

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



Office of the Auditor General

VALUE FOR MONEY AUDIT REPORT

ON PASSPORT PROCESSING BY THE PASSPORT CONTROL DEPARTMENT - MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFROSAI-E	African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (English speaking)
AG	Auditor General
APCO	Assistant Passport Control officer
AWPBs	Annual Work Plan and Budgets
BAT	British American Tobacco
BOU	Bank of Uganda
BPAFs	Bank Payment Advice Forms
DCIC	Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
FY	Financial Year
GOU	Government of Uganda
INTOSAI	International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
IT	Information Technology
JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
LCs	Local Councils
MLIS	Multiple Layer Infilling System
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PCO	Passport Control Officer
PS	Permanent Secretary
RDCs	Resident District Commissioners
SMS	Short Messages
Shs	Uganda Shillings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Article 29 (2C) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, states that, "Every Ugandan shall have the right to a passport or other travel document". It is therefore a constitutional right for every Ugandan to have a passport. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and particularly the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), is responsible for the issuance of passports in Uganda.

The processing of a passport is expected to take ten (10) working days or fourteen (14) calendar days. However, processing passports by the Passport Control Office (PCO) takes longer periods, with average delays of 9 to 32 days at the Ministry headquarters and in the regions/districts, respectively. The processing of passports at the head office had improved with an average delay of only 2 days in 2008/09. The processing of passports on average delayed for 24 days in FY 2006/2007, 25 days in FY 2007/08 and 13 days in FY 2008/09. At the regional offices/districts on average delays were 34 days in 2006/07, 39 days in 2007/08 and 34 days in 2008/09.

This has resulted into public dissatisfaction with the service rendered by the government in this regard. The audit sought to ascertain the magnitude of the delays in the processing passports and to examine the underlying causes of the delays and suggest to the management recommendations that could improve its performance and reduce the days taken to process passports.

The study was conducted in the Department of the Passport Control Office, Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration control in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The audit focused on the processing time for Passports at the Ministry headquarters and in seven of the thirteen regional/district immigration offices: Mbarara, Fort portal, Masaka, Mubende, Jinja, Gulu, and Mbale for a period of three financial years from 2006/07 to 2008/09.

The delays were attributed to the unconventional citizenship verification procedures, manual processing of passports, inadequate communication strategy, poor records management and unfavourable staff working conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The MIA should iron out the setbacks affecting the completion of the National Identification Project, which, when completed will reduce on the time that the Immigration Officers spent on the Citizenship verification exercise.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should utilise the existing Passport software used in the printing section and the existing computer network in all the sectional offices to computerize the whole passport processing cycle to reduce on the time taken to process passports.
- The MIA should make use of the IT skills possessed by the staff, which has not been exploited to increase staff efficiency at work.
- The staff that lack IT skills should be trained and refresher courses regularly carried out to enable them to increase their efficiency in the processing of passports.
- The MIA should improve on its communication strategy and feedback mechanisms to enable the clients to respond quickly to the queries raised in the course of the processing of the application forms.
- The MIA should focus on the implementation of their budgets and monitor the budgetary performance to ensure that the objectives of their policy statements are achieved.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 MOTIVATION

Article 29 (2C) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, states that, "Every Ugandan shall have the right to a passport or other travel document". It is therefore a constitutional right for every Ugandan to have a passport and the main objective of the Passport Control Department is to issue travel documents expeditiously. The processing of passports by the Passport Control Office (PCO) takes longer period, with an average delay of 9 - 30 days at Ministry headquarters and regions respectively than the stipulated ten working days or fourteen calendar days. This has resulted into the public being dissatisfied with the service rendered by the government in this regard.

The audit sought to ascertain the magnitude of the delay in the processing of passports and to examine the underlying causes of the delays and suggest to the management recommendations that could improve its performance and reduce the days taken to process passports.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE AUDIT AREA

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and, particularly, the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), is responsible for the issuance of passports in Uganda. Other documents, such as: Certificates of identity, Conventional travel documents and temporary movement permits are also issued by the Directorate.

The approval and printing of passports is centralized at the Ministry headquarters in Kampala, also referred to as the issuing office, but the issuance of application forms and the distribution of processed passports is decentralized to regional and district immigration offices. There are four (4) regional offices (Mbale, Fortportal, Gulu and Kampala) and ten other passport issuing centres at the districts (Mbarara, Masaka, Mubende, Hoima, Masindi, Lira, Arua, Mityana, Tororo and Jinja). The Passport Control Office in the Citizenship Control Department coordinates all the activities regarding the processing of passports.

Some Ugandan Embassies and High Commissions abroad, such as those in South Africa and the United Kingdom, also process and issue passports to Ugandans abroad.

1.2.2 **Mandate**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control derives its mandate to issue, monitor and ensure safe custody of Ugandan Passports from the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) as amended, Chapter 3, Article 15, the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (Cap.66) and Statutory Instruments No.15 and 16.

1.2.3.1 **Vision**

The vision of the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control is:
"Smooth, lawful stay and movement of persons in and out of Uganda"

1.2.3.2 **Mission**

The mission of the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control is:
"Provision of quality services to Ugandans and foreign nationals who enter and move out of Uganda"

1.2.4 **Objectives of the directorate**

The strategic object of the Directorate pertaining to the issuance of passports include:

- To increase the pace of processing immigration documentation.
- To improve the control and facilitation mechanism for exit and entry into Uganda.
- To improve the method of identifying both citizens of Uganda and foreign nationals.
- To set up training programmes and develop a curriculum for the Directorate.
- To install communication at Headquarters and border posts.

1.2.5 **Activities in the directorate**

The following activities are undertaken in the directorate regarding the issuing of Passports:

- Issuing of application forms
- Receipt of application forms
- Interviewing applicants
- Verification of citizenship
- Printing and signing Passports
- Delivery of Passports
- Supervision of staff

- Motivation and appraisal of staff
 - Training and coaching of staff
 - Development of the data base for all passport categories
 - Carrying out customer feedback surveys
 - Developing a Directorate website
 - Creation of customer care centres
- Other activities at the directorate include:
- Improvement of the quality of service delivery and building confidence among the public through effective public relations strategies
 - Training staff in relevant performance fields to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery
 - Provision of communication equipment to link the border posts and the Ministry Headquarters
 - Motivation of staff through awards and rewards
 - Improvement on non-tax revenue collection
 - Renovation of dilapidated office blocks
 - Provision of transport facilities, utilities and logistics for all immigration staff
 - Acquisition of appropriate ICT hard and software
 - Coordination and monitoring of all the immigration posts in the country
 - Computerization of all the registers of the Directorate
 - Establishment of a website for the Directorate, to strengthen public relations

