

# **ITAC International Business Development Strategy 2012-2015**

## **Executive Summary**

The focus of the global information and communications technology industry was on Montreal in October 2012 as Canada hosted the bi-annual World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT 2012). WCIT is a major forum for leading thinkers, policy makers and business leaders concerned with evolution of the global digital economy. 2012 marked the first time this forum took place in Canada in a generation. WCIT 2012 therefore presented an unparalleled opportunity to showcase Canadian technology before a global marketplace of customers, partners and investors. It occurred at a particularly important time in the evolution of Canada's own digital economy with our own digital economy strategy unfolding and an important auction of wireless spectrum taking place in 2012.

The key success of WCIT was the exposure it gave to over 300 Canadian companies to partners, customers and financiers from all around the world through its Business-to-Business (B2B) program, the Digital River Showcase and the C200 Investors Forum. ITAC maintains ongoing contact with these companies through a dedicated web page, surveys and ongoing communications via our President and CEO, Karna Gupta. Working with our partners at DFAIT and Export Development Canada, we are using this communication to encourage the adoption of and best practice in international business development strategies for emerging Canadian ICT companies. Thus, we are leveraging their experiences at WCIT to keep the conversation on IBD active and to present ongoing opportunities for international engagement and business development.

In 2013, ITAC built international business development momentum with the support of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) through the organization of trade missions to India and United Arab Emirates. The process of organizing these missions (which directly engaged 11 ICT companies) allowed us to engage the SME component in ITAC's membership more actively on international business development opportunities. For example, nearly 30 companies joined us for a webinar on Doing Business in India. And SMEs within ITAC's health, cyber security and Ontario committees were given presentations on the opportunities in India and Dubai. ITAC plans to conduct two follow-up missions to Dubai and India in 2014 in order to continue to reinforce the inroads our participants have made in their initial visits in 2013. Our members have identified a keen interest in opportunities in South America and ITAC will consider a mission there in 2015.

## **Sector Analysis**

- ITAC is the voice of the information and communications technology industry in Canada. It has operated as such for over 60 years.
- The ICT sector is the fastest growing sector in the Canadian economy and directly employs over 500,000 Canadians. It is the most R&D intensive industry in the Canadian economy and is a leading export sector.

- ITAC's members include large, medium and small companies from all parts of Canada in the fields of ICT services, telecommunications, software development, hardware design and manufacture, microelectronics and digital content. Through the ICT Federation, we maintain a close relationship with regional technology associations in all provinces.
- ITAC believes that ICT is a critical enabling tool which supports all sectors in business and is a critical component in driving efficiency and productivity.

### **Subsectors that will be focused on**

ITAC plans to showcase export-ready Canadian owned ICT companies who are interested in taking advantage of ongoing opportunities to meet partners, customers and investors from all around the world. This opportunity will not be limited by subsector. It will also be open to companies regardless of whether they are ITAC members.

### **Target Markets**

A central focus of ITAC's IBD work in 2013 and 2014 is on Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Following a small mission to attend Arab Health in January 2014, ITAC plans to lead a larger delegation of 10 companies to GITEX in October. The focus for this conference will be on smart cities so we will be actively engaging cyber security companies, smart grid and wireless communications companies to join our mission.

ITAC continues to play an active role in the Canada India ICT Working Group. To continue to build on the opportunities created by our mission to India Telecom in 2013 we are proposing a return mission engaging 10 companies in the software, telecom and wireless spaces to meet potential customers in India. Additionally, based on member input, ITAC will explore opportunities in Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Chile in preparation for a 2015 mission in that region.

### **Target Customers**

Our focus will be upon both the large multinationals that need Canadian ICT partners in their supply chain and also the investment / finance sector which seek out Canadian ICT & other technologies to invest in.

### **Strategic Priorities**

#### **1. Strategic Objectives and Desired Outcomes**

##### **2012**

With WCIT 2012 as our central opportunity, we built a B2B component of the Congress that introduced 300+ Canadian ICT companies to potential partners, customers and investors

through structured and scheduled meetings programmed at the Congress. Another program component was the C200 Forum that united Canadian ICT companies seeking funding with potential investors from around the world. The Congress additionally hosted 1,500 to 2500 delegates who were exposed to Canadian technology through formal media such as exhibits and showcases as well as numerous informal networking opportunities.

## **2013**

In 2013 the focus of ITAC's international business development strategy will be upon sensitizing emerging Canadian ICT companies to opportunities in key markets. We will leverage the engagement of Karna Gupta in the India Canada Working Group to encourage a group of ITAC members and non- members to begin or strengthen their engagements in the Indian marketplace. The primary focus of our activity will take place around Industry Canada's planned meetings co-incident with India Telecom 2013.

## **2014**

Supported by a GOA grant, a small delegation of ITAC members will be in Dubai in January 2014 for Arab Health, the largest regional health (including e-health) conference. We will work closely with the trade commissioner service in Dubai to ensure solid B2B opportunities for delegates.

ITAC believes that Dubai offers many superb opportunities for Canadian ICT companies and plans to keep Dubai in our IBD strategy for the foreseeable future. We have applied for GOA support to bring a larger mission to Dubai in October.

ITAC also continues to be an active member of the Canada India ICT Working Group. While no meetings of the working group are scheduled for India in 2014, ITAC believes it is important to continue to focus on India to strengthen the contacts we have established in India. We hope to encourage past mission participants to return and expand the network of Canadian SMEs doing business in India.

Additionally our strategy in 2014 calls for research and reconnaissance on key opportunities for our members in Latin America.

## **2015**

Because effective foreign business development activities require sustained focus, ITAC will continue to focus on opportunities in India and the UAE in 2015 while slightly expanding our range of activities into either Brazil, Argentina, Chile or Mexico.

## **Measurement of Results**

ITAC conducts post-mission interviews with all participants to determine the qualitative and quantitative value of the experience. This, plus our ongoing surveys of our foreign business development-ready community, will allow us to refine and refocus our efforts to support IBD strategies throughout the Canadian ICT industry.



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Karna Gupta  
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