

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commercial and Economic Communications Services: An Overview

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Communications tools are used on an international scale by governments and the private sector to support economic and commercial objectives, including trade promotion. In Canada, various federal departments have played a strong role in this area since the turn of the century.

The focal point for the trade promotion effort was originally in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce (ITC) and its predecessors. In 1982, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) inherited the trade promotion function from ITC and also assumed some of the responsibilities for investment promotion.

In 1986, the Communications and Culture Branch (BCB) was established to provide a more comprehensive and forceful approach to communications with DEA's domestic and foreign audiences, and to take maximum advantage of the communications expertise throughout the Department.

The establishment of the Communications and Culture Branch was preceded by a number of studies of DEA's communications. "The Report of the Task Force on Communications" (August 1983) followed the integration of the trade promotion function by the Department, but nevertheless called for a more organized approach, particularly with respect to domestic communications.