

## Western Economic Partnership

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The Governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan agreed at the March 13, 2009 joint Cabinet meeting to enter into a Western Economic Partnership. The Western Economic Partnership will create an unprecedented economic partnership with the three provinces representing a total western market of nine million people with a combined GDP of \$555 billion.

In recognition of the strong economic foundation of the West and the benefit of cooperation in advancing the provinces' shared interests, the Western Economic Partnership will establish the framework for collaboration on innovative ways to bolster the economy of the West to:

- improve the competitiveness and productivity of the West;
- attract business, investment and talent to the West;
- support and build capacity for innovation in the West; and,
- strengthen and diversify the economy of the West.

The Western Economic Partnership will encompass four areas:

1. internal trade;
2. international marketing;
3. innovation; and,
4. procurement.

### 1. Internal Trade

Building on the agreement already in place between British Columbia and Alberta, the Western Economic Partnership will include a comprehensive western interprovincial trade agreement (Agreement) to remove barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility between the three western provinces. The Agreement will cover all public sector entities and will encompass all economic sectors.

The purpose of the Western Economic Partnership's western interprovincial trade agreement will be to:

- establish an open, efficient and stable market encompassing British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan;
- enhance competitiveness, economic growth and stability;
- increase opportunities and choice for workers, consumers, investors and business;
- reduce costs for consumers, businesses and governments;
- promote development that is sustainable and environmentally sound, high levels of consumer protection, and health and labour standards; and,
- support ongoing trade and investment liberalization both nationally and internationally.

The outcomes of the Agreement will be to:

**STRENGTHEN THE REGION** – The Agreement will demonstrate that British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan are aligned as a single economic region in western Canada. As such, the region will provide a more attractive location to build and grow businesses and create jobs, and a platform to access the Canadian, North American and global markets. The Agreement will provide a level playing field for workers and businesses across the region. Business will benefit from open and non-discriminatory procurement opportunities.

**IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS** – The Agreement will remove unnecessary barriers, reduce costs and improve the competitiveness of businesses operating across the region, which will benefit consumers. Improving business competitiveness will further strengthen the region both domestically and internationally.

**PROVIDE EFFECTIVE REGULATION** – The Agreement will address the differences in government measures that are creating unnecessary barriers to trade. The Agreement will ensure that, going forward, the three provinces work together when developing new measures so that they do not create impediments to trade within the region.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION, WORKER AND PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND LABOUR STANDARDS** – The Parties recognize the importance of such measures and the Agreement will provide for the ability of each Party to maintain and enact legislation and regulations in these areas.

The Parties further agree that negotiations will recognize the particular needs of Saskatchewan.

## 2. International Marketing

The Western Economic Partnership will include an international marketing Memorandum of Understanding to develop joint initiatives that will result in the delivery of high quality, cost-effective activities in areas of common interest.

This international marketing Memorandum of Understanding will set the context to explore and identify specific bilateral and trilateral initiatives that create long-term economic benefits for the citizens of each province.

The provinces will, where appropriate:

- cooperate on trade and investment missions to international markets;
- undertake joint marketing and trade activities in sectors of agreed interest;
- share market intelligence on sectors of agreed interest; and
- explore models for making in-market resources available to advance the joint interests of the provinces.

The outcomes of the Western Economic Partnership's international marketing agreement will be to:

**ENHANCE COOPERATION ON TRADE MISSIONS AND MARKETING** – The Memorandum of Understanding will support coordination of international trade, investment missions, or marketing activities which highlight the strength of the western provinces.

**IMPROVE SHARING OF MARKET INTELLIGENCE** – The Memorandum of Understanding will encourage the sharing of, or collaboration on, international market research activities.

**ENCOURAGE OPPORTUNITIES TO JOINTLY UTILIZE IN-MARKET RESOURCES** – The Memorandum of Understanding will encourage provinces to share resources and infrastructure in international markets in order for provinces to establish an effective and efficient presence in priority markets.

## 3. Innovation

The Western Economic Partnership will encompass an innovation Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate provincial investments in research and development (R&D) activities in the West in order to:

- enable the three governments to use resources more efficiently and strategically;
- build critical mass of R&D activities in the West;
- attract investments and talent; and,
- strengthen the West's ability to compete in the world.

The outcomes of the innovation Memorandum of Understanding will be to:

**IMPROVE INFORMATION-SHARING** – The Memorandum of Understanding will ensure provinces share information and analysis on innovation activities and investments taking place in each province.

**STRENGTHEN REGIONAL INNOVATION CAPACITY** – The Memorandum of Understanding will provide for provinces to undertake joint activities that will strengthen or build regional innovation clusters in collaboration with industry, governments and other stakeholders.

## 4. Procurement

The Western Economic Partnership will include a Memorandum of Understanding in the area of government procurement of goods and services. By combining the common requirements of all three governments, efficiencies and significant savings to taxpayers will be realized.

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### THE GOVERNMENTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN AGREE TO:

Conclude, by January 1, 2010, all elements of the Western Economic Partnership Agreement.

This Western Economic Partnership has been signed by British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan at Calgary, Alberta, this 11th day of September, 2009.

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The Honourable Gordon Campbell  
**Premier of the  
Province of British Columbia**

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The Honourable Ed Stelmach  
**Premier of the  
Province of Alberta**

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The Honourable Brad Wall  
**Premier of the  
Province of Saskatchewan**