

Toward Prosperity

Information Technology Industry Alliance of Nova Scotia (ITANS)

Consultation

June 20, 2000

Notes:

Critical Mass:

- Building critical mass was the over-riding issue discussed. It incorporates all the other issues discussed and outlined below.
- It was suggested that the government empower a team to attract investment and to do the deals necessary to build that critical mass.
- It was suggested that this economic development IT team act like a business since it will be relating to businesses.

Financing:

- The Nova Scotia Equity Tax Credit is valuable but expires Dec 31, 2000. This needs to be renewed. It is a good way to build investment with local capital.
- Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIFs) have inefficiencies and are dangerous because they are not subject to a rigorous enough scrutiny to protect the investments. There is a false sense of security for investors since CEDIFs are advanced by the government. Fear that there will be failures and therefore negative reaction toward government.
- Government needs to facilitate the transfer of capital from outside markets

Marketing:

- Several members travel extensively and have frequent contacts with big IT players. This provides great opportunity for them to pass on a contact within the Department of Economic Development (NSED) about relocating their business to Nova Scotia. Can NSED work with this?
- ITANS people would need a one stop contact and info on the benefits of Nova Scotia. Perhaps on a CD?
- Could raise the profile of Information Technology (IT) industry in other locations by setting up a show in a hotel ballroom for one or two days as the US consulate does in Halifax. Maybe Clancy could assist.
- Need to help small companies get on the radar screen.
- Transportation information is important to IT players. Need to promote this.
- Need to promote openness to outside financial capital and create an awareness of the need for it.
- Create incentives to attract investment.
- Work with the federal government to co-ordinate the directions and initiatives that they take.
- Need to promote success stories as McKenna was able to do in New Brunswick.
- The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funded a Global TV spot that promoted local companies, is this still happening?

Trade Development:

- There was support for the idea of a trade mission of IT firms to the technology hot spots in Canada such as Ontario and British Columbia.
- The current trade mission program does not allow enough time to prepare for contact. Need time to get to know prospective clients over the phone etc and qualify them, have dialogue with them before can invest resources in going to meet them.

Infrastructure:

- Do you know about the 360 networks and how the infrastructure they are bringing in will provide advantages?
- IWAN - what is the plan for this? How can this help in economic development? Where is the report card on this?
- Frame relay is passe technology and too limiting. Why was this put in?
- Connectivity issue: ITANS board members are located around the province and would like to be able to work together via web conferencing but cannot do this with the current infrastructure.
- NS Power apparently has all kinds of dark fiber - how can the use of this be facilitated?
- Is anyone looking into wireless technology?

Labour Development:

- There is a strong need for management skills - chief financial officers are very difficult to find.

Strategy Development:

- Need to have the right people in the NSED boardroom developing this strategy.
- Is there any co-ordination among between the public sector and the IT community?
- Is there any co-ordination among the Atlantic provinces concerning IT?
- There is an initiative for tourism. Could there be advantages for IT?