementation of the Canadian ePassport, which will begin before the end of 2012.

Two key drivers of the widespread adoption of the ePassport are the following requirements:

- By August 28, 2006, all European Union member states were required to issue ePassports.
- By October 2006, the ePassport was made mandatory for visa-waiver travel to the United States by citizens of the 35 countries that participate in its Visa Waiver Program. (Canada is in a privileged position, as it is currently exempt from this program. This means that Canadians may visit the United States for tourism without a visa, even without holding an ePassport.)

The number of countries validating the ePassport chip at their borders is growing. Several countries have also begun using Automated Border Crossing (ABC) systems using biometrics. For instance, facial recognition systems can electronically compare the face of the person carrying the ePassport to the facial photo contained on the chip, to ensure it is the same person. Some countries have also adopted trusted traveller programs, which allow pre-

approved, low-risk travellers rapid clearance upon arrival in the country. These secure and time-saving electronic methods of identity management allow border officials to focus resources on cases requiring more scrutiny.

It is critical that Passport Canada keep pace with evolving international standards, norms and recommended practices in the field of passport technology and security, to ensure interoperability and ease of travel for Canadians.

## The Five Nations Passport Group

The passport-issuing authorities (PIAs) of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States make up the Five Nations Passport Group. This is an international forum for cooperation among passport issuers to share best practices and discuss innovations related to the development of passport policies, products and practices.

The PIAs in these countries provide the most relevant comparison to Passport Canada. First, the organizational structure and mandate of each PIA is discussed, including their products, services and fees. The second section compares the travel documents issued by these countries, with an emphasis on the regular adult passport, as well as an overview of the other travel documents they issue. Finally, the third section compares and contrasts the service delivery models of the four countries, both domestically and abroad, as well as their respective processing times.

### Organizational overview

The passport book itself is the tangible result of the passport issuance process for the public. However, the structure, mandate and financing of each PIA impact the activities of the organization. This section provides an overview of the legislative mandate and the mission of the PIAs in the Five Nations, as well as the annual volume of passports issued and the passport possession rate in each country.

#### Canada

As mandated by the *Canadian Passport Order*, Passport Canada is responsible for issuing, refusing to issue, revoking, withholding, recovering and providing instructions on the use of Canadian passports. It provides guidance to Canadian missions issuing passports abroad and supervises all matters relating to Canadian travel documents. Passport Canada's mission is to issue secure Canadian travel documents through authentication of identity and entitlement. In simple terms, Passport Canada ensures that a Canadian passport is issued to the right person. Since passports are used for identity purposes in contexts other than travel, the organization provides travel documents for the benefit of all Canadians, not just travellers.

Since 1990, Passport Canada has been a special operating agency that reports to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Unlike most federal government departments, Passport Canada does not generally receive government appropriations (taxpayers' money) from Parliament. Passport Canada operates on a [cost-recovery](#) basis, which means that it funds its daily operations using the fees paid by passport applicants. In other words, passports are not subsidized by all Canadians; only those who apply for a passport actually pay for this service.

Passport Canada does receive special funding from time to time to help pay for important upgrades above and beyond regular operating costs. In fiscal year 2007-2008, for instance, the federal government provided access to \$55 million in special funding, which Passport Canada

used to buy faster passport printers, implement new security measures, set up a new central processing facility and purchase more reliable and secure information technology.

Passport Canada authenticates the identity of passport applicants, but it does not determine identity. That responsibility lies with other federal departments and provincial and territorial governments, such as vital statistics authorities. Passport Canada does not have access to any centralized national identity database or registry, as no such system exists in Canada. This presents administrative challenges in authenticating a person's identity.

It is important to note that the Canadian passport is made in Canada. This includes the production of the booklet, as well as the personalization of the travel document. Therefore, in a cost-recovery environment, passport fees must reflect the costs of doing business domestically. Factors such as a strong Canadian dollar or fluctuating exchange rates have no influence on Passport Canada costs and fees. Passport Canada's last fee increase was in the fall of 2001.

Canadians can access passport services through a variety of service channels. Completed application forms may be mailed to Passport Canada headquarters, submitted in person at any of Passport Canada's 34 regional offices or 200 receiving agent locations, or, in some cases, sent via the applicant's Member of Parliament. Over 95% of Canadians live within 100 kilometres of a passport point of service. Passport Canada issued 4.8 million passports in 2009-2010. The passport possession rate among Canadians is over 60%.

### **Australia**

The Australian Passport Office is a division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It issues passports to Australian citizens, both in Australia and overseas, and its mandate is set out in the *Australian Passports Act 2005* and related laws. While it does charge user fees, the Australian Passport Office is funded through government allocations, the modalities of which are set in the Passports Funding Agreement.

The Australian government allocated new funding in its 2010-2011 budget for passports. About AUS\$100.8 million (\$102.8 million) will be introduced over six years to deliver a new passport issuance system that will enhance Australia's passport services and security. This investment in a new passport system will result in savings of AUS\$10.2 million (\$10.4 million) by 2015-2016, which makes it an element of their government's National Identity Security Strategy. Australia's last fee increase was in January 2012.

