

INFORMATION/ACCESS-TO-INFORMATION

I. THE ROAD MAP TO EXPORTING AND EXPORT FINANCE

The Objective

Canadian firms, particularly those new to exporting, are frequently frustrated by the fragmented access to information on trade finance, export finance, and export business development available from public and private sector sources. At the same time, the task of searching for information on a needed export service or program from the currently available array can be overwhelming.

The *Action Plan* sought to develop a user-friendly Road Map to exporting and to export finance programs and services, to remedy the existing uncoordinated approach to the dissemination of information. In addition, there existed a need to rationalize the information available to reflect the most frequently used Government export programs and services.

The Process

The Working Group on Information Cooperation (Info Group) was created in June, 1994 to develop and design the exporter Road Map. The Info Group, chaired by DFAIT, was represented by both public and private sector participants, particularly bank/financial institution trade specialists (see Annex III).

The Info Group conceptualized the Road Map as a user-friendly guide to information sources to a host of export related questions. Once the drafting and design of the Road Map had progressed to an advanced stage, the concept, contents, and design of the Road Map were reviewed by a Focus Group (led by an independent firm) of 13 exporters. The Focus Group participants represented a cross section of businesses from the manufacturing and service sectors, including agri-food, high tech, and a mix of large and SME firms. The group's comments were used to further revise the Road Map into its final form.