

2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

(a) Trade Commissioner Service

i) Abroad

The Trade Commissioner Service of External Affairs and International Trade Canada provides the primary means of assisting exporters through an extended network of over 110 trade offices abroad and through contacts with geographic and sectoral branches at Headquarters. While Trade Commissioners abroad monitor their host country's economic, political and social trends for their impact on trade relations with Canada, they also assist Canadian companies in their efforts to develop business abroad by:

- . identifying firms suitable as agents and placing Canadian suppliers in direct contact with these firms; assisting in finding credit and business information on potential business partners in foreign countries; interceding when problems of duties, taxes or foreign exchange arise; advising on settlement of overdue accounts, and; maintaining contacts with importers and end-users;
- . providing information on a country's trade, business and financial environment and practices; and
- . advising and assisting Canadian companies seeking foreign joint venture and licensing opportunities.

While Trade Commissioners can be invaluable to Canadian exporters, there is a limit to the services they can provide. For example, they cannot sell a product nor act as sales agents, but will recommend others who can perform these functions.

ii) Headquarters

Responsibility for trade promotion is organized on both a geographic and sectoral basis. Trade Commissioners at headquarters act as desk officers who provide detailed information about foreign markets of interest and provide essential support and backup to posts abroad. Geographic branches carry out many specific activities such as organizing trade fairs, serving as liaison with financial institutions, and making contacts for business.

Other Trade Commissioners provide technical information and develop policies in the area of aerospace, defence, agriculture and fisheries, resources and chemicals, advanced technology, transportation, investment promotion, consumer products, machinery and transportation equipment, export finance and capital projects and general trade access issues geared to improve the export environment.