
FINAL REPORT OF THE SASKATCHEWAN-ASIA
ADVISORY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 2014

FINAL REPORT OF THE SASKATCHEWAN-ASIA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Submitted to

Honourable Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan

September 30, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	A Message from the Co-Chairs
03	Council Members
03	Our Mandate
04	Recommendations
	Overarching Recommendations
	Trade Facilitation and Attraction
	Investment Attraction
	Student Recruitment and Retention and Development of Asian Competency
	Talent Attraction: Skilled Workers and Entrepreneurs
22	Conclusion

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

On May 21, 2013, we were honoured to be appointed the co-chairs of the Saskatchewan-Asia Advisory Council. Over the past 16 months we have had the pleasure of working with six exceptional council members to provide guidance for Saskatchewan's engagement in Asia.

Asia offers unprecedented opportunities for the Province of Saskatchewan. In 2013, Saskatchewan's trade with Asia was at an all-time high (\$6.6 billion in exports); with the province leading Canadian exports to India (\$1 billion), Indonesia (\$728.9 million), Bangladesh (\$326.7 million) and Malaysia (\$292.3 million). The province further exported \$2.66 billion to China and \$1.1 billion to Japan.

It is clear that Saskatchewan is enjoying unmatched prosperity – the best in over a century. Asia is increasingly prominent in our economic future, and between population increases and the rise of the middle class, will continue to be for decades to come. There is, however, a lack of urgency in national efforts to transform, and enhance, the relationship. Given Saskatchewan's disproportionate share of Canadian exports to Asia, the province must augment, reallocate, and, where necessary, provide new resources to focus on Asian markets.

International investment patterns are also in the midst of a tectonic shift, with larger numbers coming from Asia; and Saskatchewan has much to gain from this phenomenon. As a global leader in food, fuel and fertilizer, the province must re-focus its efforts to attract investment to seize the considerable opportunities in Asia's growth.



Steve Dechka
Council Co-Chair

Focusing on international student recruitment and retention, as well as talent attraction in all fields of relevance to the province, will further drive Saskatchewan's future economic and cultural growth. There is no question that the majority of provincial international students and talent come from Asian markets. However, in order to properly foster long-term relationships, the province must ensure that the experience of the international students and immigrants we host is second to none.

There seem to be pockets of resistance within the Saskatchewan, and Canadian, population to closer integration with Asia. Such resistance must be addressed, as a multi-dimensional understanding of key Asian jurisdictions is vital to Saskatchewan's success and economic growth. The development of Asian competency, defined as having a broad knowledge of the history, geography, culture and traditions of Asia, must begin at the primary and secondary levels and extend throughout post-secondary education and through professional practice. Saskatchewan citizens must be able to communicate with, and understand fully, the markets of key importance to the province's economic future.

It is with this knowledge, understanding and urgency, that we present this report to the Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan. It is our hope that the recommendations detailed in this report will guide the Province of Saskatchewan in its efforts to lead the nation in its engagement with Asia. There is no other province in the country better equipped to succeed than Saskatchewan, and we look forward to the province's continued engagement and success in Asia.



Grant Kook
Council Co-Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS

The council is composed of eight provincial and national leaders who bring private and public sector expertise on Asian engagement. Members of the council include:

- Grant Kook (Council Co-Chair), President and CEO of Westcap Mgt. Ltd;
- Steve Dechka (Council Co-Chair), President and CEO of Canpotex;
- Harold Fast, Founder of FastGenetics;
- Eva Kwok, Chair and CEO of Amara Holdings;
- Kasi Rao, Vice-President and Director, Toronto Office, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada;
- Lionel LaBelle, Past President and CEO of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP);
- Terry Bergan, President and CEO of International Road Dynamics; and,
- Doug Moen, Deputy Minister to the Premier.

OUR MANDATE

The council's mandate is to provide advice to the Government of Saskatchewan on trade, investment and talent attraction, and education opportunities and risks throughout Asia.