In 2010, the Australian Passport Office issued 1.8 million passports. There are currently about 11 million Australian passports in circulation. With a population of over 21.5 million, the Australian passport possession rate is nearly 50%. Passport demand in Australia is anticipated to exceed 2 million per year by 2015.

## **New Zealand**

In New Zealand, passport services are a component of Identity Services, an organization that is part of the Department of Internal Affairs. The role of Identity Services is to issue New Zealand passports and other travel documents, act as a register of vital statistics and ensure good governance of identity issues for all New Zealanders. The legal framework for the issuance of passports is provided in the *Passport Act 1992*. Although Passport Services are a component of Identity Services, the passport program in New Zealand operates almost completely on a cost-recovery basis. New Zealand's last fee increase was in October 2010.

About 450,000 New Zealand passports were issued in 2008-2009, bringing the New Zealand passport possession rate to about 75% of its population of 4.3 million people.

## **United Kingdom**

Identity and Passport Service, an executive agency of the Home Office, is responsible for passport issuance in the United Kingdom. Its mandate is to provide passport services to citizens of the UK and also includes the General Register's Office, which is responsible for administering vital statistics in England and Wales. The funding for Identity and Passport Service is provided through a combination of user fees and government appropriations. While it introduced a newly designed ePassport during the fall of 2010, the last passport fee increase in the United Kingdom occurred in September 2009.

Identity and Passport Service issued over 5 million passports in the course of 2010. The population of the UK is 61.3 million, and approximately 80% of UK citizens hold a valid passport.

## **United States**

In the United States, passport services are part of the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department of State. The organization's mandate is to issue passports to eligible US citizens and nationals. Funding for passport services in the US comes from a combination of user fees, legislative appropriations and visa fees. The Department of State introduced a new fee scale in July 2010 that created a rise in passport fees.

In 2010, the US passport-issuing authority issued nearly 14 million travel documents, making it the largest issuer in the Five Nations. This is not surprising, as the US population is over 310 million. The passport possession rate in the United States remains lower than in other Five Nations countries, with a third of the population holding a valid passport.

## **Organizational overview: Conclusion**

In both New Zealand and the United Kingdom, passport services are a component of a larger organization responsible for broader identity services. In both of these countries, identity and passport services include aspects of identity management in their daily operations. In New

Zealand, Identity Services are responsible for maintaining vital statistics. The UK's Identity and Passport Service administers vital statistics for England and Wales.

In Canada, Australia and the United States, passport services are restricted to issuing passports and other travel documents and do not include a national identity management component. This key difference can be explained in part by the fact that, like Canada, Australia and the United States have a federal system of government, where responsibilities are divided between central and regional governments. As in Canada, all vital statistics authorities are located in the provincial or state level of government, and are not the responsibility of the central government.

In most countries, passport services are funded with a combination of passport fees and legislative appropriations. New Zealand is the country whose funding structure comes closest to Passport Canada's [cost-recovery](#) framework. What's more, passport fees in Canada have not increased for over a decade, while fees in the other four countries have all increased within the last two years.

## **Passports and other travel documents**

This section provides an overview of the kinds of passports and other travel documents offered by the Five Nations countries. The comparison focuses on the regular adult passport issued domestically, as it is the most common travel document issued. An overview of other travel documents is provided in section 2.2. For information on passports and travel documents issued overseas, please see section 3.2.

### **Regular adult ePassports**

All of the Five Nations countries except Canada fully implemented the ePassport between 2005 and 2007. One major incentive for this change was a new requirement adopted in 2006 by the United States, requiring Visa-Waiver Program countries to adopt the ePassport if they wished to continue enjoying visa-free access to the United States. Canada is in a privileged position, as it is currently exempt from this program. This means that Canadians may visit the United States for tourism without a visa, even without holding an ePassport.

Canada has been issuing diplomatic and special passports as ePassports since 2009, as a pilot project. The full national implementation of the Canadian ePassport is scheduled to be complete in 2013. Approximately 40,000 Canadian special and diplomatic ePassports had been issued at the time of publication.

### **ePassport introduction and fee increases**

In most cases, the implementation of the ePassport saw a rise in passport fees. In the United Kingdom, progressive fee increases took place, while in New Zealand, the validity period was brought down from 10 to 5 years and the price was doubled. In Australia, passport fees are adjusted in January of every year based on the consumer price index. The introduction of the

Australian ePassport did not directly result in an increase in price for Australian passport applicants. The United States also increased their passport fee with the adoption of the ePassport.

Table 1. Fee increases resulting from the implementation of the ePassport

Country	Adult passport fee before ePassport	Full ePassport roll-out	Adult passport fee at introduction of ePassport	
<b>Canada (proposed)</b>	\$87	2012	\$120 (5-year) \$160 (10-year)	
<b>Australia</b>	AUS\$153	2005	AUS\$172	\$175
<b>New Zealand</b>	NZ\$79 (10-year)	2005	NZ\$150 (5-year)	\$117
<b>United Kingdom</b>	£51	2006	£66	\$104
<b>United States</b>	US\$85	2007	US\$97	\$100

Table 1 shows that the fee increase varied from country to country, with the UK and the US opting for an increase of £15 (\$24) and US\$12 (\$12) respectively. In New Zealand, the cost of the regular passport doubled while the validity period was cut in half. This significant increase can be explained in part by the fact in New Zealand, passport services are dependent on user fees.

