

1. Canada's International Business Development Strategy

The Government of Canada's International Business Development (IBD) strategy aims to assist Canadian business in taking advantage of international business opportunities while minimizing risk in a rapidly changing global economy. Our overarching objective is high employment, high wages and a higher standard of living for Canadians. To this end, the Government of Canada has set four goals for its IBD programs and services:

- To become the world's best trading nation by enhancing our international competitiveness
- To make Canada the location of choice for investment in North America;
- To create jobs and economic growth in Canada
- To exercise leadership in global trade liberalization.

To realize these goals and maintain and increase our share of global trade, a range of federal departments and agencies offer programs and services to Canadian business that, taken together, address six specific challenges:

Improving market access

Government must maintain and improve predictable access to foreign markets for Canadian products, services and investment. Canada has already negotiated a more liberal, rules-based trade environment for the business sector through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements with Chile and Israel.

We are building on these successes, taking a leading role in further strengthening the international trade framework, and asserting Canadian interests and expanding Canadian access based on clear and equitable rules. At the same time, we are working to cultivate an informed domestic consensus around the trade policies and trade promotion programs that Canada needs to safeguard and improve our standard of living in the global economy.

Increasing the number of exporters

As our economy evolves and our exports continue to grow, the Government of Canada is working to encourage more Canadian companies, particularly small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), to consider exporting their products and services. We are strengthening our programs and services to help smaller firms prepare to export, particularly in the knowledge-based and service sectors. For example, the phenomenal growth in on-line business presents unprecedented opportunities to increase trade in electronic commerce products and services produced by Canadian SMEs. The number of Canadian SMEs continues to grow. SMEs with export potential include companies headed by young people, immigrants, Aboriginal Canadians and women. For example, recent research shows that of the estimated 86 100 small and medium-sized exporters, fully 34 400 are owned wholly or jointly by women.

Broadening Canada's export product range

To continue meeting the needs of business, the Government of Canada is broadening the range of its service offerings — for example, providing specific information and market intelligence that meets the unique requirements of knowledge- and technology-