

APEC Means Results — Continued from page 5



CANADA'S YEAR
OF ASIA PACIFIC
1997 L'ANNÉE
CANADIENNE DE
L'ASIE-PACIFIQUE

MRA, saving extra steps in bringing products to market.

- Processes for certification of telecommunications equipment have been streamlined, resulting in the harmonization of conformity assessment procedures. This will decrease transaction costs.
- Three members (up to five in 1998) are in the trial phase of an APEC Business Travel Card to speed up business travel. Other measures are being introduced, including expanded multiple-entry visas and visa waiver programs.

Business environment: improving predictability

APEC now has:

- on-line (<http://www.apecsec.org.sg/sphome.html>) up-to-date information on government procurement regimes and opportunities, applied tariffs, investment regulations, business travel requirements, competition policy legislation and rules of origin, all of which save businesses time and money when they need to know more about the markets in the region;
- produced best-practice guidelines in the energy sector, helping independent power producers, who rely on accurate knowledge of the tendering and regulatory requirements for government procurement contracts;
- just released a guide to arbitration, mediation and conciliation services, available to resolve

private-government and private-private disputes that can hamper trade and investment.

Creating opportunities for networking

- At the second APEC international trade fair last June in Yantai, China, over 20,000 exhibitors and 100,000 visitors made contacts and expanded trade networks. The 1998 trade fair will take place in Kuala Lumpur, in November.
- Business seminars were held throughout Canada last year on trade, environment, transport, energy, and small and medium-sized enterprises (as reported regularly in *CanadExport*). These seminars also served as venues for individual networking and business promotion. The Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Ministerial Meeting in Ottawa (see the October 20, 1997, issue of *CanadExport*) alone drew over 190 exhibitors and 2,500 visitors from around the APEC region.

APEC and small business

Although the region's 40 million small businesses represent up to 90 per cent of private enterprises in the region, they account for only 35 per cent of the region's exports.

APEC's goal is to work on the issues that small businesses have identified as major barriers to their fuller participation in the regional and world economy. These concerns include lack of access to accurate and

timely information, to modern technologies, to adequate financing, to sufficiently skilled human resources, and to markets themselves.

Information services

APEC offers a wide range of information services that are especially helpful to small businesses with limited time and resources. Most of these services are available free through the APEC home page (<http://www.apecsec.org.sg>), including:

- current applied tariff rates for APEC members;
- a guide to investment regimes of APEC members, including laws, policies and incentives for foreign direct investment;
- the APEC Business Travel Handbook, for information on visas and other entry requirements throughout the region;
- the government procurement home page, for information on regulations and policies on government purchases;
- a new home page, APEC Centre for Trade and Investment, to enhance intra-APEC co-operation on trade promotion; and
- a compendium of rules of origin, containing both preferential and non-preferential rules for APEC members.

CanadExport On-Line

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/newsletr/canex>