

France as a source of foreign direct investment (FDI) and strategic partnerships: France is a major player on the international investment front and has moved up to become the fifth-largest foreign direct investor in Canada. France's FDI portfolio in Canada has grown by 229% in the past decade, reaching \$5.7 billion in 1996. More than 380 French firms are spread across all regions of Canada. France's rapidly expanding investment profile in Canada (accounting for 40,000 jobs) is making a significant contribution to the Canadian government's Jobs and Growth agenda.

Efforts to enhance investment opportunities and increase the number of strategic partnerships with France will be concentrated in several high-tech sectors. Listed in order of importance, these sectors

are: information and telecommunications technologies; health sciences (pharmaceutical products, biotechnology, medical equipment); chemicals; agri-food industries; financial partnerships (excluding scholarships); and transportation (aerospace, rail, automobiles).

A reinvigorated program of activities will focus on: (i) high-level visits, with ministerial involvement; (ii) increased contact with business associations; (iii) renewed sales and marketing campaigns; (iv) stronger promotion of alliances in high-tech sectors; and (v) partnering with provinces and municipalities.

Note: Further details regarding the action plans for these specific growth sectors can be found in the subsequent chapters of this document.

Investments and Strategic Partnerships

Objectives:

- a) to help attract at least one major direct investment from France to Canada each year
- b) to stimulate the development of some half a dozen new strategic partnerships annually between Canadian and French firms
- c) to strengthen and target our public relations efforts to promote Canada as a prime investment destination within the NAFTA region and an important business partner for France.

