

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Amplifying Global Connections for Maine

2022 Annual Report

President's Letter

Dear MITC Members and Friends:

The past year has been one of transformation and collaboration for Maine International Trade Center (MITC). A return to in-person events – including MITC mainstays such as the Boston Seafood Show, the holiday member networking event, and a modified Maine International Trade Day – provided a comforting sense of normalcy after several years of pandemic-related loss.

Last year marked a point of transformation for MITC, as we welcomed two new members of the team. Hillman Norberg and Abby Gray, both former Future Global Leaders interns at MITC, have brought new energy and ideas to the organization. As a manager, it has been exciting to watch their rapid learning over the past few months.

This injection of new ideas extends to our established staff as well. New initiatives, such as our work in offshore wind and defense, as well as an upcoming pilot program on expanding trade within the United States, have prompted a renewed focus on innovation and energy for growth. This innovation extends beyond the services MITC provides to how we do our work. Whether the launch of a redesigned website and new online funding portal, a more intentional staff professional development process, or a reimagined Future Global Leaders internship program, MITC remains committed to continuously innovating and improving our systems to the benefit of you, our clients and stakeholders.

As a result, MITC was able to leverage these improved systems to the benefit of 351 businesses and individuals across the state. Beyond the one-on-one assistance for businesses, MITC also took a more intentional strategy of collaboration with partners in Maine and beyond. The Seagriculture USA 2022 conference in September was a unique, broad-based effort, anchored by Dana Eidsness and the MENADO program that included the rest of MITC, our partners at the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) and the Maine Technology Institute (MTI), and businesses and nonprofits from all over the world. Adrian Horn's tremendous work in revitalizing the Defense Industry Maine program resulted in a leadership role with the New England regional collaborative, engaging with five other states to the benefit of businesses in the defense supply chain.

You'll find many other great stories of collaboration in the pages that follow. As you read and learn about these highlights from 2022, I hope you feel as proud of what we've accomplished together this year as I do.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved in any of our work, please contact me or a member of the MITC team. We are always looking for ways to expand our reach and bring more people and businesses into this amazing international business network.

Thank you, as always, for your support of MITC, our community, and our mission.

All the best for 2023,



Wade Merritt
Maine International Trade Center President and State Director of International Trade



MITC Staff

Wade Merritt

President

Patty Davis

Director of Finance & Administration

Dana Eidsness

Director, Maine North Atlantic Development Office

Abigail Gray

Trade Information Specialist

Adrian Horn

Director of Trade Services

Maria McIntyre

Managing Director, Invest in Maine

Julia Munsey

Director, Membership and Corporate Development

Hillman Norberg

Trade Specialist

Cheryl Rau

Director of Marketing & Communications

Zeynep Turk

Director of StudyMaine and Senior Trade Specialist

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 activities are supported by nearly 300 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.

2022 Highlights

Trade Day 2022

In May, MITC celebrated World Trade Month and held Trade Day 2022. World Trade Month (formerly World Trade Week) has been celebrated every May since 1935 by a number of federal agencies, state trade offices, area chambers of commerce, and other public and private organizations.

The theme for Trade Day 2022 was “The New World of Exporting” and featured a virtual panel discussion, virtual awards ceremony, and in-person networking reception.



Welcome New Staff

Hillman Norberg joined Maine International Trade Center as a Trade Specialist where he primarily assists Maine companies interested in exporting their products overseas and shares his knowledge of numerous markets across the globe.



With experience in process & data management and international education programming, Trade Information Specialist Abigail Gray coordinates trade research requests, organizes Global U education events, and manages the internship program.



Seagriculture USA 2022

MITC’s Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) coordinated hosting the first Seagriculture USA 2022 in Portland, ME. Lead sponsorship was provided by DECD, MTI, MITC, and MENADO, along with support from Atlantic Sea Farms, North American Kelp, New England Ocean Cluster, Live & Work in Maine, and FocusMaine.

Attendees included expert delegates from 14 states and 12 countries around the world, coming from places as close as neighboring Halifax, NS and as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Over 100 of Maine’s harvesters, institutional researchers, and businesses participated in this international event, which attracted two qualified investment prospects and generated \$1 million in local economic impact.

Conference organizer DLG Benelux has confirmed it will hold the event in Maine again in 2023.



What Trade Means for Maine

More than 2,000 Maine companies exported over \$3.1 billion in goods and services to 178 markets last year.*

* Federal export data available through November 2022

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

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

Foreign-owned companies are important customers for local goods and services and employ 35,600 Maine workers.

