

Mining opportunities buoyed by high metal prices

Much like Canada, the Nordic region is experiencing a mining boom as the industry reaps the benefits of strong metal prices and high demand for raw materials. As a result, mining opportunities abound for Canadians exporters and investors.



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“The industry here is at the forefront of technological changes to improve automation and productivity while reducing costs at a time when mines are being excavated deeper and under conditions previously thought to be impossible or uneconomic,” says Seppo Vihersaari, a trade commissioner with the Canadian Embassy in Finland.

At the same time, potential for opening new mines from the Fennoscandian Shield (in Norway, Sweden and Finland) to Greenland, which has excellent infrastructure and an environmentally conscious mining tradition, has encouraged renewed exploration.

For 2006, it is estimated that over \$125 million will be spent on mineral exploration in the Nordic countries, some 80% of the total spent in Europe (excluding Russia).

For more information, contact Seppo Vihersaari, Canadian Embassy in Finland, email: seppo.vihersaari@international.gc.ca.

Forestry competitors could be key partners

The forest industry in the Nordic region is a major force in the international market.

“Although the region is often in direct competition with Canadian forest products, the Nordic countries offer niche markets and are powerful partners in research and development cooperation,” says Maria Stenberg of the Canadian Embassy in Sweden.

“From a trade policy perspective, when the Nordic countries have concerns voiced within the EU, they are taken very seriously,” says Stenberg. “The Nordic countries are therefore allies and advocates of Canadian forestry interests towards the EU. There is also potential for collaboration in the promotion of sustainable forest management practices.”

Sweden and Finland alone make up 20% of the world’s forest industry exports. The region boasts 62 million hectares of forests which represent 1.6 % of the world’s total forest area.



Some 65 % of the forests in the Nordic countries are family-owned, while only about 6% are in Canada. Almost all of the Nordic forests are certified and sustainable forest management is ensured by national forest laws.

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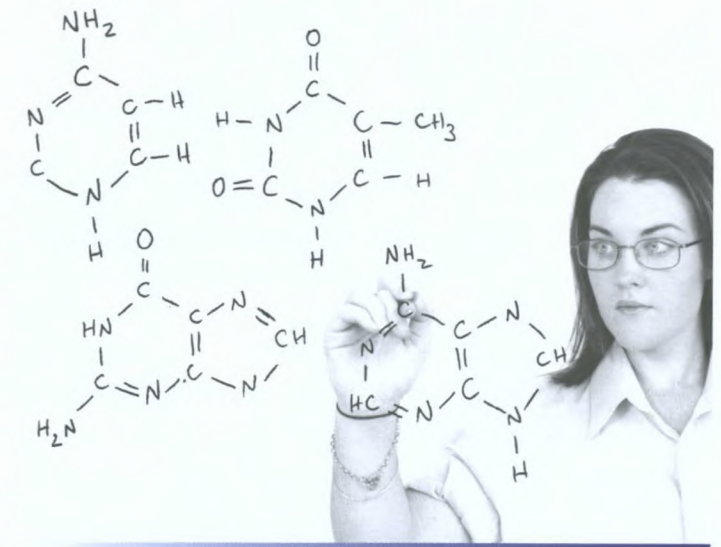
R & D collaboration in the land of Nobel ranks fifth

The Nordic countries boast impressive advances in science and technology fitting for the region of Alfred Nobel and many of his prize laureates.

With a long scientific and engineering tradition and world leading scientific institutions, the region ranks high for innovation and competitiveness. It owes much of its current economic success to investment by the private sector in research and development. But it also owes much to a well educated population quick to adopt new technologies and a capacity to integrate scientific knowledge into new products and processes.

This makes Nordic markets a good test bed for high-tech companies.

The region is also a considerable source of scientific expertise, technology and know how for Canadian companies and scientific institutions. It accounts for some seven percent of Canada’s scientific collaborations, making it Canada’s fifth scientific partner behind the U.S., U.K., France and Germany.



“The region offers significant science and technology opportunities for Canadian companies and research organizations,” says Thierry Weissenburger, a senior trade commissioner with the Canadian Embassy in Copenhagen and regional coordinator for science and technology.

He says the region is quick to adopt new technologies, while high costs in areas such as labour and the small domestic market have pushed Nordic companies to make operations more effective and add value to products.

While the Nordic countries are distinct from one another, they share common values and cultures, geographic space and increasingly common research institutions and coordination, Weissenburger says. The Nordic Council of Ministers in 2004 established the Nordic Innovation Centre, based in Oslo, to develop technology and industrial research in the region.

There are a number of regional networks and technology clusters, mostly anchored around universities and science parks as well. The Medicon Valley cluster in the greater Copenhagen and Southern Sweden bioregion and the Oulu telecom cluster in Northern Finland are two examples. Nordic clusters, including those in non-EU Norway and Iceland, participate in European Research Framework Program networks.

For more information, contact Thierry Weissenburger, Canadian Embassy in Denmark, email: thierry.weissenburger@international.gc.ca, and go to www.infoexport.gc.ca/science/nordics_home-en.htm or visit the Nordic Innovation Centre at www.nordicinnovation.net.

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