

TOURISM: A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS

Tourism is big business in Canada. In fact, it is a \$24.9 billion industry which stimulates economic growth, prosperity and cultural development in all provinces. The industry comprises over 60,000 firms offering a wide range of services from transportation and accommodation to recreation and entertainment. In 1991, foreign visitors spent more than \$8.1 billion while vacationing in Canada and, in the process, helped provide direct employment for nearly 560,900 Canadians.

Tourism is Canada's third largest export. External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC) has responsibility for delivery of the tourism program abroad through its staff at Canadian Embassies and Consulates. Industry, Science and Technology (ISTC) - Tourism Canada establishes policy, provides direction and shares in the funding for the delivery of the federal tourism program. Other government departments, provinces, territories and municipalities are also partners in marketing Canada's tourism products and services in support of Canadian industry.

While all Canadian commercial offices abroad can assist firms in the tourism sector, 22 posts staffed with tourism-dedicated personnel initiate local promotional activities. Fourteen of these posts are located in the United States and four major offshore offices are located in Paris, London, Dusseldorf and Tokyo. The Canadian tourism industry can also draw on expertise at the Canadian Embassies in The Hague, and Seoul, the Consulate General in Sydney and the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei (Taiwan). EAITC employs a total of 60 officers and over 30 support personnel in its tourism operations abroad.

In EAITC Ottawa, coordination of the International Tourism Program is done through the U.S. Trade and Tourism Development Division (UTO) in close consultation with other geographic bureaus. UTO is the department's prime coordination link with Tourism Canada, provincial and territorial governments, municipal and regional administrations and the Canadian industry.

The promotion of Canadian tourism by EAITC & staff abroad includes:

- developing and implementing tourism market development plans;
- providing the Canadian tourism industry with market data such as reports on opportunities, business conditions and structures, local business customs and distribution channels;
- facilitating market access for the Canadian tourism industry; (such as assisting in identifying sales potential or arranging participation in a travel-show)
- organizing and implementing cooperative tourism marketplaces and promotions that bring together sellers from Canada's tourism industry with potential local buyers and distributors;
- identifying and qualifying leads for business meetings in Canada from the conventions and incentive travel industry; and
- disseminating information about new tourism product and industry developments through newsletters and mailings.

When contacting a tourism officer abroad, Canadian companies seeking marketing assistance should be prepared to fully describe their product or service, to explain the reasons for targeting a particular market segment and to provide a list of any marketing support such as familiarization tours, audio/visuals or display material they are willing to offer.

Canadian sellers can assist the department's tourism officers abroad in effectively marketing their product by providing the following information:

- the location of their facility or service and the time of operation
- the type of client sought (groups, inclusive tours, incentive, convention...)
- any support offered such as familiarization tours, audio/visuals, display material
- the markets in which the firm is presently active
- contacts and clients known from the area targeted