

Canada also works to ensure that developing economies can participate more fully in the WTO by offering them technical assistance to better understand and implement their WTO obligations. The APEC Economic Integration Program, announced by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 2001, allocates \$9 million over five years to help Southeast Asian economies improve their ability to implement WTO agreements. Canada and Japan also founded the APEC WTO Capacity Building Group, which coordinates WTO capacity building assistance within APEC. Best practices are shared through training seminars and workshops, ensuring that all APEC members have the expertise necessary to fully participate in international trade negotiations.

To ensure that Canadian interests are taken into account within the APEC decision-making process, various Government of Canada departments are active in APEC's 32 working groups and committees. Canada is involved in policy-related work in a diverse range of areas, including energy, fisheries, marine resource conservation, human resources development, gender issues, electronic commerce, finance, and economic analysis. These working groups and committees focus largely on strengthening the domestic policy-making capabilities of APEC member economies.

APEC Means Business for Canadians

APEC is helping to create a better environment for trade, which benefits Canadian businesses, including large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Initiatives for improving the trade climate include:

- lowering business costs through trade facilitation
- strengthening domestic policy
- strengthening the ability of developing economies to participate in trade through economic and technical cooperation

Trade facilitation is a priority for Canada. Canada coordinated a World Bank Study, entitled *The Economic Impact of Trade Facilitation Measures: A Development Perspective in the Asia-Pacific Region*, which illustrates the economic benefits of trade facilitation. The study revealed that further action on trade facilitation in areas such as customs, standards and business mobility could increase trade between APEC economies by approximately \$420 billion. This would offer significant opportunities in the region for Canadian businesses.

