

1997, EDC served more than 3700 customers and reached an overall business volume of \$28.6 billion. More than 85% of EDC customers are SMEs.

- The **Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC)** helps Canadian exporters do business in foreign markets by assisting in contract negotiations and participating as the prime contractor in export sales. In 1996-97, CCC worked with more than 1300 companies, of which 80% were SMEs, on contracts worth over \$859 million.
- In diplomatic posts around the world, the **Canadian Trade Commissioner Service** introduced the following best-practice innovations:
 - 23 posts have launched their own Web site, allowing users to obtain targeted and timely information and enabling officers to spend more time on activities such as gathering market intelligence.
 - A number of trade posts have set up Infocentres (dedicated correspondence units) to expedite responses to requests for service. Trade enquiries are now handled better and faster at participating posts.
- The **International Business Opportunities Centre** continues to put sales leads from around the world into the hands of prospective Canadian suppliers. The Centre responded to more than 8500 trade enquiries from 142 Canadian diplomatic missions abroad in 1997, and contacted more than 14 000 companies across Canada, 75% of which fall into the category of SMEs.

Focus on SMEs

- A special **Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) unit** was created at DFAIT to adapt trade promotion services to the needs of SMEs and of specific SME market segments, such as women, Aboriginal, multicultural and youth entrepreneurs. The SME unit has to date:
 - created a joint public-private sector Trade Research Coalition in support of women business owners
 - launched a *Businesswomen in Trade* Web site
 - formulated an IBD strategy for Aboriginal businesses
 - developed a youth program to include students and young entrepreneurs in trade missions
- The **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum** developed a framework for incorporating the concerns and priorities of small and medium-sized enterprises throughout its work. The business forum and