1.2.6 **Organizational structure**

There is an established Board on Citizenship and Immigration Control responsible for policy making. The Permanent Secretary (PS), Ministry of Internal Affairs is the overall supervisor and Accounting Officer in the Ministry. The Passport Control Department is under the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC) and is headed by the Commissioner Citizenship & Passport Control. The Commissioner is assisted by the Assistant Commissioner who is also the Passport Control Officer. There is also a Deputy PCO who by designation, is a Principal Immigration Officer. Below the Deputy PCO, is a Principal Immigration Officer in charge of the strong room, 3 Senior Immigration Officers in charge of reception, passport delivery and general supervision. There are also senior immigration officers at regional and district offices, some other immigration officers and support staff. (**Appendix I**)

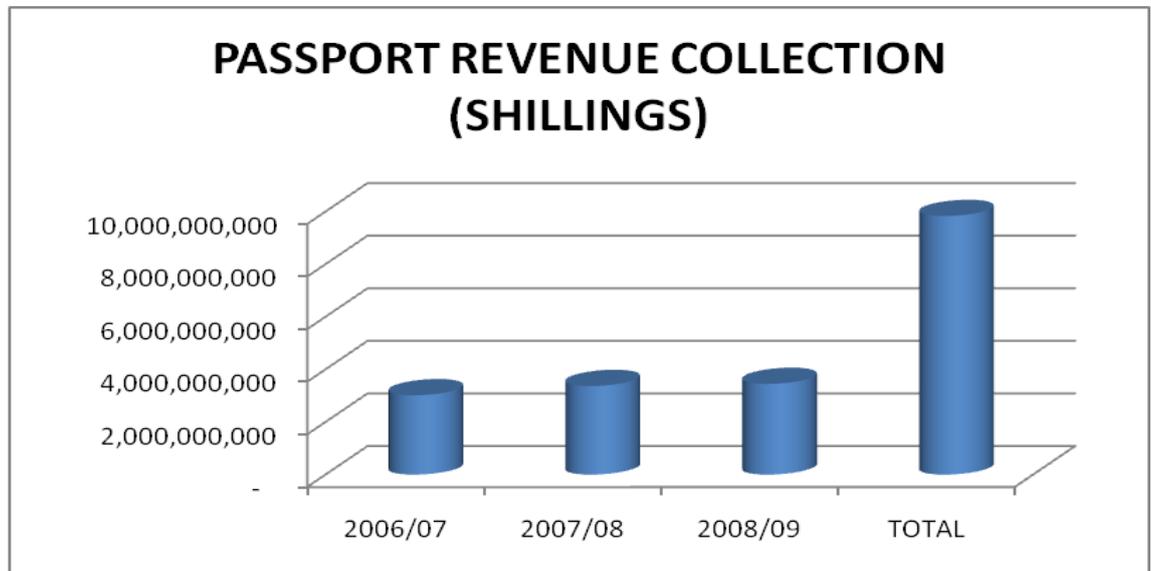
1.2.7 **Funding**

The activities of MIA and the DCIC are funded through government budget support. The Ministry received and spent an average of Shs.4.1 billion per annum on the DCIC as follows:

Table 1: Annual Directorate expenditure

FINANCIAL YEAR	AMOUNT SPENT ON DCIC (SHS)
2006/07	4.1 billion
2007/08	4.2 billion
2008/09	3.7 billion
TOTAL	12 billion
Average	4 billion

The Passport Control Office contributed Shs.3.01 billion (2006/07), Shs.3.37 billion (2007/08) and Shs.3.45 billion (2008/09) in Non Tax Revenue (NTR) from passport fees totaling to Shs.9.83 billion in the period under review as illustrated in the bar graph below:



Source: Audited Financial Statements of the MIA

1.2.8 **Scope**

The audit sought to:

- Ascertain the number of days taken by the Immigration and Passport Control Department to process a passport.
- Ascertain the average delay in the processing of passports.
- Identify the causes of delay in processing passports and

- Suggest recommendations that could help the management to mitigate the causes of the delay.

The audit focused on the processing of Passports by the Department of Passport Control Office, Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control in the MIA in three financial years from 2006/07 to 2008/09. It covered the Ministry headquarters and seven (7) of the thirteen (13) regional/district immigration offices: Mbarara, Fort portal, Masaka, Mubende, Jinja, Gulu, and Mbale.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This audit was conducted in accordance with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) standards and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) Value for Money audit manual. The standards require that the audit is planned in a manner which ensures that an audit of high quality is carried out in an economic, efficient and effective way and in a timely manner.

2.1 SAMPLING

In planning the audit, a sample of six hundred and twelve (612) passports was systematically selected for the study as follows:

Headquarters

Passports at the Ministry headquarters were stratified by selecting the first 20 passports produced in every month of the year under study for each category of passports which include renewals and new issues. This resulted into a sample population of 1,440 passports comprising of Renewals (720) and new issues (720).

The two strata were further subjected to systematic sampling as follows:

New issues

Every 3rd passport produced in every month of the year in the "new issue" strata was given equal chance of being selected. This resulted into the selection of 216 sampled passports for the period under study in this passport category (6 passports*12 months*3 years).

Renewals

Every 5th passport produced in every month of the year in the "renewals" strata was given equal chance of being selected. This resulted into the selection of 144 sampled passports for the period under study in this passport category (4 passports*12 months*3 years).

Regional/District Passport issuing centres

Passports at the regional/district centers were stratified according to each of the 4 quarters of the Financial Years (FY) under the study. Only new issues were considered since most of the passports at the regional/district centers are in this category.

Three (3) passports were randomly selected from each quarter of every FY in the seven (7) out of fourteen (13) regional/district passport issuing centers of Jinja, Mbale, Gulu, Mubende, Masaka, Mbarara and Fort portal. This resulted into a total 252 sampled passports from the regional/district passport issuing centers under the category of “new issues” (3 passports*4 Quarters*3 Years*7 regions/districts).

The table below summarizes the audit sample as follows:

Table 2: Number of Passports sampled

FINANCIAL YEAR	HEADQUARTERS			REGION/DISTRICT	TOTAL
	NEW ISSUES	RENEWALS	TOTAL	NEW ISSUES	TOTAL PASSPORTS
2006/2007	72	48	120	84	204
2007/2008	72	48	120	84	204
2008/2009	72	48	120	84	204
TOTAL	216	144	360	252	612

2.2 **DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected through the following data collection methods:

Document Review

A number of documents and records were reviewed with an objective of understanding the processes, legal mandate, activities, laws and regulations involved in the issuance of passports. Also examined were application forms and passport registers.

