

Programs

The Lombard regional government does not have a service for dealing with foreign businesses. The main sources of help for Canadian companies interested in opportunities in Milan would be the Canadian Consulate, and the Ontario Government Office. They can also contact Assolombardia, the Lombard regional office of Confindustria, Italy's main business organization.

ASSOLOMBARDIA (Associazione Industriale Lombarda), Via Pantano, 9 20122 Milan, Tel. 39 (2) 88231-35.

Canadian Consulate General of Canada, Via Vittor Pisani 19, Milan. Tel. 39 (2) 669-7451.

Delegation of Ontario, Piazza della Repubblica, 12 Milan 20124. Tel. 39 (2) 859-2028.

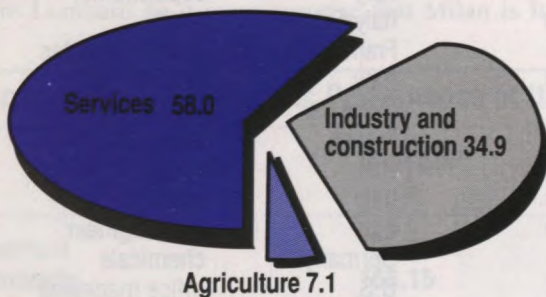
Rhône-Alpes

Rhône-Alpes is an important technology and production centre situated in southeastern France. Many large corporations have chosen to locate in the region because of its excellent supplier network. This capability is a major competitive advantage because it allows firms to contract out work they are better off not doing internally. Such a strategy lowers costs and enables companies to focus on their real strengths.

Next to the Ile de France, the Rhône-Alpes region has the largest and wealthiest population in France. Its capital, Lyon, is second only to Paris in size. Lyon and Grenoble are the two major industrial and research pillars of the region.

Rhône-Alpes covers 43,700 km² and is located along the borders of Italy and Switzerland between two mountain chains: the Alps to the east and the Massif Central to the west. It has a population of 5,175,000 concentrated around Lyon, the Rhône Valley, Saint-Etienne and Grenoble. Approximately 38 million people live within 300 miles of the region.

Employment by sector in Rhône-Alpes, 1987 (percentage of working population)



Source: Groupe Expansion.

Structure

The main industries in Rhône-Alpes are metallurgy, mechanical engineering, chemicals and pharmaceutical products, electrical engineering, foodstuffs and power supply. There are a variety of well qualified suppliers, subcontractors and consultants in the area. Partnership subcontracting is considered to be a regional strength.

Grenoble alone, for example, has 400 firms available for subcontracting, particularly in the following high tech areas: integrated circuits, printed circuits, wiring, coils, electromechanical products, precision engineering and plastic products.

Agricultural production is high. In 1988, the area accounted for 3.4 million hectolitres of wine, 1.2 million head of cattle, 13.4 million hectolitres of milk, and 894,000 tonnes of corn. Tourism, the main service industry, will receive a boost from the 1992 Winter Olympics which will be hosted within the region.

Infrastructure and capabilities

Rhône-Alpes is centrally located on a major north-south transportation axis. Superhighways from northern Europe, Paris, the Alps and southern France, Spain, Switzerland and Italy converge on Lyon. There are 53 million customers within a day's easy trucking. Ships of 5,000 tonnes navigate from the ports of Lyon on the Rhône River to Marseille. The capacity of the regional airport is being expanded, and Lyon is becoming an important node in the TGV (high speed train) network. The TGV can cover the 480 kms to Paris in just two hours.

More space is available here than in any other major European industrial centre at prices that are 50% lower than in Paris. Lyon has three science parks, two colleges of advanced technology and industry, and five major research centres. There are over 300 researchers in more than 100 laboratories and research centres in biotechnology alone. Grenoble has a total of 8,000 researchers (including 1,500 foreign researchers) at 8 research centres, 7 engineering schools, 2 university technology institutes, a school of commerce, a school of business and three universities.