



# Navigating Global Uncertainty Together

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## 2025 Annual Report



Maine International  
Trade Center

## What Trade Means for Maine

Maine companies exported over \$5.5 billion  
in goods and services in 2024.

84% of Maine exporters are small-  
and medium-sized businesses.

International trade supports 1 in 5  
(170,300) Maine jobs.

Among international employers,  
companies from the Netherlands,  
Canada, and the United Kingdom  
support the largest number  
of Maine jobs.

Foreign-owned companies are  
important customers for local goods  
and services and employ  
**36,800**  
Maine workers.

*Sources: US Census Bureau, "How Maine's Economy Benefits from International Trade & Investment" from Business Roundtable, and "Investing in America" from Global Business Alliance*

## Key Partners



## Our Role

Maine International Trade Center (MITC) is Maine's leading source for international business assistance. MITC offers customized consulting, research, and an extensive network of connections across Maine and around the world to help businesses expand global markets for their products and services.

A public-private partnership, MITC is supported financially by more than 200 businesses and organizations, corporate sponsors, and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD). MITC members include manufacturers, service providers, and educational institutions located in all 16 Maine counties. While our members support the organization through annual membership dues, MITC provides assistance to any Maine business whether members or non-members. We work with both exporters and importers.

# Our 2025 Impact

283

Maine businesses assisted

\$4.9 million

in export sales facilitated

\$134,028 in grant funds stewarded

to benefit 33 Maine small businesses

## Blue Biotechnology Collaboration

MITC co-authored a comprehensive blue biotechnology regional assessment with Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences and Hatch Blue that identified over 1,000 organizations connected to marine biotechnology across New England, with Maine home to the region’s largest concentration. The assessment supports Bigelow’s Blue Biotech Innovation Ecosystem program and positions Maine to capture opportunities in the \$10B+ global blue biotechnology market.

“MITC has been an essential partner in supporting the positioning of Maine as a world leader in blue biotechnology. Their investment, combined with critical contributions in data collection and market analysis, helped strengthen this ecosystem roadmap significantly. MITC’s unique expertise in connecting Maine’s marine assets to international markets was instrumental in articulating how our state can compete globally in this emerging sector. As a proud member of MITC, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences looks forward to continuing this partnership that exemplifies the collaborative, cross-sector approach needed to transform Maine’s economy for the future.”

*Dr. Beth N. Orcutt, Vice President for Research & Senior Research Scientist, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences (East Boothbay, ME)*

## Our Values

At Maine International Trade Center, our shared values provide energy to fuel our work, focus to guide decision making, and clear expectations for how we treat our members, partners, and clients, as well as each other.

Integrity	Adaptability	Approachability	Trust	Impact
<b>Do the right thing</b> We do the right thing, leading with integrity.	<b>Stay nimble</b> We stay flexible and resourceful in the face of change, learning as we go and supporting each other.	<b>Be open and welcoming</b> We ensure everyone feels heard, supported, and valued.	<b>Extend grace</b> We communicate openly with patience and respect, especially during challenging times.	<b>Deliver results that matter</b> We remain mission-driven and globally aware.

# President's Letter

Dear Partners, Members, Friends, and Clients:

As 2025 draws to a close, we reflect on a year marked by both unprecedented challenges and resilience in global trade. Uncertainty in trade policy and rising costs created serious headwinds for Maine exporters. For specific sectors and overseas markets, Maine exports are on pace to drop 15-20% for the year.

What I have learned in my nearly 30 years of doing this work is that international trade is a long game. Businesses that build relationships over years (and decades) and remain committed to global markets are best positioned to overcome policy shifts. Maine's international business community is adaptable and strong.



International trade continued in 2025. Throughout the year, MITC worked alongside businesses from across the state to navigate the changes, providing one-on-one assistance and referrals, as well as hosting educational programs and B2B matchmaking events that fostered new opportunities despite the turbulence.

Maine hosted over 125 of our colleagues and partners from 42 states and 15 countries for the annual State International Development Organizations (SIDO) Best Practices and Training Forum in Portland at the end of September. SIDO is an important forum, network, and support system for the MITC team and more than a few businesses in our state.

