

3.3.1 INITIATIVES

The TCI network of government departments and agencies is pursuing the following initiatives:

□ Expanding Awareness of Global Market Opportunities

A key element of the export capability and preparedness strategy is to make Canadian firms aware of the global market. The provinces and federal regional development agencies provide services such as trade awareness sessions, export preparedness seminars, networking breakfasts and self-help diagnostics. Publicizing company profiles and Export Award winners helps to raise the profile of successful exporters.

The Canadian Tourism Commission will continue to provide tourism industry decision-makers with credible, research-based marketing, product development and economic business intelligence, and will encourage them to use this information in their business decision-making processes.

□ Engaging Strategic Partners in Exporter Preparation (with particular emphasis on SMEs)

The Regional Trade Networks coordinate regional exporter service resources, and a continuing priority will be to recruit additional strategic partners to prepare businesses (particularly SMEs) for export. Some innovative partnerships involve the academic community – for example, matching export-potential firms with MBA students for market-specific research. Other programs include International Co-op Internships, International Student Partnering, and WD's International Trade Personnel Program.

□ Targeting Team Canada Inc Services to Meet Exporter Needs

General Information: One of TCI's main priorities is to raise awareness of services available to business clients. A national toll free number (1-888-811-1119) now connects callers to TCI's Export Information Service, which provides direct access to the programs and services of member departments (such as Industry Canada's CBSCs and International Trade Centres, and AAFC's Agri-Food Trade Service). Walk-in inquiries are also served at CBSCs across Canada.

TCI's *ExportSource* web site (<http://exportsource.gc.ca>) also allows clients 24-hour access to international business information. The site's popularity increased during 1998, averaging over 13 000 visits a month. A 1997 "performance snapshot" of the site revealed an overall satisfaction rate of 64 percent; when changes were made in response to this feedback, the satisfaction rate increased to 68 percent in 1998. To respond to the changing needs of clients and the advances in information technology, the site is being redesigned to include an improved organization, an upgraded search engine, and a new look for the new millennium.

Skills Development: An important activity for firms early in their export preparation is the development of export knowledge and skills. Core services include export preparation guides, export skills training, preparation for U.S. markets, and preparation for other markets.

In partnership with TCI, the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) now offers introductory "Going Global" seminars aimed at enhancing the export awareness, skills and knowledge of potential and existing SME exporters. The three-hour workshops, delivered locally through the RTNs, include introductions to international trade, market research, and international marketing.

Export Counselling: Export counselling services range from assessing a company's export preparedness, to assistance in developing an Export Plan and the identification and selection of target market(s). Core services include: export preparedness assessment; export plan development; and export plan implementation.

Market Entry Support: These support services are designed to help export-prepared companies to obtain the necessary decision-making information to enter markets, participate in trade fairs, join trade missions or identify and find partners.

Trade Financing: Financing for exporters, in the form of market development financing, working capital, foreign buyer financing and insurance, is available through a consortium of TCI providers – EDC, CCC and the federal regional development agencies ACOA, CED and WD – as well as BDC.

These services are designed to equip clients with the skills and information necessary to initiate and establish sales in particular markets. (Specific examples are presented in Annex 2.)