



Report In Brief

U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General

September 2007



Why We Did This Review

During the course of a review of Commerce's trade promotion efforts requested by Congress, we identified ways the Department could enhance the process used to develop the annual *National Export Strategy*. The original scope of the trade promotion review did not include comments on the *National Export Strategy*. We agreed to address this issue in a separate memorandum report at the request of some of the other offices of Inspector General involved in the interagency review. Those OIGs raised several concerns about Commerce's development of the strategy, and we concurred.

Background

The Trade Promotion Coordination Committee (TPCC) develops an annual *National Export Strategy* report as a requirement of the Export Enhancement Act of 1992. The strategy should establish government-wide priorities for federal export promotion and financing activities and provide a plan to bring activities of the TPCC agencies into line with the priorities. The annual report is sent to Congress with the approval of the President.

To view the full report, visit www.oig.doc.gov/oig/reports/2007/IPE-18589.pdf

International Trade Administration

Greater Interagency Involvement and More Effective Strategic Planning Would Enhance the National Export Strategy (IPE-18589)

What We Found

The TPCC Secretariat, part of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA), develops the basic themes and strategic priorities discussed in the annual *National Export Strategy* in consultation with senior ITA officials, but without consulting extensively with officials from other TPCC agencies. We found the strategy document lacks clear and measurable export-related goals, does not align export promotion goals with the strategic planning processes of its member agencies, and does not clearly track agencies' actual progress towards those goals. Specifically, we found that

1. TPCC members have a limited role in developing the *National Export Strategy*. The TPCC Secretariat develops the outline of the *National Export Strategy* and determines what information submitted by member agencies will be included in the final document.
2. The *National Export Strategy* does not establish specific export promotion goals or use performance measures to track program success. In its 2002 report, GAO reported that the *National Export Strategy* was too broad and did not discuss specific goals or assess progress toward meeting those goals. Our review showed little had changed.
3. The TPCC may not include all relevant agencies.

What We Recommended

We recommended that the Under Secretary for International Trade ensure that the following actions are taken:

1. When developing the *National Export Strategy*, institute a meaningful interagency strategic planning process that identifies the core strategic goals and objectives of federal export promotion efforts through an interagency consultative process; aligns agency-specific strategic objectives with government-wide export promotion strategic goals; identifies any agency-specific performance measures relevant to government-wide export promotion goals; and uses these measures to evaluate the progress of agencies towards meeting government-wide export promotion goals.
2. Continue to engage the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) on trade promotion activities. As appropriate, work with the White House and representatives of individual agencies to revise the list of TPCC members so that the membership roster includes all federal agencies with a stake in trade promotion efforts.