

## **Comments By Government Officials**

Interviews with representatives of the Federal and Provincial government departments of trade and trade development confirmed that the structure, strengths and weaknesses of this industry sector were not well understood yet. There were numerous examples of individual Canadian EP companies which were successful in exporting to Western Europe, but there was no overall picture of domestic sectoral strengths being the basis for these successes.

### **The Tele-conference with Government and Industry Experts**

The tele-conference with industry and government representatives presented further insights into this finding. The consensus was that success by Canadian EP companies was more a matter of individual firms' efforts and capabilities than regional or national strengths. Some regions, such as Alberta, may have strengths in a particular sector such as engineering in oil and gas exploration and development. The critical issue was still one of turning this general, diffuse expertise into a specific export foray by individual companies.

In part, this finding reflects a reality of the EP market. It consists of a great variety of different products and services, united only by their common purpose, i.e. protecting the natural environment. The finding also reflects the reality of the Canadian industrial base.

The studies and involved officials all agree that a Canadian company looking to succeed in the European market should have some technological edge, preferably protected by patents or some other mechanism. Thus, technological innovation becomes the domestic strength which spurs the export successes.

## **Conclusions**

The Canadian EP industry is still largely an unknown. While all levels of governments have a strong interest in its growth and development, problems of inconsistent definitions and lack of resources have hampered obtaining clear insights into the structure and strengths of the industry. There are no clear pictures of sectoral strength.

However, there are numerous examples of Canadian firms which have been successful in selling both their EP products, processes and services into Western Europe. A key feature in most of these successes has been a technological lead which gave the firms an advantage over the sophisticated European domestic competitors.

In the next section, we examine some of these success stories of Canadian companies and distil from them the key components of a successful export strategy.