

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CANADA

# Import/Export Guide



BC JOBS  
PLAN



# BRITISH COLUMBIA IMPORT/EXPORT GUIDE



## **Internet Access**

Many of the resources listed in this guide are web-based only. If you do not have your own Internet connection, try your local library or Community Futures British Columbia office. For free Internet access call 604 289-4222 to find the location nearest you.

**This guide is also available electronically at:**

[www.gov.bc.ca/importexportguide](http://www.gov.bc.ca/importexportguide)

or for translated versions visit:

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/small-business/resources](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/small-business/resources)

# CONTENTS

This Guide	1
Your Primary Resource – Small Business BC	1
Starting Up and Running an Import Business	3
Starting Up and Running an Export Business	7
Additional Trade Resources	12





# THIS GUIDE

Expanding to the world-wide marketplace can be good for business, but both you and your company must be prepared. There are a number of rules and regulations you must follow to bring goods into this country or to send them abroad. This guide introduces you to information and resources available to help you navigate the exciting world of international trade.

## Your Primary Resource

Many helpful resources appear throughout this guide. While most offer information on a specific topic or area, Small Business BC assists British Columbia's entrepreneurs with all aspects of business start-up and growth.



### Small Business BC

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)

82-601 West Cordova Street

Vancouver, BC V6B 1G1

Tel: 604 775-5525 or 1 800 667-2272

Fax: 604 775-5520

E-mail: [askus@smallbusinessbc.ca](mailto:askus@smallbusinessbc.ca)

Twitter: @smallbusinessbc

Facebook: /smallbusinessbc

Small Business BC provides entrepreneurs with the information and guidance necessary to build a solid foundation for their business. As your primary resource, Small Business BC's services can help you learn everything you need to know about importing and exporting, including trade seminars, one-on-one advisory services, business plan reviews, and online resources.

- > **General Business Information Advisory Service:** Book a complimentary 30-minute consultation with a Business Advisor to help answer your business inquiries.
- > **Business Plan Advice:** Meet with a Business Plan Analyst for a business plan review to help you prepare to approach lenders, or coaching to develop your overall business strategy.
- > **Market Research Advisory Services:** Schedule a one-on-one consultation with a Market Research Analyst to assist you with market research in areas such as target market analysis, industry analysis and competitive analysis.
- > **Ask an Expert:** Book one-on-one consultations with professionals in human resources, accounting, legal, market research, branding, social media, websites and more.
- > **Import/Export Advice:** Meet with a Trade Advisor for a consultation on business requirements and to register your import or export business.
- > **Business Seminars and Webinars:** Information-packed business seminars on over 50 topics, including import and export topics, delivered by industry experts, who are also small business owners. Seminars are held at the Small Business BC office in Vancouver and are also available through webinar across B.C.

To receive updates from Small Business BC on information, resources and events for small business owners in B.C., visit: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/stay-updated/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/stay-updated/)

# STARTING UP AND RUNNING AN IMPORT BUSINESS

This section of the guide provides information related to importing on regulatory and legal issues, funding and financing, contacts and directories.

Small Business BC offers trade education, one-on-one trade advising and business registration, as well as business plan review services to help you with your import business.

Book a meeting with a Trade Advisor today for a consultation on business requirements and to register your import business at: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/services](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/services)

To register for upcoming seminars and webinars on import, covering topics from how to start an import venture, to regulations and licensing requirements, visit: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/seminars](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/seminars)

Small Business BC offers checklists that provide step-by-step instructions on how to start an import business:

## > **Import Regulations for Small Business:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/import-regulations-small-business](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/import-regulations-small-business)

## > **How to Import Goods into Canada:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklist/guide-importing-goods-canada/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklist/guide-importing-goods-canada/)

## > **How to Register a Business for Import:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-registering-your-business-import/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-registering-your-business-import/)

Also read through Small Business BC's online guides to importing:

> **How to Import Commercial Goods into Canada:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-import-commercial-goods-canada](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-import-commercial-goods-canada)

For more information, contact Small Business BC at 604 775-5525 or 1 800 667-2272.

In addition, we recommend you visit Canada Business Network at: [www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca) (search Import).

Canada Business Network is a national point of service where entrepreneurs can go for government information, advice and support to help build their business, and to access selected government programs, services and frequently requested forms for importers.

If you are going to import goods, you will need to register with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). You can do this through the OneStop Business Registry at: [www.bcbusinessregistry.ca/registrations.htm](http://www.bcbusinessregistry.ca/registrations.htm)

The CBSA's website, [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/import](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/import), offers useful tools tailored to small- and medium-sized businesses, including *Importing: A Step-by-Step Guide*, at: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/import/guide-eng.html>

This guide will help demystify the process of importing commercial goods into Canada. It is designed to help people who have never, or rarely, imported before, guiding them through the necessary steps for complying with the various laws and regulations.