Among international employers, companies from Canada, Switzerland, and the UK support the largest number of Maine jobs.

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

Growing Maine's Economy

One-on-One Business Assistance

Maine International Trade Center (MITC) helps Maine businesses grow international sales. According to our most recent International Business Needs Survey, MITC's one-on-one consulting assistance and research services are extremely important and highly valued by Maine companies.

Trade assistance covers a broad range of topics including logistics, tariffs, documentation, and research on new markets. MITC's team of trade specialists bring experience and a depth of knowledge in key industry sectors. In addition, MITC has developed a network of valuable professional contacts in Africa, Asia, Canada, the High North/North Atlantic, and Europe.

351
Maine organizations
assisted in 2022

Export Assistance Grants

MITC provides financial assistance to eligible Maine companies to expand international sales. Generally, export assistance funds may be used for business-to-business matchmaking, interpreters or translators, trade show space or other on-the-ground overseas activities, as well as international e-commerce and digital marketing activities.

During 2022, a total of 27 Maine small businesses were approved for 35 projects to grow export markets with **STEP Financial Assistance Awards**. These projects generated \$4.3 million in actual sales reported, with an additional \$25 million in projected sales for the next 12-18 months representing a 25.6:1 immediate ROI and 153:1 projected ROI for funds awarded last year. In September, MITC received an additional \$400,000 in federal money from the US Small Business Administration to continue funding under this program for 2 more years.

"This funding was very helpful in reestablishing our international market connections after the COVID-related downturn and opened up connections in the Middle East which we previously did not have."

Anderson Griffin, Corporate Controller, Montalvo Corporation (Gorham, ME)

27 Maine small businesses
received STEP funding

\$4.3 million in actual sales
reported

\$25 million in projected
sales

Trade Shows & Missions



For small and medium-sized companies MITC offers valuable exposure to international buyers and distributors in a cost-effective way through coordinated group participation in overseas trade shows and missions.

In 2022, MITC organized exhibit space at **Seafood Expo Global/Seafood Processing Global** in Barcelona and **MEDICA 2022** in Düsseldorf, with a record-high 9 Maine companies exhibiting in the "Best of New England" booth. International visitors to the booth included companies and individuals from Germany, UK, India, Canada, Turkey, Italy, France, England, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, Australia, Israel, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Poland. In addition, MITC staff held meetings with 6 international companies that are interested in moving their operations to the United States during the show.

12 Maine companies
exhibiting at 2 shows

255 serious leads and
contacts

\$13.9 million in projected
sales

"MITC through its logistical support and available funding support made it possible for Prapela to attend MEDICA. Our NIH SBIR grant does not allow grant proceeds to support commercialization efforts. As a result, the funds Prapela has available to attend any tradeshow or meeting are very limited. Simply put, we would not have attended MEDICA in 2022 without MITC support."

John Konsin, Co-Founder & CEO, Prapela (Biddeford, ME)

Growing Maine's Economy

Defense Industry Maine

Defense Industry Maine (DIME) is an initiative of Maine International Trade Center established to help Maine companies diversify both within and outside of the defense industry.

MITC Director of Trade Services Adrian Horn was nominated and accepted the Co-Chair position for **New England Defense Industry Collaboration (NERDIC)** working with Adam Boltik from New Hampshire. NERDIC is a unique entity which coordinates the growth of defense-related businesses across the six states within the New England region. NERDIC focuses on an approach built around collaboration and multidisciplinary solutions to address the challenges identified by the New England defense manufacturing sector.

In 2022, DIME traveled to Montreal, Quebec to represent Maine at **Aero Montreal** – one of the largest global aerospace industry gatherings in North America. Meetings held included directors of Bell Defense systems, Bombardier Defense, the Canadian Air Force 3rd Space Division, the Canadian Army, and the Consul General of the Czech Republic. In addition, DIME presented the Loring Commerce Centre to the Montreal aerospace cluster as a low barrier, easily accessible option for aerospace work in Maine.



Invest in Maine

Invest in Maine is an initiative of MITC and Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) established to promote job creation and growth through overseas business attraction.

In 2022, Maine Army National Guard's long-standing relationship with Montenegro's armed forces expanded to include the private sector. **Digital Den**, an early-stage incubator, visited Portland with 10 of their companies. MITC collaborated with the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs (MCE) and the Maine Army National Guard to ensure a productive visit with a tour of the International Marine Terminal, as well as meetings with The Roux Institute, Maine Technology Institute (MTI), The Savatteri Law Firm, Maine Angels, and the Foster Center for Innovation at University of Maine.

