

Assistance may provide for establishing new businesses, acquiring fixed assets — land, buildings and equipment — expanding existing facilities, strengthening working capital, financing raw material or finished inventories for manufacturers, and research and development. Funds are made available directly or by guarantee in various forms.

Business counselling services may be provided by AOC and include management advice and guidance on financial, technical and marketing matters for small and intermediate-sized Alberta businesses which cannot afford to obtain this type of help elsewhere. Services are provided through the company's head office in Ponoka and branch offices in Calgary, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, St. Paul, Medicine Hat, Edson and Edmonton.

17.3.10 British Columbia

The economic development ministry provides programs and services to government agencies, industries and the business community through two main branches. A policy planning and research branch formulates economic development flows for the province, co-ordinates implementation of strategies and provides information for many of the ministry's activities. The branch also implements programs originating from the Canada-British Columbia Industrial Development Subsidiary Agreement. A business and industrial development branch provides market development and promotional programs to assist existing businesses, encourage new industry and develop BC's exports. These include trade missions, trade shows, seminars, incoming buyers' programs, and market development.

A small business assistance program helps managers in analyzing and diagnosing business problems, recommending solutions and preparing financial proposals and applications for assistance through various aid programs. Through its technical assistance program, the branch shares companies' costs in undertaking market and financial feasibility studies, and studies designed to improve productivity. The aim of this program is to provide incentive to companies to expand their facilities, diversify their product lines, or enter into new business.

The ministry maintains liaison with the British Columbia Development Corp. This Crown corporation provides for acquisition and servicing of land suitable for industrial use in areas where serviced industrial land was not previously available, or where high land costs prohibited location of individual firms. It also provides financial assistance through loans to businesses wishing to expand existing operations or create new economic activity in the province. The ministry maintains a trade and industry office at British Columbia House in London, England.

17.4 Government aid and controls

17.4.1 Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs

The federal consumer and corporate affairs department administers federal legislation and policies affecting business, and demonstrates that a competitive marketplace can benefit consumers, business people and investors. Four bureaus and a field operations service share responsibility for achieving the department's marketplace objectives.

The consumer affairs bureau co-ordinates government activities in the field of consumer affairs; it includes consumer services and consumer research branches and the consumer standards directorate. The corporate affairs bureau administers legislation and regulations pertaining to corporations; its branches are responsible for corporations, bankruptcy, securities and research. The intellectual property bureau administers laws pertaining to patents, copyright and industrial design, and trade marks, with a branch responsible for each of these fields. Canada's participation in international intellectual property organizations is the responsibility of the research and international affairs branch, and the role of informing Canadians of the services of the bureau is filled by a technical advisory services branch. The bureau of competition policy has branches specializing in resources, manufacturing, services and marketing practices. A research branch undertakes basic research projects. The Restrictive Trade Practices Commission is an independent administrative commission that reports directly to the minister.