

# Executive Summary

---

## Background

In 1996, the Mexico Division (LMR), Latin America and Caribbean Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) developed a *Trade Action Plan for Mexico*. This plan implemented the Team Canada concept, in the context of changing demands for support from the Canadian business community. The *Trade Action Plan* envisioned a shift away from sectoral market information and event-driven activities, towards customized market intelligence and information-driven activities.

The staff of LMR in Ottawa and of the Commercial and Economic Section at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City and in the consulates in Monterrey and Guadalajara concluded that these innovations would require an entirely new business model. A project team was appointed to conduct workshops in Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara, consult LMR/DFAIT staff in Canada, and develop a model and implementation plan. This guide is the final result of this broadly consultative exercise.

## The Need for Teamwork

The most important finding from staff workshops was a widely shared view that a *new team approach* would be needed. This reflects an understanding that intelligence gathering requires a network of pre-established personal relationships. The only way to maintain persistent contacts with a constantly rotating Canada-based staff is to share contacts and networking information within teams made up of both Canadian and locally engaged staff.

There was also a broad consensus that teamwork is most likely to be achieved if team activities are guided by *principles* rather than a traditional hierarchy. The principles identified include clear priorities, transparency and consistency, accountability, recognition of performance, and respect for risk-taking. These principles should drive the implementation of the new business model.

## Business Processes

The new business model embodies a number of *processes* that are to be carried out in a team environment. These result in the delivery of support to Canada's exporters. They consist mainly of collecting business intelligence, assessing it, storing it, and using it to promote Canadian exports to Mexico.

### Sources of Intelligence

Market intelligence is obtained from personal contacts based on established relationships. Such relationships are usually established and nurtured through two essential activities: calling on contacts and attending events and meetings. Staff will spend more time outside the office meeting with contacts as well as following up with them by telephone. It is