---

## THINKING ABOUT STARTING A NEW SMALL BUSINESS?

If you have not yet decided whether starting a small business is right for you – or you simply need more information about it – see our ***Starting a Small Business Guide***. This guide will lead you through the basic steps of starting a small business and will tell you where you can find more information to make sure your new business is a success. It's available online at:

[www.gov.bc.ca/startingasmallbusiness](http://www.gov.bc.ca/startingasmallbusiness)

or for translated versions visit: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/small-business/resources](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/small-business/resources)

Small Business BC provides a complimentary 30-minute consultation with a Business Advisor to help answer your business inquiries and to discuss how to start your business. To book an appointment in person, by phone or via Skype call 604 775-5525 or 1 800 667-2272.

Also visit [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/faqs](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/faqs) for answers to the most common questions on how to start a business.

---

## SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY: ÖRLING & WU

Fredrik Örling and Julie Wu met in England, and when they left the UK to move to Canada, they decided to start a business and bring everything they cherished in European design to Vancouver. Now in business since 2010, each item displayed in their Gastown store is handpicked by the dynamic duo, and sourced from places far and wide, from Belgium to Japan.



During their first year in business, they attended a number of Small Business BC seminars, concentrating on importing, financial management, accounting and marketing. Their advice for those first starting out? “Take time to plan your business and really research the market,” says Wu. “Get to know importing processes, your product HS codes and be due diligent on checking your invoices before you pay them. Also always compare shipping rates and have shipping companies review your rates every year.”

***For more small business success stories visit:***  
[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/success-stories/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/success-stories/)

# STARTING UP AND RUNNING AN EXPORT BUSINESS

If you're thinking of exporting, Small Business BC is your key resource for information on how to sell goods and services outside of B.C. It offers education on exporting, one-on-one trade advising and business registration, as well as business plan review services to help you start exporting.

Book a meeting with a Trade Advisor today for a consultation on business requirements and to register your export business at: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/services](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/services)

To register for upcoming seminars and webinars on exporting visit: [www.smallbusinessbc.ca/seminars](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/seminars). Seminars are available live in their Vancouver office or by webinar from anywhere in B.C.

Small Business BC has helpful checklists that provide step-by-step guides to help you start and run an export business:

> **How to Register a Business for Export:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-registering-your-business-export/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-registering-your-business-export/)

> **How to Export Goods from Canada:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-exporting-goods-canada/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/resource/howtos-checklists/guide-exporting-goods-canada/)

Also read through Small Business BC's online guides to exporting:

> **How to Finance Your Growing Export Business:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-finance-your-growing-export-business/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-finance-your-growing-export-business/)

> **How to Export Commercial Goods into New International Markets:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-export-commercial-goods-new-international-markets/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-export-commercial-goods-new-international-markets/)

> **How to Work with Offshore Manufacturers:**

[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-work-offshore-manufacturers/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/article/how-work-offshore-manufacturers/)

---

## SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS STORY: LOVEY'S BODY PRODUCTS

Marcie Weinstein Smith didn't initially intend to start a business when she developed an all-natural diaper cleaning spray – she simply created the spray as a mom who needed to solve a problem for her new baby. She found that her son's skin became irritated by every baby wipe on the market. Exasperated, she experimented with her own all-natural formula to prevent diaper rash using only clean and safe ingredients. The idea took off when other moms saw her using the spray in public and would inquire where they could buy it for their own babies.



Lovey's product line now includes three products and can be purchased in over 150 stores across Canada, through international online retailers like Amazon, as well as on the Lovey's website. This year, Marcie also starting exporting her line of products through distributors in South Africa and the United Kingdom. But before taking that big step, she made sure it was the right decision.

"Do your research and make sure you have a true understanding of your costs before you start exporting. You have to consider the cost of shipping, taxes, exchange rates and brokerage fees, just to name a few," says Marcie. "Understand your numbers, know your margins and know the rules and regulations for the country you're exporting to. Make sure you're being compliant so your products don't get tied up in customs!"

In the next year, Marcie is planning to expand her business further by selling the line of Lovey's products in Asia. Choosing to export wasn't a simple one, but for her, it was the right one.

**For more small business success stories visit:**  
[www.smallbusinessbc.ca/success-stories/](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/success-stories/)

## We Also Suggest You Visit

### **Canada Border Services Agency**

[www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/menu-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/menu-eng.html)

Tel: 1 800 461-9999

E-mail: [contact@cbsa.gc.ca](mailto:contact@cbsa.gc.ca)

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) website offers a range of useful tools tailored to small and medium-sized businesses, including *Exporting: A Step-by-Step Guide*, [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/guide-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/guide-eng.html) which explains export rules.

