INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE
GATT TRADE INFORMATION AND TRADE PROMOTION ADVISORY SERVICES

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE
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CENTRE OFFERS MARKET INFORMATION SERVICE
FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

This Centre has been set up to help developing nations increase their exports. One of the chief ways in which it can do this is to assist them in exploring the prospects of expanded markets for their products. The Centre's Market Information Service is the unit chiefly concerned with this end and will, on request, investigate the possibilities of expansion of exports.

The Centre estimates that it could most usefully assist with information on markets for semi-processed, processed and manufactured goods although it will also cover primary commodities if requested to. It considers that it would be desirable to devote special attention to products available for export at the present time or in the near future, rather than to those still in the planning stage. The Centre could, of course, also advise about future prospects for such products. Generally speaking, however, it is the Centre's hope that requests made to it will relate to processed products that are already of substantial export interest in the country's trade or could become so in the near future.

As regards the sources of enquiries, the Centre will give priority in the first instance to requests for assistance originating from government liaison agencies (which are mostly ministries of commerce or foreign trade institutes) and to other government institutions; and secondly, to enquiries from recognized trade associations. If a private trader makes a request for a survey of a foreign market for a particular export product, the Centre would undertake it if the product was of some importance in the economy of the originating country. The liaison agency in the country would subsequently be provided with the results of any such research. No distinction is made between GATT and non-GATT countries; the only requisite being that the work requested be on behalf of a developing country.

Attached is a questionnaire designed to elicit basic data that the staff of the Centre would require in order to commence investigations on a product presented for a survey.

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This questionnaire, should not however, be considered an absolute minimum requirement without which the Centre would not undertake surveys. There might be instances where part of the information requested may not be available - as for example in the case of new products not yet widely exported. It would, however, be appreciated if as much as possible of the information requested be furnished, inasmuch as the more information there is to work on, the more complete and expeditious the answers can be.

In cases where the information desired is limited to tariffs, other import restrictions or other single governmental measures (e.g. sanitary regulations), it would, of course, not be necessary to furnish all the information requested in the questionnaire. It would be sufficient for such purpose to provide specifications concerning the product detailed enough to identify it in the tariff lists or other relevant classification systems used by the government of the importing country.

It is hoped that this note will encourage and assist those in the less-developed countries who wish to take advantage of the Centre's services to formulate their enquiries in a manner that will enable the Centre to furnish answers as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible. Enquiries should be addressed to the Centre at the address above.
Data on products about which the International Trade Centre is asked to investigate market prospects

(a) estimated domestic production; product's importance in the present total export trade of the country and pattern (i.e., to which nations); estimated export potential in the near future;

(b) specifications - grade, quality, packing, etc.; technical specifications would be needed in the case of a manufactured product;

(c) length of time needed for delivery; if the product is an agricultural commodity, which are the export seasons;

(d) an indication of the range of prices within which the exporter believes he could compete in the target market; where exporters have already attempted to sell in a foreign market, what else is known about the success of such competitors, e.g. if it is attributed to price, greater proximity, established trade channels;

(e) any other information that might be helpful in making an assessment of prospects, e.g. some unique characteristic of the product, as in the case of handicraft styles;

(f) on which market information is required or whether it will be left to the discretion of the Centre to select the markets that appear to offer the best prospects.