

Despite some caution compared to a year ago, Canadian firms are bullish about business prospects in Asia Pacific. This was a key finding of a survey of businesses

region. What's more, 16% of respondents expect substantial investment increases, up from 9% last year.

Over the longer term, the optimism is more pronounced. In the next two

of respondents, followed by resource companies and business services suppliers.

APFC is a Vancouver-based think tank partially funded by the federal government. It undertakes strategic research to provide guidance on Asia Pacific topics for Canada's public and private sector. It conducts its investment intentions survey annually.

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Canadian firms still bullish on Asia Pacific

active in the region, released January 9 by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APFC).

For 2001, some 46% of survey respondents expect to boost their investments. Though down from last year's 56%, the figure still outstrips the 40% of firms planning only to maintain current investment levels and the 6% planning to cut their stakes in the

to five years, 65% of respondents expect to boost investments. Though lower than last year's 74%, this still represents almost two thirds of companies surveyed. Most bullish are firms operating in India and Australia, followed by China and Japan.

Carried out last December, the survey covered 93 Canadian companies present in Asia Pacific. Manufacturing firms made up the largest proportion

Canada-India Business Council

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On November 30, the Council co-hosted, with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Ontario Exports Inc., an "Opportunities in India" information seminar within the Construct Canada 2000 trade fair, held November 29-December 1, 2000, in Toronto.

Sector-specific trade missions

Next week's trade mission, co-sponsored by C-IBC in partnership with CMHC, Ontario Exports Inc., DFAIT, the Canadian High Commission (CHC) in New Delhi, and the Builders Association of India, is also targeted at the building and construction sector. Other recent C-IBC-sponsored trade missions to India include a power mission in 1997, an agri-business mission in December 1998, and a multi-sector executive business mission in October 1999.

Council initiates business networks

The Council is facilitating business

networks for collaborating on specific projects. In mid-2000, for example, the C-IBC identified and brought together three Canadian companies with a wide range of expertise in the health care sector, as well as a potential partner in Hyderabad, to build a privately/publicly funded teaching hospital with diagnostic and laboratory facilities.

The C-IBC hosts or co-hosts a plethora of information seminars, addressing topics such as India's taxes and government structure and sector-specific opportunities. Many of these activities are organized in conjunction with DFAIT and the CHC. "We see ourselves as being an augments for the programs of the Department and the Canadian High Commission," says Jans.

The C-IBC also has alliances with both Canadian and Indian industry associations to team up for sector-specific activities such as trade fairs and match-making sessions.

Erratum

In the January 15, 2001, issue of *Canadexport*, on page 13, the oil and gas export figures in the article "Developing opportunities in Brunei Darussalam" should have read as: "Brunei currently exports 220,000 barrels of oil and 1 billion cubic feet of gas per day."

Voice for sectoral views

On the advocacy side, the C-IBC considers itself the key private sector voice on any advisory committee to government. Not least, the Council offers the expertise of its own directors under a mentoring program in which directors help members to assess and manage the various risks of doing business in India. Says Jans: "Our directors collectively have about 100 years of experience to share."

With such expertise, not to mention the invaluable services of the organization as a whole, the C-IBC continues to fill the shoes of its founder.

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(For the unabridged version, see www.infoexport.gc.ca/canadexport and click on "Business Chambers and Associations")