The council endorses, and is directed by, five overarching principles for working in Asia:

1. Engagement efforts require a long-term commitment, aligned with the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, and must include a bold and aggressive strategy, patience and an investment in relationships;
2. The government should take a disciplined and focused approach to its work, including clear targets, specific goals and measureable outcomes, aligned with Saskatchewan's distinctive strengths;
3. Partnerships are key in Asia. These include partnerships with private and public institutions, industry and all levels of government (i.e., national and sub-national governments in Asia);
4. Trade, investment and talent attraction, education and innovation are all interconnected and underpinned by Asian competency (linguistic and cultural);
5. The government must prioritize support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to succeed in Asia.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are organized under five categories:

- Overarching Recommendations;
- Trade Facilitation and Attraction;
- Investment Attraction;
- Student Recruitment and Retention and Development of Asian Competency;
- Talent Attraction: Skilled Workers and Entrepreneurs.

The overarching recommendations are broad proposals that seek to influence Saskatchewan's relationship with Asia across all areas of interest. The remaining four categories offer specific recommendations to attract Asian trade, investment and talent, and to encourage the Saskatchewan public to become increasingly connected to Asian markets through business relations, work and educational experiences, and travel.



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

By 2050, Asia is expected to account for half of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP),¹ and the combined GDP of China and India is likely to exceed the total output of the G7.² Adding to that, 525 million people in Asia already count themselves middle class — more than the European Union's (EU) total population. Over the next two decades, the middle class is expected to expand by another three billion people, coming almost exclusively from the emerging world. In China alone, 500 million people could enter the global middle class over the next decade.³

It is undeniable that global political and economic power is shifting; and the shift is towards Asia. By 2030, it is expected that Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power, based on GDP, population size, military power and technological investment.⁴

It is evident, however, that Canada is lagging behind our competitors, such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States (U.S.), when it comes to Asian engagement across all areas – trade, investment and talent attraction, and advanced education. We must do better. We must act with urgency.

The council believes that Saskatchewan is the province that can best establish, maintain and cultivate relationships with Asian markets, and must do so in order to continue growing the sectors of the provincial economy.

As such, these overarching recommendations are far-reaching actions, which will impact Saskatchewan's broad engagement with Asia. The council views these recommendations as crucial to the province's success.


1. The Government of Saskatchewan should focus its efforts in Asia on priority areas that hold the greatest advantage for the province:
 - a. in markets where the province has an established, multifaceted relationship (i.e., China and India), the government should focus its efforts on select sub-national emerging jurisdictions within those markets; and,
 - b. in markets where the province has an established, but focused relationship (i.e., a singular focus on trade, immigration or post-secondary education), the government should leverage its existing expertise and relationships to achieve multifaceted engagement (i.e., Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh and South Korea).
2. The Government of Saskatchewan should increase the frequency and consistency of Premier-led and minister-led missions to priority Asian markets. Missions should include:
 - a. clearly articulated goals that result in specific and tangible deliverables that cover priority areas for the province (trade, investment and talent attraction, and student recruitment);
 - b. systematic follow-up plans, which work to embed individual connections into institutional relationships; and,
 - c. a strong focus on emerging cities/provinces in key markets, particularly as it relates to agricultural investment and trade.

¹ Asia Pacific Foundation, *Canada's Asia Challenge: Creating Competence for the Next Generation of Canadians. A Report of the Asia Competence Task Force* (Vancouver, BC, November 2013), 11.

² The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Looking to 2060: Long-term Global Growth Prospects* (Paris, France, November 2012), 8.

³ Ernst and Young, *Middle Class Growth in Emerging Markets*, <http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Issues/Driving-growth/Middle-class-growth-in-emerging-markets%20>.

⁴ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* (Washington, DC, December 2012), 16.



“Canada certainly has the capacity for a deeper economic engagement with the Asia Pacific region. What is urgently needed is the motivation and the collective will, provincially and nationally, to tackle market opportunities that beckon beyond our complacent, North American cocoon.”

