

Canadian exporters looking to tap into Thailand's recovering economy have an invaluable resource in the Thai-Canadian Chamber of Commerce (TCCC). Located in Bangkok, the Chamber offers unique networking opportunities, and works closely with both the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok and the Thai government to enhance regrowth of the business environment in Thailand.

The TCCC, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1991 to promote commercial relations between Canada and Thailand. The results are compelling: Canadian exports for the period of January-August 2000 are up over 21% from the same period in 1999 and Canada's investment in Thailand — estimated at \$563 million in 1999 — is modest but growing.

Members as partners

Most key sectors are represented in the mostly corporate TCCC, with membership more or less evenly split between Thai and Canadian companies. This is ideal for fostering partnerships — something TCCC President Peter van Haren highly recommends. "One of the things we stress to people looking to do business in Thailand is to find a local partner — someone who has their feet on the ground already. A number of companies will willingly take on the responsibility of setting up a local presence for your company and be your local representative."

In fact, such partners can be found among the Chamber membership itself. Most of the Thai members, explains van Haren, belong to the Chamber precisely because they are interested in doing business with Canadians. "As a Chamber, we can't do direct match making," he notes, "but we can provide a venue for networking through our many business and social events." These events include an annual golf tournament, pub nights, a Thanksgiving ball and a Christmas party.

As well, members gain opportunities to participate in trade missions in the region, organized in conjunction with the Canadian Embassy. Trade missions are open to companies within Thailand, as well as to those seeking entry.

Through the Chamber, members can access the Board of Trade of Thailand, the Board of Investment,

van Haren, Chairman of the organization. "We have good communications with different government departments. We work closely with the ministries, striving for fairness and equality for foreign business. "The organization successfully lobbied the Revenue Department to refund delayed value-added tax (VAT) to foreign businesses and was

Fostering business and trade relations

Thai-Canadian Chamber of Commerce



and several Canadian business organizations in Thailand and Canada.

Close affiliation with Embassy

The TCCC and the Embassy co-operate to foster trade between Canada and Thailand. Recently, the two

instrumental in expediting government approval of the new Alien Business Law.

Fostering bilateral trade links

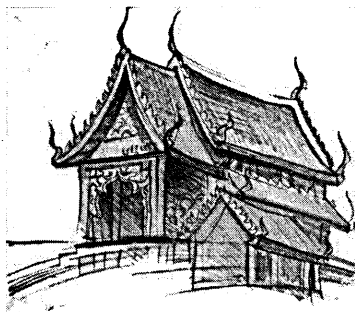
In September 2000, TCCC representatives attended the sixth Canada-Thailand Bilateral Economic Commission (BEC), held in Ottawa, where Canadian and Thai officials met to discuss issues of mutual interest. This year, the Royal Thai Consulate General in Toronto canvassed interest for a Canada-Thai Business Alliance.

Canadians a good fit for Thailand

Peter van Haren encourages Canadians to tap into the Thai market. "Thailand is open to cultural and religious differences and is a very liberal country; Canadians fit in quite well here and are very well liked. If they can be patient, Canadians should be able to do quite well in the market."

For more information, contact Megan Foster, Executive Director, Thai-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, tel.: (011-662) 266-6085/6, fax: (011-662) 266-6087, e-mail: tccc@loxinfo.co.th Web site: www.thai-canadian-chamber.org *

(For the unabridged version, see www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport)



groups organized the first Canada-Thai Business Forum in Bangkok, and collaborated on market study development. For up-to-date reports on a range of sectors, visit: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/bangkok

Unique lobby organization

The TCCC works closely with the Government of Thailand through the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand (JFCCT), an organization comprising 10,000 members that represents the country's 22 foreign Chambers of Commerce.

"The JFCCT is quite a powerful lobby group here in Thailand," explains