

The background of the page features a photograph of a modern building with a prominent white dome structure. The building is set against a clear sky, and the image is partially obscured by a white diagonal shape that separates the header from the main content.

Increasing Canada-Israel Trade, R&D and Scientific Cooperation

The second bilateral free trade accord Canada ever signed was with Israel in 1996, a testament to the unique friendship between the two countries. Since the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) came into force, two-way trade has tripled to \$1.6 billion. There are also a number of bilateral agreements between Israel and Canadian provinces, including Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

On July 21, 2015, Canada and Israel reached a significant new milestone by concluding negotiations to expand CIFTA. The modernized agreement will empower Canadians and Israelis to further leverage their unique strengths to create high-value jobs, boost vital industries and enhance R&D in both countries.

CIFTA is a prime example of the mutual benefit accrued to the people of Canada and the people of Israel alike through close cooperation on the basis of shared strengths, interests and values. The bilateral relationship is particularly robust in the areas of science, technology and innovation, based on more

than 20 years of close collaboration and jointly funded research with universities and the private sector.

Enhanced cooperation can improve lives around the world through innovations in medicine, communications, agriculture, environmental protection, energy and clean technology.

Growth has been fostered in a number of important ways, particularly through the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF). CIIRDF reflects the vitality and special nature of the bilateral relationship, with its funded projects providing tremendous economic value to both countries. The bilateral R&D relationship has also benefited from close collaboration through the National Research Council, the Canada-Israel Energy Science and Technology Fund, and the Canada-Israel Health Research Program.

There is also significant cooperation between Canadian and Israeli universities, with formal partnerships approximately doubling since 2009. In 2013, Universities Canada signed an agreement with their

Israeli counterpart that aligns institutions of higher learning in both countries for much closer collaboration. There are currently major partnerships in neuroscience, stem cell research, cyber security, ocean science and nanotechnology, to name just a few existing areas of mutual benefit.

The expanding trade and scientific relationship is something to be celebrated, but it is crucial that further progress be made to fully harness its untapped potential. Greater synergy in the Canada-Israel partnership can generate substantial economic benefits for both countries through job creation and billions of dollars in additional bilateral trade. At the same time, growth in the bilateral relationship also has the potential to change lives around the world for the better, through cutting-edge innovations in medicine, com-

munications, agriculture, environmental conservation, energy and clean technology.

While people-to-people and government-to-government ties are exceptionally strong between Canada and Israel, both can be further leveraged to realize the full potential of business-to-business relationships and collaboration between entrepreneurs and research institutions in both countries.

Federal and provincial governments can enhance the Canada-Israel partnership by securing existing bilateral programs for the long term and organizing trade missions to Israel, specifically focused on maximizing the impact of the recently modernized free trade accord and exploring new opportunities for strategic cooperation.

KEY POINTS

- The second bilateral free trade accord Canada ever signed was with Israel in 1996, a testament to the unique friendship between the two countries.
- The Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement demonstrates the mutual benefit accrued Canadians and Israelis alike through close cooperation on the basis of shared strengths, interests and values.
- Enhanced cooperation can improve lives around the world through innovations in medicine, communications, agriculture, environmental protection, energy and clean technology.
- Federal and provincial governments can enhance the Canada-Israel partnership by securing existing bilateral programs for the long term and organizing trade missions to Israel.