

1

Introduction

Singapore, with the dynamism of its economy, its regional role as a communications and transportation centre, and its membership in a wide range of international institutions, is an important interlocutor to Canada on regional and global trade, economic and political issues. While Canada's political and economic relations with Singapore are maturing, there remains significant potential to broaden these ties in the future.

Canada enjoys sound relations with Singapore as a result of the Commonwealth bond, a similar outlook on international problems and Canada's support for and active dialogue with the Association of East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The two countries regularly exchange information and views on a broad range of issues, including, more recently, multilateral trade negotiations, political and economic developments in the region and peacekeeping. However, trade is by far the most important feature of Canada-Singapore relations.

This survey examines the nature and scope of trade and economic relations between Canada and Singapore over the last decade. It focuses on bilateral relations, agreements and initiatives and touches only briefly on some of the international and multilateral fora in which Canada and Singapore are both active participants.

The current economic situation in Singapore is highlighted in section 2, which provides some insights into Singapore's success as a dynamic Asian economy. Section 3 provides an overview of commercial relations between Canada and Singapore and comments on the evolution of bilateral trade in terms of its volume and composition. This section also summarizes Canada's export marketing efforts in Singapore and the priorities defined as part of Canada's trade strategy with the country.

Section 4 focuses on Singapore's role as a regional base for Canadian development assistance programs in ASEAN, as Singapore itself is not a recipient of Canadian bilateral aid. The agreements and arrangements currently in place between Canada and Singapore are summarized in Section 5. These provide the basic infrastructure for the continued expansion of economic and commercial relations between Canada and Singapore. A summary of other areas of co-operation between the two countries is also provided in this section.