Our team also played key roles in new collaborations with exciting potential to strengthen Maine's economy through innovation, investment, and sharing of best practices on several fronts:

- In October, I had the pleasure of leading a [Maine delegation trip to Japan](#). The first stop was a day in Tokyo, then the group traveled to Maine's sister state of Aomori. The Aomori-Maine sister state agreement was signed in 1994. The trip was an important opportunity for Maine to honor and celebrate the history of the relationship, as well as explore new opportunities for innovation and idea exchange across our common sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism in the future.
- MITC North Atlantic Director Dan Berger presented a case study on [Maine's Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Technology Hub](#) at the OECD-New Brunswick Conference on Place-Based Economic Development in Moncton in October. Speaking to 300 delegates from business, government, and civil society sectors across multiple countries, the presentation showcased Maine's 70+ partner ecosystem and 10-year vision to attract \$10B in capital investment and create 4,000 high-wage jobs, positioning Maine as a global leader in leveraging forestry assets for sustainable economic development.
- MITC Senior Trade Specialist Abby (Gray) Plante partnered with the broader Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the legislature's Housing Production Innovation Working Group to coordinate a multi-day [Industrialized Construction Trip](#) to build connections between stakeholders in the Maine housing industry and major manufacturers in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The October trip focused on the residential construction industry and was supported by MTI and Maine's Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Technology Hub.
- MITC partnered with Business Finland to organize the [Forest to Future: Maine-Finland Forest Industry Integration](#) virtual event in November, featuring high-level leadership from both Maine and Finnish government officials. The webinar attracted Finnish forest industry participants and showcased Maine as North America's strategic gateway for forest innovation, promoted MITC's Bioproduct Market Expansion Accelerator program, and generated momentum toward a Maine-Finland Trade & Study Mission in 2026.

As always, our team remains committed to helping your business expand global markets for your products and services. We're in this together. Thank you for your partnership and trust.

Warm regards,

Wade Merritt

Maine International Trade Center President and State Director of International Trade



# Maine's Strong Ties with Canada

Canada is Maine's largest trade and investment partner. Maine exported \$1.3 billion of products – approximately 40% of the state's total exports – to Canada last year. This figure only accounts for physical products. The value of the relationship grows substantially when adding services like banking and tourism. As a border state, Maine serves as a logistics hub for Eastern Canadian trade and relies on Canadian inputs for domestic manufacturing. Maine's natural resource-based industries (potatoes, blueberries, lobster, forest products, etc.) are highly integrated with Canada, which is characterized by two-way trade flows of raw materials and finished products, as well as bilateral investments.

MITC President Wade Merritt was a featured speaker at the **Virtual Townhall on Trade Relationships, Tourism, and the Impact of Uncertainty** presented by the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Commerce for Greater Moncton, and the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce. The April event drew over 300 registrations and 173 online attendees.

Also in April, MITC helped to organize a **visiting delegation led by Naval Quebec** of 23 member companies and organizations. A half-day meeting was held in Bath with 21 Maine companies, organizations, and institutions with interests in the maritime industry and supply chains. The visit was intended to foster win-win approaches through judicious partnerships, joint-project collaborations, and strategic alliances.

"We are members of Naval Quebec and attended their annual conference in 2025. We find the status of shipbuilding in Quebec and Canada in general to be highly valuable. We have been supplying to RCN, Coast Guard, and various commercial ferry and workboat builders and operators across Canada for over 15 years. There remains genuine interest and opportunity for bilateral trade."

*Steve Hadik, President, Pole Star Maritime LLC (Woolwich, ME)*

In June, MITC President Wade Merritt accompanied Governor Janet Mills on her **visit to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia** to strengthen cross-border relationships and economic ties. The trip included a roundtable meeting with the Saint John Chamber of Commerce, a fireside chat hosted by the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, meetings with New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt and Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston, and a tour of the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE).

"Honestly, we can't say enough about the team at MITC. Expanding into New Brunswick felt like a big leap, but they were right there with us, opening doors to Canadian contacts we would have struggled to reach on our own. It's been about so much more than just business leads. MITC helped us start real, lasting relationships. We're walking away with a foundation of trust that's going to keep our cross-border business growing for years."

*Joe Marriner, Business Development Executive, Lynch Logistics (Bangor, ME)*



# Supporting Maine Businesses

## One-on-One Assistance

Our team is dedicated to helping Maine companies succeed in global markets. MITC's trade specialists meet businesses wherever they are in their international business development to provide customized information, guidance, and referrals.

During a typical month in 2025, MITC received an average of 14 requests for one-on-one assistance. MITC Trade Specialists responded to a total of 170 requests for assistance from Maine companies and organizations with 30% of requests from MITC members.

