



news release

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OUELLET ANNOUNCES CANADA-POLAND ENTREPRENEURS FUND

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced Canada's intention to establish a \$32-million Canada-Poland Entrepreneurs Fund to support the development and growth of small and medium-sized business enterprises in Poland.

"Small and medium-sized companies are at the forefront of Poland's economic turnaround and are critical to the success of the Polish government's efforts to foster a vibrant free market economy. This innovative fund will provide direct assistance to the grass-roots entrepreneurs and managers who are a major source of new employment and the driving force behind Poland's rapidly growing private sector," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Canada-Poland Entrepreneurs Fund will provide financial assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises in a selected region of Poland through the provision of short-term credit, long-term equity and a loan guarantee program. Supporting business advisory services and training will also be provided under the project. The revolving loan fund will target private Polish companies employing between five and 100 full-time employees. In addition, Canadian-Polish joint ventures located anywhere in Poland will be eligible for assistance.

Canada is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding on the management and structure of the Fund. It is anticipated that the Fund will commence operations in 1995.

The Canada-Poland Entrepreneurs Fund is part of Canada's ongoing technical assistance program with Poland managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. More than \$26.7 million has been committed to date in support of some 95 projects.

Funding for this initiative will be drawn from Canada's original 1989 contribution to the multilateral Polish Stabilization Fund designed to support Poland's foreign exchange reserves.

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