Financial Institutions

Canadian financial institutions offer a variety of products and services that have made them attractive to customers and investors around the world. They offer investments that are not only lucrative, but low in risk.

From banks, trust companies and co-operatives to insurance companies and stock exchanges, Canada's well regulated financial institutions are among the safest in the world. Canadian legislators are very attentive to the rules and regulations that govern Canada's financial sector. They are determined to maintain a system that is stable and encourages competition.

Canadian financial institutions are also among Canada's leading export earners. Liberalization of financial regulations in North America, South America and the Caribbean, Europe, Asia and the Caribbean is providing foreign clients with greater opportunities to take advantage of Canadian financial services.

CANADIAN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE DEVELOPED A SOPHISTICATED CAPACITY TO MANAGE EFFICIENT AUTOMATED SYSTEMS SPANNING LARGE NETWORKS OF BRANCHES ACROSS CANADA.

Canada's six major banks have all established foreign commercial operations, most of them in a number of countries on several continents. Canadian life insurance companies, major investment brokers and trust companies operate virtually everywhere in the world.

These institutions have responded to the growing interest of foreign investors in Canada as a secure, low-restriction market offering attractive returns and an opportunity for risk diversification. They have also responded to the growing demand for competitive, reliable financial services in other countries.

While there are differences among the services offered by Canadian institutions, there are also some basic similarities:

- *Banks focus on private and investment banking services for both Canadian and international customers. They also offer foreign exchange and treasury services, trade credit, guarantees and acceptances.*
- *Trust companies offer private and merchant banking, investment services and a range of advisory services to both international and Canadian clients.*
- *Life insurance companies sell individual policies and annuities to local customers, either directly, through brokers, or through corporate employee benefit plans.*
- *Brokerage houses offer Canadian securities — as well as securities from other countries — to international and Canadian customers.*

Technological change is making modern financial institutions more efficient and user-friendly. Canadian financial institutions have developed a sophisticated capacity to manage efficient automated systems spanning large networks of branches across Canada. They possess a wealth of expertise in operating and co-ordinating branches, in the design of payments systems, and in many other areas. Some foreign financial institutions have already learned that they can speed the modernization of their systems by taking advantage of these advisory resources.