

**France's
Priority R&D
Sectors:
information
technologies,
transport,
food,
chemistry,
innovation,
medicine
and the
environment.**

budget of 52.3 billion FF (\$13.1 billion) for 1997 represents a nominal decrease of 1.4% from 1996. Investments in space will remain roughly stable, with France maintaining its position as the largest space-faring nation in Europe and the largest contributor to the European Space Agency (ESA). France has activities in all major areas of space research and a diversified world-class industrial base.

Conclusion: France will continue to offer Canada real opportunities to acquire key technologies in areas of strategic importance and to jointly develop new technologies. In addition, France offers excellent opportunities for collaborative research and will continue to be a major market for leading Canadian high-technology products.

France-Canada bilateral S&T relations

There is a plethora of science and technology relationships between Canadian and French scientists and research-oriented companies. Formal government-to-government S&T relations are undertaken within the France-Canada Cultural Agreement of 1965 and an exchange of letters specific to S&T dating from 1973. One consequence has been a series of bilateral Joint Scientific Commission meetings, the ninth of which took place in May 1996. That meeting identified sector co-ordinators for six mutually agreed "privileged" sectors: fisheries/oceans; agri-food; forestry; telecommunications and information technologies; medical research; and the human and social sciences. All except forestry are major strategic priorities

for France. In addition, France and Quebec have strong formal bilateral research agreements that are actively supported and funded on both sides.

Conclusion: An excellent framework exists for bilateral R&D collaboration with France. SMEs should become more aware of the potential R&D opportunities. Canadian efforts to gather and distribute intelligence on emerging world-class French technologies should be enhanced.

France in the European Union: an important partner for Canada

France is the second-largest financial contributor to the EU and a major beneficiary of the EU's expenditures on R&D, under the Fourth Framework Program for Research and Development (\$18 billion in 1994-1998). France will also have a very important role in the identification of priorities for the Fifth Framework Program. While the EU pot for R&D represents less than 10% of overall European annual expenditures, these are purely project funds (as opposed to infrastructure and salary) and therefore assume a greater importance within the European research context than their proportion suggests.

Canada has access to the European Union's R&D programs through the S&T Agreement signed in June 1995.

Canada-France privileged co-operation sectors:

**Fisheries/oceans; agri-food;
forestry; telecommunications and
information technologies; medical
research; and the human and
social sciences.**

