

There was considerable discussion during the early stages regarding the breadth and scope of the study. While we have identified specific segments and regions of high growth, for the most part we have attempted to cover all regions and all segments of the U.S. construction market. The CCA emphasized on many occasions that they did not wish to pre-judge (through focussing on only a few opportunities) what may and may not be of interest to their member firms. At the start-up meeting, William Clarke of External Affairs and International Trade outlined a similar mandate as that desired by the CCA, "a study to be of equal interest to Fredericton (New Brunswick) contractors looking toward Maine and Trail (British Columbia) contractors interested in Spokane"¹. Thus, while we have encountered many documents stating that construction in a certain region and segment is expected to grow, say, for two years, we have attempted to keep such information at a minimum. Typically, information that a certain market is booming indicates that it may already be too late for Canadian firms to capitalize on the boom. We feel that it is more important that Canadian firms identify stable regions which make sense for them, and enter these regions while keeping in mind the information and advice provided in this study.

Report Organization

Including this Section and the Executive Summary, this report comprises eight sections and nine appendices. Section Two discusses American construction trends in a fairly general manner. Sections Three and Four of the report examines the various regions and construction segments (listed in Table 1-2) of the American market, identifying some segments and regions as offering particular growth potential. The study also details the availability, wages, unionization and other characteristics of the construction labourers and trades and these are the subject of Section Five. Section Six discusses matters of taxation and insurance. Information on market constraints and penetration strategies was considered essential by the CCA to helping Canadian contractors penetrate the U.S. market and the report therefore addresses these issues (in Section Seven). Section Seven also draws upon the previous U.S. market experiences of Canadian contractors.

As requested by the Department of External Affairs and International Trade, the study summarizes trade shows, trade journals, associations, and other information sources of potential value for aspiring entrants into the U.S. market - this information is included in the Appendices. Descriptions of prominent local competitors as well as information on regional costs and taxes is also provided in the Appendices.

¹A prime goal of the government, in sponsoring this study, is to increase the number of Canadian firms who pursue contracts in the border states - "the company with a gravel truck and portable cement mixer in Coultts, Alberta who can lay foundations in northern Montana".