

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Government is requesting the opinion of Canadians on the possible scope of a free trade agreement between Canada and the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) welcomes this opportunity to provide input based on its extensive experience of over 34 years of international work around the world. Although NAIT has done work and is currently working in Latin America, NAIT views Central America as a potential market. This document will allow us to present the local socioeconomic needs that NAIT can satisfy when entering Central America. Similarly, it will state how a free trade agreement between Canada and the mentioned Central American countries will facilitate NAIT's entry into their technical/vocational training markets.

Since NAIT is in the technical/vocational training industry, a service industry, this document is solely meant to represent trade benefits that would reduce international risk for NAIT when entering Central America as a potential new market.

## PROFILE OF NAIT



The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) is the largest technical institute in Canada with a primarily publicly funded operating budget of over CDN\$100 million and an enrolment of over 14,000 full-time and apprenticeship students along with part-time students numbering over 35,000.

NAIT was founded in 1962, but since 1982 it has been governed by an autonomous board. The Institute's mandate is to act as a tool for economic development with its practical "hands-on" approach to career oriented business, technological and trades education. NAIT is world renowned for developing curricula in tune with the real needs of the workplace. More than 700 business, industry, and government leaders serve on NAIT's 54 full-time program advisory committees. These crucial links with industry provide NAIT with a job placement rate greater than 80 percent.

Offerings in more than 85 different full-time programs, 36 apprenticeship trades and more than 900 continuing education courses span a wide variety of career fields. Students can earn a certificate, diploma or applied degree in disciplines that include:

- Applied Building Science
- Business
- Electrical and Electronics Technology
- Health Sciences
- Information Management and Communications
- Mechanical and Manufacturing Technology
- Resources and Environmental Management
- Trades Training

NAIT is located in Edmonton, Alberta, the center of Canada's refining and petrochemical industry. Alberta produces 85% of Canada's oil and gas and NAIT plays an important role by training qualified graduates for the refining and petrochemical industry.

