

CANADA POWERING UP IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Having already reached a free trade agreement with the European Union and a revised deal that preserved the three-party Nafta, Canada has shifted more attention across the Pacific as it pursues growth opportunities in what is the world's largest, most populous and fastest-growing region.

While China's economy still dominates in Asia, Japan has exhibited a fresh commitment to restart its stagnant economy and India looks set to eclipse those two economies in a few years.

"For the first time, there's a genuine appreciation that the center of gravity has shifted from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, we must get it right in Asia," **Canada India Business Council President and CEO Kasi Rao** said.

Amid the fast-changing landscape in global trade, Canada's government wants to double its overseas exports by 2025.

"Asia is a key market in realizing these

goals. Engaging with the different markets in Asia is a long-term commitment and we are investing heavily in terms of time, human resources and capital," **Canada's Chief Trade Commissioner Ailish Campbell** said.

Tasked to help Canadian companies access overseas markets, the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) has made progress over several years. But, it still has much work to do in helping Canadian firms expand Canada's trade with the rest of the world.

In 2000, the U.S. accounted for about 76% of Canada's trade activities, with Asia-Pacific accounting for only 10%. In 2018, the figure for the U.S. shrank to 63%, while that of Asia-Pacific grew to 17%.

Also, Canada's trade with Asia-Pacific is expected to expand even more rapidly because of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific

Partnership (CPTPP), which has come into effect in Australia, Brunei, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam, among others. It also has a free trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea.

"Our research has shown that Canadian companies are much more confident in choosing a country if it is covered by a free trade agreement. It gives them a lot of comfort if there is an understanding of how trade will be done and how tariffs will be applied," **Export Development Canada CEO Mairead Lavery** said.

Business Council of Canada Vice President for International Trade Brian Kingston agreed but further clarified, "These trade deals are not the be all and end all. Rather, they are the government's measures that pave the way for Canadian companies and nudge them in the right direction. FTAs provide focus on opportunities in markets that Canadian companies otherwise might not have thought of."

Canada also hopes that the CPTPP will attract more inward investment.

"Investors can secure preferential access to Canada's network of 14 free trade agreements. This makes Canada an even more ideal location for a North American office," Campbell said.

Within the vast country, Canada's provinces present various opportunities that have drawn in certain investors. British Columbia and Nova Scotia remain the preferred destinations for Asian investors, particularly Chinese investors, while Saskatchewan attracts Indian business, which accounts for one-third of bilateral trade.

As the location of country's political and financial capital, the province of Ontario is first-in-mind when it comes to investment, whether across the southern border or the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

"Companies are naturally drawn to Ontario because of its steady pipeline of diverse talent, world-class universities and colleges and incubators," said **Todd Smith**, who led **Ontario's Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade** and organized several road shows across Asia to directly promote the province.

"The message is simple and clear: We are open for business," Smith said. ■

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR FINDS LINKS BETWEEN CANADA AND ASIA

GCI Capital Founder and CEO Larry Liu is a young entrepreneur serving as a bridge between Canadian and Asian companies and marketplaces.

Founded in 2014, GCI thrived with its robust growth investments in startups across Canada, especially in cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Waterloo, as well as in the Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

"Providing funds to companies is not enough. We are not like other venture capitals," said Liu, who attributes GCI's success to its ability to choose companies that are right for its portfolio and guide them correctly after investment.

Apart from the typical venture capital investments, GCI connects Canadian companies to the Chinese market through its extensive network and its knowledge of local culture and the business environment in China.

In fewer than five years, with 20 companies in its portfolio and six exited companies, the venture capital company has expanded to China and the U.S. via a second fund that has helped some companies

penetrate foreign markets.

Conversely, GCI also handpicks successful Asian marketplace business models and introduces them to North America.

"We have helped companies in the food delivery, powerbank sharing and fintech sectors. We have also introduced an online marketplace for high-quality, affordable goods," Liu said.

For GCI Capital, helping its portfolio companies find success is important.

"We want to go beyond requirements and to take a hands-on approach during intensive work with the companies," said Liu, who travels regularly to China to visit his team and further strengthen his network there.

Although a young venture capital, GCI has built quite a reputation for having narrowed the gap between Canada and China and forging a partnership with Zhejiang province's Innovation Center. While the partnership encourages Canadian companies to invest in Zhejiang, it also allows Chinese companies to access GCI's expertise as they expand to North America. ■

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YORK UNIVERSITY GRADUATES GLOBAL CITIZENS EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS

THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, fueled by automation and technologies such as AI, is changing the way we work and the skills we need to succeed.

[York University](#) graduates globally educated citizens with the transferable skills they need for success in a rapidly changing economy. In this context, York is redefining how to prepare students for success with innovative opportunities for students, showcasing teaching, learning and research excellence.

Since York's founding in 1959, the university has opened the door to success for hundreds of thousands of students from diverse backgrounds, including young people who are the first in their family to attend university, new Canadians, mature students, and students of all ages from other countries who want a uniquely Canadian post-secondary education experience.

York continues to develop new programs that respond to emerging labor



Rhonda L. Lenton, President and Vice-Chancellor of York University, pauses to speak to a group of students on the university's main campus in Toronto, Canada.

market needs while also growing the number and quality of experiential education opportunities available to its students both locally and internationally. Experiential education provides students with hands-on learning activities that connect the skills and knowledge acquired in academic programs to the workplace or the community through internships, co-op programs, community-service learning, community-based research activities, clinical placements and more.

York University's internationally acclaimed [Vision: Science to Applications \(VISTA\)](#) program is one example of a global partnership between five faculties and more than 50 academic, nonprofit and commercial partners. This vision research has important implications for human health and for the technologies that we use. Supported in part by the government of Canada through a

C\$120 million (US\$90.6 million) research grant, VISTA aims to integrate biological and computational vision research to produce technologies that help people live healthier, safer and more productive lives.

Such collaborations and partnerships exemplify York's approach to local and global engagement geared toward social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing. York recently ranked No. 5 in Canada and No. 26 in the world by the inaugural [Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings](#), which set out to measure how global universities contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

York University is committed to expanding access to higher education, ensuring that graduates have the knowledge, skills and experience to realize their full potential for their own benefit and that of the world.



Faculty of Health students working collaboratively in the anatomy research lab.