

economic system¹⁰. In summary, four factors explain why companies seek and government provides export support:¹¹

- the growing importance of international trade
- the increasing intensity of international competition
- the necessity to participate in global trade expansion
- the need to strengthen domestic industrial sectors

What Do We Know About Fairs and Missions?

We saw that government is a provider of support that responds to perceived needs in the private sector, specifically those related to the competitive competence required at a certain stage of the exporting process¹². At each stage companies have key question to resolve and decisions to make. The appendix details the roles of trade fairs and missions as facilitators in the exporting process.

Research on trade fairs is often proprietary. It frequently consists of profile data on exhibitors or visitors and rarely of data on company behaviour or performance related to trade fairs¹³. Academic research is growing, although only about one dozen studies either deal exclusively or partially with the issue of trade fair decisions and performance.

Trade mission research is very scarce and only four studies are published. These examine trade missions in the foreign market entry process. Other proprietary research on government-organized missions often is not publicly available. Short accounts of missions, recounting what took place, are often found in trade publications. The following summarizes key differences between trade missions and fairs:¹⁴

<u>Features</u>	<u>Trade Missions</u>	<u>Trade Fairs</u>
scale of activity	smaller	larger
location of activity	movable (markets)	fixed (fair sites)
organizer	governments	commercial firms
visibility	lesser	greater
resources needed	lesser	greater
planning horizon	shorter	longer
performance measurement	harder	easier

Trade missions do not lend themselves as easily to analysis as trade fairs. Trade mission activity is much smaller than that of trade fairs, although between 100 and 200 missions are run annually by the federal and provincial governments in Canada. The potential trade fairs and missions hold