

Broadening the exporter base

- The newly established **Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Unit** continued to adapt trade promotion services to the needs of SMEs and specific SME segments such as women, Aboriginal and youth entrepreneurs. During 1998 the SME Unit:
 - Established a task force to provide advice to the Minister for International Trade on trade development issues for SMEs
 - Coordinated the Women's Trade Research Coalition study *Beyond Borders: Canadian Businesswomen in International Trade*
 - Completed the development of an Aboriginal International Business Development Strategy, to be implemented in April 1999
 - Piloted youth-focussed New Exporters to Border States (NEBS) trade missions.
- The **Aboriginal Business Canada Program** provided \$6.6 million in funding to 296 business projects. Business of Art seminars comprise an ongoing success story, and trade missions have been dispatched to major international craft and gift shows. Aboriginal clients are making increased use of government IBD programs, and the market niche of indigenous-to-indigenous consulting is being explored.
- The **New Exporters to Border States (NEBS)** program provided 1000 Canadian SMEs with first-hand exporting experience through participation in either a NEBS or NEBS Plus mission to one of Canada's U.S. consulates. Another 500 Canadian SMEs participated in the Reverse NEBS program, which brings trade experts to Canada to guide new-to-market firms in the intricacies of selling beyond our borders.
- In 1998, the **New Exporters to South America (NEXSA)** program was developed to introduce export-ready Canadian companies to South American markets through five day missions. NEXSA, which targets SMEs, is a new approach to trade missions that offers participants market training and preparation in Canada, followed by a five day customized program of appointments. Sectors to be targeted in 1999 include plastics, furniture, mining, oil and gas, information technology and telecommunications.
- The **New Exporter Training and Counseling Program (NEXPRO)** is designed by the Business Development Bank of Canada for owners and managers of small businesses who lack the knowledge and experience necessary for the export process. A total of 840 business persons took training sessions within 22 NEXPRO projects in 1998-99.

5. International Market Development

Improving programs and services for exporters

- The **Export Development Corporation (EDC)** is the only Canadian financial institution devoted exclusively to providing trade finance and risk management services in support of Canadian exporters and investors. It