

7.2 Analytical Capacity

In order for the APFC to be able to provide the strategic, intellectual leadership that Canadian business leaders, educators, governments, and others require in formulating their response to the Asia Pacific region, there must be a commitment made to strengthening the Foundation's analytical capability. This will enable the APFC to better fulfil its stated mandate to "promote scholarship and expertise" and to "collect and disseminate information and ideas" about the Asia Pacific region.

Indeed, the APFC is well-positioned to enhance this role. It possesses extensive "raw" information resources and continues to develop new and innovative information products -- both in print and electronically -- that package information and data on Asia Pacific in a useful format for its clients. Furthermore, the APFC possesses a national network to distribute these products, both through its regional offices and electronically through APFNet.

In order for the APFC to be able speak authoritatively on issues affecting Canada's economic, political, social, and cultural relations with the Asia Pacific region, however, existing resources need to be complemented by the development of a modest in-house analytical capacity.

It should be noted that there is currently a great deal of research being undertaken across Canada by universities, private and public research institutes, governments, and some major corporations. The development of the APFC's analytical capacity would not be aimed at duplicating existing efforts, but rather to develop the capacity to provide much needed coordination, distillation and dissemination of the current research efforts to Canadians. In this manner, the APFC's analytical function would act as a catalyst encouraging other organizations to apply their energies and resources in a complementary manner to the cause of research aimed at improving Canada's relations with the Asia Pacific.

The development of an in-house capacity to analyze trends and issues affecting Canada's relations with the Asia Pacific region - to distil and disseminate research and analysis in a clear, concise and timely manner - would enable the APFC to offer critical "value-added" information, and policy advice to a broad range of clients -- both directly and indirectly. For example, by presenting timely analysis and policy options through the vehicle of provincial governments, business associations and others, the Foundation will also be able to assist in addressing the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, such an in-house capacity will enable the APFC to partner with other institutions which already have analytical capabilities in economic analysis, or to stimulate research activities in the social sciences where relevant to the APFC's mandate. In this manner, the APFC can act as both a catalyst to encourage research into Asia Pacific issues and a clearinghouse for research currently being undertaken across Canada.

This analytical capacity -- an ability to identify and suggest responses to the issues that