

# INTRODUCTION

The Latin American and Caribbean Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has developed a series of research templates for export market information. They are a series of tools designed for the trade commissioner, the commercial official or an outside consultant for the development of substantive and useful information about the market in a specific country. They can also be used to assess the potential for exporting Canadian goods and services into that market.

The research templates are outlines, or checklists, of information required to make either an informed assessment of market potential or to proceed into an export initiative. The templates collected here provide a guide to the export process. They proceed from an initial orientation to the business environment in the new market, through more in-depth market information to an assessment of potential partners in the new market and a summary of the export process.

The first research template provides a guide for an overview of the business environment in the new market. While large amounts of information exists on any new market, the trade practitioner needs a way of sifting through this material and collecting only those items that are most useful for the development of basic market understanding. The research template outlines the sort of information that is critical to collect on a regular basis to maintain a currency of knowledge of the market. It presumes a broad base of general knowledge about the country, its politics and the potential markets for the Canadian exporter. This template can also be used to guide trade commissioners through the regular requirements for trade and economic reporting.

The next four research templates focus on market information. The market summary is an overview of the market for Canadian capabilities in one foreign industrial sector. It outlines the existing market, the role of imports, the competition and the regulatory environment, but treats each very briefly. The following templates for the market profiles on consumer goods, industrial goods and services have the same structure but require a greater level of detail about the potential market. The objective of the research templates for market profiles is to provide the Canadian business person with a clear idea of the type and nature of opportunities in the target market and how to take advantage of them. The profile should provide the user with the facts needed to make an informed marketing decision.

In addition, there is a template for an industry market directory of key contacts and sources of assistance. Though this has been included here to serve as a guide in the preparation of a directory at the sectoral level, the same format can be used at a more general country level to organize contacts and sources of assistance for all industries in a target market.

The research templates for a trade fair directory and for a directory of professional conferences have been developed to support the marketing efforts of the small- to medium-sized Canadian company. Trade fairs and exhibitions are very good venues for a company to introduce their products in a new market. For service providers, participation at a professional conference or series of seminars can also serve to introduce a unique capability or solution to potential customers. The templates seek information on the nature of the event in the past and in the present, the types of attendees targeted and attracted, and the key contact in the organizing body for further information on eligibility, booth fees, etc.