Last year overall, MITC provided one-on-one assistance to 283 Maine companies and organizations in all 16 counties through in-person or virtual meetings, phone calls, emails, and research to respond to requests received for assistance. In 2025, 1 in 3 of the Maine businesses/organizations assisted received MITC one-on-one assistance at least twice.

### Trade Assistance Requests

#### Top Countries

Australia, Canada, China,  
France, Italy, Japan, South Korea,  
and the United Kingdom

#### Frequent Topics

Best Markets  
Business Development Grants  
Contact & Referral Requests  
Export Documentation & Certifications  
Tax & Tariff Rates\*  
Trade Statistics

283

Maine organizations  
in all 16 counties assisted

"MITC has been instrumental in creating international opportunities for small businesses in Maine. Their continued support and dedication to helping companies grow does not go unnoticed. We appreciate everything they do for Maine's business community."

*Angela Gillespie, Chief Operating Officer, Howell Laboratories, Inc. (Bridgton, ME)*

*\* In 2025, questions regarding tariffs were the highest category accounting for over 30% of total trade assistance requests.*

## What Maine Businesses Told Us

Between March and June 2025, a market research project conducted by Adapt USA on behalf of MITC included a survey, focus groups, and interviews. Here are a few highlights of what we heard from Maine's international business community:

- Surveyed businesses were looking to expand beyond Maine - 42% nationally and 40% internationally - indicating growth aspirations for the next 2 years
- Top global target markets identified were the United Kingdom, Germany, France, China, Mexico, and Canada
- Significant barriers to international growth noted were regulatory hurdles, lack of market knowledge, trade policy and tariffs, logistics, limited capital, and workforce constraints

## Funding for Small Business Growth

The [State Trade Expansion Program \(STEP\) grant initiative](#) of the U.S. Small Business Administration provides funding to increase the number of businesses that export. Administered by MITC, the objective is to encourage Maine companies to seek new international sales through financial support for costs associated with export growth activities, representing \$103,788 in grant funds stewarded last year.

During 2025, a total of 17 Maine small businesses completed projects to grow export sales in international markets with [STEP Financial Assistance Awards](#). As a result of trade policy uncertainty, federal funding cuts and temporary freeze, and a government shutdown, MITC was unable to provide award reimbursement payments to companies within the standard timeline, which resulted in businesses delaying or canceling projects. For the completed projects, a total of \$4.9 million in actual sales and \$11.9 million in projected sales for the next 12-18 months were reported.

**\$4.9 million**  
in actual export  
sales reported

"MITC showed terrific flexibility and patience when federal programs were affected by recent federal cuts, working with us to adjust our award funding accordingly. We greatly appreciate them!"

*Seth Berry, VP Business Development, Kennebec River Biosciences (Richmond, ME)*

In addition, STEP funding was used to support participation costs for Maine companies in training programs to develop export capacity and strategic growth.

As part of MITC's ongoing support for early-stage exporters, we helped three Maine-based small businesses attend the [New to Export Training](#) program conducted by our colleagues at the State International Development Organization (SIDO) in April. The training provided tailored guidance on export planning, market research, and international business development. This cohort showed strong export potential, especially in cleantech and sustainable products. Two of the three companies completed formal export plans and are actively pursuing international strategies.

In February through May, MITC hosted [ExporTech Maine 2025](#) for three Maine businesses. ExporTech™ is a 10-week, national export strategy accelerator program for experienced exporters that are ready to expand global sales. With assistance from MITC staff, the companies developed their export strategy and received guidance from local and national experts in international business. Sample topics covered included selecting sales channel partners, evaluating pricing structure, developing successful international business partnerships, and iterating digital marketing ideas. At the end of the program, each business presented a strategic export growth plan and received feedback from international business leaders.



U.S. Small Business  
Administration

"MITC has been a great partner in helping us realize our export potential. A little help goes a long way when one is at the beginning stages of their export journey."

*Mitchell Lench, CEO, Ocean's Balance (Biddeford, ME)*

## Funding for Small Business Growth (cont.)

Growing domestic sales is a smart business strategy. Investing in market analysis, selection, and entry methods serves as a springboard for future success in international markets. In addition, market diversification that includes strong domestic sales will help a business weather times of global economic uncertainty.

Funded by the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan (MJRP) through a contract with the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD), MITC administers the [Maine Domestic Trade Expansion Program](#) (DTEP), providing financial support to help companies diversify and grow markets within the United States.