Observation

Seven regional/district immigration offices and the Ministry headquarters were visited with a view of observing how immigration officers were conducting business and to assess the level of clients’ satisfaction. The working environment of staff was also observed and assessed during the field visits. The audit team also observed the general work flow in the various sections of the Department.

Interviews

Interviews were held with senior officers in the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control to obtain a general understanding of the processes involved in the issuance of passports and ascertain the causes of the delay in the processes. In addition, forty (40) clients and thirty (30) staff members in the PCO from the Ministry headquarters and the regions/districts were interviewed to ascertain the

time taken to process a passport and what hinders the timely processing of passports.

The List of persons interviewed and documents reviewed are shown in appendix (ii)

2.3 **DATA ANALYSIS**

The collected data was analyzed using computer analysis tools which included Epi-data, Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel to obtain data relationships and guidance in data interpretation. Frequencies, averages, variance and mode (most occurring events) were obtained using the aforementioned analysis tools. We compared the dates and numbers of Passports produced in the three years (2006/07 to 2008/09) and analyzed the average Passport production time in those years with an objective of establishing the causes of the differences in the trends. The average processing time was compared also over the geographical locations with a view of identifying the specific causes in specific regions/districts.

CHAPTER 3

SYSTEM AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION

3.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY PLAYERS

The Board

The Board is an established body responsible for issuance of policy guidelines to the DCIC and in accordance with Section 7 (1b) of the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, is responsible for issuing Uganda Passports and other travel documents.

Applicants

Applicants get application forms (A and B) which they fill and take to the Local Council chairpersons (LC I, II and III) and Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) for endorsement. They have a responsibility of submitting the duly filled forms for approval by the immigration officers.

Permanent Secretary, MIA

The Permanent Secretary is the administrative head and chief executive officer responsible for policy implementation and overall supervision of activities in the Ministry.

Director, DCIC

The Director is the head of the DCIC responsible for the implementation of policies in the three Departments of Citizenship and Passport Control, Immigration Control and Inspection and Legal services.

Commissioner, Citizenship and Passport Control

The Commissioner is the head of the Citizenship and Passport Control Department. He implements the decisions of the board and attends to other administrative instructions from above. He is responsible for the supervision of staff under his Department.

Assistant Commissioner, Citizenship and Passport Control

The Assistant Commissioner deputizes for the Commissioner, Citizenship and Passport Control. He is the Passport Control Officer (PCO) and in charge of approval and signing of Passports. He is also responsible for direction and supervision of staff under him.

Assistant Passport Control Officer

The Assistant Passport Control Officer (APCO) deputizes for the PCO, approves and signs Passports and is also charged with supervising staff under him.

Principal Immigration Officer, Strong room

The Principal Immigration Officer, Strong Room, is the administrative head of the strong room section. He is responsible for Passport printing and prepares them for signing by the PCO and his deputy. He is also in charge of the day-to-day supervision of staff under his section.

Senior Immigration Officers, Headquarters

There are three senior immigration officers at headquarters in charge of Reception, Passport delivery and general supervision. At the reception, the senior immigration officer or the receptionist provides applicants with the general information required in filling in forms and regarding the submission procedures (Details in the attached forms A and B).

Senior Immigration officers, Regional and District offices

There are also senior immigration officers at regional and district offices responsible for receiving Passport applications, verifying applicants' particulars, submission of applications to headquarters and distribution of approved and processed passports.

Ugandan Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad

Ugandan Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad help Ugandans to acquire passports while abroad. The embassy officials receive application forms from clients, interview them and verify their citizenship status. The processed files are

sent to Kampala for passport processing. The processed passports are then sent to the embassies which deliver them to successful applicants.

LCs, DISO and RDCs

Local council chairpersons (LC I, II and III), District Internal Security Officers (DISOs) and Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) confirm the citizenship of applicants by endorsing on application forms before they are submitted to the immigration office.

3.2 PROCESS DESCRIPTION

It takes ten (10) working days or fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of receiving an application to the delivery of a processed passport to the applicant.

The following processes are involved:

3.2.1 Issuance of Application Forms

Application forms (Forms A and B) are obtained at immigration offices at the headquarters, regional and, district offices and Ugandan Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad.

Application Form A

The following information is required to be filled in;

- Particulars of applicants (Name, Date of birth, Place of birth, profession, Address, Telephone contact)
- Type of citizenship
- Marriage status
- Declaration by applicant (Specimen signature and date of signature)
- Recommender's name, address, profession, telephone contact and signature

Application Form B

- Particulars of applicants (Names, Country of residence, Village, Sub county, Date of birth)
- Particulars of applicant's parent
- Type of citizenship
- Declaration by applicant (Specimen signature and date of signature)
- Recommendation from LC I to III and Resident District Commissioner
-

Other application forms

There are application forms to be filled by a client under the following circumstances:

- Loss of passport
- Children under the age of sixteen (16) years
- Renewal of passport

The application forms for initial passport are required to be signed by LC chairpersons (LC I, II and III), DISOs and RDCs before approval by the immigration officers.

3.2.2 **Receipt of Application Forms**

The duly filled application forms and other supporting documents are presented to the Passport Assessment Office to obtain Bank Payment Advice Forms (BPAFs) from the cash office which are used in the designated banks for payment of Passport fees. Under the new system, which was introduced in September 2008, applicants have to pay the passport fees in advance (that is before submission of application forms). However, before the introduction of advance payment of passport fees, passports would be processed to be paid for later.

On presentation of a receipt and a copy of BPAFs from Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) confirming payment of Passport fees of Ug.shs.50,000, the duly filled forms and supporting documents are delivered and received by immigration officers. The applicant is then interviewed and his/her papers verified to confirm his/her nationality. The immigration officer, when satisfied, endorses on the application file with a recommendation to the PCO. This also confirms that the applicant has been physically seen and the documents belong to him/her. The immigration officer allocates the applicant a file number which is booked in the receiving register. The file is then sent to the PCO for approval before the printing of a passport. When the applicant fails to satisfy the immigration officer during the interview, he/she is advised to reappear with the correct documents confirming his/her citizenship.

At the embassies abroad, application forms are received from Ugandan citizens who are interviewed by the embassy officials and the approved application forms sent to Kampala for passport processing.

3.2.3 **Approval Of Application Forms**

The PCO on receipt of the application files from the receiving section and embassies abroad, further verifies the files and checks if the information given in the application forms (Forms A and B) tallies with that in the supporting documents. The PCO also reviews the written commitment by the immigration officers to verify that the applicant physically appeared for interviews as required by the law/regulations. This function is also done by his deputy due to the volume of files handled in a day. When the PCO or his deputy is satisfied with the information on the files, the files are registered, and a list of approved files compiled and sent to the strong room for passport printing. Some files are queried and a list of queried files is prepared and the files sent to the query desk (Room 6) and others sent to the legal service department depending on the magnitude of the query.

