

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Angus Reid Group has been contracted by the Communications Policy division of the Department of External Affairs and International Trade to carry out public opinion research regarding "Going Global", the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and the development of information materials for the Canadian public.

As outlined in the scope of work as supplied to the Angus Reid Group by the Department, the "Going Global" trade strategy, announced by the Prime Minister in a speech in Singapore on October 15, 1989, is a programme of new trade, investment, and science and technology initiatives, designed to position Canada strategically in its major markets: Asia - Pacific, Europe, and the United States.

As noted in the perspective supplied by the Department, "Going Global" is the corollary of the Canada - U.S. Free Trade Agreement which was implemented on January 1, 1989. Recognizing that the Canada - U.S. Free Trade Agreement is now in its first stage of implementation, the Department has indicated the need for a thorough analysis of the public's attitudes towards international trade in general, and the Free Trade Agreement specifically, in order to develop themes and information materials and to test them before they are released to the general public.

As a result, the Angus Reid Group has been commissioned to conduct a comprehensive public opinion study consisting of three components: a quantitative "benchmark" study to include 1,500 interviews of a representative sample of Canadian adults, stratified by province; a series of tracking studies involving interviews with 1,500 persons on related topics with respect to the benchmark study; and 16 focus groups for the development of information materials for the public with respect to "Going Global" and the Free Trade Agreement. The focus group schedule is divided into two parts -- a preliminary round of 8 focus groups that were conducted in late April 1990, to determine attitudes on a series of specific topic areas in order to scope out the parameters of issues for future investigation; and a follow-up set of 8 focus groups on the completion of the quantitative (benchmark) study. The latter focus groups would be used for the testing of specific communication materials for public dissemination.