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A.2 TRADE COMMISSIONER SERVICES ABROAD

EAITC has a network of over 800 Trade Commissioners in Canada and abroad. The Trade Commissioner's role is to assist Canadian exporters and promote Canadian trade, investment and tourism.

Over 500 of these trade officers are posted outside of Canada in Canadian embassies, high commissions and consulates. These Trade Commissioners monitor the host country's economic, political and social trends for their impact on trade relations with Canada. Trade Commissioners abroad can assist exporters in several ways:

- Identify firms suitable as agents and place Canadian suppliers in direct contact with these firms; provide credit and other information on potential business partners in foreign countries.
- Provide information to exporters on a country's trade, business and financial conditions, on methods of doing business and on appropriate distribution channels for particular products.
- Suggest appropriate trade shows to launch Canadian products.
- Advise and assist Canadian companies seeking foreign joint venture and licensing opportunities.

While trade commissioners can be invaluable assistants to Canadian exporters, there is a limit to the services they can provide. They will not sell a product or act as sales agents, debt collectors or travel agents. They will recommend others who can perform these functions.

Before contacting Trade Commissioners abroad, it is recommended that Canadian firms develop a systematic marketing plan. Once specific markets of interest have been identified, the company should contact only those Trade Commissioners in the target market area.

A full listing of Canadian Trade Commissioners is published in the Department's "Directory of the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service", available from EAITC in Ottawa (Info Export) or from your local International Trade Centre.