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Chris Padfield
Director-General, Small Business Branch
Innovation, Science and Innovation Canada
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

Subject: CanExport Program

Dear Mr. Padfield:

Some of the Canadian Chamber's SME members with experience in international markets have examined the CanExport Program launched earlier this year to determine the degree to which it could be of assistance to them. They applaud the objective of the program to support Canadian SMEs that want to increase their export reach. However, there are a few aspects of the program that detract from it meeting their needs. They have asked us to share these with you:

1. The "one new market only per project application" criterion requires the SME to segregate its marketing approach and costs for a single country when, in fact, companies will often target geographical regions for marketing campaigns in order to have maximum impact while minimizing costs, such as travel.
2. The criterion that "applicants can only have one active CanExport project at any given time" when combined with the preceding further restricts the program's usefulness to these companies.
3. By defining a "market" as equivalent to a "country" and then prohibiting the use of CanExport for any market into which the company has exported in the previous two years, the program eliminates support for expansion of Canadian exports into new markets within the same country. Typically, a "market" is defined as a particular sector (e.g., medical, defence, oil and gas), rather than a country. Supporting the exports of Canadian SMEs to new markets within a country should be encouraged, rather than discouraged.

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4. Another challenge our members mentioned is the restrictive/prescriptive nature of what the funding can be used for. If there were more flexibility, e.g., a Canadian company could access the \$50,000 in funding for a variety of "approved market activities" (allowing the company to determine what it needs and where it would deploy the funds) it would account for the variety of SMEs we have in Canada that require different types and levels of support based on their industry norms. This would increase the ability to apply the program more efficiently to their business and export markets.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey our members' perspectives. I hope they are helpful.

Sincerely,



Susanna Cluff-Clyburne
Director, Parliamentary Affairs

c.c.: Canadian Chamber of Commerce SME Committee