
economy, high levels of innovation, access to a highly skilled work force, sectors with high growth potential and a healthy relationship with our trading partners. The Government of Canada continues to work to improve the domestic and international investment climate by adopting competitive, efficient and fair marketplace laws and regulations for both businesses and consumers. Actions to date include: strengthening the competition law; implementing policies to address investment barriers related to intellectual property, patent protection and risk management; harmonizing with other jurisdictions; promoting Canadian standards; and participating in bilateral, regional and multilateral trade and investment treaties.

The Program for Export Market Development (PEMD) continues to be an important support mechanism for Canadian companies seeking new opportunities abroad. Last year, 477 companies received assistance under that program. Sales reported by companies using PEMD assistance amounted to \$136 million.

Export Development Canada (EDC) continues to respond to the financing needs of small and medium-sized companies, which constitute almost 90% of its clients. This community will remain a priority for EDC as it strives to increase its customer base. EDC's two other priorities are (1) helping exporters to diversify into higher-risk developing markets and (2) building partnerships with other financial intermediaries in Canada to increase Canada's overall export support capacity.

The Canadian Commercial Corporation is in the process of restructuring its operations in order to make itself more commercially oriented, more self-sufficient and more user-friendly. The Corporation has reorganized its business operations along sectoral lines, and it will also be implementing a new fee-for-service regime that will allow it to continue delivering the services clients have come to depend on. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which comprise 80% of the Canadian Commercial Corporation's clientele, report that the Corporation's

support is instrumental in overcoming the financial, administrative and credibility constraints they face when trying to break into the highly complex and competitive government procurement markets worldwide.

The Trade Commissioner Service's "New Approach" to serving Canadian business abroad centres on the creation of a more results-driven, client-focused organization. The New Approach is now standard client service policy, designed to better manage and focus the workload of trade officers abroad. The goal is to achieve more effective service and improved client outcomes and satisfaction.

Continued refinements of the New Approach will emphasize optimization of the Department's human resources and electronic tools abroad, with a special focus on training and skills development for front-line employees. As well, an effective electronic delivery system for services will be introduced.

In response to priority needs identified by clients, the Trade Commissioner Service now delivers six core services from more than 130 posts abroad: market prospects, key contacts search, visit information, face-to-face briefing, local company information and troubleshooting. In addition, posts now partner with Canadian organizers under the terms of the Trade Commissioner Service Business Mission Agreement, with a view to making trade missions more effective. Non-core services such as foreign language translation and business events management are referred to third parties identified by posts in the target market. These non-core services are provided on a fee-for-service basis. More information on these and other services is available from the Trade Commissioner Service Web site (www.infoexport.gc.ca).

To reinforce its accountability to taxpayers, the Trade Commissioner Service welcomes feedback, comments or suggestions from clients. These can be communicated by calling the following toll-free, dedicated feedback line: 1-888-306-9991.