

# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL EXPORT COUNSELING AND ASSISTANCE

### International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

The International Trade Administration (ITA) is dedicated to opening markets for U.S. products and services and providing assistance and information to exporters. ITA units include (1) trade specialists in 108 domestic Export Assistance Centers and 150 overseas offices, (2) industry experts and market and economic analysts, (3) market access experts, and (4) import policy and trade compliance analysts who enforce trade laws and agreements that provide remedies to domestic industries injured by unfair import competition. These ITA units perform analyses, promote products, and offer services for the U.S. exporting community, including export promotion, counseling, and information programs listed elsewhere in this booklet.

**Contact:** For more information about ITA, call 800-USA-TRAD(E) (800-872-8723), or visit [www.ita.doc.gov](http://www.ita.doc.gov).

### U.S. Commercial Service, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce

The U.S. Commercial Service (CS), a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, helps U.S. companies, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, increase their international market share and sales. Through its global network of more than 1,700 trade specialists located in 108 domestic offices and 150 posts in 80 countries, the CS works one-on-one with companies through every step of the exporting process—helping them leverage world-class market research, promote their products and services in target markets, meet qualified international buyers and distributors, and overcome challenges and barriers they may encounter while doing business in international markets.

**Contact:** For more information about the CS and its programs, visit [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov), or—to speak with a CS trade specialist—call 800-USA-TRAD(E) (800-872-8723).





### Trade Information Center, CS, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce

The Trade Information Center (TIC), a U.S. Commercial Service resource, is the first stop for companies seeking export assistance from the federal government. CS trade specialists working in the TIC

- Advise U.S. firms on all government export programs
- Guide businesses through the export process
- Provide country and regional business counseling on standards and trade regulations, distribution channels, opportunities and best prospects for U.S. companies, tariffs and border taxes, customs procedures, and common commercial difficulties
- Direct businesses to market research and trade leads
- Assist businesses with the North American Free Trade Agreement Certificate of Origin and with other free trade agreements
- Provide information on overseas and domestic trade events and activities
- Refer businesses to state and local trade organizations that provide additional assistance

**Contact:** For more information, visit [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov). To contact a CS trade specialist, call 800-USA-TRAD(E) (800-872-8723), fax (202) 482-4473, or e-mail [tic@ita.doc.gov](mailto:tic@ita.doc.gov).



### U.S. Export Assistance Center Network, CS, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce

The U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have formed a nationwide network of U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs). USEACs are located in more than 100 cities throughout the United States and serve as one-stop shops that provide small and medium-sized businesses with hands-on export marketing and trade finance support. USEACs work closely with federal, state, local, public, and private organizations to provide unparalleled export assistance to American businesses trying to compete in the global marketplace.

USEAC trade specialists provide global business solutions by (1) identifying the best markets for their clients' products; (2) developing effective market-entry strategies based on information generated from commercial offices; (3) facilitating the implementation of these strategies by advising clients on distribution channels, key factors to consider in pricing, and relevant trade shows and missions; and (4) providing assistance in obtaining trade finance available through federal government programs, as well as access to state, local, public, and private-sector entities.

Many USEAC offices are co-located with other federal, state, local, public, and private-sector entities—making it easy for U.S. companies to find the help they need.

**Contact:** For the address and phone number of the USEAC nearest you, see Appendix A, call 800-USA-TRAD(E) (800-872-8723), or visit [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov).

### Global Diversity Initiative, CS, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce

The Global Diversity Initiative (GDI), a program of the U.S. Commercial Service, provides services to increase the export of goods and services from women and minority business owners. Specifically, GDI works to engage, educate, and advocate for U.S. women- and minority-owned businesses so that they can tap into growing export markets for their goods and services. GDI also supports the Rural Export Initiative, which provides companies in rural areas better access to export assistance and global market research.

**Contact:** For more information, call (202) 482-4792, e-mail [global\\_diversity@ita.doc.gov](mailto:global_diversity@ita.doc.gov), or visit [www.buyUSA.gov/globaldiversity](http://www.buyUSA.gov/globaldiversity).

### District Export Councils, CS, ITA, U.S. Department of Commerce

District Export Councils (DECs) are organizations of leaders from local business communities whose knowledge of international business provides a source of professional advice for local firms. Closely affiliated with USEACs, the 58 DECs nationwide combine the energies of more than 1,500 volunteers to supply expertise to small and medium-sized businesses in their local communities that are interested in exporting. For example, DECs organize seminars that make trade finance understandable and accessible to small exporters, host international buyer delegations, design export resource guides, and create export assistance partnerships to strengthen the support given to local businesses.

**Contact:** For more information on DECs, call 800-USA-TRAD(E) (800-872-8723), or visit [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov).

