



In September 1994, in what came to be known as the Red Wilson Report, the government was encouraged to:

- coordinate all federal and provincial IBD activities;
- eliminate overlap and duplication across government;
- select sectoral and geographical priorities for IBD services and programmes;
- consolidate funding to allow for an integrated, strategic IBD program;
- strengthen the Trade Commissioner Service while retaining it within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Internal government reviews (Program Review I) also raised questions and reinforced concerns about overlap and duplication in IBD programs. The business community emphasized that government support for IBD was more important to the future economic health and well-being of Canada than programs in many other areas; however, the business community also shared the view of government that this support had to be re-engineered to reflect the fiscal realities of the day. With the growing recognition that programs supporting IBD were intimately linked with jobs and wealth creation, the government focussed its attention on achieving savings without impairing its ability to help Canadian companies in their internationalization efforts.

These various factors resulted in a fundamental reassessment of the focus and structure of the federal government's international business development strategy.

Creation of Team Canada

Not only did the strategy draw heavily on these private sector consultations, it built on the government's jobs and growth agenda of "Building a More Innovative Economy." The strategy sought a government-wide approach to create partnerships with the provinces and the private sector. Such an approach would harness the collective strengths of all participants to leverage diminished resources, reduce overlap, set priorities, improve market intelligence and sourcing systems and simplify program and service delivery.

The resulting "Team Canada" approach to international business development operates on two levels:

- Internationally, the Prime Minister has led a series of high-profile trade missions to garner new business in chosen emerging markets.

- Domestically, an ongoing effort led by the Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade (DFAIT), Industry Canada (IC) and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has provided a greater degree of coordination among federal departments, the provinces and the private sector. This has promoted the jobs and growth priorities of the government and the growth of the Canadian export community through a series of programs designed to educate, inform and support both the novice and the experienced exporter.

Several key initiatives have flowed from the creation of the Team Canada approach:

- A planning document, entitled *Canada's International Business Strategy* (CIBS), governs the new collective approach to IBD and guides resource allocation;
- A committee of federal deputy ministers serves as an IBD "Board of Directors";
- National Sector Teams and Regional Trade Networks have been established;
- A trade opportunities sourcing unit has been created;
- Priority countries and sectors have been identified;
- Common IBD program guidelines have been adopted across government.

In agreeing to this strategy, the government challenged the business community to work with it to double the number of active exporters by the year 2000. To achieve this objective, IBD departments have taken the following initiatives, consistent with the Team Canada approach:

- creation of the Agri-Food Trade Service;
- special focus on assisting SMEs to become successful exporters;
- revitalization of the Trade Commissioner Service;
- approval, in 1996, of a new investment strategy, including the formation of Investment Partnerships Canada, to focus government resources on key prospective investors.

This new integrated approach to international business development represents a major ongoing commitment. The challenge is to maintain the momentum of implementation and delivery.