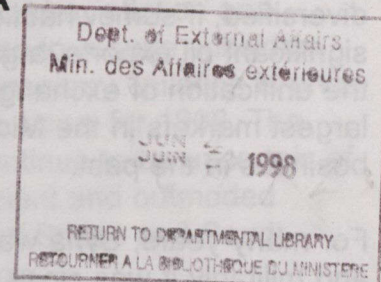


**DOING BUSINESS IN SYRIA****CONTACT:**

Commercial Division,
Canadian Embassy in Damascus
Street Address: Plot 12, Mezza Autostrade, Damascus
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3394, Damascus, Syria
Tel: (011-963-11) 611-6692/611-6851
Fax: (011-963-11) 611-4000
Time: 2 hours ahead of GMT

**SYRIA**

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Area: | 185,180 Km ² |
| Population: | 14.3 million (1995 est.) |
| Official language: | Arabic |
| Other spoken languages: | French, English |
| Currency: | Syrian Pound |
| Current Exchange Rate | US\$ 1 = 42 Syrian Pounds |
| Capital: | Damascus (population 4.0 million) |
| Other Major Cities: | Aleppo (3 million), Homs (1.5 million), Latakia (1 million), Hama (1 million), Deir Ezzor (1 million) |
| Normal Business Hours: | |
| Government | 08:00-14:00, Saturday - Thursday |
| Private | 09:00-14:00 and 17:00-20:00, Saturday - Thursday |

IN BRIEF

A Syrian Businessman recently said that up to about two years ago, a private sector business could not import anything without an import license, and it needed political connections to obtain a license. Now, as long as you have the money, you can get an import license for almost anything.

This change exemplifies the way Syria is changing. For years, Canadian firms had problems penetrating this major Middle Eastern market. Lately, major contracts have been won by Canadian suppliers, and more potential exists, in both the public and the private sector, in the communications, power, plastics, pharmaceutical, agricultural and oil and gas sectors.