

specifications based on local conditions or inappropriate criteria is an outstanding issue. So too are barriers in the form of procurement policies adopted by buying groups or public bodies which specify that all product must carry the label of one specific certification scheme to the exclusion of other equivalent approaches. Canada would be concerned about any measures requiring mandatory labelling for forest products based on non-product-related process and production methods.

Canada will continue to monitor our access to key markets with a view to ensuring that certification remains a voluntary marketplace activity and that criteria consistent with Canadian forest values are used to evaluate Canadian products.

Certification of Organic Food Products

EU regulations allow for imports of organic products from EU-listed third countries authorised to export to the European Union and from non-listed third countries. Canada is currently not on the EU list, hence exports of Canadian organic products to the European Union need to be certified and Canadian exporters must work through individual Member States to obtain clearances to import certified organic products on a case-by-case basis. EU organic legislation requires that organic product certifiers meet criteria as certification bodies defined by EN45011/ISO 65. EU Member States are implementing this requirement. The case-by-case approval has from time to time created market access difficulties for Canadian organic exports.

Canadian exporters will have to continue to meet Member State requirements for organic imports until Canada appears on the EU list of third countries authorised to export to the European Union. To meet EU requirements for a listed country, Canada has to demonstrate that the recently developed "Canadian Standard for Organic Agriculture" [ratified in 1999 by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC)] meets EU or equivalent organic production standards; and that Canada has an accredited certification body for organic agriculture. Canada should be able to meet the first EU requirement as the Canadian Standard for Organic Agriculture is consistent with international standards (ISO 65 standard and Codex alimentarius).

The second requirement is not yet met as the Canadian Organic Advisory Board (COAB), a non-profit advisory body representing the interests of organic production and certification groups in Canada, only recently submitted an application for accreditation to become the first Standards Council of Canada accredited certification body for Canadian organic products. The accreditation process is expected to be a time-consuming taking up to 2-5 years for completion.

IMPROVING ACCESS FOR TRADE IN SERVICES

Professional Services

Discussions between the European Union and Canada were initiated in 2000 to explore the interest of our respective professional services providers to develop mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). Following domestic consultations on both sides, interest has been expressed by the architecture and engineering professions to explore the feasibility to initiate discussions towards the development of an agreement. These professions have significant export interest and experience in each others markets and are signatories to existing MRAs. For example, Canadian engineers have concluded recognition agreements with their French and U.K. counterparts.

Discussions between the professional bodies are at an early stage. Both sides have agreed to exchange information regarding their respective regulatory regimes on matters such as accreditation, licensing and qualification requirements and procedures. This is a necessary first step to fully understand the commonalities and differences of their regimes. It is expected that the discussions will be on-going through 2001.

The Canadian government has long encouraged national and provincial professional bodies to engage in the development of mutual recognition agreements with their respective foreign counterparts as a means to facilitate and enhance their ability to export their services in foreign markets. Because these agreements are between respective professional associations, and hence are not inter-governmental in nature, the government's role is to facilitate and encourage the development of MRAs.