

Building Partnerships

Strengthening Consultations with Industry

Consultations with a wide variety of industry groups are an integral part of the government's approach to international business development. Canada's ITBP consultations will therefore be intensified to ensure that ITBP sector strategies reflect the private sector's interests as effectively as possible.

The International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) and the Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITs) also provide an ongoing two-way flow of information and advice between the government, business and labour on international business matters. The government is committed to strengthening this consultative mechanism by structuring the committees to focus on a broader range of trade policy and trade development programs and issues. To this end, three task forces are being established under the ITAC to focus more specifically on trade policy, trade development and environmental issues affecting various industry sectors. Individual SAGITs will set up other task forces or sub-committees to carry out in-depth analysis on particular issues.

Improving Federal-Provincial Cooperation

In view of the closure or restructuring of provincial foreign office operations, and the growing fiscal pressures all governments face, the federal government will work closely with provinces individually, or on a regional basis, to promote better coordination of international business planning and activities, and reduce areas of potential overlap or duplication.

Likely issues to be addressed in the coming year include database sharing, electronic communication linkages, integrating and streamlining the delivery of funded assistance programs and services, exporter education and preparation, and investment promotion and leveraging.

Greater Government Cohesion and Service

The government is committed to establishing clear government-wide objectives to guide resource allocation decisions for international business development. This means eliminating overlap and duplication between departments and setting clear priorities. Canada's ITBP, an important part of this process, will therefore be strengthened and broadened in the coming year.

The government will also improve business community access to government information services, such as those provided by the Canada Business Service Centres, which serve as one-stop information "windows."

Increasing Trade Participation

Becoming a Nation of Traders

Canadian companies are not taking full advantage of global market opportunities. The result is fewer jobs and slower domestic economic growth. Less than 8 percent of Canadian businesses are directly involved in exporting, while more than 60 percent of all exports are made by just 100 companies. Many Canadian companies not currently exporting have the potential to increase sales and production by pursuing opportunities in foreign markets.

Recognizing these opportunities and acting to take advantage of them are the first steps toward developing a successful international orientation. The Canadian government is committed to working closely with its partners to promote greater awareness of global market opportunities and to encourage Canadian companies to develop the skills to act on them.

A recent example of success is the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT), which combines the resources and leadership of the federal government, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Labour, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and other