

value of consortia, which through strength in numbers generally present more financially viable proposals for their consideration.

To some extent, the international marketing of Canadian education and training services has been hampered by a lack of national standards for private training suppliers. This has placed Canadian companies at a competitive disadvantage with suppliers from Australia and the United Kingdom. Some provinces, such as New Brunswick and Alberta, have formed consortia to assist companies with marketing and to present a common front to international markets. But foreign buyers still find it hard to know exactly who speaks for Canada. Many institutions and companies look to the federal government to play a more proactive role as a spokesperson in the general promotion of Canada as a centre for education and training excellence. The sector's international credibility would benefit from a more uniform approach within Canada.

The sector has difficulty developing formal international marketing plans. Education and training companies for the most part are managed by individuals with considerable expertise in training delivery or product development, but with less experience in business, marketing or distribution. Smaller companies in particular find it difficult to enter foreign markets, partly due to the high cost of maintaining an ongoing overseas presence. Entry to IFI markets is especially difficult for them, as a company can expect to spend \$75 000 and wait two to three years for a decision, with no certainty of securing a contract.

4.5.10 Canadian Networks

Distance learning networks that facilitate the delivery of courses by different institutions at all levels have been initiated in Canada. These networks are formed by governments, institutions themselves, or by consortia. Initially based on audio-graphic teleconferencing technology (electronic white-boarding), these networks serve a variety of institutions in their geographical areas.

The Telemedicine and Educational Technology Resource Agency (TETRA) network in Newfoundland was the first such Canadian network, launched in 1977 as a distance learning network in conjunction with Memorial University of Newfoundland's telemedicine project. Because the province has only one university with no internal competitors, TETRA, as a university initiative, quickly became a ubiquitous network serving university students around the province. Contact North in Northern Ontario