

Also, respondents believed that government was compelled to be involved in international trade and competitiveness because of its international complexity and its potential consequences over the longer term for the country. In terms of the perceived motivation for government being involved with international trade, respondents felt that while politicians, in general, tend to be motivated for "self serving short term electoral" reasons, this was an issue which should be approached more seriously, with a greater degree of commitment and with a sense of imperative because unless dealt with, external players and events would overtake Canadians and "set the agenda" for them. Clearly, however, respondents felt that the trust factor with this current government had been eroded so substantially over the past few years that issues associated with credibility and believability in framing a direction for the future would be met with suspicion and skepticism. As a result, it would appear that while respondents believe that the federal government is compelled to act in this area to protect longer term Canadian economic interests and jobs, its motives for doing so will likely be challenged.

And finally, despite the credibility issues noted above, respondents felt that the Federal Government, as opposed to the various provincial or local governments, was the primary level of government that had to provide the fundamental leadership in both setting the agenda and facilitating the various components of competitiveness and trade that would effect regional and personal circumstances for future economic enhancement.