Like New Zealand's passport-issuing authority (PIA), Passport Canada must increase its fees, largely to catch up after a decade without a fee increase, and also to mitigate the financial impact of introducing the ePassport with 5- or 10-year validity. It is worth noting that Passport Canada will be introducing an ePassport that will be valid for twice as long as the current Canadian passport, while an alternative, less expensive 5-year ePassport will also be available for Canadians.

Since the ePassport was introduced in Australia, the adult application fee has increased regularly due to the funding model of Australia's PIA. It went from AUS\$172 (\$177) to AUS\$226 (\$231) between 2005 and 2011. The most recent increase – on January 1, 2012 – saw the fee go from AUS\$226 (\$231) to AUS\$233 (\$238).

Table 2 provides an overview of the current fee, validity period and size (number of pages) of the regular adult ePassport in the Five Nations countries.

Table 2. Comparison of regular adult ePassports

Country	Adult passport fee		Validity period	Fee per annum		Number of pages
Canada (proposed)	\$120		5	\$24		36
	\$160		10	\$16		36
Australia	AUS\$233	\$238	10	AUS\$23.30	\$24	35
New Zealand	NZ\$153.30	\$120	5	NZ\$30.66	\$24	50
United Kingdom	£77.50	\$122	10	£7.75	\$12	32
United States	US\$110*	\$113	10	US\$11	\$11	28

\*For first time applicants, an additional US\$25 (\$26) execution fee is added to this price.

In terms of size, Canada's ePassport will contain more pages than those of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States for the same validity period.

#### Consular fee

In Canada, a consular fee is added to the adult passport fee, as well as to other adult travel documents, in accordance with the *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Act* of 1995. The current passport fee for adults in Canada is \$87. Passport Canada only receives \$62 of this fee; the remaining \$25 consular fee is deposited directly into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Government of Canada. Passport Canada has no authority over the use or amount of these fees, which are collected with a view to recovering the costs of providing consular services for Canadians overseas. The consular fee is not applied to children's travel documents. Most of the other Five Nation countries levy a fee for consular services as part of their passport fees.

#### Other travel documents

In addition to the regular passport, a number of other travel documents are also issued, including children's passports, business or frequent travellers' passports, certificates of identity and refugee travel documents. This section provides a brief overview of these other travel documents.

It should be noted that all Five Nations countries issue diplomatic and official or special passports for government officials and diplomats who are travelling abroad on official business. Since these travel documents are not subject to the *User Fees Act*, they are not discussed in this document.

#### Children's passports

While children's passports are the least expensive for applicants, they actually cost more to produce. In Canada, children's passports are priced at 60% of adult passport fees, to ensure they remain affordable.

In all of the Five Nations countries, children's passports are valid for five years, to accommodate the rapid changes in children's physical characteristics. All Five Nations countries except Australia have an age of consideration for children's passport set at 16 years. This means that if a passport applicant is 16 or older, he or she will receive an adult passport. In Australia, an applicant must be 18 years of age or older to receive an adult passport.

As the following table demonstrates, children's passport fees are lower than regular adult passport fees in all Five Nations countries.

Table 3. Fees for children's passports

Country	Children fee		Percentage of adult fee
Canada (proposed)	\$57		60%
Australia	AUS\$117	\$119	50%
New Zealand	NZ\$81.70	\$64	53%
United Kingdom	£49	\$77	63%
United States	US\$80*	\$83	72%

\*For first time applicants, an additional US\$25 (\$26) execution fee is added to this price.

### **Business and frequent traveller passports**

In addition to the regular adult passport, all Five Nations countries offer frequent traveller or business passports that contain more pages. While Passport Canada does not plan to continue issuing business passports, both the 5- and 10-year Canadian ePassport books will contain 36 pages, which is more than the current 24-page passport.

### **Certificates of identity and refugee travel documents**

In Canada, certificates of identity are issued to non-Canadians who have been lawfully admitted into the country as permanent residents, but who are stateless or unable – for valid reasons – to obtain a passport from their country of origin. When the bearer acquires a foreign travel document or Canadian citizenship, the Canadian certificate of identity must be returned to Passport Canada.

The refugee travel document, also known as a Convention travel document, is issued as per the 1951 *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. This travel document is issued to non-Canadians lawfully admitted into the country as permanent residents, on temporary resident permits or on protected person status documents and who are deemed to have Convention refugee or “protected person” status in Canada. A refugee travel document is endorsed for travel to all countries, except the bearer's country of citizenship.

