

- matching export-potential firms with MBA students for market-specific research;
- International Co-op Internships;
- International Student Partnering; and
- Western Economic Diversification's International Trade Personnel Program.

Targeting Team Canada Inc Services to meet exporter needs

One of the main priorities of the Regional Trade Networks will be to develop communications strategies that maximize the reach to firms. RTNs deliver a simple message: *"There's never been a better time to export"* — *"Trade Team [province] offers coordinated and seamless exporter services to help you realize these opportunities."* A national toll-free Team Canada Inc Export Information Service 1-888-811-1119 number provides direct access to Canada Business Service Centres, the International Trade Centres in Industry Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agri-Food Trade Service. These links will be expanded as more Team Canada partnerships are established. New Internet-based information sources (e.g. *ExportSource*, *ATS Online* and *Strategis*) provide 24 hour access to clients with Internet access.

Team Canada Inc export preparation services will be aimed at groups of firms tied in with sector and market opportunity and which have high export potential. These services are designed to equip clients with the skills and information necessary to initiate and establish sales in particular markets. Existing programs such as *NEXPRO — the New Exporters Program* (delivered by the Business Development Bank of Canada) and *New Exporters to Border States*, will complement services developed by the Regional Development Agencies. The latter include:

- WD's Export Readiness services offered in communities throughout Western Canada through their network partners and other local Chambers of Commerce;
- ACOA's Atlantic Trade Training Plan, which coordinates their regional activities;
- CED's CENTRACCES PME network throughout Quebec; and
- FedNor's international export preparation services in Northern Ontario through their IBD partnerships.

The newly revitalized Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) has also broadened its product offerings: *FITTskills*, *AgFITT*, *FITTservices* and *InhouseFITT*. Financing for exporters is available through the Business Development Bank of Canada

and Export Development Corporation. FITT's financing and advisory support will be targeted at firms that have the potential to succeed on bids for International Financial Institution projects.

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) has identified international trade as a key priority. Through its Aboriginal Trade and Market Expansion initiative, ABC will continue its trade support by recognizing cultural products as a priority IBD sector, marketing Canadian Aboriginal expertise to international indigenous communities, producing an Aboriginal CIBS, and developing an industry-led Aboriginal Trade entity which will focus on export promotion.

Broadening and Diversifying the Exporter Base

Initiatives to broaden and diversify the exporter base include making training material available to industry associations and other organizations to customize according to the needs of its members. We will tap Canada's ethno-cultural diversity to create a competitive advantage. We will promote strategic alliances to pursue such international contracts as offshore capital projects and international financial opportunities. Through existing mechanisms such as the *Canadian Business Networks Coalition*, and the *Business Network Program* of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, industry associations can play a stronger role in helping to set up such consortia and identifying possible networks of companies.

The Trade Research Coalition is a new government initiative to promote export development on the part of women entrepreneurs. A number of government departments and agencies (including DFAIT, the Industry Portfolio and Status of Women Canada), as well as various private sector associations, are actively involved. The Coalition is working to:

- conduct a comprehensive literature review on women entrepreneurs and trade;
- develop an Internet site for women entrepreneurs interested in export and trade issues;
- develop a database of women exporters; and
- host a Trade Summit for Women Entrepreneurs in Toronto in May 1999, drawing on the support of Canada's network of International Trade Centres.

We will encourage a mind-set for global markets and encourage more companies to make their products and services export-ready. Our objective is to enhance Canada's position as a reliable supplier of high-quality, value-added products. We will continue to expand partnerships to reach new client segments and identify new sectors with export potential, especially in new emerging technologies. This will require an ongoing review of local capabilities to match offshore opportunities.