- Derek H. Burney, Senior Strategic Advisor,
Norton Rose Fulbright Canada, Ottawa

3. The Government of Saskatchewan should establish an Asian Leaders Business Council, made up of prominent business leaders from priority regions. The business council will interact regularly with the Premier in order to:
 - a. pitch specific Saskatchewan investment and trade opportunities and,
 - b. discuss key developments in Asian markets.
4. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a differentiated marketing strategy for the province, which distinguishes the province from contentious positions of the federal government that create negative goodwill in Asian markets (i.e., recent changes made to the temporary foreign worker program) and which positions Saskatchewan as the most welcoming and business-friendly province in Canada. The strategy should seek to maximize, and use in the most efficient and effective way possible, the communication resources within government.
5. The Premier should be a leading voice in Canada on the importance of multi-dimensional engagement with Asia to advance our trade, investment and talent attraction, and education priorities. The Premier should participate in high-profile speaking engagements to demonstrate the province’s Asia strategy and to communicate the value of Asian competency.
6. The Government of Saskatchewan should establish a network of Saskatchewan expatriates to promote the province abroad and foster connections and opportunities with Asian businesses, governments and post-secondary institutions (including business leaders, students studying/working abroad and alumni).
7. The Government of Saskatchewan should encourage leading Asian leaders to visit the province by:
 - a. developing a high-level national Premier’s speaker series; and,
 - b. leveraging the province’s unique brand and world-leading centres of excellence by hosting industry-specific events, such as “pulse days”, to bring awareness of the province to key Asia constituencies.
8. The Government of Saskatchewan should connect with Asian immigrant diasporas in Saskatchewan to establish stronger international linkages for the promotion of trade and investment, and to encourage talent attraction and educational linkages.
9. The Government of Saskatchewan should issue a formal response to this report within four months of its release. Additionally, regular progress reports, at least once annually, should be submitted to the co-chairs for review.

TRADE FACILITATION AND ATTRACTION

From 2013 through 2018, the GDP of Asia is forecast to rise from \$20.3 trillion to \$28.8 trillion.⁵ That represents an expected 42 per cent increase over five years and means that Asia could grow nearly twice as fast as the EU in the medium term. And in five years, the combined Asian economies will be a third larger than the EU economy.

However, while Canada recently concluded negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the EU, providing access to 28 member countries, our country has only concluded one free trade agreement (FTA) with Asia – the Canada-Korea FTA, in June 2014. Australia has agreements with Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and along with New Zealand, a FTA with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The U.S. has agreements with South Korea and Singapore, as does the EU. And New Zealand has agreements with China and Malaysia. Canada is trailing behind; the countries that we consider to be competitors in Asia have much better market access than Canada.

However, FTAs are only part of the equation. Transportation infrastructure, export diversification and better support of Saskatchewan's SMEs are equally vital to Saskatchewan's relations with Asia and growth of the provincial economy.

Saskatchewan's economy is built on a commodity driven market with a small population base. As such, getting Saskatchewan commodities to export market is vital to the province's future economic growth. It

is now incumbent on the province to demonstrate to its global customers that it can be a world leader in predictable and competitive transportation logistics. With their growing economies and need for food and energy security, Asian countries have the largest demand for Saskatchewan products.

Saskatchewan SMEs are fundamental drivers in job creation, in both urban and rural areas of the province. Those that can expand their sales to export markets like Asia are less dependent on the local economy and our neighbours to the south – indeed, recent years of flat or slow growth in the U.S. is a clear indication that we need to be less reliant on American markets. Increased export sales by local SMEs decrease sales concentration risk, increase productivity, and create new jobs at home in Saskatchewan.

For the province to grow and compete in this very competitive global economy, Saskatchewan, and Canada, must act now. We must take advantage, and face the challenges, of this new global economy, or others will succeed where we lag.

⁵ Derek H. Burney and Fen Osler Hampson, *Brave New Canada: Meeting the Challenge of a Changing World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

GOAL

Saskatchewan will be a champion in achieving the transportation infrastructure system required for enhanced trade with Asia

"Our company has had great success over the last decade working with our partner in Singapore to grow our food ingredient supply business, secure new investment, and expand and target our R&D efforts for Asian markets. Working in South East Asia reduced my company's risk in relying solely on North American sales."