The other Five Nations countries issue similar documents, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 4. Issuance of certificates of identity and refugee travel documents

Country	Documents	Fee		Validity
<b>Canada (proposed)</b>	Certificate of identity	\$250		5 years
	Refugee travel document	\$160		
<b>Australia</b>	Certificate of identity	AUS\$140	\$143	3 years
	Refugee travel document			2 years
<b>New Zealand</b>	Certificate of identity	NZ\$81.70	\$64	1 year
	Refugee travel document			2 years
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Certificate of travel	£238	\$373	5 years
	Convention travel document	£77.50	\$112	10 years
<b>United States</b>	Refugee travel document	US\$135	\$139	1 year

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are the Five Nations countries whose passport-issuing authority is responsible for the issuance of these travel documents. In Canada, processing times apply to duly completed applications and exclude mail delivery time. What's more, complex verifications and security checks with partner organizations may lead to longer processing times. In New Zealand, applicants are advised that the minimal turnaround time is four weeks. In regards to application procedures, Canada offers a mail-in option for those applying for these travel documents, while New Zealand requires applicants to apply in person.

On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, this responsibility lies with the UK Border Agency. In the United States, it is the responsibility of the US Immigration and Citizenship Service, which is a division of the Department of Homeland Security.

#### **Passports and other travel documents: Conclusion**

Passport Canada's service offerings compare favourably with those in other Five Nations countries in terms of validity period and size, as well as the various travel documents offered. Regarding the fee for the regular adult passport, the price of the Canadian passport is similar to the average fee in the Five Nations.

#### **Service delivery**

When citizens pay passport fees, they are paying for a service. This service includes identity verification as well as a number of unseen security processes, in addition to the ultimate issuance of the physical document. What's more, this service must be accessible to the public while remaining secure. The following section compares service channels and processing times in the Five Nations, including domestic and overseas channels.

## Domestic service channels

The majority of passports are issued to people who apply from inside their own country's borders. The following table provides an overview of the domestic service offerings in the Five Nations.

**Table 5. Domestic service delivery channels**

Country	Service channels	Number of passport offices
<b>Canada</b>	Mail-in Passport Canada office Receiving agents (participating Service Canada and Canada Post outlets)	34
<b>Australia</b>	Passport office Receiving agent (Australia Post)	9
<b>New Zealand</b>	Mail-in Passport office	4
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Mail-in Passport office Receiving agent (Royal Mail outlet)	7
<b>United States</b>	Mail-in Passport office (urgent service only) Receiving agent (US Post, municipalities, clerks of the court)	25

All of the Five Nations countries have two main service channels: in-person and mail-in. Passports may be applied for in person at a local passport office or via a receiving agent (i.e. a partner government service centre that accepts passport applications). Having a network of receiving agents helps passport-issuing authorities provide greater accessibility to applicants. For instance, in Canada, over 95% of the population lives within 100 kilometres of a passport point of service.

Applications may also be made through the mail. In the case of the United Kingdom and the United States, people applying for a passport for the first time must do so in person. After the first application, subsequent passport applicants may be made via the mail. In the case of Australia, all applications must be made in person.

The standard service turnaround time in the Five Nations varies, as demonstrated in the following table. As a general rule, all urgent or express services come with additional costs.

**Table 6. Domestic processing times and related user fees**

Country	Regular service			Additional express service		
	Turn-around time	Fee		Turn-around time	Fee	
<b>Canada (proposed)</b>	In person: 2 weeks + delivery Mail-in: 4 weeks + delivery	\$160		Urgent: 24 hours Express: 2-9 days	+ \$110 + \$50	
<b>Australia</b>	2 weeks + delivery	AUS\$233	\$238	2 days	+ AUS\$103	\$105
<b>New Zealand</b>	2 weeks	NZ\$153.30	\$120	3 days	+ NZ\$153.30	\$120
<b>United Kingdom</b>	In person: 2 weeks Mail-in: 3 weeks	£77.50	\$112	Fast track: 1 week Premium: 4 hours	+ £35 + £52	\$55 \$82
<b>United States</b>	4 to 6 weeks	US\$110*	\$113	2-3 weeks	+US\$60*	\$62

\*For first time applicants, an additional US\$25 (\$26) execution fee is added to this price.

In comparison, Canada offers a standard turnaround time of two weeks for in-person applications and four weeks for mail-in applications. These turnaround times are comparable to those of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

On average, domestic service standards in the Five Nations are between two and three weeks, and Canada's service standards are within this range. The United States is an exception, having somewhat longer processing times.

In order for US citizens to receive the two- to four-week turnaround times provided by Passport Canada, they must pay an additional express service fee, bringing the total price for a first-time US applicant to US\$195 (\$200) or US\$170 (\$175) for renewals.

#### **Overseas service channels**

In all of the Five Nations countries, overseas service delivery is provided through diplomatic missions. The services provided abroad depend on each country's diplomatic network. For example, the United States has the most diplomatic missions of any country in the world, while Canada has a smaller international presence.

**Table 7. Overseas issuance of regular adult passports**

Country	Regular processing times	Fee	
<b>Canada (proposed)</b>	4 weeks + delivery	\$260	
<b>Australia</b>	2 weeks + delivery	AUS\$233	\$238
<b>New Zealand</b>	2 weeks	AUS\$162* £76	\$165 \$119
<b>United Kingdom</b>	4-6 weeks	£124.50	\$195
<b>United States</b>	1 week	US\$110	\$113

\* Overseas applications are only processed at missions in Sydney (Australia) and London (United Kingdom).

