

ACBC has offered and provided the following services to its membership:

- response to questions and provision of market intelligence;
- organization of and participation at meetings and seminars;
- publication and/or dissemination of reports and documents;
- representation of industry's views on trade policy issues to government;
- establishment of joint membership arrangements with business associations in ASEAN.

Despite these offerings, and the theoretical potential for contacts and networks, the ACBC has attracted only 19 members (not many of which are small and medium size firms which would benefit the most from membership), instead of the anticipated 62 (in the original ACBC project proposal delivered to DFAIT) which would have guaranteed financial self-sufficiency for the organization. The fact that the ACBC has not been able to attract many members has meant that its contributions to attainment of PBS objectives have been marginal, and its impacts in making the Canadian private sector "Asia competent" have been minimal. There is also a danger that public funds are creating permanent dependency rather than a self-sufficient organization.

Possible reasons for the lack of ACBC success in attracting a larger membership are thought to be as follows:

- the initiative has been government rather than industry driven;
- the Canadian business community is more attracted to individual country rather than regional (e.g. ASEAN) markets;
- large companies do not need to be made aware of the opportunities in ASEAN. They are more interested in the networking possibilities of an organization such as ACBC;
- small and medium sized firms may be discouraged by the high membership fees of the ACBC (\$700/year until now, \$350/year beginning in January 1994).
- the recession has made companies very cost conscious, and wary about joining new organizations;
- lack of awareness in the business community which is confused by the number of actors promoting the Asia Pacific area and providing services to business. This is linked to a perceived duplication by the ACBC of the work of other organizations, and DFAIT trade officers and missions;
- the second hand (from other competing sources) quality of much of the market intelligence provided by the ACBC;