In 2025, MITC stewarded \$30,240 under the Maine DTEP program that benefited 16 businesses from 11 of 16 Maine counties.

In partnership with a digital marketing consultancy (Getting to Global), MITC used funding to offer an 8-week training program focused on immediate implementation to increase national sales through digital marketing techniques. Following a successful pilot in early 2025, a second cohort met biweekly from June to August and obtained individual tailored support depending on their digital marketing needs from optimizing their digital storefronts to analyzing the impact of their marketing strategies. This training program supported Maine businesses in building digital marketing capacity, resulting in \$44,000 reported actual sales and \$671,000 in projected sales over the next year.

"The quality of the Getting to Global cohort and the quality of the contractors was very high. MITC plays a major role in supporting small business in Maine, and we're incredibly fortunate to have this organization and support!"

*Edgard "Ponch" Membreno, Commercial Director, Tempshield, Inc. (Trenton, ME)*

**\$671,000**  
in projected sales  
reported

"This digital growth class was absolutely fabulous. I now have a much better handle on the variety of tools out there to optimize online sales, and though I will still need to rely on experts to help me, I now feel capable of conversing with them and actually understanding what they say!"

*Togue Brawn, Owner and Founder, Downeast Dayboat (Bath, ME)*



# Events

Last year, MITC held 18 events (11 in-person and 7 virtual) engaging a total of 720 attendees.

## Trade Day 2025

In May, MITC hosted [Trade Day 2025](#) at the L.L.Bean headquarters in Freeport, ME. The event included a networking reception, keynote presentation by Maine State Economist Amanda Rector, and awards ceremony honoring the 2025 winners: Exporter of the Year - Xuron Corp. (Saco); Innovator of the Year - Global Secure Shipping (Old Town); Investor of the Year - Our Katahdin (Millinocket); Service Provider of the Year - Kelson Marine Co. (Portland); President's Award - Adrian Kendall, Norman, Hanson & DeTroy, LLC (Portland) and Johnna Major, KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC (Falmouth); and Future Global Leader Award - Kasei (Oma) Lin, Bowdoin College (Brunswick).



## Sector Spotlights

Our [Sector Spotlights](#) series continued for the second year. These events highlight industry leaders and provide partnership opportunities through in-person connections. Lunch & Learn sessions feature speakers who bring an international perspective while sharing insights and experiences around: new innovations in the sector, top and emerging overseas markets, and global and regional partnerships and collaborations. Networking events offer optional tours of a nearby business, manufacturing, or research facility in the industry prior to the networking reception.

In 2025, Sector Spotlights focused on Outdoor Recreation, Logistics, Blue Economy, and Composites with events held in Belfast, Biddeford, East Boothbay, Ellsworth, Lewiston, Norway, Orono, Portland, and Presque Isle. The Aroostook County Sector Spotlight highlighted the resilience, innovation, and cross-border ties that are strategic assets for Maine.



"The Maine International Trade Center team was an exceptional partner in showcasing Aroostook County's cross-border potential. In April, MITC worked closely with NMDC staff to successfully bring a delegation of Maine DECD, MTI, legislative leaders, and other key stakeholders to the region. Their leadership and coordination helped spotlight the St. John Valley, Loring, and Aroostook County's thriving manufacturing ecosystems, strengthening awareness of the region's international trade opportunities and long-term economic impact."

*Brandon McDonald, Economic Recovery Hub Manager, Northern Maine Development Commission (Caribou, ME)*



# Workforce Development

## Trade Education

In 2025, MITC hosted four trade education webinars:

**Supply Chain Resilience & Trade Policy Updates** in January co-hosted with Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) included an overview of trade policy updates and available resources to help Maine businesses mitigate tariff impacts and diversify supply chains. There was strong interest in the topic with 112 registrants and 60 attendees at the live webinar.

**Export Compliance Program Overview** in April provided Maine's business community with best practices for complying with federal export compliance regulations. The webinar drew 20 attendees representing industries such as seafood, life sciences, maritime technology, and advanced manufacturing. Participants from SBA-eligible businesses had the opportunity to schedule an individual follow-up meeting with the expert presenter with costs covered by State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant funding (*see page 5*).

