

## STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Canada's prosperity depends on the global marketplace. The United States, the new and emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East, the markets in transformation in Latin America, and the mature and evolving markets of Western and Eastern Europe all offer varied trade, technology and investment opportunities for Canadian business.

The federal government is committed to helping companies meet the challenges and opportunities created by changes in world markets. The *International Trade Business Plan* (ITBP) outlines how the government will work with Canadian business to this end.

The ITBP is based on extensive consultations with the private sector and within government. This ensures that federal international business development strategies and activities are co-ordinated, focused and of real use to business.

Canada's overall international business development objective is to create jobs in Canada by:

- capturing a larger share of global markets;
- expanding Canada's presence in the American market through the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA);
- exploiting opportunities to be created by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);
- opening access to new markets through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Multilateral Trade Negotiations;
- doubling, within three years, the number of firms exporting;
- attracting investment and technology to Canada;
- assisting companies to become more internationally competitive; and
- diversifying Canada's export composition to include more value-added goods and services.

To meet these objectives Canada faces several key tasks:

- improving market intelligence;
- improving the international environment for Canadian companies;
- improving the domestic environment for Canadian companies;
- making government support better co-ordinated and more targeted;

- strengthening the government-business partnership in international business development; and
- helping Canadian companies improve their international marketing capabilities.

### *I Improve Market Information and Market Intelligence*

Canadian companies want more market information for their strategic planning. The swift delivery of well-analysed market intelligence on specific opportunities can also be critical in helping them to win contracts.

#### *Action*

- Work closely with the Canadian business community to determine their specific market intelligence and market information needs in trade, investment and technology.
- Concentrate the activities of Canadian trade, technology and investment representatives abroad on gathering focused, sector-specific information and delivering this information to clients early enough to be useful to them.
- Acquire market intelligence pro-actively through officers with linguistic capabilities, and cultural and sectoral understanding, in key positions abroad.
- Increase the capabilities of officers to help identify and acquire technologies of interest to Canadian firms.
- Encourage more industry associations to relay market information and market intelligence to their members.

### *II Improve the International Environment for Canadian Companies*

#### *Enhance Market Access*

Market liberalization has been a central objective of Canadian trade policy since 1945. Canada is active in multilateral organizations, such as the GATT Multilateral Trade Negotiations, and has actively promoted our bilateral trade interests through the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Government will continue to work to ensure that Canadian companies receive fair treatment, which enables them to obtain maximum benefits from new international trade arrangements.

International trade policy will now focus more on the foreign and domestic policies that are outside the framework of such agreements but have an impact on access to foreign markets and on promotion of investment into Canada. This includes such issues as product standards (e.g. health and safety, phytosanitary), competition policies and regulatory frameworks, investment and taxation regulations, as well as foreign programs and policies that resist imports.