

**BACKGROUND**

In 1989, the Government of Canada implemented a new strategy designed to make Canada more competitive in the Asia Pacific region - PACIFIC 2000. The strategy is based on an integrated approach to international trade, science and technology, and investment.

PACIFIC 2000 is designed to reflect more effectively Canada's economic priorities and the interests of Canadian business. PACIFIC 2000 seeks to improve Canada's visibility in the region and encourage linkages through technology transfer, investment, sectoral export development, cultural activities and tourism.

In order to take full advantage of the opportunities in the region, Canadians must become much more familiar with Asian languages and culture. The Asian Language and Awareness Fund, a strategic component of PACIFIC 2000, is designed to enable Canadians, particularly the private sector, to become more Asia-literate and thus increase Canada's ability to deal successfully in the region.

The Asian Language and Awareness Fund is a five-year \$15 million program designed to increase Asian linguistic and cultural capabilities in Canada and to improve Canadians' knowledge about the Asia Pacific region. External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC) is assisted in managing the fund by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF), The David Lam Centre at Simon Fraser University and the Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies at York University and the University of Toronto.