

Both the Export Development Corporation (EDC) and the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) are re-aligning their programs and services to meet the export financing needs of small and medium-sized companies. Almost 90 percent of the Export Development Corporation clients are small and medium-sized companies. This community will remain a priority for Export Development Corporation's attention as it strives to increase its customer base. A 10 percent growth rate in total SME clients served is expected for 2001. Export Development Corporation's two other priorities are: diversifying exporters into higher risk developing markets; and building partnerships with other financial intermediaries in Canada to increase Canada's overall export support capacity.

Almost 80 percent of Canadian Commercial Corporation clients are small and medium-sized enterprises. These companies report that Canadian Commercial Corporation support is instrumental in overcoming the financial, process and credibility constraints they face when trying to break into new markets.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) continues to rebuild its human resources abroad to better serve the needs of an ever increasing clientele with more diverse and complex requirements for market intelligence and facilitation services. Twelve new Trade Commissioner positions were created at diplomatic missions abroad last year to enhance our capability to promote exports and attract investment and new technologies and to help Canadian suppliers and investors get the most out of market access openings.

The Trade Commissioner Service's *New Approach to Serving Canadian Business Abroad* aims at creating a more results-driven, client-focussed organization. The new approach is now standard client service policy, designed to better manage and focus the workload of trade officers abroad. The aim is to achieve more effective service and increased client outcomes and satisfaction. Extensive consultations with a large cross-section of business and partner-clients in the public sector, including two client surveys in 1999-2000, have been conducted with a view to examining the overall performance of the Trade Commissioner Service from the perspective of clients and find out what improvements are required to better respond to their needs.

In 2000, clients have expressed a relatively high 78 percent rate of overall satisfaction with the performance of the Trade Commissioner Service while underlining areas for improvement. These include the need to reduce service inconsistency between posts and to increase business acumen among front line employees of the Department's posts abroad. Continued refinements of the New Approach will emphasize optimization of our human resources and electronic tools abroad and will focus on training and skills development for our resources abroad commensurate with our clients' expectations. As well, an effective electronic delivery system of our services will be introduced.

In response to priority needs identified by clients themselves, the Trade Commissioner Service now delivers six core services from over 130 posts abroad: market prospects; key contacts search; visit information; face-to-face briefing; local company information; and troubleshooting. In addition, posts also now partner with Canadian organizers under terms of the best practice Trade Commissioner Service Business Mission Agreement with a view to making trade missions into target markets more effective. Non-core services such as foreign language translation and business events management are now referred to third parties identified by posts in the target market to assist clients for a fee. More information on these and other services can be found at www.infoexport.gc.ca To reinforce its accountability to taxpayers, the Trade Commissioner Service also welcomes feedback, comments or suggestions from clients. These can be communicated by calling the following toll free dedicated feedback: 1-888-306-9991.