

# Executive Summary

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## Background

The International Trade Business Plan is a document which consolidates the federal government's trade, investment and technology support activities in a single source. It was developed following consultations with business and industry groups, who identified a need for better coordination in delivering and communicating government services.

As it stands, the document covers a range of industry sectors, and targets a number of different audiences. To determine whether the Plan is meeting the needs of business clients, the Department of External Affairs and International Trade commissioned a qualitative research study. The research consisted of five focus groups with a cross-section of business executives. The discussions were conducted by the Phase 5 Consulting Group Inc. during the first week of October, 1993.

## Information and Delivery Needs

The research showed that the needs of business clients differ on the basis of:

- **The stage they are at in entering international markets and their level of export activity.** As companies enter export markets, their information needs change from background data required to research markets and assess risk, to information required to generate sales.
- **The size of the business.** Large businesses often have access to international networks of subsidiaries or partners, and have more resources to gather information. Accordingly, they place less reliance on government to meet their information needs. On the other hand, small business people lack the internal resources to gather information and see a role for government as a source for commercial information.
- **The business sector and nature of business transactions.** Whereas