For Canadian companies, the clearer rules and liberalized procedures represent an important opportunity. Historically, the vast majority of public contracts have gone to domestic firms. Some of this enormous market (over $600 billion annually) will now open up to companies that are strategically positioned to operate in Europe. It must be kept in mind, nonetheless, that the reforms are limited to opening this market to companies throughout the EC. The EC will open its public procurement markets to non-EC countries only on a reciprocal basis.

R&D Program Opportunities

Canadian Companies in EUREKA

A EUREKA working partnership between Zenon Water Systems of Burlington, Ontario and France's La Lyonnaise des Eaux is developing a new filtering system for municipal drinking water.

In a laser research project, Gentec of Quebec City and the National Optical Laboratory of Canada have joined with Quantel (France), Haas (West Germany), Laster Quanta (Spain), ADALS (France), Setenia (Italy), and QARC (U.K.).

In another EUREKA project, Newbridge Semiconductor Ltd. of Ottawa has joined with European Silicon Structures (ES2) and other large European investment companies to manufacture custom computer chips.

Canadian subsidiaries and sub-contractors in the EC can get assistance and funding for R&D through EC programs and a variety of cooperation agreements. If you are located outside the EC you can participate in the EUREKA program under certain provisions. It is important to recognize that in addition to satisfying the provisions of the various programs, your firm must have the financial and technological resources to enter the EC market. You could also benefit through the participation of your EC partners in other R&D programs.

R&D to Market
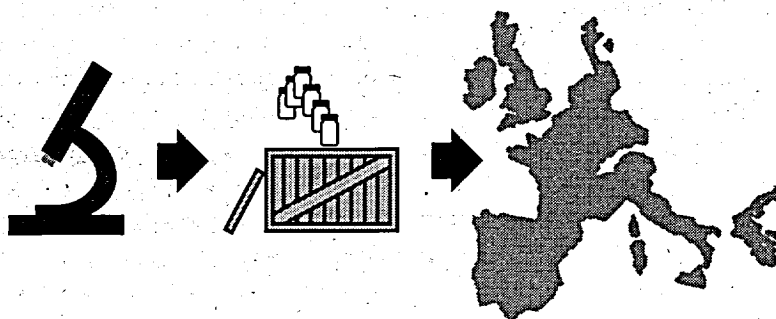
The EC spends about half of its large research budget to develop commercial applications for new technology. Its programs help to bring industrial R&D, universities, and government research organizations together.

ESPRIT (European Strategic Programme for Research in Information Technology) supports information technology projects which are increasingly application-specific with a focus on three principal areas:

1. microelectronics and peripherals including high density, high speed and multifunction ICs and peripheral technologies;