



CANADA'S TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM FOR UKRAINE

Charles Bassett, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Vice President for Central and Eastern Europe, discusses the new directions and strategies for Ukraine.

Canada's program of technical assistance for Ukraine was established in July 1991 in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade with three primary objectives: to support Ukraine's transition to a market-based economy, to promote democratic development and to increase Canadian trade and investment links with Ukraine. The 1993-94 Partners in Progress (PIPP) program and subsequent Canada-Ukraine Partners Program (CUPP) introduced in August 1994 were designed to strengthen Ukrainian institutions in the public and private sectors active in the political and economic reform process. They provided assistance to establish long-term linkages between Ukrainian and Canadian institutions. In January 1996, the successor "New CUP Program", was officially launched, now with CIDA's Central and Eastern Europe Branch.

The Monitor continues to provide regular highlights of the progress of this program and describe some of the more than 80 technical assistance projects to date. (See CUPP story on page 22.) In this issue, an interview with CIDA Vice President for Eastern Europe, Charles Bassett, offers readers an insight into the new direction which the technical cooperation program with Ukraine is taking.

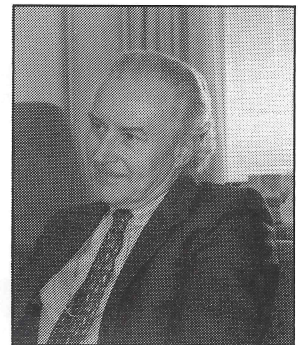
Mr. Bassett has 20 years experience with CIDA. He previously worked in the private sector and, since joining the Public Service, he has worked for the Public Service Commission and the Privy Council. He was appointed Vice President, Central and Eastern Europe Branch, in January 1995.

- Management of Canada's technical assistance program was transferred from the Department of Foreign Affairs to CIDA last summer. What do you see in your plans for this program over the next few years?

We don't see a radical departure. What we would like to do is to develop a program that builds on what we have been doing. We want to make sure that we have a clear picture of where we want to end up. And that's why we are in the process - actually in the final stages now -- of developing a strategy document. This is not a long exercise: we are spending 6-8 weeks saying, OK, what are we trying to achieve by the time we finish 3-5 years of CIDA involvement, and putting those objectives down on paper. We will then check them out with our partners in Canada and see whether they hit a responsive chord. We will also check them out with our mission in Kyiv and the government of Ukraine to make sure that we are going down the right track -- where everyone says, that's reasonable. It's essentially saying that, with a relatively small budget (when you compare it to the economy of Ukraine): What are the things that we can do that will have the most significant impact for our expenditure. What will optimize on the capability that we've got in Canada and particularly among the Canadian community of Ukrainian origin; and how does that respond to Ukraine's needs for cooperation? That's essentially what we want to do. It is more of a building than a revolutionary process. As to what we would like to achieve, I can tell you that better when we finish the strategy document, which is to be ready by the end of March.

- At his departure, Canada's first Ambassador, François Mathys, said that the goal of technical assistance is now shifting to technical cooperation with Ukraine. Is this part of your strategy?

That's very much my concept. When I took over this program, I was very uncomfortable with the title, Bureau of Assistance, because, if I look at a country like Ukraine, I see a country that has an educational base which is at least comparable to many parts of Canada. They have a technological-scientific capacity that is probably far in excess of what we have in many parts of Canada. They need help to come to terms with the new world that they now have to live in. But the concept of assistance implies that those who have something, give it to those who don't. Well, I don't see that kind of relationship with Ukraine.



I see it much more as a mutual cooperation, because we can learn as much from them as they can learn from us. So that's why for me, cooperation has a different connotation, it's not just a different word. It's a different approach where we work together towards a particular end.

- Is this the direction which CIDA has generally been taking with a lot of its programs, and what are the priority sectors and immediate requirements with Ukraine?