3.2.4 **Passport Printing**

The Passport printing is done from a strong room at MIA headquarters where the process is computerized. Blank Passports are imported from an international supplier and stored at Bank of Uganda (B.O.U) premises due to limited storage facilities at the Ministry. Few blank passports are requisitioned from B.O.U by the officer in charge of the strong room on a regular basis. A portion of blank passports received from the B.O.U is taken to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED), for embossment.

Approved applicants' files from the PCO are allocated to data entry officers and individual applicants' bio-data captured after further verification of the file contents. The files are verified to ensure that the applicant's bio-data is in agreement with the initial interviewing officers' recommendation. Spellings and proof of payment are also checked. Files which fail the test are recorded and sent to the query desk for the notification of the applicants.

The captured bio-data is stored in the print server and electronically transferred to the data transfer machine which prepares the Multiple Layer Infilling System (MLIS) sheets. The MLIS sheets are used to check whether applicants' details have been properly captured before "burning"¹ of the blank Passports. The fully processed

¹ Burning is the electronic transfer of an applicant's bio-data on MLIS sheet to a blank passport

Passports after “burning” are then swiped through a quality control machine which ensures that the details in the passport appear as captured in the system.

The Passports are alphabetically arranged by an officer in the strong room and attached on the applicants’ physical files and forwarded for writing and stamping (Page 45 of the passport) awaiting PCO’s signature.

The PCO or his deputy further verifies the Passport details and the bio-data on the files before signing the Passports. The duly signed Passports are then booked into a register by an officer in the strong room and handed over to the delivery section or regional/district immigration heads accordingly.

After the Passports are handed over, the applicant’s files are “put away” and later sent to the central registry for filing.

3.2.5 **Query Desk**

The application files which are queried at the PCO’s level and in the Printing room are forwarded to the query desk for further verification. On receipt of the queried files, the immigration officer in charge of the query desk records them and invites the applicant (using the telephone contact on the application form) to answer the queries raised. When queries are cleared, the files are taken back to either the PCO’s office for approval or the strong room for passport printing. Complicated queries are sent to the investigation and legal department for further investigation and legal interpretation.

3.2.6 **Passport Renewals**

Applicants obtain and fill application forms for renewal from the receptions of the immigration offices at the headquarters, regional and district offices, and Ugandan Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad. The duly filled renewal forms are delivered to the receiving section and the original applicants’ files retrieved from the registry. The renewal forms are then filed on the original file and forwarded to PCO for approval. A list of approved files is then sent to the strong room for passport printing.

3.2.7 **Passport Delivery**

Delivery of passports is decentralized to thirteen (13) regional offices. The regional offices include; Jinja, Tororo, Mbale, Mbarara, Fort portal, Masaka, Hoima, Masindi, Mubende, Mityana, Gulu, Arua and Lira. Passports processed at the Ministry

headquarters are delivered to applicants from the "Front Desk" of the delivery section. Up country Passports are received by regional/district immigration officers and delivered to applicants from their up-country stations.

On receipt of the processed Passports from the strong room, the passports are entered in a register by the Officer-in charge of the delivery section who arranges them according to the date of printing for easy identification during delivery to the successful applicants.

Applicants present a copy of the BPAF," Yellow copy" and their names are checked in the arranged Passports ready for delivery.

When the Passport is located, the applicant is once again interviewed to confirm that he/she is a citizen and that the passport belongs to him/her. The Passport details are then booked into a delivery register by one of the immigration officers in the delivery section and the applicant signs for his/her passport. There are two registers kept, one for Passports with even numbers and the other for Passports with odd numbers to allow for easy location.

Applicants whose names do not appear in the ready-to-deliver passports are referred to the query desk to find out the reasons for the non-processing of their applications.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.0 PROCESSING OF PASSPORTS

The Processing of a passport, according to the DCIC, takes ten working days and each section having a standard time allocated within which to perform its responsibilities as follows:-

Table 3: Number of days required to process a Passport

SECTION	NUMBER OF DAYS
RECEIVING	1
PCO	1
PRINTING (STRONG ROOM)	4
DELIVERY (FRONT DESK)	4
TOTAL	10

The above criterion applies to both new issues and renewals.

4.1 NEW ISSUES

4.1.1 Overall Performance

The audit evaluated the total time it takes to process a passport through the whole process from receiving and approval of application forms to the delivery of passports to clients. It was noted that the processing of passports generally delayed with an overall average delay of 24 days in 2006/07, 25 days in 2007/2008 and 13 days in 2008/09. There were delays at both the Ministry Headquarters and regional/district offices.

The processing of passports at the Ministry Headquarters registered average delay of 13 days in 2006/2007 and 11 days in 2007/2008. Great improvement was noticed in FY 2008/2009 which registered an average delay of 2 days. There were instances when individual passports were processed within less than the standard time of 10 days during FY 2008/2009. This improvement was mostly attributed to the introduction of the new passport pre-payment system introduced in September 2008, where applicants are required to pay in advance before approval of

