

CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL TRADE BUSINESS PLAN (ITBP):

Available at a post near you!

By Brian
Creamer

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Each year, trade officers abroad play a vital role in developing Canada's *International Trade Business Plan* (ITBP). This coming year, your input will be more important than ever. For the first time, the ITBP will be directly linked to resource allocation decisions. You will therefore want to ensure that important emerging market opportunities identified within your region are adequately reflected in the plan's industry sector strategies. At the same time, you will want to make sure that your Post's activity proposals are fully and actively considered for funding in the ITBP review process.

Before explaining how you can do this, a little background about the ITBP is useful.

What is the ITBP?

Essentially, it is the process for developing and coordinating government international business development strategies, priorities and activities – both trade development and trade policy. It operates as a partnership between 18 federal departments, the provinces, and the private sector. It also reduces overlap and duplication and provides the mechanism through which industry can directly influence government strategies and activities for international business development.

The results of the ITBP consultation process are published annually and represent the government/industry consensus on international business development priorities. Copies of the Plan are sent to all Posts and consist of:

- an *Overview*, summarizing the government's main trade policy and international business development objectives, as well as opportunities, challenges and priorities by the world's major geographic regions;
- a series of 23 *Industry Sector Strategies*, detailing how the govern-

ment will work with industry to take advantage of emerging global trade, technology and investment opportunities; and,

- lists of *International Activities*, by sector, representing the specific activities governments intend to sponsor in support of each sector strategy.

The main distribution point for the ITBP is the InfoCentre. Last year, the centre distributed more than 85,000 individual sections of the ITBP. These were sent across Canada and beyond – the vast majority to industry. With all provinces now partners in the process, and private sector involvement much greater, the demand for the 1995/96 ITBP will undoubtedly be even higher.

How Should the Post Get Involved?

By now, all Posts will have received a complete set of documents for the 1995/96 ITBP. Take the time to review the Overview and the Sector Strategies of particular importance to your Post.

Are the key market opportunities and priorities in your territory adequately captured? If not, get in touch with the contacts listed and make your views known. By doing this, your views can be taken into account during the consultation process for the 1996/97 ITBP which begins almost immediately.

You will also have an opportunity to comment more formally, and in greater detail, on ITBP plans and strategies as part of the 1996/97 post planning exercise. Instructions on the new Trade Tracking and Planning System (TIPPS/TTS) and how it will be linked to the ITBP will be included in the call letter. Nevertheless, becoming an active partner in the consultation through ongoing contact with those in Canada responsible for your sectors of interest, will help ensure that your priorities get the attention and resources they deserve.

Any questions? Give the ITBP Working Group a call at 944-ITBP (944-4827).

Brian Creamer is with the Trade Planning and Coordination Division (TOC).