

In the global context, national competitiveness is highly dependent on leading-edge technology development and innovation. NRC has a variety of programs to help companies to become export-prepared and compete successfully. These programs and facilities are important parts of the Canadian innovation infrastructure, and serve as major attractions for foreign direct investment in R&D and manufacturing. NRC also uses its increasingly strong international networks to help promote the formation of joint ventures between Canadian firms and those abroad.

In addition, NRC contributes to international agreements leading to mutual recognition of the equivalence of measurement standards, which contribute to the expansion of trade.

Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)

Natural Resources Canada's mission is to provide knowledge and expertise for the sustainable development of Canada's natural resources, and to improve the global competitiveness of the resources sector (and related sectors) for the well-being of Canadians.

Market Access: NRCan works to maintain and expand access to international markets for Canadian resource commodities and resource-based products, knowledge, technologies, and services. This is achieved through participation in policy discussions and international trade agreements, international commodity study groups and bilateral working groups, and also by promoting exports of technical expertise and advice. Through international negotiations and in conjunction with other departments, NRCan is:

- working toward acceptable protocols of accession to the World Trade Organization that reflect Canadian industry interests and other non-tariff items;
- working in bilateral and multilateral fora to encourage market liberalization, and to ensure a level playing field for Canadian energy, mining, forestry and geoscience interests;
- working to negotiate lower tariffs and eliminate unjustifiable non-tariff barriers for natural resources;
- seeking adoption of an acceptable heavy-metals protocol under the United Nations Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP);
- working toward an international sea-bed mining code under the Law of the Sea Convention;

- providing key scientific data and socio-economic forest products information in support of Canada's actions on forest products trade issues;
- undertaking bilateral and international partnerships in forest fire science, sharing NRCan information technologies for fire prediction and management with international partners, and working toward a common international agenda for addressing wildland fire events;
- working multilaterally and bilaterally on energy efficiency standards to ensure that their implementation does not create barriers to trade;
- working to ensure that restructuring of the U.S. electricity market does not impose trade barriers to Canadian electricity exporters;
- promoting risk-based approaches to international measures aimed at management of metals and minerals throughout their life cycle.

International Market Development: NRCan provides focused international support to resource-related companies in areas such as market intelligence, export marketing assistance, trade promotion, government-to-government dialogue, and brokering of contracts. Many resource-related SMEs looking to break into international markets can benefit from federal expertise to strengthen their innovation capacity and trade orientation. NRCan's activities include:

- undertaking Team Canada-style international trade missions, led by the Minister of Natural Resources, to safeguard and improve Canada's trade and investment position in natural resources in key markets;
- facilitating the international market development of earth sciences through various incoming/outgoing geomatics and geosciences missions with federal, provincial and private participants;
- commercializing and marketing internationally, in partnerships and cooperative ventures, Canadian geomatics and geoscience capabilities such as spatial reference infrastructure technologies, to increase Canadian market exports;
- operating a new trade post in Buenos Aires to develop the geomatics market in Latin America while reducing the business risks;
- creating markets abroad by promoting adoption of efficient alternative energy technologies developed by CANMET Energy, in some cases with industrial partners;