

MAKING THE CONNECTION

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The role of the Trade Commissioner Service and the role of the Department is often not known or understood by many Canadian business people. Confusion over where to go for information about exporting and export financing is an all too common problem.

Many SMEs do not know who to turn to for advice. Although the International Trade Centres are continually involved in outreach activities, many firms

never receive our message.

However, all businesses are in constant contact with their banks, and rely on their bank for a myriad of services. This close relationship has presented the Department with the opportunity to reach out to many businesses, particularly SMEs, who may not otherwise learn about our programs and services.

In a first-ever cooperative effort, the Department, the Canadian Bankers' Association and major Canadian banks have developed a *Road Map to Exporting and Export Financing*, a brochure to assist clients in finding the appropriate information sources for export-related questions. The financial institutions involved have agreed to include personalized reproductions of the Road Map in the information they make available to their clients.

The Road Map is a tool that guides companies to the many sources of information and counselling services

about exporting and export financing that are available across the government and banking community.

The Map includes, in addition to the InfoCentre, contacts for ITCs, CBSCs, EDC, FBDB, CCC, FITT, and CEA. The version published by the Department also includes a list of all the participating financial institutions.

The Road Map's purpose is to direct exporters and potential exporters to services available to them *in Canada* – sources which should be tapped before contacting posts overseas. Posts are encouraged to distribute the Road Map to their Canadian clients, particularly those first time contacts who have export potential but who are inexperienced in or new to exporting.

The Department, the Canadian Banker's Association and major Canadian banks have developed a new brochure to point the way.

A companion piece to the Road Map, *Top Ten Export Programs* is now being distributed to posts. As its name implies, the *Top Ten* summarizes the key federal assistance programs and services available to clients. We are excited about the potential to reach a much broader audience through these publications. These tools represent an innovative addition to the Department's outreach program – targeting SMEs at the grass-roots level.