

- *"My business is more project-oriented. Instead of going in and trying to market a product on a regular basis, we're looking at projects from time to time. What we need is feedback from the field (from the embassies) to advise us on projects as they're coming up, and to advise us on what stage they're at."*
- *"Our function is to, first, find a project, win it, and then successfully execute it. If we develop a joint venture, it usually ends with the project."*

Whereas manufacturers often need to visit the export markets they are investigating (e.g. *"to understand the social attitudes of people and whether there's a market for our product"*), commercial service companies felt that, given their project-specific needs, the information can be gathered by telephone more cost-effectively.

- *"We can phone people on a regular basis and the bill is \$2,000 per month. That's one plane ticket."*

### Advocacy Role

Businesses are interested in information which assists them with commercial objectives. Associations, however, perform an advocacy role and have a greater need for broad sectoral information related to government activities, policies and plans.

## 3.2 Information Needs

Prior to evaluating the publication, participants were asked to identify and prioritize their needs with respect to information to support their international business activities (i.e. both preparation and export market development).

One overriding theme was that the information must be specific to the needs of each particular business in order to be most useful. Broad sectoral information was of general interest, but did not address the higher order demand for information that can be used to generate sales for a particular business, product or service. The following comments reflect the experience of business people in accessing services that did not provide business-specific information:

- *"We were on a network (the World Trade Centre network) for two years and we found that there weren't opportunities for us. In the end, we dropped it because we didn't see the benefit to our particular business."*
- *"The OBS (Open Bidding Service)...I haven't found anything yet that I've bid on."*