

YORK REGION EXPORT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE 2003 PROGRESS REPORT

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, August 20, 2003, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received for information.
2. Staff be authorized to execute strategic alliances with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, and York University's Schulich School of Business to pursue opportunities for co-operative initiatives.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the York Region Export Development Initiative.

3. BACKGROUND

The Export Development Initiative is a Regionally funded initiative to assist York Region companies to develop and expand their export potentials. It is a key component of the Region's economic development program to promote economic growth and prosperity in the area.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Export Advisor

Provision was made in the 2003 approved Budget for the retention of two Export Advisors to operate the program. However, as a result of the departure of Ken DeWolf in January 2003, the Region was left with only one Export Advisor to serve clients in the entire area for the first half of the year. The selection process for the second Export Advisor is now completed, and Tony Baker has been retained to work with Elizabeth Sendel for the remainder of 2003.

4.2 Export Activities

The level of export activities for the first half of the year was slightly affected by the Iraqi War, the slowdown in the U.S. economy, and by the complement reduction to one Export Advisor. However, SARS did not appear to have a significant impact on client activities. Elizabeth Sendel continued to meet with companies and assist them through counselling and referrals to export support agencies.

The program offers the following benefits to the business community:

- Proactive approach has offered a value-added service to businesses in the Region.

- The outreach program has enabled the Export Advisor to promote the Region and address a variety of related economic development issues.
- The service provided has facilitated companies towards achieving tangible results such as increased revenue and reduced costs.

Attached as (*Attachment 1*) to this report are some testimonials of client companies to the program.

As at the end of July, the Export Advisor has visited 230 companies, and serviced 362 companies either by telephone or by email. The number of active clients totalled 752, broken down by municipalities as follows:

Aurora	18
East Gwillimbury	1
Georgina	3
King	2
Markham	378
Newmarket	20
Richmond Hill	100
Vaughan	194
Whitchurch-Stouffville	38

During the first seven months of the year, the Export Advisor was involved in the following seminars/workshops/special events:

- Participated in the York Region booth display at York Technology Association's Tech Expo in February.
- Co-sponsored an eProcurement Seminar with Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters in June.
- Hosted 2 workshops for the York Region Women's Entrepreneurs in March and June.
- Participated as a speaker at the Markham YMCA Exporting Workshop in June.
- Attended the FITT (Forum for International Trade Training) Annual Conference in Ottawa in June.

Activities undertaken for the first seven months included the following:

- Offered consultation service to exporters.
- Provided hot-line support through telephone, fax and email services.
- Held export clinics for new entrepreneurs and small businesses at local Business Centres and Associations.
- Undertaken speaking engagements at business associations.
- Sent out regular broadcast emails and faxes to promote the program.
- Initiated discussions with Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and York University's Schulich School of Business for the purpose of establishing strategic alliances.
- Attended trade shows, seminars and special events hosted by external agencies, e.g. Sweden Chamber reception, Global Traders reception, IMBA presentations by Schulich School's international students, etc.

4.3 Strategic Alliances

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) and the Schulich School of Business of York University have expressed their interest in establishing strategic alliances with the Region to jointly promote the Export Development Initiative.

The proposed strategic alliances will have the following benefits for the Region and its clients:

- Extend the awareness of the Program and enhance the Region's profile within the broader business and academic community.
- Create opportunities for the members, partners and students of these two organizations to participate and add value to the program.
- Allows the Region to be aware of seminars, conferences and other events planned by the partners.
- Opportunities for joint event planning and shared resources.
- Provide a forum for networking and exchange of ideas and information.
- Client companies can access co-op student placement and the available expertise of international students.
- Extend the opportunities for cost-sharing and revenue generation for the program.

It is recommended that staff be authorized to execute strategic alliances with CME and the Schulich School of Business to identify and explore business development opportunities, and to work co-operatively to improve the competitiveness of Canadian industry and expand exports.

4.4 Proposed Workplan

With the addition of the second Export Advisor, the program will continue to be delivered in the direction as originally intended. The following performance metrics have been set out for the balance of the year:

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| • One-on-one company consultations | 65 per month |
| • Export Seminars | 3 to be held: Establishing New Markets
Trade Finance, Logistics |
| • Export Newsletter | October circulation: 5000 copies to be distributed |
| • Establish New Branding Image | for completion by November |
| • New Export Brochure | for completion by November |
| • Strategic Alliances described | 2 to be concluded in September as in this report |
| • Networking Events | attendance at 4 events |
| • Export Assessment Survey | 75 companies to be surveyed in November/December
results to be compiled in January 2004 |

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Export Development Initiative promotes economic growth in the Region, and supports the Vibrant Economy Goal as established in *Vision 2026*.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The net amount of \$89,000 has been allocated for the Export Development Initiative as part of the 2003 approved Economic Development Budget. There will be no direct financial impact with respect to the strategic alliances with Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the Schulich School of Business.

Staff and the Export Advisors will actively pursue additional funding sources and sponsorships to offset some of the costs associated with the operation of the program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The direct and indirect impact of increased export activities will benefit all local municipalities and the Region as a whole.

7. CONCLUSION

In the past three and a half years, the Export Development Initiative has been successful in serving companies within the Region. This initiative has been acknowledged as one of the most successful among similar programs across Ontario. The Export Advisors and their approach were considered proactive, innovative and professional. It is recommended that the initiative be continued as a strategic economic development program subject to approval of the 2004 budget.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is attached to this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)