

YOU TALKED, WE LISTENED

By Gisèle
Laframboise

In April 1995, The Trade Development Operations Division (TOO) sent a Questionnaire to posts and geographic divisions regarding the delivery of services by the International Trade Centres (ITCs). Of the 39 responses received, it was clear that the role of ITCs is not well understood and that communication with ITCs is sporadic and mainly on an as-need basis. There were comments reported on the level of service offered by each ITC and by individual officers.

How are the ITCs responding to your comments? In addition to the survey, a training needs analysis was undertaken at the same time. Overall resources in ITCs have increased. ITC personnel will be taking International Business Development

and Market Information/ Intelligence training in the next few months. They will also be equipped with the InfoCentre and other information databases to allow improved response to inquiries. They are working on service standards and examining models for planning, tracking and performance measurement.

ITC staff have read the survey results. As an integral part of the Trade Commissioner Service network, they are committed to serving you better. In order to ensure the Post-ITC partnership works well, it is important that posts abroad also understand what an ITC can and cannot do. ITC services vary from region to region depending on what other Team Canada partners do.

✧ INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRES ✧

What's an ITC?

The International Trade Centres or ITCs were established in 1988 by DFAIT and Industry Canada to deliver federal trade programs and services in the provinces and to provide the linkage to our international network of posts. The 10 ITCs are located within Industry Canada offices across Canada.

What is the role of an ITC?

Some functions performed by ITCs have been redefined by the recent Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) on International Business Development (see *Trade Post* Vol.2 No.4, October 1995)

ITCs are responsible for assisting companies that are export-ready or already exporting while Regional Development Agencies (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Federal Office of Regional Development Quebec (FORD-Q), Western Economic Diversification (WED), and Industry Canada in Ontario) are responsible for the export awareness and the export readiness of Canadian firms.

ITCs are leading the process of establishing Regional Trade Networks and Regional Trade Plans. This includes developing the relationships with partners, establishing a common list of activities in the regions, ensuring provincial participation in the Canadian International Business Strategy process, etc.

In addition to the new functions provided under the MC, the ITCs will still be providing posts and DFAIT divisions with the following services:

- assist with recruitment of companies for fairs and missions
- disseminate potential opportunities to firms
- source companies for specific opportunities
- answer post queries
- prepare incoming officers programs
- counsel companies
- prepare itineraries for visiting companies
- check the bona fides of Canadian companies
- verify product/service capability of specific companies
- contact provinces or municipalities (eg. regarding provincial missions)

The Trade Development Operations Division (TOO) co-managed with Industry Canada provides functional direction to the ITCs. We urge you to keep us informed of any problems, comments, suggestions or success stories that you may have concerning ITCs and their operations. You may contact Richard Crouch at 613-996-8544 or by e-mail.

At the time of printing Gisèle Laframboise was a member of the Trade Development Operations Division.