Copenhagen-based **Adapt Agency** is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing better digital experiences through sustainable and accessible websites, marketing campaigns, and e-commerce solutions. MITC recognized Adapt Agency as our 2022 Foreign Direct Investor of the Year. Since the relocation to Maine, the company has increased revenue and net income 200%.

"We are grateful for the warm welcome we have gotten in Maine. The focus on the local community and making all businesses thrive is truly impressive. Our joint focus on sustainability surely helps, but I can recommend Maine to any business owner ready to think out of the box."

Kresten Wiingaard, CEO, Adapt Group

MENADO

The Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) at MITC connects Maine businesses and institutions with opportunities in the North Atlantic and Arctic regions and facilitates introductions for international partners in the region looking to innovate or locate in Maine.

MENADO led efforts to bring the annual **US-Greenland Joint Committee Meeting** to Maine in 2022. This high-level diplomatic meeting, hosted by the US Department of State and the Government of Greenland, sought to strengthen ties in four primary areas: trade and investment, energy and mining sector cooperation, educational and cultural cooperation, and scientific and environmental cooperation. MENADO coordinated a US-Greenland Transportation Roundtable at the Port of Portland to explore how the group can support more business between Portland and Nuuk, leveraging the weekly Maine-Greenland ocean transportation service we have in place with Eimskip and Royal Arctic Line. In addition, MENADO organized meetings for visiting business delegates with Maine companies in several sectors.

During 2022, MENADO continued to lead efforts under the MOU signed between Maine and Finland in 2019 that enhances forest sector collaboration. With the addition of Michigan in 2021, the overall objective is to have collaborative research and development projects funded and underway in the first quarter of 2023. The **Finland-Maine-Michigan Forest Bioeconomy Collaboration** formed around five working groups: Advanced Wood Construction, Forestry/Smart Forestry, Biorefining, New Value-Added Products (cellulose materials and other products), and Policy Innovation.

Growing Maine's Economy

MENADO (cont.)

MENADO supported a delegation of 41 Mainers for business development meetings and to attend sessions and private events at the **2022 Arctic Circle Assembly** in Reykjavik in October. This year's delegation included business professionals, academics, students from 6 Maine colleges and universities, scientists, artists, representatives from two fine art museums, and investors. In partnership with museums in Iceland and Sweden, the Portland Museum of Art hosted a preview opening of their "Down North" exhibit at the Reykjavik Art Museum for Arctic Circle Assembly guests. MENADO hosted a Maine delegation meeting at Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs where Maine and Iceland discussed trade and collaboration priorities, and Iceland's Foreign Minister Thórdís Kolbrún Reykþjörd Gylfadóttir addressed the delegation.



"Since engaging with MENADO in 2021, my companies have been introduced to potential partners and stakeholders in the North Atlantic region that have led to purchase orders, refined business strategies, and broad brand awareness for my product suites. My participation as a Maine delegate at the Arctic Circle Assembly 2022 in Reykjavik with MENADO is producing results, not even 90 days later. I'm engaging with University of Iceland and Iceland's Coast Guard in ways I hadn't imagined."

Charlton Shackleton, Founder/CEO, The Shackleton Trust, and Entrepreneur & Investor/Advisor, Wave Aerospace and Northern Lights Space Exploration

Offshore Wind Global Supply Chain

In 2022, MITC continued its engagement with the State of Maine's Offshore Wind Roadmap initiative, contributing expertise and guidance to the project, which is led by the Governor's Energy Office. With our work focused on the economic development aspect of this emerging industry, MITC has developed a strategy for supply chain access for Maine businesses. In February 2022, consultant Josh Rosen completed an operational strategy "Getting Ready for Offshore Wind" to enhance the work of the Roadmap committee. XODUS Group, a Boston and UK-based consulting firm selected in the fall, will execute the strategy in collaboration with MITC. In addition, MITC benefited from the expertise of US Coast Guard detailee Aaron Davis, who spent six months working alongside the team as part of an industry training program, on this project.

StudyMaine

MITC's StudyMaine initiative is a statewide consortium of Maine high schools, colleges, and universities that was created to promote Maine as a top US education destination to potential students, parents, and education agents around the world. StudyMaine works in collaboration with the US Commercial Service (USCS) Portland office to organize education missions (outbound and inbound) and participate in StudyUSA social media marketing campaigns.

