

Exporting, like any new business endeavour, involves careful and thorough market research. The information gathered is assembled in a market profile that contains all the facts and data needed to prepare a company for export opportunities and possible problems.

A well-developed market profile can be an exporter's most valuable tool. Among other things, it tells you who your potential customers are, what kinds of products or services they need and use, and how conditions in their country may influence their buying decisions.

Gathering the masses of detailed information required for a comprehensive market profile is a big job. However, some of the export organizations listed in this booklet can help you supplement and update your preliminary findings.

Research on your top countries should include the following:

- Statistics on trade with Canada and other countries
- Business practices and customs
- Transportation and communication networks: their quality and reliability
- Economic situation
- Political environment
- Credit standing

This information should be assembled under six key headings of your market profile: General background; Market accessibility (i.e., can your product or service be sold there?); Sales potential; Regulations affecting sales; Terms

of payment and currencies; and Distribution within the country.

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*Japan: A Guide for Canadian Exporters is one of the many booklets that provide information to help you do business in a specific country. They're available from the Department of External Affairs trade information centre, Info Export. You can call Info Export toll free 1-800-267-8376. Ottawa callers can dial 993-6435.*

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### General background

This section of your market profile includes:

- The size of the country and the potential market
- Its climate and terrain
- Its distance from Canada
- The size and distribution of its population
- Statistics on average income
- The country's plans for development and the likelihood of those plans enhancing or diminishing acceptance of your products or services, affecting the purchasing power of your customers, or influencing the attractiveness of your products or services

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*In the booklet Argentina - A Guide for Canadian Exporters, you will find the following information for your general background section: Argentina's continental area totals approximately 2 800 000 km<sup>2</sup>; Argentina's climate varies from the subtropical to the subantarctic; and the estimated population in 1985 was 30.7 million.*

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### Market Accessibility

How easy or difficult will it be for you to introduce your product or service to a particular market? It will depend on:

- Whether or not there are any restrictions on imports through taxes, import duties or quotas. What are the country's policies and attitudes towards imports from Canada?
- The actual access situation, specifically for your products or services. Is it in the process of improving or deteriorating?
- Existing currency controls. Is the currency convertible? Are there bilateral trade agreements favouring the goods and services of other countries?

### Sales potential

The level of demand and long-term potential sales will be based on:

- The competition your company faces from present and future domestic supply
- The price differential between your goods and theirs
- Emerging trends by volume, value and country of origin