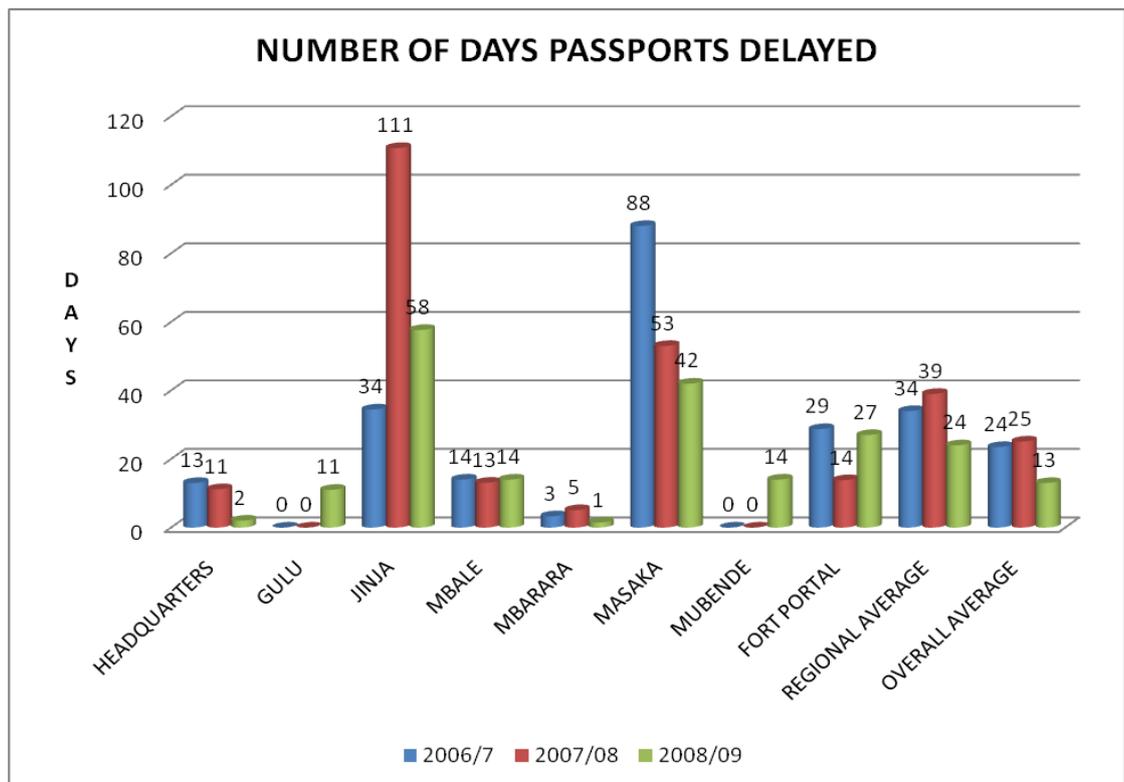
application forms. This is intended to increase applicants' commitment and response time on matters regarding their applications.

The regional performance (all regions/district combined) registered an average delay of 34 days in 2006/2007, 39 days in 2007/08 and an improvement to 24 days in FY 2008/2009.

Jinja was the poorest performing region/district followed by Masaka and Fort Portal. Mbarara district performed well. The good performance in Mbarara region/district was attributed to effective communication by the immigration officer who uses his personal mobile phone to either call or send short messages to applicants when their passports are ready.

The detailed performance of regional/district offices and the Ministry Headquarters is illustrated in the following graph:

Bar graph showing delays at Headquarters, Regions/districts and Overall Performance



Source: OAG analysis of Passport dates from registers at Headquarters and regional/district offices

NB: 0 means "no records were availed to the audit team"

An analysis of the delays in Gulu and Mubende districts for FY 2006/07 and 2007/2008 could not be performed due to poor record keeping at the stations during the period.

4.1.2 **Sectional Performance**

The audit also evaluated the time it takes to process a passport at different sections of the production process. Each section has got a standard time within which to perform its activities. However, it was not possible to analyze the performance of all sections due to poor record keeping which was characterized by failure to record files in the registers and lack of dates on some entries. Sectional performance was analyzed as described below:-

4.1.2.1 **Delays from Receipt of Application Forms to Printing**

It takes a maximum of 6 working days from the date of receipt of an approved application form to the printing of a passport.

The audit revealed that the processing of application forms to the printing of a passport was taking longer than the stipulated time. The delays averaged from 21 days in FY 2006/07, 25 days in FY 2007/08 and 11 days in FY 2008/09. The audit revealed that regional/district offices were experiencing longer delays on an average of 31 days in 2006/07, 36 days in 2007/08 and 16 days in 2008/09.

For example, Jinja registered an average delay of 10 days in FY 2007/08 while Masaka posted average delays of 87 and 65 days during FYs 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 respectively. The delays at the Ministry Headquarters were 10 days in FY 2006/2007, 13 days in FY 2007/08 and 5 days in FY 2008/2009. The good performance for the head office during 2008/2009 is attributable to the introduction of the new passport prepayment system.

The duration of delay from application form processing to the passport printing stages is summarized in the following table:

Table 4: Delays from receipt of application forms to passport printing (days)

	2006/7	2007/08	2008/09
HEADQUARTERS	10	13	5
GULU	*	*	10
JINJA	30	100	52
MBALE	18	2	9
MBARARA	4	3	4
MASAKA	87	65	14
MUBENDE	*	*	3
FORT PORTAL	17	11	17
REGIONAL AVERAGE	31	36	16
OVERALL AVERAGE	21	25	11

***Records not maintained**

Source: OAG Compilation from Passport registers at Headquarters and regional/district offices

Management response:

There has been an improvement in this area and the passports at the headquarters are issued out within 10 working days. However, for the upcountry in issuing stations, the time is still beyond ten days because there are delays from banks upcountry in issuing the returns to the applicants, and also due to the fact that the officers have to travel to the headquarters for processing and collection of the ready passports. Regional Immigration officers have to first accumulate a sizeable number of applications for 2 or 3 days before making an economic journey to the headquarters.

The problem is exacerbated by inadequate logistics at the regional/district offices.

4.1.2.2 Delivery of Passports

The delivery section is supposed to deliver passports to clients within four working days from the date of receipt of the printed passports from the printing room by the front desk to the date of handover to clients.

It was noted that there were delays in delivering the passports to the clients, with an average of three days in FY 2006/7, one day in FY 2007/08 and three days in FY 2008/09. At the Ministry Headquarters, Passports were delivered to the clients on an average of two and three days before the due delivery dates in 2007/08 and 2008/09 respectively. However, regions/districts performed more poorly compared

to the headquarters. Clients received their passports after longer delays averaging three days after the due delivery dates in 2006/07 and 2007/08. In 2008/09 it was noted that clients received their passports on an average of eight days after the due delivery dates.

The nature of the delay in the delivery of passports is summarized in the table 5 below:

Table 5: Delays in delivery of Passports

	2006/7	2007/08	2008/09
HEADQUARTERS	3	-2	-3
GULU	*	*	1
JINJA	4	11	6
MBALE	-3	8	6
MBARARA	0	-3	-3
MASAKA	2	-4	29
MUBENDE	*	*	6
FORT PORTAL	12	5	10
REGIONAL AVERAGE	3	3	8
OVERALL AVERAGE	3	1	3

***Records not maintained**

Management response

It is not possible to keep passports in the delivery office (front desk) for 4 days after production due to lack of storage facilities. The problem that is experienced is the failure of applicants to collect their passports. A surcharge should be imposed on all those applicants who fail to collect their passports on time, after due notification.

4.1.3 Renewals

Renewed passports are expected to be delivered to the applicants within four (4) days after the printing of the passports. The delays in renewals could not be analyzed from the time of printing the passport to its delivery to the clients due to the poorly maintained renewals' register which had many missing entries and or booking dates.

The analysis of renewals at the regional/district immigration offices was also impossible due to lack of separate registers for renewals and new issues.

