

Foreword

This volume brings together the results of some of the trade-related policy research undertaken within, on behalf of, or in collaboration with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada over the past year. Launched in 2001 as part of the response to the Government of Canada's *Policy Research Initiative*, a government-wide effort to re-create and expand its research capacity, the *Trade Policy Research* series is now in its seventh edition.

Previous volumes have traced the debate in trade policy circles since the watershed developments at the 1999 WTO Ministerial in Seattle, following the progress of the Doha Round, touching on topical issues such as the proliferation in regional trade agreements, and showcasing research and analysis conducted within the Government of Canada on various aspects of trade policy and economic globalization more generally.

This year's volume takes up different facets of two major elements of trade policy: trade promotion activities and regional trade agreements.

Part I has two papers. The first sets out the theoretical case for public sector engagement in trade promotion and surveys the economic literature on the potential impacts of such programs. The second examines the emerging leaders in integrated trade service provision based on electronic platforms, with a particular focus on electronic trade finance.

Part II has a number of papers that range from discussions of methodological issues confronted in impact assessments of free trade agreements, to assessments of the impact of some of Canada's existing trade agreements, to assessments of the potential economic impacts of future agreements.

Through this volume, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada seeks to continue to contribute actively to the development and dissemination of knowledge concerning the role of international trade and investment in Canada's economy and in the global economy more generally, while at the same time

stimulating the development of policy research capacity, and further developing links with professional and academic researchers in the field of international commerce.

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