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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of International Trade and  
Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and  
Multiculturalism

### **Export pilot project launches in two Vancouver Island communities**

COMOX VALLEY – A new pilot program to help small B.C. businesses navigate export services is now being offered in four communities throughout the province, including the Comox Valley and Port Alberni.

Export Navigator is a one-year pilot project the Province has developed in partnership with Small Business BC and federally-funded Community Futures offices. The B.C. government is contributing more than \$500,000; Community Futures is providing \$140,000 and Small Business BC is administering the project.

The program, which is part of a commitment in the #BCTECH Strategy to help small businesses become export ready, is designed to assist growth-oriented businesses that can demonstrate a capacity to increase production and have the resources to commit to exporting. Trained export advisors in each community are providing personalized support, helping to identify and connect businesses to the appropriate programs, services and contacts at every stage of the export process.

The Comox Valley will have two export advisors through its Comox Valley Economic Development office, while Port Alberni has two export advisors operating out of its Community Futures office.

Complementing this work are new export tools to encourage export growth and simplify the process, including:

- A streamlined business needs and export readiness assessment; and
- A client workbook that empowers businesses with information and knowledge to advance their export goals.

The other two pilots are taking place in Prince George and Vernon.

The #BCTECH Strategy is a key component of the BC Jobs Plan to support the growth of B.C.'s vibrant technology sector and strengthen British Columbia's diverse innovation economy.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Don McRae, MLA, Comox Valley –**

“With the help of the Export Navigator pilot project, central Vancouver Island businesses will be able to get the help they need to reach new markets and grow their businesses. This project is all about doing everything we can to make it easier for businesses to grow, which results in a diverse and resilient economy and more jobs for British Columbians.”

**Teresa Wat, Minister of International Trade and Minister Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism –**

“Many small businesses view exporting as complicated – government is prepared to do whatever it takes to make it easier for these B.C. businesses to get their goods to market. Through Export Navigator, businesses will be more likely to become successful, profitable exporters, strengthening the business environment in their community, and creating more high-paying jobs for British Columbians.”

**Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour –**

“British Columbia’s small businesses have innovative products and solutions that the world needs, but few are exporting their products and services. That’s why government has committed to launch a service to help our small business owners navigate the maze of export services – their success is B.C.’s success.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Export Navigator is supported by the Ministry of International Trade, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training and the Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.
- Small businesses make up 98% of all business in B.C. and employ more than one million people.
- Small businesses provide 55% of all private-sector jobs in British Columbia, the second highest rate in the country.
- There were approximately 388,500 small businesses operating in B.C. in 2015 – 313,500 have fewer than five employees.
- Exports provide a vital source of economic growth and job creation – right now, one in five jobs in Canada is generated through trade.
- In 2015, total British Columbia goods exports worldwide were \$36 billion.

**Learn More:**

For more information about Export Navigator, visit:

<http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/export/export-navigator/>

For more information about Community Futures in the Comox Valley and Port Alberni, visit:

<http://www.cfstrathcona.ca/>

For more information about B.C. trade and investment opportunities visit:

<http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/>

#BCTECH Strategy: <http://bctechstrategy.gov.bc.ca/>

For more information about Small Business BC, visit: <http://smallbusinessbc.ca/>

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