

Applicants included firms from all regions of Canada and were distributed across the range of industry from large and medium manufacturers, small high tech firms, service industry firms, agriculture, fish and food processors, and small manufacturers.

The general criteria considered by the selection panel in assessing the comparative performance of the firms were: strong growth in export sales, the introduction of new products to the export market, the entry into new export markets, and/or outstanding service to the exporting community.

All demonstrated through their applications a willingness to undertake risk to achieve significant export results in a very uncertain international environment.

The firms which we are honouring tonight can be justifiably proud of their achievements but must realize that other Canadian firms can achieve similar success. In this spirit I would like those who are currently exporting to rededicate themselves to the expansion and reenergizing of their activities and those who have not entered the export arena to seriously consider its rewards.

Mr. Soubry, ladies and gentlemen that concludes my formal remarks for this evening. If you will excuse me for a moment I will move to the stage for the official presentation of this year's Canada Export Awards.