

Services and Programs of  
The Department of Regional Industrial Expansion

Keith McKeller : DRIE

The Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) has the objective of increasing overall industrial, commercial and tourism activity in all parts of Canada. Some 38 offices located across Canada provide a convenient first point of contact for firms wishing to take advantage of the Department's programs. Industry sector branches at DRIE headquarters in Ottawa specialize in particular industries. The sector branches provide overall industry intelligence by monitoring up-to-date information on industrial activities and issues. Within the Forest Products Directorate, a part of the Resource Processing Industries Branch, are divisions which focus on wood products, pulp and paper, and further manufactured wood and paper products industries.

The government's principal means of delivering direct federal assistance to industry is through the Industrial and Regional Development Program (IRDP) which is administered by DRIE. Contributions and repayable contributions are available to support innovation, plant establishment, modernization/expansion and marketing. However the current departmental policy is not to provide assistance to projects resulting in new or expanded capacity in certain regions. Under the IRDP marketing element, DRIE provides support for the Co-operative Overseas Market Development Program (COMDP) in equal partnership with the Council of Forest Industries of British Columbia (COFI), and the B.C. government in British Columbia, and with the Quebec Lumber Manufacturers Association (QLMA) and the Quebec government in Quebec. COFI and QLMA undertake a broad range of offshore market development activities under their respective COMDP programs. Financial assistance to stimulate private industrial investment is also available in some provinces as a result of federal/provincial agreements on industrial development which stem from Economic and Regional Development Agreements (ERDAs).

The Program for Export Market Development (PEMD) supports activities such as market identification trips, participation in trade fairs abroad, and invitations to incoming buyers. By way of example, PEMD financial assistance for market identification trips is 50 per cent of return economy air fare and a daily allowance of \$150 while abroad.

DRIE local offices as well as the Forest Products Directorate can assist exporters by working with the Department of External Affairs to obtain useful information on export markets. Providing the outlook for demand in offshore markets, identification of possible customers and agents, and provision of tariff or tax information, are some of the services available through DRIE.

Each year, the Forest Products Directorate conducts a number of incoming and outgoing missions. For example, this past years activities included incoming missions of Belgian and Korean importers and users of softwood lumber who were brought to Canada to meet Canadian producers.

In summary, DRIE provides industry with a wide range of support through its programs and services.