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Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD)

WD is responsible for federal economic development activities in Western Canada. The department works in partnership with the western provinces, business, industry associations and communities to stimulate the western Canadian economy.

WD's "New Directions" program enhances the export position of western companies by boosting their competitiveness in domestic and global markets.

The department no longer provides repayable loans to individual companies, but seeks new innovative partnerships within both the public and private sectors. These partnerships will address the needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises for information, business services and capital, particularly for high growth industries critical to Western Canada's economic diversification.

One of WD's new products focussed on export development is the International Trade Personnel Program. This federal-provincial initiative links export-focussed western firms with recent post-secondary graduates. The program accomplishes two important socio-economic goals: it gives companies the extra person-power they need to penetrate new markets, and it gives recent graduates valuable work experience. Under the new program, the length of export-development projects may