

In terms of some export "commodities" that could effectively compete on the world market, respondents identified aeronautical, electrical, communications, transportation, engineering, construction, pulp and paper, architectural/fashion design, agricultural products and expertise, nuclear energy, high technology and medical research. It would appear that from this mix of export "products", many respondents viewed the "intelligence service sector" -- i.e., "expertise" products (consulting in health care, financial services, communication, environmental and general technology etc.) as a potential source of untapped future trade opportunities. Further, tourism was viewed by most as an "export" Canadians could sell -- particularly in regions such as the Maritimes where further development had potential.

In terms of future growth markets for Canadian exports, respondents pointed to Europe and the Pacific rim as primary, with the U.S. and other countries (i.e., Latin America, Asia etc.) as secondary. Also, respondents perceived Canada as having a positive trade balance; however, a minority believe that this positive balance is eroding.

As noted above, respondents believe that the approach to greater competitiveness preparation and action is through a collective effort; however, it was emphasized that the role of government is to set a framework or plan in place, act as a facilitator within Canada for setting measurable goals and putting efforts in a context, and to externally promote opportunities for Canadian entrepreneurs. Respondents envisaged a multi-disciplined response from government that would attempt to tie together various avenues of current or potential programs into a focused and cohesive direction.

In this regard, respondents currently believe that the government has no cohesive strategy or plan to deal with international trade and greater competitiveness. Further, respondents had no sense of an economic framework or blueprint to contextualize trade efforts -- including the Free Trade Agreement.