### **Emergency travel documents and temporary passports**

Typically, both emergency travel documents and temporary passports are issued to citizens overseas. Since their format, use and validity differ greatly from one country to another, a direct comparison is difficult to achieve. For example, New Zealand's emergency travel document is valid for up to 12 months and costs NZ\$300 (\$234), including the replacement passport, while the UK's emergency travel document is valid for a single journey and costs £91.50 (\$144). While there is no application fee for issuing an Australian emergency travel document, a priority processing fee of AUS\$103 (\$105) may be required.

The Canadian emergency travel document is meant to be used for a single journey, either for direct return to Canada or to another Canadian mission where full passport services may be obtained. When this emergency travel is complete, the document must be returned to Passport Canada. The proposed new fee for the Canadian emergency travel document is \$75, including the consular fee.

The Canadian temporary passport is an eight-page travel document issued by a Canadian mission for urgent travel situations or residency requirements and is issued in conjunction with a regular passport. The proposed new fee for the Canadian temporary passport is \$110, including the consular fee.

### **Administrative services**

In addition to issuing travel documents, Passport Canada also offers various administrative services. Generally speaking, these are extra services that are currently offered for free. To recover the cost of offering these services, new administrative fees have been proposed. One example of administrative services offered by all Five Nations countries is the making of certified true copies for clients. However, administrative services vary greatly between countries, making comparisons impossible. For instance, file transfers, a service for which Passport Canada is proposing a new fee, are unique to Canada.

Australia charges an extra fee for replacing lost or stolen passports, and Canada is proposing a similar fee, to compensate for the extra verifications needed. In addition to this proposed new

fee, Passport Canada is proposing to charge fees for some other administrative services that are not comparable internationally.

**Table 8. Administrative service fees**

Administrative services	Country with administrative service fee	Service standard (if applicable)
<b>Replacement of lost or stolen passport</b>	Canada (proposed) + \$45	Regular service standard
	Australia 1 <sup>st</sup> replacement in 5 years +AUS\$103 (\$105) 2 <sup>nd</sup> +AUS\$233 (\$238) 3 <sup>rd</sup> +AUS\$467 (\$476)	Regular services standard
<b>Certified true copies of travel documents</b>	Canada (proposed) \$45 (max. 3 copies)	N/A
	Australia AUS\$3.95 (Australia Post) (\$4)	
	New Zealand NZ\$65 (\$50)	
	United Kingdom £7.15 (\$11)	
	United States US\$50 (\$52)	

In addition, Canadians will have the opportunity to retain their valid passport while it is being renewed, for a proposed fee of \$45. Australia, New Zealand and the United States offer this service for citizens abroad.

**Service delivery channels: Conclusion**

Canadian service delivery channels, both domestic and abroad, compare well to those of other countries in terms of accessibility, processing times and fees. It should be noted that the upcoming introduction of the Canadian ePassport will not bring about any changes to current processing times.

Regarding service channels within Canada, although Passport Canada must cope with vast geographical realities, its extensive network of offices and partner receiving agents ensures that Canadians receive excellent service. Passport Canada is well within the average of other Five Nations countries in terms of service delivery.

## Other passport-issuing authorities

This part of the international comparison briefly examines passport-issuing authorities (PIAs) that are fundamentally different from Passport Canada. The countries reviewed are France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland. These countries are all members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In all of these countries, passport applicants interact primarily with police or local municipal or regional authorities, instead of a dedicated passport service. In most cases, the same entity that deals with vital statistics also deals with passports. This convergence simplifies identity checks for passport applicants. However, many factors come into play, such as different modes of government, the existence (or not) of national citizen databases, and different privacy laws.

All of the countries examined here issue ePassports. One major driving force for adoption of the ePassport by many countries was the United States' requirement that countries issue ePassports to remain in the US Visa-Waiver Program. Another key driver was the requirement to issue ePassports by 2006 to be part of the Schengen Area, Europe's border-free zone. What's more, a requirement came into force in 2009 for Schengen countries to capture fingerprints, in addition to facial photos, for passports. These requirements had great impact on the practices of PIAs in the countries examined below.

### France

In France, passport applications are made in person in the offices of local municipalities. The data is then sent to a local prefecture to be checked; then it goes to the Imprimerie Nationale for printing. The coordination and monitoring of this process is the responsibility of the *Agence Nationale des Titres Sécurisés*, an agency of the French Ministry of the Interior.

The French passport-issuing authority is funded exclusively through legislative appropriations. Passport fees are simply part of the general revenues of the state.

It is mandatory for passport applicants to apply in person at their municipality, where their facial photo and eight fingerprints are captured. Applicants must pick up their passport in person. When they go to get the finished passport, their fingerprints are checked against those on the passport. Service standards vary, as all printing is done in one centralized location, and service centres are based in municipalities.

#### Summary: French regular adult passport

Validity period	Fee		Size	Service channel
10 years	€86	\$120	32 pages	Municipalities

## Germany

In Germany, passport applications are handled by local municipalities. Since all German citizens must register in their municipality, their identities are firmly established at the municipal level. This means that passport applicants' information is readily available to authorities. Passport applications must be submitted in person, and the finished passport must be picked up in person. Fingerprints are captured during both visits.