In the period under review, it took an average of 12, 4 and 3 days in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, respectively to deliver renewed passports to applicants. The failure to adhere to the stipulated delivery time caused an average delay of eight (8)

days in 2006/07. However, improvement was noted in 2007/08 where there was no delay and in 2008/09 renewed passports were on average delivered to clients before the stipulated delivery time as shown in table 6 below:

Table 6: Delays in the delivery of renewed Passports

YEAR	Average days taken to process renewed passports	Average delay (Days)
2006/07	12	8
2007/08	4	0
2008/09	3	-1

Source: OAG Compilation from Passport registers at Headquarters

Management response

Two new records staff have been recruited to help streamline the renewals register. All files that are taken out of the registry are recorded.

4.1.4 Exceptional Cases

It was noted that there were some isolated cases where the processing of passports had taken a very long period of more than ten years. The issuing of passports on these files had been delayed for an average of 14, 18 and 17 years during 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 Financial Years. The application forms had been submitted between 1980 to 2004 and the passports printed during 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 Financial years. These applications had been submitted before the introduction of the new passport prepayment system when the commitment of the clients was very low.

It was further noted that the delivery section still had un-collected passports which had been processed at least six months prior to the audit. In October 2008, the last recorded date, un-collected passports totaled 1,155.

The section did not have an up-to-date figure of un-collected passports at the time of audit (September 2009). It was also not clear whether the applicants are notified when the passports are ready.

Management response:

Before the introduction of the new system of prepayment for passports, there was lack of commitment by applicants who would take longer to respond to queries or pick up the processed passports.

Some applicants are confused by illegal middlemen who prolong the passport process in preference to charging them exorbitant fees. We have issued strong instructions to the police to arrest all those middlemen/agents who hang around immigration offices and take advantage of innocent applicants.

4.2 **CAUSES OF THE DELAYS IN PROCESSING OF PASSPORTS**

The causes of the delays in the processing of passports can be traced throughout the entire processing cycle. The following causes were identified during the audit:

4.2.1 **Verification of Citizenship**

The verification of applicants' citizenship at the receiving section relies on the recommendations of the various local administrators and government agencies comprising of chairpersons of Local Council (LC I) to LC.III), the District Internal Security Officers (DISO), the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC).

At the receiving section, DCIC performs additional verification procedures such as interviewing the applicant; considering physical features such as facial complexion and skin colour, among others. The procedures are time consuming and lead to congestion and clients queuing for a long time. All the staff interviewed confirmed that the verification methods used are time consuming and render the exercise long because of the unconventional methods used.

Conclusion:

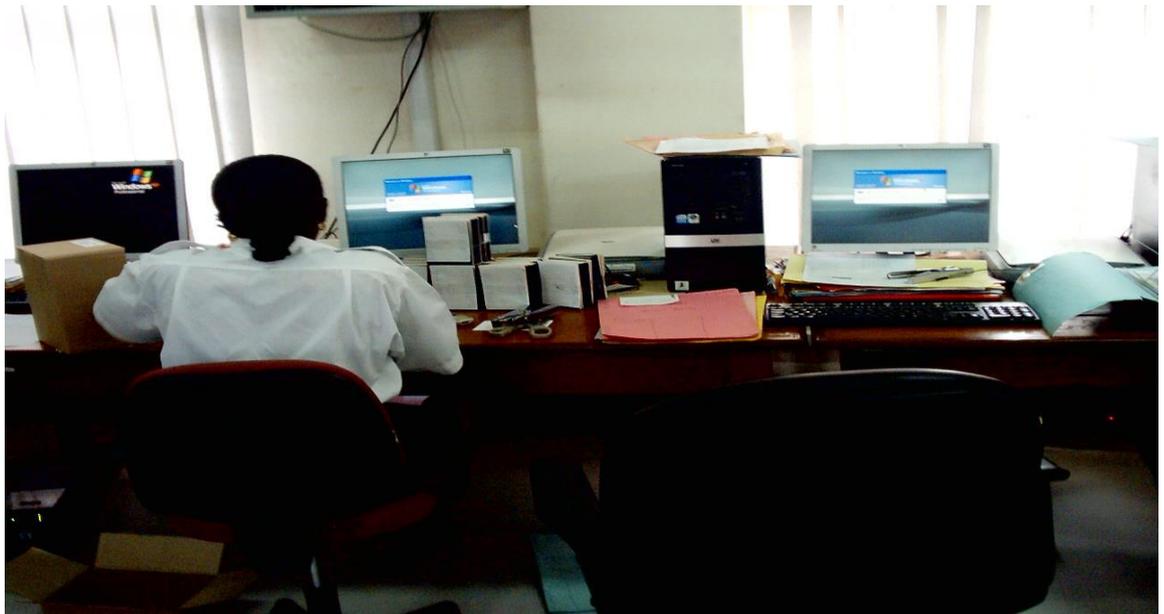
The use of unconventional citizenship verification methods delays the interviewing exercise and the subsequent processing of application forms. This in turn affects the time taken to submit approved application forms to the strong room for passport printing.

Management response:

Extra checks are performed to ensure that the right people get the passports. The Verification process does not go by physical features and facial complexion alone, it also involves a combination of several other verification aspects such as putting to the applicant additional questions during interview. The lack of National Identity Cards farther prolongs the verification exercise.

4.2.2 Information Technology

There was limited use of IT in the processing of passports. The activities such as: registration of application forms, forwarding of files to the PCO and to the printing room, registration of the printed passports and the delivery of passports to clients are performed manually. In the strong room, the printing and indexing of passports is computerized. Tagging, writing, stamping and registration activities are carried out manually.



Immigration officer capturing application files

We noted that the Department has not embraced the use of IT in its work processes. We noted that 62% of the staff, interviewed possessed IT skills but only 9% were using IT in their work situations.

Conclusion:

The Passport Control Office has not embraced the use of IT in the passport processing cycle and this continues to hamper the attainment of the objective to increase the

speed of processing passports and other immigration documentation set by the directorate.

Management response:

The Ministry computers are not networked to link all passport issuing centres in the country. A local area network exists at the headquarters and some immigration offices such as that of the director and the commissioner are linked to the passport printing room.

The IT skills of staff will be harnessed to help improve the passport production process.

4.2.3 Handling of Queried Applications

The applicant is supposed to be notified of the query by telephone. We noted that 90% of the queried applicants are verbally notified when they make follow up on their applications at the front desk. It is only 10% of the applicants who are advised on phone. This facility is only available at the Headquarters in Kampala but not available in all the up-country stations. The verbal communication of the queried application forms to clients affects the client response time and hence the delays in the process.

