

The Canada Japan Industrial Cooperation Forum (ICF) has JETRO, the CEA, the CMA, the CCC and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Toronto as full members, and includes as "ex-officio" members several federal and provincial departments, including FAIT. Its objective is to foster linkages between Canadian and Japanese companies.

The ICF was first raised in May 1992 by then MITI Minister Watanabe with Minister Wilson. While the idea of a private sector group to foster corporate linkages was appealing (and indeed was welcomed as a private sector initiative by Minister Wilson), the Canadian partners (CEA, CMA and CCC) were initially sceptical of the concept, particularly as it had the potential of eating up scarce resources. There was also a feeling that the idea, as originally developed by JETRO, was heavy on process but was not well formulated with respect to how the ICF would add value. The concept has since been refined and now enjoys the support and participation of the Canadian private sector as represented by the three associations. The driving force behind this initiative, however, remains JETRO.

Indeed, ICF "activities" to date are largely JETRO activities repackaged under the ICF banner.

Over the past year JETRO has helped us with an Automotive Mission to Japan (paying the costs of 3 of 18 mission members and organizing a reception in Tokyo) and arranged for one Canadian auto parts company to participate in a "design in" program with a Japanese auto assembler. We are currently exploring other ways in which JETRO can complement our efforts.