The German passport program is financed in part by user fees, which cover the cost of producing the book and the providing the service. While municipalities are the main service delivery channel, the production of the passport is done by the national printer under the supervision of the federal Ministry of the Interior.

### Summary: German regular adult passport

Validity period	Fee		Size	Service channel
10 years	€59	\$82	32 pages	Municipalities

## Italy

In Italy, the national police is responsible for the issuance of passports. Applications can be made at municipalities, police stations or the passport sections of the Commissariat for Public Safety, which are located in every Italian province. Passport applications must be made in person, as is the case with all Schengen Area countries, at which time the applicant's facial photo and fingerprints are captured.

Italian passport operations are funded through a combination of user fees and legislative appropriations. The passport costs €82 (\$114). Of this amount, there is a 40€ (\$56) fee for the production of the document as well as a €42 (\$59) tax mark that is added to the application form. This administrative cost goes directly to the national treasury. The €42 tax mark must be renewed annually for travel outside the Schengen area.

### Summary: Italian regular adult passport

Validity period	Fee		Size	Service channel
10 years	€82	\$114	32 pages	Various governmental offices

## Japan

The Japanese PIA is a component of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Local prefectures handle passport applications and issuance. Applications must be made in person, and applicants are notified by postal card when their passport is ready for in-person pick-up. While user fees are charged for the passport, funding is provided through legislative appropriations.

Japan is one of the few countries in the world that offers its citizens the choice of a 5- or 10-year validity passport. However, applicants under 20 years old are only eligible for a 5-year passport. The fee for the 5-year passport is 11,000 yen (\$110), while the 10-year passport fee is 16,000 yen (\$160).

Canada will soon join Japan in offering a choice of 5- or 10-year validity, which is unique on the international stage. The costing of the Japanese 5-year validity passport at 69% of the price of the 10-year option is nearly identical to the calculation for the cost of the Canadian 5- and 10-year ePassport. In Passport Canada's proposed fee structure, the fee for the 5-year ePassport is set at 70% of the fee for the 10-year option.

#### Summary: Japanese regular adult passport

Validity period	Fee		Size	Service channel
5 years	¥11,000	\$110	36 pages	Municipalities and prefectures
10 years	¥16,000	\$160	52 pages	Municipalities and prefectures

#### Switzerland

In the spring of 2010, Switzerland introduced an ePassport with 10-year validity. The Swiss Federal Police oversees passport issuance, but service delivery is the responsibility of regional authorities called cantons.

While part of the passport application can be done online, Swiss applicants must still go to the passport office in person. Although Switzerland is not a member country of the European Union, it is a member of the Schengen Area, and must follow Schengen requirements. This means that the application process includes both photo and fingerprint capture.

To ensure continued visa-free access to the United States for Swiss citizens before the full roll-out of the Swiss ePassport, Switzerland introduced a pilot project ePassport in tandem with its regular 10-year passport in the fall of 2006. Called the *Passeport 06*, it was a 5-year ePassport that was introduced in a few offices for a fee of 250 Swiss francs (\$285). This pilot project paved the way for the current 10-year Swiss ePassport, known as *Passeport 10*.

#### Summary: Swiss regular adult passport

Validity period	Fee		Size	Service channel
10 years	CHF140	\$160	40 pages	Cantons

### **Other passport-issuing authorities: Conclusion**

Due to fundamental differences in the approach to passport issuance, the PIAs examined in this section are not directly comparable to Passport Canada. However, it is interesting to note some of the important differences that set them apart from Canada and the other Five Nations countries.

For instance, mandatory in-person application is common to all the PIAs in this section, but it is a rarity within the Five Nations. Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States require that people applying for a passport for the first time do so in person, but subsequent passport applications may be made via the mail. Australia requires an in-person interview for all applicants, while Canada and New Zealand have no in-person requirement.

One of the reasons why the PIAs examined here require in-person application is that, with the exception of Japan, they must capture applicants' fingerprints to satisfy Schengen Area requirements. None of the Five Nations countries are members of this group, and therefore are not subject to these obligations.

Japan, the only country examined here that is not part of the Schengen Area, provides an interesting comparison because it is one of the only countries in the world to offer both a 5- and 10-year validity option. When Canada adopts the ePassport with a choice of 5- or 10-year validity, it will join Japan in offering an option that is unique on the international stage.

What's more, like all of the Five Nations countries except Canada and New Zealand, all of the PIAs examined here depend on legislative appropriations as a source of funding. Once again, Canada is quite unique in this respect.

## Conclusion

Due to differences in passport issuance systems and governance structures, a direct comparison between passport systems is difficult to achieve. However, this document strives to provide an informative look at practices in comparable countries, while respecting a certain methodology.

The other Five Nations countries (Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States) were examined due to their similarities with Canada, while a few other passport-issuing authorities (France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Switzerland) provided more international context.

