

Agreement on Trade in Services. In the current GATS negotiations, Canada continues to pursue additional commitments to secure improved access and predictability for Canadian services providers. For example, Canada has requested commitments on independent professionals in such sectors as computer and related services, engineering services and architectural services. Canada is also actively promoting increased transparency of temporary entry commitments so that business people, immigration practitioners, human resources managers, small and medium-sized enterprises and other affected parties can better understand the temporary entry commitments undertaken by members.

In its initial conditional offer, Canada proposes increasing the length of stay for business visitors, intra-corporate transferees and professionals; providing coverage for after-sales/after-lease services providers and their spouses and common law partners; and increasing the transparency of its temporary entry commitments.

In addition to the GATS, Canada is party to several regional and bilateral trade agreements containing labour mobility provisions that promote trade in goods, services and investment. These include the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Canada–Chile Free Trade Agreement (CCFTA), and the Canada–Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement (CCRFTA). The GATS, NAFTA and the CCFTA contain comprehensive temporary entry provisions facilitating the movement of business persons in three categories: business visitors, intra-company transferees and professionals. In addition, NAFTA and the CCFTA contain a fourth category to facilitate the temporary entry of traders and investors. Canada participates in a trilateral NAFTA Temporary Entry Working Group, which deals with ongoing implementation issues related to temporary entry and works closely with U.S. officials on bilateral temporary entry issues.

Canada is currently negotiating several other regional and/or bilateral trade agreements including the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Central America Four and Singapore, which may include temporary entry provisions.

SINGAPORE ISSUES

At the July 31, 2004, WTO General Council meeting in Geneva, WTO members agreed that the three Singapore issues of transparency in government procurement, investment and competition policy would not form part of the work program set out in the Doha Declaration. The decision followed strong opposition to negotiations on the three issues from the G20 and G90 groups of developing countries. Although no work toward negotiations on any of the three Singapore issues will take place within the WTO during the Doha Round, Canada continues to see value in addressing these issues in the multilateral trading system and will continue to promote their inclusion in future negotiating rounds.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

To take advantage of the significant potential for international trade represented by the hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on government procurement worldwide, Canada has pursued market access in the World Trade Organization. Increased sectoral coverage and a reduction of discriminatory barriers in the United States and other key markets would create significant opportunities for Canadian exporters. To increase opportunities, Canada supports a range of activities to broaden and strengthen government procurement disciplines and ensure effective implementation of existing commitments.

Canada, along with 37 other countries, is party to the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement (AGP). The AGP provides the basis for guaranteed access for Canadian suppliers to the United States, the European Union, Japan and other key markets. Canada continues to pursue greater and more secure market access through the AGP. A review of the AGP, with a mandate to expand coverage, eliminate discriminatory provisions and simplify the agreement, remains a priority. Work is continuing, with input from the provinces and other stakeholders, to establish Canada's priorities for further market access.