- Mark Pickard, President, InfraReady Products, Saskatoon

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The Government of Saskatchewan should take the leading role in mobilizing the public, the private sector, provincial governments and the federal government to create the conditions necessary to build and manage the transportation infrastructure system required by Western Canada.
11. The Government of Saskatchewan, in coordination with British Columbia and Alberta through the New West Partnership (NWP), should develop a clear, practical plan to build the transportation infrastructure and regulatory system that will allow Saskatchewan and Western Canada to compete on equal footing with our competitors (i.e., Australia, the U.S., Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia).
12. The Government of Saskatchewan should support a made-in-Saskatchewan web-based transportation portal that will deliver current and predictable delivery times for all products in the export queue.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will triple its exports to Asia by nurturing and expanding its network of Asian markets and consumers of Saskatchewan products by 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Government of Saskatchewan should support STEP to expand its operations to achieve the aggressive trade targets expressed in the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, and demanded by the vast potential for Saskatchewan exports in Asia.
14. The Government of Saskatchewan, in coordination with the Saskatchewan-Asia Advisory Council and STEP, should take a focused and strategic approach to establishing private and/or public sector in-market representation in Asian markets that hold the greatest potential for the province. As a matter of priority, representation should be in place in South Asia and the ASEAN region by October 1, 2015. Representation in two additional markets should be in place no later than 2018. This representation will complement the strong in-market presence Saskatchewan already maintains in Shanghai.
15. The Government of Saskatchewan and STEP, in consultation with the private sector, should systematically prioritize their overall export promotion on markets and sectors that hold the greatest economic advantage for the province.
16. The Government of Saskatchewan should better leverage existing in-market resources by inviting trade commissioners from the federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) to the province on an annual basis and having existing regional DFATD personnel embedded and/or seconded within STEP.
17. The Government of Saskatchewan should assert its interests by supporting provincial and territorial engagement in the negotiation of bold and aggressive FTAs with Asian markets.
18. The Government of Saskatchewan should assert its interests and take the lead in eliminating agricultural supply management, with a view to capturing Saskatchewan's competitive advantage in growing provincial exports exponentially.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will focus on tripling SME exports to priority Asian markets by 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. The Government of Saskatchewan should ensure that existing market support and export readiness programs are streamlined and provide adequate support for Saskatchewan-based companies. The Government of Saskatchewan, in concert with STEP, should identify Saskatchewan SMEs with an interest in expanding their operations to Asian markets. Interested SMEs should have ease of access to programs that offer:
 - a. market intelligence and trade expertise;
 - b. cultural competency and language training;
 - c. Asian business and protocol proficiency;
 - d. funding streams;
 - e. in-country support;
 - f. branding and marketing assistance; and,
 - g. education on risks such as credit, collection cycles and corruption.
20. The Government of Saskatchewan, in concert with STEP, should profile and recognize SME success stories to highlight the importance of Asian engagement.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

International investment patterns are in the midst of a tectonic shift, with larger numbers coming from Asia. In fact, China and Japan now account for approximately 55 per cent of the world's foreign exchange reserves; China alone maintains almost \$3 trillion in foreign exchange reserves and approximately half of China's \$14 billion in current investments are in resources.⁶ Additionally, Asian companies are positioning themselves as global innovators, with half of the world's top 50 patenting firms based in China, Japan and South Korea.⁷

Foreign direct investment is critical in order to further Saskatchewan's economic growth and develop and expand our thriving industries. The province must intensify its efforts to make its case to Asian investors. The Premier's leadership, along with a strategic and focused approach by government, is important to position the province internationally, particularly in Asia where current and new relationships will have to be developed in a systematic way.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will revamp its investment attraction approach to substantially increase the share of Asia investment into the province by 2020

"As Agrocorp's global presence has expanded, we were naturally drawn to investment in both Saskatchewan and Canada. Saskatchewan has demonstrated global reach and a proactive approach towards trade development. As we continue to grow our pulse processing plant and business in Moose Jaw, we appreciate the support we have received from the province since the project's conceptualization, and we expect many more opportunities to work together."