MITC partnered with Manufacturers Association of Maine to offer a live webinar in October on **Tariff Strategies for Maine Manufacturers** that featured a national expert in export and import compliance to provide Maine manufacturers with strategies to mitigate duties and enhance business resiliency amidst uncertainty. In total, 18 Maine businesses located in 9 Maine counties participated in the 2-hour live session. Prior to the webinar, registrants said they wanted to know more about tariff reduction/deferral strategies, duty drawbacks, product-specific mitigation strategies, and guidance on planning and projecting costs. One participant reflected, "As small manufacturers, we are overwhelmed by the need to quickly understand the impact of tariffs. MITC's help is deeply appreciated."

"In partnership with MITC, we're collaborating to bring practical, expert guidance directly to Maine manufacturers. Together, we hosted a webinar led by an import-strategy specialist to help our members navigate sourcing, compliance, and risk in today's global marketplace, while also exploring efforts to strengthen and grow the domestic supply chain. We look forward to expanding this collaboration in 2026 as we continue delivering timely, actionable value that supports manufacturer resilience and growth."

*John Lewis, Executive Director, Manufacturers Association of Maine (Augusta, ME)*

In November, MITC hosted **Expanding North: Exploring Canadian Market Entry and Partnerships**, a live webinar focused on opportunities for Maine businesses in the Canadian market. With a total of 26 attendees, the webinar focused on practical strategies, lessons learned, and real-world examples and insights to navigate cross-border trade and grow business in Canada.

"In 2025, the collaboration between the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and MITC strengthened Maine's business community by turning insight into action — from co-hosting a timely webinar on supply chain resilience and trade policy, to convening manufacturers and partners on a business ecosystem trip to Aroostook County, to fostering innovation through a Composites Lunch & Learn sponsored by Maine MEP — together demonstrating a shared commitment to helping Maine businesses compete, adapt, and grow in global markets."

*Jim Fay, President, Maine MEP (Augusta, ME)*



## Internship Program

MITC's [Future Global Leaders \(FGL\) internship program](#) is open to college students and recent college graduates. We offer international market research internships, which help Maine businesses while providing practical experience. These paid, part-time internships are located in our Portland office. In addition to providing international trade research support, students contribute to ongoing MITC initiatives to highlight members, strategize member outreach, and strengthen the FGL alumni network. MITC has been very fortunate over the years to welcome over 200 amazing interns. Around 30% of our former FGLs are still in Maine, and about 10% are working internationally around the globe (e.g., Belgium, China, Germany, Mexico, Turkey, and the United Kingdom).

In 2025, MITC continued to increase the number of applicants and diversify the colleges and universities represented by applicants to our internship program with a total of 53 applications received last year, which is double the number in 2024.

Applicants represented more than 20 colleges and universities including: University of Southern Maine, University of Maine Orono, University of Maine School of Business, University of Maine School of Policy & international Affairs (SPIA), Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College, Husson University, The Roux Institute at Northeastern University, American University, Connecticut College, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Dickinson College, Pomona College, Tufts University, University of New Hampshire, University of Richmond, University of Texas, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"The Future Global Leader internship program at MITC has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my undergraduate career. It gave me the chance to apply what I've learned in the classroom to real-world work that supports Maine businesses internationally. The MITC staff were incredibly supportive; they treated me like a true member of the team, trusted me with meaningful projects, and offered thoughtful feedback that helped me grow. I also had the chance to meet inspiring leaders across Maine's business and policy landscape. The relationships I've built here and the insight I've gained will absolutely shape where I go next."

*Madison Johnson, MITC Research Assistant (Spring 2025), University of Maine*



*During her internship, Madison Johnson (second from left) made several professional connections at MITC events and a coffee hour hosted by Bank of America. After completing her internship, Madison began a position as Market Financial Center Manager at Bank of America in July.*

# 2025 MITC Sponsors

## Premier \$10,000



## Partner \$7,500



## Connector \$5,000



## Supporter \$2,500

Camden National Bank  
Central Maine Power  
City of Bangor  
Consulate General of Canada in Boston  
Deer Brook Consulting  
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KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC  
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# 2025 MITC Members & Partners

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Brooks Trap Mill, Inc.	Graffam & Associates	Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD)
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Camoin Associates, Inc.	Greenhead Lobster, LLC	Maine Development Foundation
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For the most current list of MITC Members,  
please visit the online **Member Directory** at [mitc.com](https://mitc.com)

# 2025 MITC Members & Partners

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# 2025 MITC Team

## MITC Staff

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State Director  
of International  
Trade



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