

food, tourism, arts and crafts, fashions and music recordings are notable examples. Potential also exists in many non-traditional sectors in manufacturing, forestry, construction, transportation, distance education and others. Exports of Aboriginal consulting services have been successful in helping other Aboriginal businesses export to Central America and various developing countries.

The Government intends to undertake a variety of activities that promote awareness of Aboriginal export capabilities, and will be working with export-ready and near-ready Aboriginal firms to expand exports. This will be achieved by:

- facilitating access to existing exporter assistance programs and improving these programs, where possible;
  - developing special focus market planning and export-readiness training;
  - encouraging Aboriginal participation in missions and trade fairs;
  - establishing sectoral initiatives in sectors of strength such as tourism, food products, environmental industries and consulting services.
- **Industry Associations Outreach** — To promote the growing business services sector, a number of industry associations will be contacted, and their members surveyed, to determine priority export markets and market information needs within this sector. The Government will then work with each association to develop a specific export action plan. Other potential initiatives include the creation of industry association export committees, workshops, and other activities.
  - **Export Financing** — Lack of access to financing is an area that represents a major challenge for many SMEs with export potential. The Government will work with companies and Canadian financial institutions to improve SMEs' access to information on export financing and export development

services (e.g. by encouraging the banking industry to become a more effective source of information and counselling for exporters). It will also work with the Export Development Corporation (EDC) to develop new and innovative ways to increase operating lines of credit for smaller exporters, and measures to broaden SMEs access to medium-term financing. In addition, through co-operation with the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) and financial institutions, it will seek to establish a mechanism to help SMEs obtain pre-shipment financing for export contracts.

- **Market Maximizer Events** — Each year, the Government proposes to support a small number of "Market Maximizer Events" of interest to both SMEs and larger firms. These are events that have strong potential to promote Canadian business internationally and therefore merit exceptional support in terms of preparation, implementation and follow-up. To qualify, an event must meet certain basic criteria regarding the presence of foreign visitors and exhibitors, the level of Canadian content, the degree of Canadian industry endorsement, and the availability of training for new exporters. The Government proposes to fund these events on a cost-shared basis with the private sector.
- **International Investment/Technology Partnerships** — The Government is currently working with approximately 700 Canadian SMEs, primarily in high-technology sectors, to help them find international investment partners and sources of best-practice technologies. Such efforts will be expanded to include more companies in other sectors. Greater use will also be made of multimedia technologies to introduce potential international partners to Canadian SMEs.