- Vijay Iyengar, Chairman and Managing Director, Agrocorp International Pte. Ltd., Singapore

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. The Government of Saskatchewan should:

- a. identify and develop project proposals for a minimum of 10 major and diversified investment opportunities, where Saskatchewan has a clear comparative advantage, and find local and regional champions for each project;
- b. adopt a targeted relationship-centred strategy, which includes a priority commitment to relationship management, to promote the 10 major priority projects to key investors in

Asia (i.e., identify and target specific partners in Asia); and,

- c. following a private sector model, task and deploy the *right* people on behalf of government to secure major Asian investments to support the priority projects and perform the appropriate follow-up (i.e., bring in private sector expertise).

⁶ The Conference Board of Canada, *Fear the Dragon? Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Canada* (Ottawa, ON, June 2012), ii.

⁷ IFI CLAIMS Patent Services. 2013 Top 50 US Patent Assignees. http://www.ificlaims.com/index.php?page=misc_top_50_2013.

22. The Government of Saskatchewan should dramatically increase the value-added agriculture sector to position the province as an international leader in food security and bioproduct innovation by:
 - a. incentivizing the expansion of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre, and other similar facilities, to better enhance the province's world-leading capabilities in extrusion and value-added agriculture commercialization;
 - b. fully understanding the impacts and implications of Saskatchewan's current municipal tax rates, fees, levies and regulatory burdens on the province's competitiveness, and adjusting and implementing incentives as necessary; and,
 - c. benchmarking itself to peer jurisdictions in North America and aim to be the "best in the class" in its execution of its investment attraction strategy. The province's regulatory structure should be reviewed periodically to ensure the province's ongoing competitive standing.
23. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a targeted strategy, based on our core sector strengths, to attract the presence of Asian capital firms (i.e., head or satellite offices) and Canadian institutional investors to the province.
24. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a *toolkit* to enhance Saskatchewan's investment attraction environment. The *toolkit* should include:
 - a. a provincial statement that specifically identifies Saskatchewan's position on foreign direct investment;
 - b. policies pertaining to tax and royalty incentives, the protection of property rights, transparent rules of law, research and development funding, and investments in education;
 - c. an "ease of doing business" index that covers information on non-tariff barriers and regulatory issues across all sectors; and,
 - d. a user-friendly website that details Saskatchewan's unique and competitive business environment, ways in which one can invest in the province, and the strategic sectors where investment is being sought.
25. The Government of Saskatchewan should continue its advocacy efforts with regards to clarifying the federal position on foreign direct investment, eliminating limitations of foreign ownership in strategic sectors, and encouraging new and robust Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements with Asian markets.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ASIAN COMPETENCY

With only three per cent of Canadian post-secondary students taking advantage of opportunities to study abroad, and only a small fraction of the total choosing to study in Asia, Canadian students are not seizing the opportunities presented in Asian markets.⁸

The same can be said about Asian students studying in Saskatchewan. The province ranks seventh (2.1 per cent) out of all provinces and territories in terms of international student recruitment in Canada. Compared to Ontario (41.9 per cent) and British Columbia (25.7 per cent)⁹, Saskatchewan has a lot of ground to cover in order to catch up.

Saskatchewan should turn its attention to the next generation of international leaders. Post-secondary international students are an added revenue source for institutions with challenging budgets, but more importantly, these students represent the next wave of Saskatchewan immigration. Highly skilled students become innovative entrepreneurs, job creators, investment attractors and Saskatchewan ambassadors, who link the province to vast international networks. And there is no question that the majority of provincial international students come from Asian markets of significance to Saskatchewan.

In order to properly foster these long-term relationships, the province must properly introduce students to the Saskatchewan advantage, and must ensure that their experiences are positive.

However, our enhanced engagement with Asia goes far beyond a focus on international students. Saskatchewan students must also develop a broad knowledge of the history, geography, culture and traditions of Asia. Asian competency, with a priority focus on linguistic training, must begin at the primary and secondary levels in order to equip the future generation of Saskatchewan workers to succeed in the global markets that will be vital to the province's future growth.

