

Two incoming trade missions will be conducted for prospective Mexican buyers. In the East, "Americana 97" will be sponsored by the Association québécoise des techniques de l'environnement, in Montreal. In the West, an incoming mission will visit Alberta and British Columbia.

Market research will be undertaken to assess the impact of new environmental legislation, identify business opportunities and create a buyer profile directory. Related activities will focus on informing Canadian companies about market entry strategies and business methods in this sector.

Information Technology and Other Advanced Technology Products and Services

The advanced technology sector has so far not developed to its full potential, but it has excellent long-run prospects. This sector includes industries using leading-edge computer hardware and software for such applications as telecommunications, informatics, computer assisted design (CAD), industrial automation and geomatics.

Telecommunications Technologies

No other sector of the Mexican economy has grown faster than the US \$3 billion telecommunications industry. The demand for advanced technology products and services has been stimulated by the privatization of *Teléfonos de México (Telmex)*, the national telephone company. In the last three years alone, foreign investment and imports have more than doubled. By 1997, long distance service in Mexico will be open to competition, offering opportunities to service operators and equipment manufacturers. The objective of the *Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT)*, Secretariat of Communications and Transportation, is to raise telephone density to more than ten lines per 100 persons, which represents a 15 percent increase.

Telecomm de Mexico is expected privatize a number of services including public fax, telegram, electronic mail and satellite communications. As the development process continues, computer networking and telecommunications will become increasingly important. The entry of foreign financial institutions into the Mexican market has greatly increased the demand for computer networking.

Computer Technologies

As a result of the government's trade liberalization initiatives, Mexican companies have been forced to modernize their operations. The long-run opportunities for foreign suppliers are especially attractive because the domestic industry is poorly developed and the nation has little investment in old technology to slow the pace of modernization. The removal of import restrictions on computers in 1992 led to a large increase in computer sales. But there were still only about 45 personal computers for every 1,000 inhabitants in 1994. This compares with about 250 in the United States.

Computer applications include informatics, industrial automation and geomatics. Mexican companies and government agencies are looking for low-cost systems that can become productive very quickly. There is a particular need for software that will run on desktop systems as opposed to workstations. Microsoft's Windows 95 is rapidly becoming the dominant operating system.