In its efforts to reduce the incidence of queried application forms, the Directorate has embarked on public awareness campaigns where television and radio programmes have been introduced to enlighten the public on matters and procedures concerning the acquisition of passports and other travel documents. Information and educational materials have also been introduced and a Public Guide to Uganda Passport procedures (2009) was published with the assistance from Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS). The Directorate has also established a website (www.immigration.go.ug) to strengthen public relations.

Conclusion:

The PCO lacks the efficient communication facilities required to increase efficiency in the modern business environment which in turn hampers the business-client feedback mechanism, which is very important in effective service delivery.

4.2.4 Records Management

We noted that the recording, filing and retrieval of client files at the central registry was not properly done. Some files are brought or taken out of the registry without being recorded. We also observed that entry into the registry is not restricted. It is

accessible to every member of staff including the support staff as well as to the clients.

According to the Officer-in charge of the central registry, the problems in the registry are due to uncoordinated recording and filing activities between his section and the receiving section and the lack of storage space which leads to haphazard storing of records. He further explained that the registry still stores old records of as far back as the 1930s when the first passport was issued in Uganda.

The audit inspection found the central registry overwhelmed by the huge volume of records/files which were not properly stored. Records/ files with effect from 2001 to date were still lying on the registry floor.



Records/files fully packed in central registry

Records/ files kept on the registry floor due to lack of storage space

Poor records management affects the location and retrieval of records/files during the processing of passports hence causing delays in the processes. Most affected is the renewal of old passports where the client's file has to be retrieved before the approval of application forms. Also affected are new applications whose records have been queried, and also new cases where a family maintains one file.

Out of the 216 files under renewals category which were requested for from the central registry for up-country stations, only four files were retrieved and availed for audit after searching for two weeks.

A project to computerize the registers had begun with the central registry whereby the scanning of files had commenced. At the time of audit in September 2009 the project had stalled due to implementation challenges.

Conclusion

The Directorate has not established a proper record management system and this affects the processing time of passports especially when the decisions to approve application forms depend on reference information that has to be retrieved.

Management response

There is a register for booking files leaving the registry. The filing system in the registry is inadequate due to the limited storage space. Files from the year 2005 to date are not on shelves. Attempts to request for more storage space from the Ministry of Public Service did not yield results. The Ministry has embarked on an exercise of scanning records of files from 2001 to date. The exercise, however, is slow due to lack of heavy duty scanning machines. Two records assistants have also been recruited to increase on the manpower.

4.2.5 Staff Working Conditions

Staff commitment and concentration towards work was very low which in turn affects the speed of processing passports.

It was noted that the flow of work during the processing of passports was affected by the poor staff working conditions. When members of staff were interviewed about their working conditions, they cited the problems of office accommodation, transport, communication and poor remuneration. We also noted that immigration officers were using very old furniture both at the regions/districts and at head office. All the visited regions/districts were housed in old and dilapidated central government buildings constructed a long time ago. Most of the immigration officers in the PCO at head office are also housed in old structures built during the colonial times.

Staff at the head office also complained of air pollution caused by tobacco fumes from the adjacent tobacco factory which is a health threat to their lives.

Another concern of the staff was that they are only provided with one pair of uniforms whereas they are expected to be in uniform from Monday to Friday yet they have to wash in between the working days.

We noted that all the 7 regional/district immigration offices visited, lacked transport facilities. Officers have to travel to headquarters in Kampala by public means, using their personal funds, to deliver clients' application forms and collect the processed passports for onward delivery to owners. The Department of Citizenship Control is allocated only one (1) vehicle, which is mainly used to collect blank passports and embossed passports from B.O.U and MoFPED, respectively.

We noted that it is difficult to conduct inspection visits satisfactorily in the whole country using one vehicle.

Dissatisfaction was also expressed by staff against being financially marginalized; citing the fact that despite the annual revenue contribution of Shs.3.01 billion (2006/07), Shs.3.37 billion (2007/08) and Shs.3.45 billion (2008/09) from passport fees collection alone, their working conditions remained poor.

Conclusion:

The audit findings from the staff interviews affirmed that the directorate did not adequately address the working conditions of staff as stated in its objectives of providing transport facilities, utilities and logistics for all immigration staff, renovating dilapidated office blocks, motivating staff through awards and rewards and coordinating and monitoring all the immigration posts in the country.

Management response:

The Ministry acknowledges the observations made, but mitigation measures are constrained by the government budgeting system. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development allocates a budget ceiling beyond which a ministry cannot make budget provisions. Plans are underway to provide staff with uniforms.

4.3 **OVERALL EFFECT OF DELAYED PROCESSING OF PASSPORTS**

The overall effect of delayed processing of passports is the dissatisfaction of the public who may resort to other means of acquiring passports such as using middlemen who request for illegal and exorbitant processing fees.

4.4 **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The time taken to process passports was generally longer than the expected time and this was mainly as a result of the bottlenecks in the system which mostly affected up-country regions/districts.

The improvement at the headquarters can further be extended to achieve a shorter passport processing time if the Ministry removed most of the bottlenecks hampering the efficient operation of production process.

CHAPTER 5
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Verification of Citizenship

5.1.1 The MIA should address the challenges and iron out the setbacks affecting the completion of the National Identification Project which, when completed will reduce on the time immigration officers take during the citizenship verification exercise

5.2 Information Technology

5.2.1 The MIA should take advantage of the existing Passport software used in the printing section and existing computer networks in all the sectional offices to computerize the passport processing cycle to reduce on the time taken to process passports.

5.2.2 The MIA should tap the IT skills possessed by the staff, which has not been exploited to increase staff efficiency at work.

5.2.3 The staff that lack IT skills should be trained and refresher courses regularly carried out to enable them to increase their efficiency in the processing of passports.

5.3 Handling of Queried Applications

5.3.1 The MIA should improve on its communication strategy and feedback mechanisms to enable clients to respond quickly to the queries raised during processing application forms.

5.3.2 The MIA should focus on the implementation of their budgets and monitor the budgetary performance to ensure that the objectives of the their policy statements are achieved.

5.3.3 The MIA should develop a sustainability plan to enable it to support its newly introduced public awareness programmes in the media. This will create awareness among the clients regarding the processes involved in the timely acquisition of a passport.

5.3.4 The published passport guidelines should be distributed to all passport processing centers and be well displayed to enable the public to understand and appreciate the passport procedures.

5.4 **Records Management**

5.4.1 The project to computerize the central registry should be revived and completed to improve on records management.

5.4.2 The Directorate should harmonize the recording and filing procedures between the central registry and the application receiving section to allow for the proper management of records.

5.5 **Staff Working Conditions**

5.5.1 The MIA should develop a strategy to improve staff welfare and working conditions so as to improve on their efficiency in performing their duties.