### **Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) sets the policies and regulations for the import of plant, animal and food products, which are then enforced by Canadian Border Services Agency at Canadian entry points. For accurate and timely information on import requirements, use CFIA's Automated Import Reference System (AIRS). Simply visit [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) and type "AIRS" in the search field. You can also call the CFIA National Import Centre at 1 800 835-4486.

### **Trade and Invest British Columbia**

[www.britishcolumbia.ca](http://www.britishcolumbia.ca)

Trade and Invest B.C. works with international enterprises to help them build strong links to the resources, skills and businesses that make British Columbia an attractive place to work and invest. They have a dedicated team of trade and investment professionals in B.C., as well as a network of international trade and investment representatives based in China, Japan, Korea, India, Europe and the United States. Visit: [www.britishcolumbia.ca](http://www.britishcolumbia.ca) to learn more about the services offered by the Ministry of International Trade for investors, buyers and exporters.

## **Export Development Canada**

[www.edc.ca](http://www.edc.ca)

Tel: 1 866 283-2957

Export Development Canada (EDC) has been helping Canadian companies and investors do business around the world since 1944. EDC offers market intelligence and supports international sales and investment through a mix of financial and insurance products and services.

## **Export Controls Online**

[www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles](http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles)

Tel: 1 877 808-8838

E-mail: [eics.scei@international.gc.ca](mailto:eics.scei@international.gc.ca)

Export Controls Online (EXCOL) is a web-based tool that creates a user-friendly environment for submitting online applications to the Canadian government. Through EXCOL, you can submit applications for new export permits and certificates or request changes to current ones. To use this service, you must first register with the Trade Controls Bureau, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. Visit the EXCOL website for more information and online forms, or call the EXCOL help desk at 1 877 808-8838.

## **British Columbia Business Network**

[www.britishcolumbia.ca/buy/find-suppliers.aspx](http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/buy/find-suppliers.aspx)

The B.C. Business Network is a resource provided by the Government of British Columbia that helps you identify exporters and suppliers with goods and services for sale.

Find suppliers quickly and conveniently and learn more about importing from British Columbia.

## Additional Trade Resources

There are a number of services available to help you find new trade opportunities and to promote your products or services:

### **Canadian Company Capabilities Database**

[www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccr-rec.nsf/eng/Home](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccr-rec.nsf/eng/Home)

Tel: 1 800 328-6189

Register with Industry Canada's Canadian Company Capabilities Database (CCCD) to make sure buyers in Canada and around the world know about your products and services. The database profiles more than 60,000 Canadian companies. Over 500,000 domestic and international companies browse the database every month looking for Canadian businesses. You can receive additional information on registering with the CCCD at: [www.bcbusinessregistry.ca/registrations.htm](http://www.bcbusinessregistry.ca/registrations.htm)

### **Canadian Trade Commissioner Service**

[www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca](http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca)

Tel: 1 888 306-9991

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) will provide you with on-the-ground intelligence and practical advice on foreign markets to help you make better, more timely and cost-effective decisions in order to achieve your international business goals. They can help you prepare for international markets, assess your market potential, find qualified contacts and resolve business problems. TCS services are offered free of charge to Canadian companies and organizations.

## Concierge Service

[www.concierge.portal.gc.ca](http://www.concierge.portal.gc.ca)

Tel: 1 855 53-GUIDE (1 855 534-8433)

The Government of Canada's Concierge Service assists small to medium enterprises in navigating the many available innovation resources and support programs offered by the government. Concierge Advisors, located across Canada, provide one-on-one assistance and will use their industry experience and depth of knowledge to help guide clients to the most appropriate innovation programs and services available. The bilingual Concierge Service is delivered by the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) in collaboration with over 40 federal and provincial partners.

## Competition Bureau

[www.competitionbureau.gc.ca](http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca)

Tel: 1 800 348-5358

The Competition Bureau, as an independent law enforcement agency, ensures that Canadian businesses and consumers prosper in a competitive and innovative marketplace. The Competition Bureau provides information on the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*, which requires that prepackaged consumer products bear accurate and meaningful labelling information to help consumers make informed purchasing decisions.

## RFPSource

[www.rfpsource.ca](http://www.rfpsource.ca)

RFPSource is a free electronic matching service provided by the Government of Canada to help Canadian companies find global business and partnering opportunities. RFPSource will match your profile against the thousands of opportunities received daily and e-mail you directly the ones that meet your business needs.

## Canadian Commercial Corporation

[www.ccc.ca](http://www.ccc.ca)

Tel: 1 800 748-8191

Are you targeting foreign governments for your international sales? The Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) helps Canadian companies access government procurement markets outside of Canada through government-to-government contracts. Headquartered in Ottawa, CCC operates under the Minister of International Trade in collaboration with Export Development Canada and the Department of International Trade and Development. In 2012-13, CCC worked with 210 Canadian companies and was active in over 72 countries.

