

negotiate an alliance with a Japanese partner and some of the costs of establishing and maintaining the alliance can be defrayed through the Japan Science and Technology Fund. However, it has recently been reported that Canadian firms will not be permitted to join domestic programs designed to enhance the competitiveness of national industry.

Canadian firms contacted for comments during the course of this study were unanimous in their support of Canadian government efforts to secure improved access to technology consortia in these countries. All of them reported benefits from their R&D cooperation activities such as product enhancement, increased network of contacts, stronger ties with existing partners and potential for increased sales to the region. However, it is recommended that EAITC, in partnership with ISTC and other interested departments, undertake further study to determine the capacity of Canadian high-technology firms to participate in and benefit from membership in foreign-based technology consortia.

Finally, it will be necessary to consult with a number of federal departments and agencies (SBDAs) in order to achieve a consensus on this issue since a necessary corollary of improved access may be the requirement to adapt similar Canadian programs to provide reciprocal access to foreign-based firms. It is recommended that the consultation process be initiated as soon as possible, given indications that policy trends in our major trading partners may be moving in a protectionist direction with respect to technology creation activities, a move which might be detrimental to the interests of Canadian firms and to full Canadian participation in the development of new technologies.

RÉSUMÉ

Sur une courte période en comparaison, la théorie du commerce «stratégique» est devenue à la théorie économique ce que la controverse sur la «fusion à froid» est à la science. Qu'il s'agisse ou non d'un changement de paradigme, cela est discutable d'un point de vue théorique, mais d'un point de vue pratique, le libre-échange demeure le meilleur choix. Il existe un phénomène peut-être plus évident encore : c'est la croissance du réseau international d'alliances entre sociétés, particulièrement celles où il y a échange de connaissances techniques, au sein de l'OCDE et surtout entre les États-Unis, la CE et le Japon.

Il est apparu évident, lors des recherches qui ont mené au présent document, que le Canada a tout avantage à accroître sa participation, dans d'autres pays, à des consortiums technologiques bénéficiant d'un soutien de l'État. Notre économie étant relativement petite et avancée et contribuant modestement à la technologie industrielle