

7. The On-Line Trade Mission (OLTM) and the Virtual Trade Mission (VTM) Web sites have been developed to simplify and standardize the process of preparing firms to export and to introduce them to specific markets. Of the eight trade missions that have taken advantage of the OLTM resource to date, six have been to European destinations, reflecting the crucial role these electronic services play for Canadian SMEs interested in Europe.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

That the federal government review and modify its export promotion activities and resources to ensure that complementarity between its activities and those of the provinces is achieved, that closer links with Canadian business organizations are forged, and that adequate recruitment of foreign officers with the necessary private sector skills to help open European markets to Canadian firms is undertaken.

The Government agrees that coordination of trade promotion activities with the provinces is key to the export success of Canadian companies and has put in place several mechanisms to address this.

Team Canada Inc groups together 23 federal departments and agencies with a trade development mandate. The Regional Trade Networks comprise the provinces, DFAIT, Industry Canada and regional development agencies such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Team Canada Inc already includes features such as a single 1-888 number that provides access to virtually all federal, as well as most provincial, trade assistance programs. The 12 Trade Team Canada Sectors (TTCS) have private sector as well as federal and provincial participation, and are co-chaired by private sector representatives. They meet regularly to set objectives and priorities, and to determine what resources are available to meet the agreed objectives. In short, effective mechanisms are already in place to ensure a complementary approach among various federal departments and provincial governments, as well as the private sector. These mechanisms include ongoing reviews of export activity plans and resource allocations.

Co-location of provincial officers in Canada's missions in Europe is a means of enhancing federal and provincial efforts. For example, Ontario and Alberta officers will soon be co-located with the Canadian High Commission in London and the Canadian Consulate in Munich.

The Government maintains close ties to major business associations in Canada. It has also been active in supporting the launch of the Canada-Europe Round Table for Business (CERT), which aims to establish closer links between Canadian and European firms.