



INTRODUCTION



Exporting can bring significant benefits. It can also place demands on companies that they may or may not be prepared to meet. *The Exporter's Guide* is designed for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are considering the possibility of exporting. It won't provide them with ready-made export markets and strategies. It will, however, give them an understanding of the realities of exporting, and provide them with solid, straightforward information on how to assess their export capabilities and guide them through the process of planning and executing their first exporting venture.

There has never been a better time for Canadians to export. A low dollar, decreasing trade restrictions, the globalization of markets, and improved travel and communications infrastructures make exporting in the nineties more viable than ever before.

Similarly, the opportunities available to smaller enterprises in the international marketplace are also better now than they have ever been. Partnering with large firms has become a viable option for them to gain access to foreign markets. For their part, large firms are interested in forming partnerships and alliances with smaller firms to make use of their entrepreneurial capabilities and to pursue opportunities in specialized areas and market niches.

Principal sources used in the preparation of The Exporter's Guide include:

- *Exporting for competitiveness — Ten steps for small business (Industry Canada)*
- *Export Guide — A Practical Approach (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade [DFAIT])*
- *So, You Want To Export (DFAIT)*
- *Trade Development Programs and Services (DFAIT)*
- *Top Ten Export Programs (DFAIT)*
- *FITTskills 1: Global Entrepreneurship (Forum for International Trade Training)*