5.5.2 The MIA should implement its reward strategy whereby the best performing regions/districts or individual staff are recognized and rewarded to increase institutional and staff motivation and commitment at workplaces.

John F.S. Muwanga

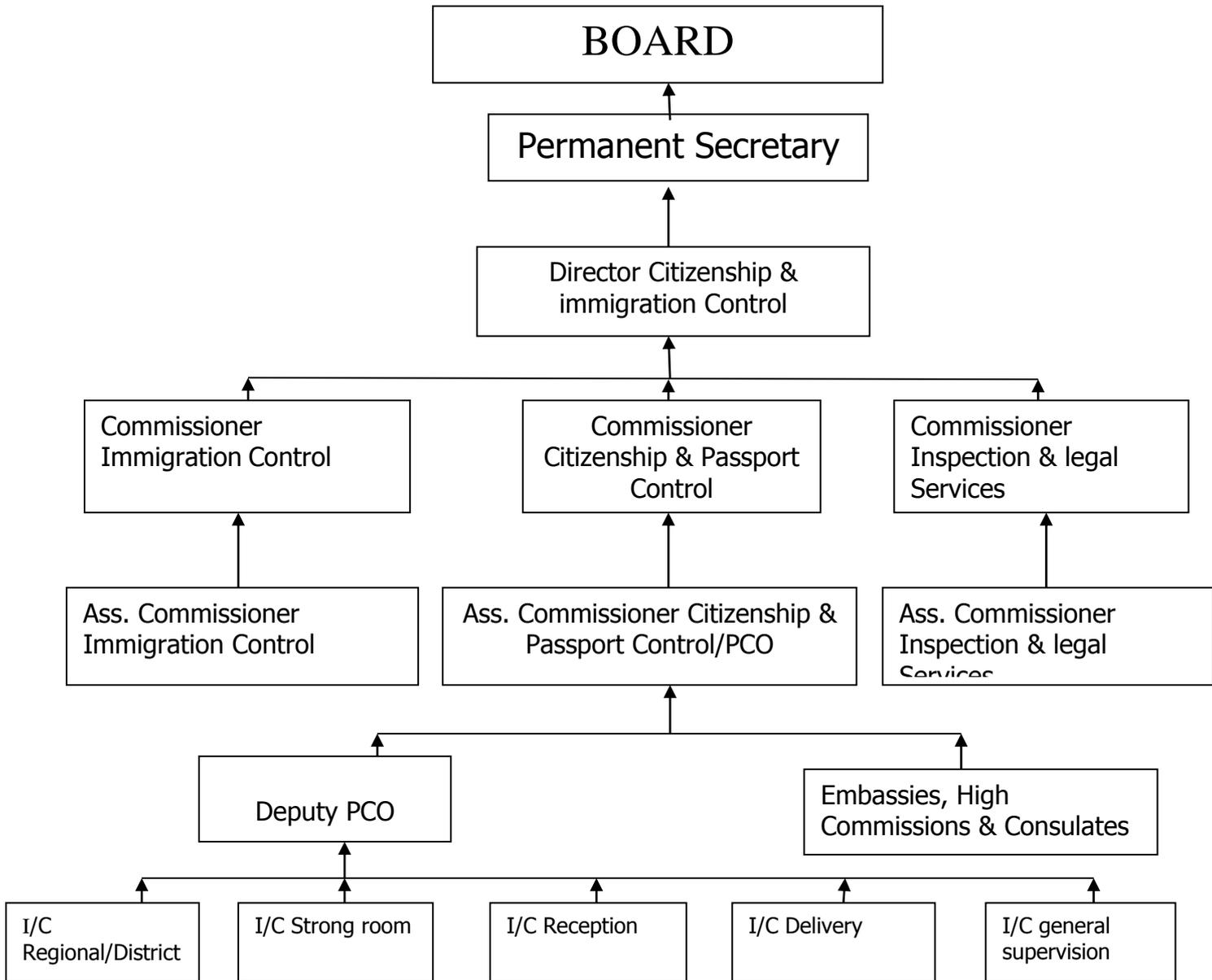
AUDITOR GENERAL

KAMPALA

25TH MARCH 2010

APPENDIX I

**DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE DIRECTORATE OF
CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION CONTROL-PASSPORT CONTROL
DEPARTMENT**



As explained to the auditors by Immigration staff

APPENDIX II

The following people were interviewed:-

Section	Officer	Purpose of the interview
Administration	Permanent Secretary	To obtain information about the overall organization of the MIA and policy matters.
	Commissioner (DC&I)	To obtain information about the organization of the Directorate, policy matters, laws, regulations and agree on the assessment criteria.
Passport Control office	Assistant Commissioner (DC&I)/ Passport control officer (PCO)	To obtain information about the organization of the department, the processes, activities and challenges faced in the passport control office.
	Principal Immigration officer/Deputy PCO	As above
Passport printing	Principal Immigration officer/Strong room	To obtain information on the printing process of passports and challenges faced.
Reception	Senior immigration Officer	To obtain information on how applicants are received and directed into procedures of acquiring a passport.
Delivery	Senior immigration Officer	To obtain information on how passports are delivered to applicants and the challenges faced.
Front office	Senior immigration Officer	To obtain information on the activities carried out at the front office and the challenges faced.
Regional and District immigration offices	Senior immigration Officer	To obtain information on processes, activities and challenges at the regional and district immigration offices.
Accounts	Senior Accountant	To obtain information on passport fees paid by applicants.

The following documents and records were reviewed:-

Document	Purpose of the review
The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) as amended.	To obtain the constitutional provisions affecting the activities of the department of passport control.
Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act (Cap.66),	To obtain the legal requirements governing citizenship and immigration procedures.
The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Regulations (2004)	To obtain the regulatory requirements governing citizenship and immigration procedures.
The Passport Regulations, 2004	To obtain the regulatory requirements governing passport processing procedures.
Ministerial Policy Statements (2006/07, 2007/2008 & 2008/09)	To obtain the Vision, Mission, goals, objectives, activities, targets and performance of the DCIC.
Passport registers (2006/07, 2007/2008 & 2008/09)	To obtain the dates of application, approval, printing and delivery of passports and ascertain the average delay.
Ministerial Revenue and Expenditure Estimates(2006/07, 2007/2008 & 2008/09)	To ascertain the budget allocation of the ministry and in particular the directorates expenditure related to the passport control office.
Audited Financial Statements (2006/07, 2007/08) and 2008/09	To obtain the performance of the Non Tax Revenue (NTR) contributed by the Passport control department in form of passport fees and the amount the ministry spent on DC&IC.