

IBOC: Trade leads

AUSTRIA — International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Bidder Database — Canadian suppliers of equipment related to all aspects of operation of the IAEA — including nuclear equipment, equipment for safeguarding nuclear facilities, detec-



IBOC
International Business
Opportunities Centre

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As Team Canada Inc.'s Sourcing Centre, the International Business Opportunities Centre (IBOC) matches business opportunities from around the world with the business interests of Canadian exporters, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. IBOC offers a value-added service to trade commissioners by directly contacting Canadian companies about foreign trade leads.

To pursue our international trade leads, check out our Web site at www.iboc.gc.ca (particularly our E-Leads® and Web-Leads®).

tion equipment and such items as office supplies and furniture — are invited to register for a bidders list that will be used for the solicitation of contract bids by the UN and affiliated organizations. Interested companies must complete the application form and submit a financial report. To request the form, contact the International Atomic Energy Agency, Procurement and Supply Section, Wagramer Strasse 5, P.O. Box 100, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, quoting case no. 011122-05243. For more information about doing business with the UN and the IAEA, consult the UN procurement Web site at: www.iapso.org (Notice received from the Canadian Embassy in Vienna.)

SOUTH AFRICA — Licence for Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite — The Minister of Communications invites applications for licences to operate a telecommunications service using Global Mobile Personal Communications by Satellite (GMPCS). The GMPCS licence enables the provision of fixed or mobile, broadband and/or narrowband telecommunications services to end users from a satellite or a network of satellites using, but not limited, to VSAT systems. Cost of application: SAR 50,000. Closing date:

April 30, 2002. For more information about the application process, contact the Chairperson, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), 164 Katherine Street, Block B, Pin Mill Farm, Sandton 2196 South Africa, fax: (011-27-11) 321-8547. To receive a response, provide complete contact information including fax, telephone and e-mail. For more information, visit the ICASA Web site at: http://docweb.pwv.gov.za/NewDocuments/ITA_GMPCS.html Contact Karen Garner, Trade Commissioner, Canadian High Commission Trade Office, Johannesburg, fax: (011-27-11) 442-3325, e-mail: karen.garner@dfait-maeci.gc.ca quoting case no. 020122-00310. (Notice received from the Canadian High Commission Trade Office in Johannesburg.)

IBOC trade opportunities — find out more at www.iboc.gc.ca

Editor-in-Chief: Suzanne Lalonde-Gaëtan
Managing Editor: Louis Kovacs
Editor: Julia Gualtieri

Layout: Yen Le

Circulation: 70,000
Telephone: (613) 992-7114
Fax: (613) 992-5791
E-mail: canad.export@dfait-maeci.gc.ca
Internet:

www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport

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CanadExport

Albert Rock is a true innovator. In the mid-1980s, the British Columbia entrepreneur invented an automatic measurement device to help him keep up with the demand for his services collecting information on buildings' mechanical systems for troubleshooting purposes. His invention proved so popular Rock did himself out of a job as a human "information logger" — and into a multi-million-dollar manufacturing and distribution business. Now a world leader in an industry Rock pioneered, ACR Systems Inc. continues a tradition of innovation in everything from its export strategies to the fascinating end-uses of its portable information logger.

Started as a research and development company with financial assistance from Industry Canada, and incorporated in 1986, Surrey, B.C.-based ACR Systems today has 32 employees and sales approaching \$10 million. "We're still a small company," explains General Manager David McDougall, "but we're big exporters."

Exports, in fact, represent 83% of company sales and are made to 100 countries around the world, including the United States, which is both ACR's primary export market and primary market, period.

Variety of users and uses

McDougall describes ACR's data loggers as "smart instruments that can collect information on anything that can be measured — temperature, relative humidity, pressure, electrical current, pulse signals, and more." These small portable instruments take readings at regular intervals, and the information, stored in the logger's memory, is then transferred to computer for analysis. The loggers themselves don't solve

problems but provide a continuous record of conditions so that the end user can take whatever action is necessary.

The uses to which ACR's instruments have been put are virtually endless. The loggers have, for example,

Small B.C. high-tech company a big exporter

"Innovation" loggers

monitored the temperature of the heat tiles on space shuttles to determine the optimum materials for use under extreme temperature conditions; monitored the temperature of frozen foods in transportation to ensure food safety; and monitored the power quality of slot machines, since poor power quality can produce "false jackpots." A data logger placed in the box transporting the Iceman from its place of discovery in northern B.C. in 1999 ensured the correct temperature for preserving the body for scientific analysis.

Innovation creates edge

There are now about 150 companies in the industry, says Albert Rock, but his company has a definite competitive edge. "We're considered the Rolls Royce of data loggers — we're higher priced but have unique technology and a much longer battery life."

Innovation also extends to ACR's export strategy. Rather than supplying directly to end-users, the 100% Aboriginal-owned company has pursued worldwide business partnerships with industrial instrumentation companies that integrate ACR products into broader industrial electronics systems that they are supplying to end users with specific problems to solve.

Such business partnerships have also helped ACR to avoid reinventing the wheel when it comes to providing technical support. "Our conclusion is that with the number of countries we deal with, we literally can't do it on our own. We need partners who already understand the local business culture and language," says Rock.

Another beneficial partnership for ACR has been with agencies of the Canadian government, including the International Trade Centre and Aboriginal Business Canada in Vancouver. Over two years ago, ACR began re-

ceiving accounts receivable insurance from Export Development Corporation (now Export Development Canada), which has led to increased sales and larger orders.



ACR President and founder Albert Rock with his SmartButton mini Data Logger (inset).

Partnerships pay off

The company's strategies have paid off. Over the past five years, ACR has more than doubled the number of distribution points in its worldwide network, from 60 to more than 150 resellers. A February 2001 opening of a sales office near San Francisco has put ACR on track for increasing U.S. sales 20% over the previous fiscal year. And within the next 12 months, the company intends to expand its presence in Western Europe. With such expansion, there is no telling where ACR's data loggers will turn up next.

For more information, contact David McDougall, General Manager, tel.: (604) 591-1128, fax: (604) 591-2252, e-mail: david@acrsystems.com Web site: www.acrsystems.com

(For the unabridged version, see www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport and click on "Sharing Trade Secrets.")

Mexico: By the book — Continued from page 1

that things are going to be rosy. The forecast has been revised to "less than 1% growth, with a large possibility of a small contraction."

Longer term, much hinges on the U.S., to which Mexico sends almost 90% of its exports, and on the global economy. Almost as important is whether Mexico will stay the course on economic reform in the new and uncertain post-9/11 environment.

A full agenda

Attracting foreign investment is one of many priorities for President Vicente Fox's administration. According to Mexican statistics, Canada ranked fourth overall in 2000 for foreign direct investment (US\$497.2 million), behind the United States, Spain and the Netherlands. The administration is also concerned with job creation, fiscal reform, energy reform, eliminating the budget deficit, restructuring

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