

SECTORAL MARKETING PROBLEMS:

Majority of the companies in the sector, especially those in GIS, have annual revenues below \$5.0 million per annum. They lack necessary financial and human resources to collect market intelligence, to prepare bids and execute large projects overseas.

These shortcomings on the international scene could be minimised somewhat by a trade association mandated to exercise an effective promotional role on behalf of its membership in export markets.

An obvious disadvantage of the sector is the recent significant increase in competitiveness of foreign firms who have benefited from direct national governments subsidies and tying in of projects to foreign aid policies and programs. This is especially true of France. Most of the success stories of French industry in export markets can be attributed to a variety of modalities of direct government support.

The Canadian firms on the other hand have been experiencing shrinking government involvement in their well-being.

The industry is of the opinion that Canada is under-represented at such influential institutions as the World Bank, ADB, UN, FAO, ESCAP and others. It is very important for the sector to have full time Canadian experts in Remote Sensing and GIS employed by these agencies. Asia and Pacific Rim markets alone are forecast to generate from \$250 to \$400 million in projects over the next five to eight years. A majority of these projects will be financed by the organizations listed above.

To some extent the industry is confused and demoralised by the uncoordinated, overlapping and sometimes contradictory export promotion programs exercised on their behalf by several federal departments and provincial governments. This often results in a given company being encouraged to participate in promotional projects, such as trade fairs and trade missions, with conflicting dates or marginal benefits to Canadian firms.