

JAPAN'S IMPORT PROMOTION PROGRAMS

The Japanese Government's approach to Canada with regard to import promotion is consistent with broader trade policy objectives outlined in MITI's Export Expansion Program of 1990. This \$US 100 million program called for the establishment of an information network for the promotion of imports, an exchange program among importers and exporters, the dispatch of sectoral experts overseas to seek products with import potential, and pilot projects to establish comprehensive import promotion centres. The country focus of this program is on the EC, Canada, the US, and Oceania. The importance which the Hosokawa Government has placed on opening up the Japanese import market will ensure that this approach continues to be accorded a top priority.

JETRO (the Japan External Trade Organization) is an organization charged with promoting Japanese trade abroad. Originally it promoted exports of Japanese products, but for the last 20 years it has increasingly turned its efforts to promoting imports. While it likes to characterize itself as a private sector organization (and indeed receives some private sector support), the bulk of its funding comes from the Japanese government through MITI. MITI uses JETRO to deliver most of its import promotion programs.

Import promotion programs include:

- publication of a comprehensive series of market guides
- dispatch of experts to identify products in Canada that have import potential in Japan
- organization of import fairs in Japan
- provision of a "Business Support Centre" in Tokyo to provide free office space and advice to foreign companies (for a limited period).
- co-sponsorship of various seminars and workshops dealing with various aspects of doing business in Japan
- dispatch of some 25 import specialists around the world on a long-term basis to work with local companies in developing appropriate strategies for Japan

We are involved with JETRO and the CEA as a co-sponsor of one of these import specialists. We make use of the current incumbent, Mr. Nakayama, to counsel Canadian companies on approaches to the Japanese market. We are now discussing a second import specialist to focus on the building products sector and to be based in an industry association (the BC Specialty Wood Products Group).

We are also working with JETRO to deliver the "Japan Manufacturing Engineer Exchange", whereby up to 10 Canadian engineers will work in Japanese companies for a year to learn of advanced manufacturing technologies. The Japan Science and Technology Fund is being used to provide the Canadian participants with language and cultural awareness training and to help defray some of the costs of their stay in Japan.