In terms of the organizational overview, it is clear that Passport Canada is nearly unique in the world as a completely [cost-recovery](#) government organization that relies solely on user fees and not on legislative appropriations. What's more, Canada is – by far – the Five Nations country that has not seen a passport fee increase for the longest time. By the time the Canadian ePassport is adopted, passport fees will have remained static for over a decade.

In terms of ePassports, Canada is part of a dwindling minority of countries not yet issuing ePassports to all their citizens. Regarding the physical document itself, the number of pages in the upcoming Canadian ePassport will compare favourably to those in the other Five Nations countries.

The validity period of the Canadian ePassport will again place Canada in a unique position on the international stage, as one of the only countries offering a choice of 5- or 10-year validity. Although both validity periods conform to international standards, the 10-year validity period is more prevalent among the countries examined in this document.

In terms of service, such as processing times and service channels available to passport applicants, Passport Canada's service delivery model compares favourably to other countries, many of which do not share the geographical realities of Canada.

What's more, the proposed new fee for the Canadian ePassport with a choice of 5- or 10-year validity is well within international norms.

In addition to providing contextual information about the environment in which Passport Canada operates, this international comparison demonstrates the diversity of practices in the field of travel document issuance, as well as essential principles that are nearly universal. It is a reminder that Passport Canada is part of a worldwide community of passport-issuing authorities, and that the Canadian passport does not stand alone; it must evolve and advance to ensure safe travel for Canadians and citizens of all countries.

## **Annex A – References and further reading**

### **Passport Canada**

- Website: [www.passportcanada.gc.ca](http://www.passportcanada.gc.ca)

### **Australian Passport Office (English only)**

- Website: [www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au)

### **European Union**

- EU and freedom of movement :  
[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/l33020\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l33020_en.htm)

### **French passport (French only)**

- Website: <http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/N360.xhtml>

### **German passport (German only)**

- Website: [www.epass.de](http://www.epass.de)

### **Passport services, United Kingdom (English only)**

- Website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/passports/>

### **International Civil Aviation Organization**

- Website: [www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)
- Machine-Readable Travel Documents website: <http://www2.icao.int/en/mrtd/>

### **Italian passport (Italian only)**

- <http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/category/1087/>

### **New Zealand passport (English only)**

- Website: [http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Services-Passports-Index](http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Passports-Index)

### **Passport Services, United States Department of State (English only)**

- Website: [www.travel.state.gov/passport](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport)

### **Swiss passport (French, German and Italian only)**

- Website: <http://www.schweizerpass.admin.ch/content/pass/fr/home.html>

## Annex B – Glossary

**Biometric:** A measurable physical characteristic or personal behavioural trait used to recognize the identity, or verify the claimed identity of, an enrolled individual. Biometrics can be captured through photos or the scanning of fingerprints.

**Canadian Passport Order:** Enacted in 1981, the Canadian Passport Order provides the legal framework for the production and issuance of passports in Canada.

**Consular services fee:** The consular services fee was implemented to help maintain and improve the consular services that the Canadian government makes available to Canadians living, working and travelling abroad. It makes up CAN\$25 of the adult passport fee and is not charged on applications made for children.

**Consumer price index (CPI):** The consumer price index is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services.

**Digital signature:** Canada's ePassports will contain a digital signature that is unique to the Canadian government. If something is wrong with this signature, it shows that the passport is not authentic. The technology used to sign and verify the data on the chip is called Public Key Infrastructure (PKI). This is an internationally-recognized way to encrypt data, commonly used in credit cards and other secure documents using electronic chips.

**Diplomatic passport:** Passport Canada issues diplomatic passports to Canadian government officials and diplomats, as well as representatives and delegates of the Government of Canada participating in international governmental organizations and international conferences of a diplomatic nature.

**Facial recognition technology:** Facial recognition means identifying a person using their facial characteristics by digitally comparing two or more photos. Each photo goes through an electronic scanning process to locate landmarks on the person's face, such as the eyes, nose and mouth. The system then generates a facial template that can be used to compare one photo against another. Instead of relying solely on human judgment when comparing photos, facial recognition is a way of comparing photos objectively, using a scale to show the likelihood of a match or non-match.

**ePassport:** The ePassport consists of a paper passport book that includes an electronic chip securely encoded with the identifying information found on the passport's data page, as well as a biometric identifier. In the case of the Canadian ePassport, the only biometric identifier is the passport holder's digital photo.

**Integrity:** The integrity of the passport, in the context of travel document security, is the assurance that the passport has been issued to its rightful bearer.

**International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO):** The International Civil Aviation Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It was created in 1944 to promote

the safe and orderly development of civil aviation worldwide. Headquartered in Montreal, ICAO develops international air transport standards and regulations and serves as the medium for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 190 member states.

**Issuance process:** The issuance process is the process through which passport-issuing authorities process applications, authenticate applicants' identity, and print personalized and secure travel documents.

**Legislative appropriations:** The funding of federal departments and agencies through public funds collected through taxes, as opposed to funds collected through user fees.

**Machine-readable zone (MRZ):** The last two lines at the bottom of page 2 of the passport form the machine-readable zone, which repeats the bearer's personal information and passport details in a format that can be electronically read by a passport reader.