While this may be a long-term investment, it is fundamental to position the province, and its citizens, as committed partners of Asia.

⁸ Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, *Building a Stronger Canada-Asia Relationship Through Two-Way Educational Links* (Vancouver, BC, March 19, 2014), 2.

⁹ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Government of Canada, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2013-preliminary/08.asp>.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will double international post-secondary student recruitment by 2020, with a priority focus on Asian markets

"The presence of international students at the University of Saskatchewan enriches the cultural and educational knowledge of our campus and creates stronger ties with our global community. Asia is an important part of our international recruitment strategy."

- Gordon Barnhart,
Interim President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

RECOMMENDATIONS

26. The province should establish a high-level International Education Council to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between government, post-secondary institutions and industry, and, as part of its work, build collaboration deeply into the province's institutional framework.
 - a. The International Education Council should be in place no later than Fall 2014, and comprise a small but representative group consisting of: the Minister of Advanced Education (Chair); the Presidents of the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan and SIAST; Saskatchewan post-secondary alumni with significant international experience; two senior private sector representatives with significant international ties; and, a current, high-achieving international student.
 - b. The International Education Council should identify system-wide barriers and opportunities as they relate to international post-secondary student recruitment, specifically from Asian markets, and develop a strategic plan, including priority initiatives, timelines, a detailed budget and outcome measures, which will be received by the Ministry of Advanced Education no later than six months from its inception.
 - c. Upon receipt, review, and approval of the strategic plan, the government should provide transformative resources to support the priority initiatives identified by the International Education Council with the objective of making Saskatchewan a key jurisdiction in North America for international education.
27. The Government of Saskatchewan should encourage post-secondary institutions to implement practical settlement and immigration supports for international students and their families. Support should include, but not be limited to: airport pick-ups; assistance with banking and currency exchange; language training; mentorships; home-stays; relationship building programs; guardianships; and, immigration advocacy and system navigation.
28. The Government of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with provincial internationally renowned institutions, should take a leadership role in facilitating and funding research partnerships between leading Asian post-secondary institutions and their counterparts in the province.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will systematically increase the annual retention of international students

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. The Government of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with post-secondary institutions, should:
 - a. develop an international student retention data collection and analysis system; and,
 - b. develop a mechanism to communicate with, capture the experiences of, and track for at least 10 years post-graduation, international students who have graduated from a Saskatchewan post-secondary institution.
30. The Government of Saskatchewan should ensure that international graduates who want to stay in Saskatchewan have stronger connections to the provincial skills agenda by expanding post-secondary co-op and career development opportunities. Initiatives may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. partnering with post-secondary institutions, career centres and international students to increase awareness of employment opportunities and support for international students who want to stay and work in Saskatchewan; and,
 - b. organizing innovation, business, and farm tours for international students to better profile and highlight the province's first-class innovation, employment and investment opportunities.
31. The Government of Saskatchewan should ensure that programs like Mitacs Globalink reflect a stronger Saskatchewan representation to better connect exceptional international students with the province's top researchers.
32. The Government of Saskatchewan should work with the Government of Canada to explore the possibility of expanding eligibility for federally funded settlement and language training programs to include international students and family members who are transitioning to permanent residence.

GOAL

Saskatchewan students, government and industry have access to linguistic and cultural competency programs to achieve success in Asia

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. The Government of Saskatchewan should work with post-secondary institutions (including, but not limited to, Saskatchewan business schools) and other partners (i.e., international students) to increase the study of Asian languages and related skill sets relevant to the diverse Asian region. Initiatives may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. post-secondary courses and degrees;
 - b. comprehensive in-country educational and cultural experiences, such as short-term study tours, group tours, exchanges, working vacations, practicum placements and internships; and,
 - c. co-qualification programs.
34. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop and implement Asian language and awareness programming in primary and secondary schools in the province. Programming should be in place for the commencement of the 2015-2016 school year, with Mandarin as the first educational priority. The number of schools that offer the programming should increase substantively over time.
35. The Government of Saskatchewan should incentivize the public service to participate in classroom and internet-based Asian language and awareness programming.
36. The Government of Saskatchewan should encourage industry to take a proactive role in developing language skills within their organizations to enhance Saskatchewan's global competitive advantage.
37. The Government of Saskatchewan, in partnership with industry and post-secondary institutions, should implement programs to enhance the international experience of Saskatchewan students in priority Asian markets.