During 2022, in response to the war in Ukraine and inquiries from USCS colleagues posted there, StudyMaine surveyed member schools across the state on the potential intake of Ukrainian students – ideally at fully financed status – to determine placement options that Maine would be able to offer. Ultimately, as a result of this pro-active outreach to the StudyMaine network, one Maine school accepted 4 students from Ukraine.

In 2022, a Reverse Education Mission brought 11 education agents from Mexico and Ukraine to Maine. In collaboration with USCS, StudyMaine organized the 4-day mission, which included visits to 10 high school and college/university campuses across the state.



"The Maine Education visit was a wonderful trip. Not only did it give me the opportunity to visit several schools' boarding campuses - which is essential when presenting schools to families - but also meet and get updates from key staff and speak to current students to learn from their personal experience. We also had the opportunity to better understand Maine lifestyle, places to visit, and available activities. As a result, I can now share presentations of the state and the schools to my families in a much more effective and personal way. It really does make all the difference!"

Ma. Alicia Garcia Valdez, Alce Idiomas Mexico

Developing Maine's Workforce

Global U

Global U



training Maine companies
for global success



Maine's future success depends on a global workforce. When we talk with Maine businesses about barriers to growth and exporting, the inability to hire enough skilled workers to fill existing orders is frequently one of the top challenges for manufacturers across industry sectors. While addressing the workforce shortage is beyond the scope of MITC, our efforts in this arena provided international business-focused training for employees or entrepreneurs and internships for college students during the past year.

Whenever possible, MITC proactively collaborates with partner organizations, such as the Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONECT) and the World Affairs Council of Maine, to coordinate on topics, scheduling, and cross-promotion for educational offerings. In 2022, Global U virtual training with expert panelists and instructors drew over 100 attendees on the following topics: Cybersecurity Essentials for International Business, Global Cybersecurity Roundtable, Maine International E-Commerce Roundtable, Mastering Export Documentation, and USMCA Benefits for Your Business.

Internships – Future Global Leaders

MITC has trained over 200 college students and recent graduates in our paid, part-time Future Global Leaders (FGL) internship program. As a Research Assistant, MITC interns learn about international trade from Maine's point of view, hone internet and other secondary research skills, and gain valuable insight into what real Maine companies doing business internationally need to know.

In 2022, the FGL internship program underwent significant changes to emphasize professional development, student-centered project delegation, and experiential learning outside of the MITC office. Led by Trade Information Specialist (and 2022 Future Global Leader Award recipient) Abigail Gray, the program now emphasizes student initiative, community building, and increased direct engagement with Maine companies.

Beyond technical research on trade topics to assist importing and exporting businesses in Maine, this year's intern cohort also pursued projects according to their interests that included supporting MITC marketing projects for social media and website content development, spearheading preparation of trade show guides for 10 Maine companies participating in MEDICA 2022 in Germany, and actively recruiting future interns at local career fairs.

Last year, a total of 13 applications for internship spots were received and 7 interns were hosted representing Husson University, Saint Joseph's College of Maine, University of Maine School of Policy and International Affairs, and University of New England.



"I would describe my internship experience as an amazing opportunity to grow and develop my knowledge of international trade. I was given the freedom to focus my energy on areas that I find most interesting so that I could learn more about what I want to do in the future. The MITC team was very supportive and encouraging; all the projects and events that I have completed or attended have been recognized and acknowledged. I was seen not as an intern but as a co-worker with knowledge to contribute in any conversation or topic."

Keegan Stanton-Meas, former MITC Research Assistant, 2022

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For the most current listing of MITC Members,
please visit the online Member Directory
with links to company websites and searchable
by industry sector.

MITC Members

Our members are the lifeblood of what we do. Our success depends on their success in entering and doing business in markets around the globe, which in turn supports jobs in Maine and strengthens the state's economy. Working together helps all of us grow and prosper.

MITC members include nearly 300 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.

located in all 16 Maine counties

representing over 20 industry sectors

75% with less than 25 employees

Members Supporting Members

Members Supporting Members brings Maine's international business community together. With support from our Members Supporting Members sponsors, MITC remains a trusted resource with a vital network of connections across the state and around the world. Now more than ever, we believe those relationships matter.

Members Supporting Members



Thank you to our Members Supporting Members sponsors for their ongoing commitment to our work during 2022.

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