

Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development
Government of British Columbia

BRITISH COLUMBIA SETS SIGHTS ON ASIAN HORIZON

As Canada's only province on the Pacific Ocean, British Columbia is increasing its economic and cultural relationships with Asia. B.C.'s trade with Asia has increased 55 per cent in the past 10 years as the province looks beyond its traditional trading relationship with the United States. B.C. has established itself as Canada's Pacific Gateway and the natural transportation link between Asia and North America.

British Columbia's large Asian population contributes to the growing relationships across the Pacific. More than 22 per cent of the province's population is of Asian heritage, the largest proportion outside the continent of Asia itself.

Supported by industry and non-governmental organizations, the Government of British Columbia has implemented an assertive strategy to take advantage of B.C.'s position as Canada's Pacific Gateway. The government's strategy includes:

- Creating a network of six of Trade and Investment Offices in Asia – located in Bangalore, Beijing, Guangzhou, Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo. These offices promote trade and investment with B.C., cultural and academic exchange, and collaboration in research and development.
- Opening its Asia-Pacific Business Centre at Vancouver's Robson Square to help B.C.-based companies do business overseas and connect inbound investors to opportunities in British Columbia.
- Launching the BC Alumni Ambassadors network. The network uses expatriates and graduates from British Columbia's post-secondary institutions to promote the province overseas.
- Establishing a government department – the Asia Pacific, Trade and Investment Division – dedicated to expanding B.C.'s trading opportunities overseas.

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The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada is an independent, not-for-profit think-tank that promotes dialogue on economic, security, political and social issues between Canada and Asia – fostering informed decision-making in the Canadian public, private and non-governmental sectors.

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The International Business Development Branch facilitates business connections between companies and organizations in British Columbia with those in the Asia Pacific, the United States and Europe. These links promote export growth in goods and services, attract foreign investment into British Columbia, and drive innovation by fostering collaborative technological research and development.

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The Canada Asia Pacific Business Association is a non profit organization that promotes international trade and the establishment of new opportunities for businesses between Canada and those overseas. The CAPBA also promotes economic growth for businesses sectors and communities, with the specific aim to achieve better living standards in less developed countries.

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The role of the Canada Asia Pacific World Trade Association, a non-government organization, is to enhance the communication and co-operation of small- and medium-sized businesses in Canada with those in different countries to promote the growth of trade.

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The University of British Columbia's Institute of Asian Research is one of the leading research institutes on contemporary Asia. It serves as a centre for policy consultation and a training ground for senior policy makers interested in Asia and is home to Pacific Affairs, an international scholarly journal on the Asia Pacific that has been published for 80 years.

WEB RESOURCES

- Province of British Columbia's multilingual website that promotes B.C. as Canada's Pacific Gateway and as a place in which to live, study, work, invest and trade – www.CanadasPacificGateway.ca.
- The BC Alumni Ambassadors network website provides an overview of the program and recent stories about the British Columbia's efforts in Asia – www.bcalumni.ca.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Grow the west? Look to the (far) east, says former trade minister, The Globe and Mail, June 18, 2009 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/grow-the-west-look-to-the-far-east-says-former-trade-minister/article1184788>
- Asian trade key to economic recovery: western premiers, National Post, June 19, 2009 <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=1714758>
- Sizing up B.C.'s strength's and challenges in a global economy, Vancouver Sun, June 17, 2009 <http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Sizing+strengths+challenges+global+economy/1704015/story.html>

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