### Office of International Trade, Small Business Administration

The Office of International Trade (OIT) works with other federal agencies and public and private-sector organizations to encourage small businesses to expand their export activities, as well as to assist small businesses seeking to export. OIT directs and coordinates SBA export finance and export development assistance. OIT outreach efforts include regional initiatives with Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, Mexico, and Nigeria, whereby SBA's alliances with government agencies for small business in other countries can facilitate trade opportunities in those countries. In addition, OIT develops "how-to" and market-specific publications for exporters.

In assisting small business exporters, OIT oversees SBA loan guarantee programs, including the Export Working Capital Program, which is available through USEACs and SBA field offices across the country. Also through the USEAC network, OIT spearheads the Export Trade Assistance Partnership (E-TAP). The E-TAP program focuses on small groups of export-ready companies, providing them assistance in developing export markets, acquiring orders or contracts, gaining access to export financing, and preparing for trade missions or overseas shows.

**Contact:** To learn more about OIT, call (202) 205-6720, fax (202) 205-7272, or visit [www.sba.gov/oit](http://www.sba.gov/oit).



### Small Business Development Centers, Small Business Administration

Located throughout the United States, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) provide a range of technical and export assistance, particularly to small companies that are new to exporting. Such assistance includes counseling, training, and managerial support. Their counseling services are free to the small business exporter, but there may be small fees for export training seminars and other SBDC-sponsored export events. Many SBDCs are involved in the E-TAP program.

**Contact:** For more information on SBDCs, call Jorge F. Cardona, Office of Small Business Development Centers, at (202) 205-7303, fax (202) 205-7727, or visit [www.sba.gov/sbdc](http://www.sba.gov/sbdc). For the location of the SBDC nearest you, call 800-USA-TRAD(E).

### Export Legal Assistance Network, Small Business Administration

With a presence in 70 U.S. cities and with the participation of more than 250 attorneys, the Export Legal Assistance Network (ELAN) program is a nationwide group of attorneys in private practice who have particular expertise in international trade and who provide free initial consultations to businesses that are new to export on export-related matters. Issues relating to export licensing, domestic and foreign taxation, tariffs, and intellectual property rights are just some of the topics covered. The ELAN service is available through SBA district offices, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and Small Business Development Centers. For maximum benefit from the session, we recommend that exporters call ELAN after designing their strategic plan so they arrive with specific questions.

**Contact:** For the address and phone number of the SBA office nearest you, visit [www.sba.gov/oit](http://www.sba.gov/oit), or call 800-U-ASK-SBA. To contact ELAN, call Judd Kessler, ELAN national coordinator, at (202) 778-3080, fax (202) 778-3063, or e-mail [jkessler@porterwright.com](mailto:jkessler@porterwright.com). For a full list of ELAN coordinators across the United States, visit [www.fita.org/elan](http://www.fita.org/elan).

### Service Corps of Retired Executives, Small Business Administration

SCORE, which consists of locally chartered volunteer organizations funded by SBA, provides free, expert, problem-solving assistance to small businesses. Helping American small businesses to prosper has been SCORE's goal since the program began in 1964. SCORE tries to match counselor experience with client needs and provide one-on-one counseling. SCORE also conducts well-developed, pre-business workshops and a variety of business-oriented seminars and training sessions.

**Contact:** Visit SCORE's home page at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org), call (800) 634-0245, or fax (202) 205-7636. To contact W. Kenneth Yancey Jr., SCORE's chief executive officer, call (202) 205-6762.

### Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is the only federal agency created to specifically foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in America. The agency's mission is to actively promote the growth and competitiveness of large, medium, and small minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA operates the Minority Business Development Center (MBDC) Program and the Native American Business Development Center (NABDC) Program. These programs provide direct business consulting services to minority entrepreneurs. The centers provide the following services: access to markets; access to capital, management, and technical assistance; and education and training. To accomplish this goal, the centers provide entrepreneurial assessments and general business consulting; marketing assistance; loan packaging and other financial consulting; identification of and assistance in obtaining procurement opportunities; education and training; and various other entrepreneurial consulting services. MBDA currently operates 26 MBDCs and 8 NABDCs throughout the United States. MBDA works closely with the International Trade Administration on innovative ways to engage U.S. minority firms in the international business arena. Seminars inform minority firms of the tremendous opportunities available through international trade. MBDA supports several minority trade missions and matchmaker programs and notifies the minority community about all Department of Commerce trade missions.

**Contact:** To learn more about MBDA, contact Donald Powers at (202) 482-7982, fax (202) 482-3473, e-mail [dpowers@mbda.gov](mailto:dpowers@mbda.gov), or visit [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov).