

- encouraging Canadian bids on IFI projects by developing the means to provide industry with timely project intelligence, market information and advice;
- reviewing all relevant government programs and initiatives, including export financing, CIDA Industrial Co-operation and Bilateral Programs, various CIDA and DFAIT consultant trust funds, and mechanisms for placing Canadians within IFIs abroad, to determine if they can be used more strategically in support of Canadian commercial interests;
- reviewing — and developing responses to — impediments to the success of Canadian suppliers;
- improving Canada's representation within IFIs by seeking to have more Canadians with industry knowledge and expertise placed in strategic areas within these organizations.

Domestic Initiatives in Support of International Business

Support for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises

Creating international business opportunities for Canadian firms through various trade policy mechanisms is critical. But the mere existence of such opportunities cannot ensure greater Canadian success in global markets. Companies themselves must have the capability to seize promising trade, technology and investment opportunities as they arise.

A major thrust of the Government's international business agenda will be to encourage more Canadian SMEs to become active exporters and explore international investment partnerships. (Other new initiatives target Canada's rapidly growing business services sector.) SMEs represent the fastest-growing component of the Canadian economy. They are also the most responsive to rapid change, and are responsible for creating most new jobs. Their potential for creating new jobs in the future is even more promising. SMEs are therefore central to the Government's jobs and growth agenda.

Government support for SMEs will focus on the following areas:

Market Information and Intelligence

Government has an important role to play as a provider of strategic information to the private sector — ensuring that industry clients have the right information, in the right form, at the right time, so that they can make the right business decisions. Industry has said that government must make strategic information on export opportunities, outward investment, strategic alliances, technology transfer and market access and competitiveness issues more readily available, particularly to SMEs, which often lack the resources to obtain global market intelligence. The Government will therefore work to improve its ability to provide industry clients with the kind of timely, targeted, strategic information they require. This will be achieved through the following means:

- **Trade Commissioner Service (TCS)** — For over 100 years, Canada's Trade Commissioner Service has played a vital role in helping Canadian firms explore and exploit international business development opportunities. With 130 offices in 84 countries, as well as International Trade Centres across Canada, the TCS is Canada's largest overseas market information and commercial intelligence network. Its role is to promote and protect Canada's international business development interests. To ensure that Canadian businesses continue to get the support they need abroad, the Government, working with the private sector, is strengthening the ability of the TCS to respond to changes in the international environment.
- **Information/Intelligence Collection and Dissemination** — The government network of Sector Expert Groups (SEGs) — an important vehicle for collecting and disseminating intelligence across governments and to the private sector — will be expanded. In addition, dissemination of international