

CYAP Forum ACAP

CANADA'S YEAR OF ASIA PACIFIC

L'ANNÉE CANADIENNE DE L'ASIE-PACIFIQUE

APEC Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Week in Ottawa



Photos from National Research Council Canada, Industry Canada and the University of Ottawa

Everyone knows that Canada is a highly successful trading nation. But what many people are not aware of is that a mere 100 companies account for over half of this country's total exports. Remarkably, only 10 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the most dynamic sector of Canada's economy, are taking advantage of globalization and selling their goods and services abroad.

A particular highlight of Canada's year as chair of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum is APEC SME Week in Ottawa from September 15 to 19. The event will draw over 1 000 business people and government officials from APEC economies, enabling small businesses to make contacts and explore exporting opportunities to the fastest-growing region in the world.

Under the theme "Improving Trade Opportunities for SMEs," APEC SME Week offers an unprecedented opportunity to expand trade in the Asia-Pacific region. Events will give companies a chance to showcase their businesses and to network with some of the most influential business and political leaders in the Pacific Rim. It will be a one-stop opportunity for export-ready SMEs, or those considering exporting, to acquire information on financing and markets as well as to make the business and government contacts necessary for such an undertaking.

APEC is a regional intergovernmental forum dedicated to making trade and investment easier, faster and simpler. Members range from Canada's most important G-7 trading partners, the United States and Japan, to established markets like Singapore and Hong Kong and emerging ones such as China. With consumer

Events taking place during APEC SME Week

The Ministerial Meeting (September 18-19): Ministers responsible for SMEs will meet to discuss initiatives and policies in areas that have been identified by SMEs as crucial to continued growth. Priority areas include access to financing, markets, technology, human resources and information.

The Business Forum (September 17-18): Over 100 expert speakers in 25 sessions and workshops will cover topics of importance to SMEs such as: market access and partnership strategies, finance and investment strategies, investment in business skills development and technology innovation. Keynote speakers include Terry Matthews of Newbridge as well as Michael Cowpland of Corel Corporation.

An Exposition (September 17-18): 175 exhibits will showcase some of the most innovative and competitive companies from across the APEC region. There will be pre-event programs for international buyers, potential partners and exhibitors.

Site Visits (September 12, 15, 16, 19): APEC delegations will visit selected facilities across Canada to view Canadian technologies, products and services in leading-edge sectors of interest in Asia Pacific.

Young Entrepreneurs Seminar (September 15): Sponsored by the Business Development Bank of Canada, this seminar will be an opportunity for tomorrow's business leaders to make recommendations to today's key decision makers.

spending rising at three times the rate in North America, Asian members of APEC also have the world's fastest-growing middle class.

APEC SME Week is expected to generate \$11.5 million in local economic activity and create stronger trade and investment linkages between Canada and Asia Pacific. It will also highlight the advantages of Ottawa-Carleton and the Outaouais as an excellent place to do business.

EDC Helps Exporters Sell to Asia Pacific and Around the World

Exporting to the Asia-Pacific can be a daunting prospect for businesses of all sizes. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in particular, the investment of time and money required up front can put a market out of reach. The Export Development Corporation (EDC), through its market research, innovative financing options, collective experience and network of contacts, provides exporters with enhanced access and understanding of these unique markets.

EDC has been actively involved in the APEC Trade, Environment and Energy Ministers' Meetings held in Canada in 1997 and has sponsored the APEC SME Ministerial and Business Forum to help give Canadian exporters opportunities. As well, EDC's work with APEC export credit agencies is supporting small and medium-sized exporters as well as infrastructure development throughout the region.

What is EDC?

For more than 50 years, EDC has helped Canadian companies of all sizes meet, manage and mitigate the challenges they face when doing business outside of Canada so they can seize global opportunities. As Canada's official export credit agency, EDC is a self-sustaining financial institution that strengthens the global competitiveness of Canadian exporters and

investors in more than 200 countries by offering some of the most sophisticated trade finance skills available in Canada today.

Last year, Canadian companies did more than \$22 billion worth of business in world markets with EDC as their partner. More than 85 per cent of EDC's customers are small and medium-sized companies.