CCC can help you structure and capture your next international contract. For more information, visit [www.ccc.ca](http://www.ccc.ca)

## Trade Data Online

[www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/tdo-dcd.nsf/eng/Home](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/tdo-dcd.nsf/eng/Home)

Trade Data Online (TDO) provides the ability to generate customized reports on Canada and U.S. trade in goods with over 200 countries.

You may need to gather international trade statistics, do research on trade data or analyse the Canadian domestic market, find out how TDO can help you in your day-to-day tasks.

These reports will provide information about:

- specific products or industries
- specific or multiple countries
- specific, multiple or the last 5 or 10 years

Visit Trade Data Online and discover how you can benefit from the wealth of information offered.

## **Canada's Pacific Gateway**

[www.pacificgateway.gov.bc.ca](http://www.pacificgateway.gov.bc.ca)

British Columbia is the preferred gateway for Asia Pacific trade, with the most competitive supply chain on the west coast of the Americas. B.C.'s integrated, seamless supply chain includes airports, seaports, railways, roadways and border crossings, connecting Canada and the North American market to Asia and the world. Government and industry partners have made investments to increase capacity, eliminate congestion, and streamline operations. Projects that are underway to expand and enhance port, rail, road and airport infrastructure total more than \$22 billion. In 2013, additional public and private sector investments were announced which will increase bulk and container capacity and improve supply chain performance.

**Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada**

[www.asiapacific.ca](http://www.asiapacific.ca)

Tel: 604 684-5986

Toll Free: 1 800 685-7823

**Canada Export Centre**

[www.canadaexportcentre.com](http://www.canadaexportcentre.com)

Tel: 604 685-7823

Toll Free: 1 877 685-7823

**Canada China Business Council**

[www.ccbc.com](http://www.ccbc.com)

Tel: 604 630-8838

**Global Affairs Canada**

[www.international.gc.ca](http://www.international.gc.ca)

Tel: 1 800 267-8376

**Western Economic Diversification Canada**

[www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca)

Tel: 1 888 338-9378



### **Small Business BC**

*Comprehensive business information and business planning resources for starting and growing a business in British Columbia*

**1 800 667-2272**

**[www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)**

### **OneStop Business Registry**

*Online business registration and change of business address*

**1 877 822-6727**

**[www.bcbusinessregistry.ca](http://www.bcbusinessregistry.ca)**

### **Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, Small Business Branch**

*Information on provincial government programs and services*

**250 387-4699**

**[www.gov.bc.ca/smallbusiness](http://www.gov.bc.ca/smallbusiness)**

### **ServiceBC**

*Province-wide access to government services including key government transactions for business*

**1 800 663-7867 (Enquiry BC) to be**

**transferred to the nearest**

**Service BC Contact Centre**

**[www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca)**

### **FrontCounter BC**

*Single window service for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies to obtain information and authorizations needed to start or expand a business*

**1 877 855-3222**

**[www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca)**

### **Futurpreneur**

*Provides mentoring services and loans to grow the economy one young entrepreneur at a time.*

**1 866 646-2922**

**[www.futurpreneur.ca](http://www.futurpreneur.ca)**

### **BizPaL Business Permits and Licences**

*Online tool to quickly and easily identify permit and licencing requirements for business*

**[www.bizpal.ca](http://www.bizpal.ca)**

### **WorkBC**

*Information and resources to help employers fill jobs, find the right talent and grow their business*

**[www.workbc.ca](http://www.workbc.ca)**

### **Aboriginal Business Service Network**

*Business information and resources for Aboriginal entrepreneurs*

**250 828-9834**

**[www.absn.ca](http://www.absn.ca)**

### **Women's Enterprise Centre**

*Business information counselling and skills training for women entrepreneurs*

**1 800 643-7014**

**[www.womensenterprise.ca](http://www.womensenterprise.ca)**

### **Canada Business Network**

*The Government of Canada's main site for business information*

**1 888 576-4444**

**[www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca)**

### **Community Futures British Columbia**

*Business counselling and assistance for new and existing businesses in rural British Columbia*

**1 604 289-4222**

**[www.communityfutures.ca](http://www.communityfutures.ca)**

### **La Société de développement économique**

*The Francophone Economic Development Organization enhances the vitality of minority language communities and assists with economic development*

**1 877 732-3534**

**[www.sdecb.com](http://www.sdecb.com)**

### **Western Economic Diversification Canada**

*Works to strengthen western innovation, business development and community economic development*

**1 888 338-9378**

**[www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca)**



**BC JOBS  
PLAN**