

sectors is expected to top US\$ 25.84 billion for the period from 1995 to 1998. From 1994 to 2002, investment in the oil & gas industry alone is expected to reach US\$ 17.5 billion.

Another way of analyzing the market size is to look at CPT (Computers/Peripherals) statistics. It is expected that, by the end of the century, the computers and peripherals sector will account for over 2% of Colombian GDP. Total imports of these products was US\$ 540 million in 1996 and it is expected to rise to US\$ 580 million in 1997. Colombian exports were US\$ 12 million and local production only amounted to US\$ 2 million, meaning there is a need for foreign technology.

Either way, demand for geomatics products and services is expected to show phenomenal growth in Colombia and the Colombian market is open for business. Colombian companies are eager to share their knowledge of Colombian geomatics opportunities with Canadian and other foreign companies, in turn they gain training and advanced technologies from the participating companies. They seek a symbiotic relationship and it is important that Canadian companies take advantage of this situation before foreign firms take the lead.

A) Size and Structure of Colombian Geomatics Companies

There are very few large geomatics firms in Colombia. The largest geomatics firms in Colombia have sales between US\$ 2,000,000 and US\$ 3,000,000, making them look quite small compared to some of their Canadian counterparts. The remaining Colombian geomatics firms are small, one- or two-person operations, owning one piece of equipment, bidding on projects, and then contracting out most of the services.

In general, the larger Colombian firms have access to most of the latest technology, although frequently they do not have the experience or the training to efficiently use the technology. This has created opportunities for strategic alliances and joint ventures between foreign and Colombian companies. While the Colombian companies can provide access to the Colombian market through their contacts and knowledge of the industry, Canadian companies can provide the technical know-how and bring a fresh perspective to the industry. Already this approach has proven beneficial for a few Canadian companies that have entered the Colombian geomatics market. These relationships have been successful because a basis of trust has been developed between the companies.

B) Changing Strategy of Colombian Geomatics Companies

Colombian geomatics companies are trying to provide more geomatics services and products. Some of the most successful geomatics companies that were interviewed for this report are those that have diversified their services within the geomatics industry. Users of geomatics information want to be able to deal with one company that can provide the solution to all their geomatics needs. For example, they seek companies which provide training and consulting services, remote sensing images and all types of software and hardware products.