



External Affairs' Export Programs and Services

International trade development is the largest function of the Department of External Affairs. The main components of the department's program are the Office of the Minister for International Trade, the five geographic branches, the Trade Policy Branch, the International Trade Development Branch and the Trade Communications Bureau. Specialists in the International Trade Development Branch are able to provide advice on many aspects of exporting including export finance, trading houses, countertrade, technology development, investment and information systems.

Because the department is responsible for fostering the expansion of Canada's international trade and commerce, it offers a number of programs and services to assist companies in their export efforts. The following section provides a brief overview of the primary export programs and services.

The Trade Commissioner Service

One of the best-known of the department's export-assistance programs, the Trade Commissioner Service, has a long history of working closely with the business community. Five geographic branches (US, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and Latin American and Caribbean) with headquarters in Ottawa co-ordinate the work of over 400 trade officers at 90 missions around the world. Their primary tasks are to:

- identify market opportunities in their territory;
- identify local importers, agents, distributors and buyers that could be recommended to Canadian exporters;