**NEXUS card:** A NEXUS card is a travel document designed to expedite the border clearance process for low-risk, pre-approved travellers into Canada and the United States. Those approved to participate in NEXUS receive a membership identification card to use when crossing between these two countries at designated NEXUS air, land and marine ports of entry.

**Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD):** The OECD is an international economic organization comprised of 34 countries. It was founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. The mission of the OECD is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems.

**Passport card:** In the United States, a passport card is a travel document that can only be used at US land border crossings. It offers expedited border crossing through the use of vicinity chip technology. Canada does not issue passport cards.

**Passport-issuing authority:** A passport-issuing authority is a government organization responsible for issuing travel documents.

**Passport possession rate:** The passport possession rate is a statistic that determines the percentage of passport holders in a specific country.

**Proximity chip:** A proximity contactless chip, such as the one found in the ePassport, ensures that the chip can only be read when held at very close range to a reader. The Canadian ePassport must be held within 10 centimetres of the ePassport reader to be read.

**Public Key Directory (PKD):** The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has created a system to facilitate the exchange of passport-related information between participating countries. Called the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), it is a repository where participating countries, like Canada, deposit their digital signatures to ensure ePassports are authenticated at border crossings. The ICAO PKD does not contain personal information about the passport holder. It contains the passport holder's country's signing certificate, which confirms to border

agents that the ePassport was issued by a bona fide authority and that it has not been tampered with.

**Schengen Area:** The Schengen Area is a European free travel zone that includes the abolition of controls at the internal borders of Schengen member countries and establishes common rules and checks at external borders. It also provides for a common visa policy and includes accompanying measures aimed at increased police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

**Special passport:** Passport Canada issues special passports to persons holding office, such as Members of Parliament, senators, members of provincial cabinets, and to persons employed by the Government of Canada in a non-diplomatic capacity travelling on an official mission or to a post abroad.

**Vicinity chip:** Commonly used in enhanced driver's licenses, vicinity chip technology allows for the data found on the electronic chip to be read from a medium to long distance. The ePassport, on the other hand, contains a proximity chip, which can only be read at close range.

**User Fees Act:** The *User Fees Act* is a law that sets out requirements for federal government departments that wish to adopt new service standards and associated fees. Its purpose is to ensure adequate scrutiny of changes to government services for which fees are charged.

**Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI):** The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is a US law that requires all travellers, including American and Canadian citizens, to present a valid passport or other approved secure travel document when entering the US from within the western hemisphere.

## **Annex C – Passport Canada's international role**

Passport Canada is active in a number of international forums as part of its mandate to contribute to international and national security. The following list illustrates some of the key areas where Passport Canada is active.

### **G8 Roma-Lyon Migration Experts Sub-Group**

The G8 Roma-Lyon Group aims to develop norms and recommendations to fight transnational organized crime and terrorism. The Migration Experts Sub-Group (MESG), one of six Roma-Lyon sub-groups, is mandated to deal with these issues as they relate to migration. Passport Canada, an active participant in the MESG, attends tri-annual meetings and provides advice and feedback on projects related primarily to travel documents.

### **International Civil Aviation Organization**

In the area of travel documents, ICAO is a key international agency responsible for the adoption of standards, recommended practices and specifications. Passport Canada supports Canada's permanent representative to ICAO to ensure that Canada's philosophy on travel documents is well represented at ICAO by the permanent representative.

- **Public Key Directory**

The ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) is a repository for participating countries to deposit the data other countries need to ensure ePassports are authentic. This method of information sharing is used by border control authorities to check that ePassports are genuine and unaltered. Passport Canada serves on the board of the PKD, the standing body responsible for the organization. The board is appointed by the ICAO Council and is responsible for determining a range of operational procedures. Membership on the board enables Canada to provide support and feedback on this international security initiative.

- **Technical Advisory Group**

The ICAO Technical Advisory Group on Machine-Readable Travel Documents (TAG/MRTD) develops and adopts specifications for travel documents which are included in Document 9303. The TAG/MRTD also publishes guidance material as well as technical reports and information papers to assist states in implementing its specifications. Under the governance of the TAG/MRTD, two working groups were established:

- **New Technologies Working Group**

The ICAO New Technologies Working Group (NTWG) develops policies, specifications and guidance material for the manufacture, security, testing, issuance, deployment and globally interoperable use of travel documents. The NTWG advises the ICAO Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which is responsible for the development of specifications for travel documents with the goal of global interoperability. Passport Canada chairs NTWG meetings to ensure that Canada's interests are reflected in travel document developments.

- **International Capacity Building Working Group**

The ICAO International Capacity Building Working Group (ICBWG) is mandated to identify and implement projects related to the issuance and use of travel

documents in states and regions as well as to carry out capacity building activities in conjunction with states, other international organizations, intergovernmental bodies and the private sector. Passport Canada is a leading player in the working group's activities and has participated actively in the development of guidance material for travel document and issuance processes.

### **Five Nations Passport Group**

Passport Canada belongs to the Five Nations Passport Group, through which it engages in information-sharing with officials from the passport-issuing authorities of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. The group addresses a broad spectrum of issues associated with travel documents.