

The Bureau of Competition Policy promotes competition and efficiency in the Canadian economy through enforcement and administration of the Competition Act, ensuring in the process that consumers, retailers, distributors and producers are protected from anti-competitive practices, and that success in the marketplace is determined by economic efficiency and fairness. The stated objectives of the act are to promote economic efficiency and the international competitiveness of Canadian business, to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have an equitable opportunity to participate in the economy and to provide consumers with competitive prices and product choices. Moreover, if, as a result of competition law, markets work better, then there is less need for direct government intervention.

The act contains criminal law prohibitions against agreements (conspiracies) to lessen competition, anti-competitive behaviour such as price maintenance, predatory pricing, price discrimination, and misleading advertising and deceptive marketing practices such as double ticketing and pyramid selling. In addition, certain trade practices described in Part VII of the act including merger, abuse of dominant position, refusal to deal, tied selling, and market restriction, while not prohibited, are subject to civil review by the Competition Tribunal which, for the purposes of this part of the act, is a court of record. The director of investigation and research, who is also the assistant deputy minister for the Bureau of Competition Policy, is responsible for investigating matters falling within the ambit of the act, and he is the only person who may apply to the Competition Tribunal for a remedial order in respect of the civil matters under the act. However, private parties may apply to the Tribunal to register voluntary specialization agreements justified on efficiency grounds.

Part VIII of the Competition Act requires parties to large merger proposals to notify the director, provide certain information and wait from 7 to 21 days before completing the merger.

Since 1976 the director has been empowered to make representations in respect of competition before federally regulated boards, commissions and tribunals. The director may also make representations before provincial regulatory bodies with the consent of the board, commission or tribunal in question. By arguing the case for competition and its related efficiency gains, the director seeks to ensure that the benefits of competition are represented and considered in the regulatory decision-making process.

**Food.** Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada is responsible for regulation on behalf of the consumer of the quality, quantity, composition, substitution, packaging, labelling and advertising of food products, by the administration of portions of the Food and Drugs Act, the Canada Agricultural Products Standards Act and the Fish Inspection Act.

**Measurement.** The Weights and Measures Act prescribes the legal standards of weight and measure for use in Canada; it also ensures control of the types of all weighing and measuring devices used for commercial purposes, and provides for in-use surveillance directed toward minimizing inaccurate measurement. The Electricity and Gas Inspectors Act provides similar standards for fair measurement of these two forms of energy at both levels.

**Appliance labelling, energy consumption.** Refrigerators, freezers, washers, dishwashers, clothes dryers and ranges sold in Canada must show an Energuide label. This label indicates the kilowatt hours a month of energy consumption of each model. This energy labelling requirement is regulated under the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.

**Corporations branch** of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada administers the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Corporations Act, the Canada Co-operatives Association Act and the Boards of Trade Act. The branch has a statutory duty to issue formal documents in connection with corporations created under other federal acts such as the Loan Companies Act, Trust Companies Act, the Canadian and British Insurance Companies Act, and the Railway Act.

All federal business corporations other than those carrying on business as financial intermediaries must be incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act. Federal non-profit corporations continue to be incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act until a proposed new Non-profit Corporations Act is passed by Parliament.

## 17.7 Government aid to business

Government programs are available to help in several stages of developing a business by providing financing, information or technical guidance.

**Start-up stage.** The success of a business operation can be influenced by the initial research and investigation. Agencies such as the Federal Business Development Bank offer training and