



The bilateral business associations are a significant player in the field of international trade. They are growing in number and membership has increased 298 percent since 1990. The current 19,334 members are a source, relatively untapped by the Department, of information, knowledge and networking potential. The Department's knowledge of bilateral business associations, previous to the undertaking of this survey, was limited to its experience with only a few bilateral associations and the varied experiences of a small number of trade commissioners. The objective of this survey is to define areas of interest shared by the associations and the Department that can guide the Department in its future cooperation with bilateral business associations.

By means of a survey sent to each association, requesting quantitative data about their operations and members, the Department researched the following:

1. What size are the associations, what do they do and what challenges do they face?
2. How actively do the associations promote international trade and business ties?
3. On what common issues might the associations and the Department work together?

Of the 83 surveys sent out 48 were completed and returned, a response rate of 58 percent of the total number of bilateral business associations. Details of the research process are shown in Appendix 2: "Detailed Research Methodology."