

7. MARKET ACCESS

As a result of Mexico's accession to GATT, the Mexican government has gradually opened the economy to international markets. Tariffs have been lowered from a maximum 100% in 1983, to 20% since December, 1988. The official price system has been totally eliminated and import permits are required on only 198 of the total 11,812 items in the Mexican Harmonized Tariff System.

The import climate for wood and wood products improved as a result of this commercial liberalization. Therefore, imports in this industry, classified under Chapter 44 of the Harmonized System, are subject to an ad valorem duty of maximum 20% assessed on the invoice value. In addition, a customs processing fee of 0.8% is assessed on the invoice value. A 10% value added tax (recently reduced from 15%) is then assessed on the cumulative value of both taxes in addition to the invoice value. Some manufacturers who use imported inputs for their products under a Mexican Government approved manufacturing plan may have the duty and/or VAT waived or rebated. Raw materials, intermediates and machinery for use in manufacturing or assembling products for export are generally eligible to be imported either duty free or under bond.

Formerly, in order to bid on tenders and sell to a government agency or decentralized company, foreign manufacturers required having a local resident agent and to have the foreign supplier registered and accepted by the Secretariat of Planning and Budgeting (Secretaría de Programación y Presupuesto - SPP). As of July 1991, the above requirement for prior registration with SPP has been eliminated.

The new procedures now in force require the foreign supplier to have a local agent or representative and it has to be registered through his local representative as an accepted supplier with each government ministry and/or decentralized agency according to the international tender requirements under review.

International tenders financed by the World Bank or the International Development Bank are open to all member countries of these institutions. More recently, the World Bank, where its credits are involved, has required that bid documents should also include an affidavit confirming that the Canadian company is a bona fide Canadian company with an official residence in Canada and that Canada is recognized as a contributing member to the World Bank.

There are no official metric requirements applicable to imports into Mexico. However, since the metric system of units is, by law, the official standard of weights and measures in Mexico, importers will usually require metric labeling for packaged goods, although the English system is also used. Dual labeling is acceptable. Imported products should be labeled in Spanish containing the following information: name of the product, trade