

CANADA-ASEAN CENTRE

To enable Canada to keep pace with ASEAN's explosive development, the Canada-ASEAN Centre (CAC) was established in Singapore in 1989. Unlike anything before it or since, its mandate is to "serve as a catalyst and the centre of a network linking Canadian and ASEAN interest groups in a wide range of activities designed to promote better understanding of our respective institutions, cultures and people." The Centre will carry out this mandate through targeted projects and programmes in the areas of public affairs, institutional cooperation and academic relations, and business cooperation.

The public affairs program is designed to improve the understanding of Canada by the people of ASEAN and of the ASEAN region by Canadians. Through well planned media and public relations activities, seminars and conferences, the coordination and development of regional tours by high profile Canadian and ASEAN speakers or groups in the fields of business, education, technology, culture and sport, the Centre will increase the demand for business, academic and institutional links between Canada and the region.

In the area of institutional cooperation and academic relations, the Centre will facilitate the increase of academic and other people exchanges between Canada and ASEAN through various means including: establishing a structure to respond to the identified need to review, analyze, channel and implement ideas and contacts between academics and institutions in both regions; identifying priority academic institutions as mechanisms to foster exchange; establishing the Canada ASEAN Academic Forum and the Canada-ASEAN Academic Fund. The Centre will also seek a strong Canadian position in the regional "Think Tank" network and other selected, well-established institutions in the region and in Canada.

As another goal of the Centre is to facilitate the continued strong growth of Canada-ASEAN trade and investment activity, the Centre will implement programs toward business cooperation by strengthening the business associations between Canada and each ASEAN country, and the Canada-ASEAN Business Council. The Centre will also engage in trade promotion activities, and develop regional business strategies in key sectors.

An Executive Director heads the work of the Centre and is guided by an Advisory Council consisting of senior business people and academics from Canada and ASEAN countries, and the Canadian High Commissioner to Singapore. The Centre also collaborates actively with the Canadian missions in each country, as well as Canadian businesses, academics and other experts in the region.

To further improve the level and quality of information sharing throughout the region, the Centre has appointed a Coordinator from each ASEAN country. The Country Coordinators are successful business people who assist with information gathering and dissemination, and project planning and administration.