

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

ATLANTIC  
**CANADA**  
ATLANTIQUE

ENTENTE SUR LA PROMOTION DU COMMERCE EXTÉRIEUR

2005  
**Biennial Report on  
Activities and Results**

# Building a Trading Culture



## Together in Atlantic Canada

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**A Commitment to Sustainable Development**

At ACOA, we believe that a healthy environment is essential to the development of a strong, growing and sustainable economy. We are committed to protecting the environment of this region by promoting sustainable businesses and communities in Atlantic Canada and by setting an example in the environmental management of ACOA's own operations.

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GOVERNMENT OF  
NEWFOUNDLAND  
AND LABRADOR



## IBDA Overview

The Canada/Atlantic Provinces Agreement on International Business Development (IBDA) is a federal/provincial partnership. It has a mandate to help established exporters in Atlantic Canada expand their activities into new and more diversified markets, and to help new exporters get started. The overarching objective is to build a more dynamic environment for trade and export in the Atlantic region.

Essential to the success of the IBDA is the commitment of all seven partners to work together on behalf of Atlantic Canadian companies. This approach ensures coordination on a pan-Atlantic scale, and combines limited resources to produce the maximum number of benefits.

## Partners

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- International Trade Canada
- Industry Canada
- Province of New Brunswick
- Province of Prince Edward Island
- Province of Nova Scotia
- Province of Newfoundland and Labrador



## History

When it was launched in May 1994 — for three years and with a total investment of \$3 million — the IBDA was a first for Atlantic Canada, and the only trade development forum of its kind in the country. The Agreement has been extended three times since then, most recently in 2005 for five years with an additional \$10 million of investment.

The IBDA encourages the development of new ideas and models for projects that specifically help Atlantic Canadian businesses from a wide variety of sectors to sell their goods and services in international markets.

The pan-Atlantic nature of the Agreement enhances the visibility of Atlantic businesses in foreign markets and supports the development of export opportunities for specific sectors of the regional economy.

## Components

The IBDA comprises four main elements:

**Training and Awareness** expose businesses to export market opportunities by helping them acquire the knowledge and skills and training they will need to succeed in international markets.

**Market Information and Intelligence** work gathers critical information about international market conditions, opportunities and contacts to help guide and tailor trade development activities.

**Research and Planning** develop longer-term sector strategies and plans for international business development, keeping in mind exporter needs and best practices.

**International Business Development Activities** help Atlantic companies explore international markets. Activities include trade shows and missions, business matchmaking, networking and partnership building services.

## Major Outcomes

The IBDA's success is a matter of record. The Agreement has achieved its objectives of building partnerships, expanding export activity in the region, bringing the sector players together, leveraging expertise and resources, and creating economies of scale around international business development.

Since 1994, 32 per cent of companies that participated in an IBDA-sponsored trade activity for the first time have since begun exporting internationally; 42 per cent of companies reported an increase in the volume of their exports and 29 per cent started exporting to new markets as a result of an IBDA activity.

An independent evaluation of the Agreement conducted in 2004 found that project activities and planning supported international business development in the following sectors:

- Building Products and Construction
- Business/Professional and Education Services
- Consumer-Wholesale
- Environmental Industries
- Food (Agri-Food and Seafood)
- Fish and Aquaculture Technology
- Information Communications Technology (ICT)
- Life Sciences
- Ocean Industries
- Plastics and Metals

The evaluation also found that the IBDA has been particularly effective in opening up new markets for Atlantic exporters — especially the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

## Notable IBDA projects

### Internship 2004

One of the longest-running and most successful projects supported by the IBDA is the Internship Program, administered by the Centre for International Business Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Janet Lord, the Centre's Program Coordinator, says that eight MBA students from universities across Atlantic Canada participated in the 2004 sessions. Essentially, the students were assigned to Canadian Consulates in Buenos Aires, Dublin, Miami, Boston, Chicago, London, Trinidad and Tobago, and Los Angeles for 12-week postings between late May and August. The task for each of them was to research best practices and market opportunities for the Atlantic Canadian company to which he or she was attached. "It provides tremendous experience for the student and a great deal of market information and intelligence for the Atlantic company," Ms. Lord says. "Needless to say, the support from the IBDA is crucial. It provided assistance with travel and living expenses."

### IT CEO Boot Camp 2005

"Without the International Business Development Agreement, we could never have staged as successful an event as the information technology CEO boot camp," says Malcolm Fraser, President of the Information Technology Association of Nova Scotia. In January 2005, owners and senior managers of IT companies in Atlantic Canada gathered in Halifax to learn about product marketing and opportunities in the burgeoning e-health field. "Both topics are directly related to improved export capabilities," Mr. Fraser explains. "Knowing how to market your product abroad is obviously crucial, and e-health is a largely export-driven field." During the one-day event, participants were exposed to fresh perspectives and techniques for achieving and maintaining business growth. According to Mr. Fraser, the event was a tremendous success.

### IBDA-sponsored activities

**32%**

of companies that participated for the first time have since begun exporting internationally.

**42%**

of companies reported an increase in the volume of their exports.

**29%**

of companies started exporting to new markets as a result of an IBDA activity.



## Oceanology International 2004

Oceanology International 2004 was the biggest networking and deal-making event of its kind in the world. And, last year's conference did not disappoint: it attracted more than 7,000 people from 70 countries. With support from the IBDA, 22 Atlantic Canadian delegates made the trek to London and, according to Darrell O'Neil of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, the experience was a uniform success. Preliminary results from Oceanology 2004, which occurred last March, indicated on-site sales of some \$1.7 million and future anticipated sales of close to \$20 million. "This is crucially important experience for our ocean tech exporters and near-exporters," Mr. O'Neil says. "The Atlantic Canada Reception was well attended, with between 200 and 250 guests overall. Without support from the IBDA — which contributed toward the costs of exhibit space, booths, networking and reception — we couldn't make the effort."

## Consumer Products Export Strategy 2005

Thanks to the IBDA, Atlantic Canada now has its first, comprehensive Consumer Products Export Strategy. "This has been a long time coming," says Taylor Parsons of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. "It will provide us with a roadmap for the future of consumer products exporting in the region." The Strategy, which was recently completed, provides a complete profile of the consumer products sector in Atlantic Canada, identifies key sub-sectors, and proposes a strategy to grow and develop the sector. "With this in hand, we can now move on to developing an action plan," Ms. Parsons says.

## Sector Workshop 2004

"Sector workshops are crucial functions of the IBDA," says Andrea Arseneault, Trade and Investment Officer for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. "They provide provincial and federal government sector and trade officers with the opportunity to network, develop strategies and annual workplans, and generally discuss potential IBDA projects." Why does this matter? The 2004 workshop provided the 114 delegates, which included provincial and federal government sector and trade officers, with an opportunity to network, share information, and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent to Atlantic Canadian exporting.

To learn more about the IBDA please visit [www.acoa-apec.ca/ibda](http://www.acoa-apec.ca/ibda).

