

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses one of approximately 80 sectors reviewed as part of a broadly-based study commissioned by the U.S. Trade, Tourism and Investment Development Bureau of the Department of External Affairs. The objective of this study is to provide a preliminary indication of potential opportunities for the expansion of Canadian exports into the United States. The findings in each report are based on an analysis of U.S. trade statistics and a limited survey of U.S. importers and trade associations from a broad cross-section of U.S. industry.

The purpose of each report is to assist Canadian companies in identifying potential export opportunities that may justify further investigation. While the reports do not provide analyses of Canadian export industries or their international competitiveness, they do provide other kinds of information that should be useful. For example, each report provides information on individual companies that have indicated an interest in new sources of supply, some of which are quite specific. Information on U.S. import market size and shares, and on industry publications and trade fairs that the companies surveyed felt were most useful, are also provided. As such, individual reports in the series should be of particular interest to small and medium-sized Canadian companies that either are not yet exporting, or that would like to increase their level of exports to the United States.

Plastic products is one of the sectors examined during the study. A survey of U.S. importers was undertaken to gauge the effects of the devaluation of the U.S. dollar on imports from developed countries, and to assess potential opportunities for Canadian manufacturers to replace these imports. The results of the survey were significant, with more than 80 percent of U.S. importers of plastic products verifying that the lower value of the U.S. dollar has increased the costs of their imports. In addition, nearly 30% felt the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement would result in an increase in Canadian imports. As a result, the majority of those surveyed expressed an interest in hearing about the product offerings of Canadian plastic products manufacturers as possible replacements for existing import sources.

These importers like to receive product and company information via a number of means including brochures, trade publications, manufacturers' representatives and/or personal visits to the potential supplier. Key factors in considering imports of plastic products are favourable prices and limited