TALENT ATTRACTION: SKILLED WORKERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Multis E Gentibus Vires, Latin for “From Many Peoples Strength,” is the official motto of the Province of Saskatchewan. This motto expresses Saskatchewan’s multicultural heritage, the combination of First Nations and Métis cultures, and the key role of immigration in the province. It exemplifies the past, and speaks to the present and future of the province; a future that is dependent on welcoming a new wave of Canadians to Saskatchewan – namely, those from Asia.

According to the 2011 census, 19.1 per cent of Canada’s population are visible minorities, of which 65 per cent are Asians. Further, Asians are the fastest growing visible minority group in Canada, currently representing 13 per cent of the Canadian population.

The retention of new residents in the province is fundamental to the future growth and success of Saskatchewan. Immigrant retention provides benefit in opening new doors and networks for trade, investment attraction, and awareness abroad of the opportunities in Saskatchewan. We should make a concerted effort to ensure newcomers feel welcome and have a positive and productive experience living and working in the province.

It is time for attitudes to change regarding immigration in Canada – and Saskatchewan could be the leading voice calling for such a change. The province’s sound fiscal and stable macroeconomic advantages should be positioned to create long-term opportunities for talent and innovation. Much of this talent will undoubtedly come from priority Asian markets, such as China and India. These newcomers should be welcomed with open arms and open minds – it is the foundation of our economic future.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will successfully retain a higher percentage of immigrants in the province by becoming the most receptive jurisdiction in Canada for newcomers

"Immigrants have played a vital role in complementing our growing Canadian workforce and in helping us meet the demand for skilled labour at Brandt as we pursue opportunities in a global market. The majority of our immigrant workers have become permanent residents and are contributing in a very positive way to the economy of Saskatchewan."

- Gavin Semple, Chairman of the Brandt Group of Companies, Regina

RECOMMENDATIONS

38. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop and implement a comprehensive plan to positively influence the receptivity of communities to newcomers and the long-term integration of immigrants in Saskatchewan, with a particular focus on Asian immigration.
39. The Government of Saskatchewan should develop and implement an employer education program for Saskatchewan businesses that are recruiting newcomers, especially those from Asia. Program components should focus on protection legislation and the rights and responsibilities of workers.
40. The Government of Saskatchewan should proactively review current settlement supports for newcomers and foreign students and facilitate solutions in collaboration with businesses and civic organizations. Current settlement supports should educate newcomers on provincial protection legislation and the rights and responsibilities of workers.
41. The Government of Saskatchewan should better celebrate and promote Saskatchewan's immigrant populations through planned and ongoing events and award ceremonies, with a particular focus on Asian immigrants.

GOAL

Saskatchewan will ensure that businesses have the knowledge and tools necessary to successfully attract new immigrants through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) and the federal express entry process

RECOMMENDATIONS

42. The Government of Saskatchewan should actively reach out to employers to provide information on Saskatchewan's labour market opportunities. Where new federal programs are introduced, such as the express entry process, the government should launch an aggressive 90-day employer education program to ensure Saskatchewan businesses successfully navigate these systems.
43. The Government of Saskatchewan should explore opportunities to work with provincial occupational regulators to facilitate the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications and labour market integration of internationally trained workers into the Saskatchewan labour force. This work should include the development and accessibility of pre-arrival information, qualifications assessment, English language programming, upgrading, workplace supports and alternative career paths.
44. The Government of Saskatchewan should work with its New West partners, Alberta and British Columbia, to assume greater authority over the design and administration of our immigration system.

GOAL

The Government of Saskatchewan will re-focus its immigration priorities to attract a greater number of immigrant entrepreneurs to the province

RECOMMENDATIONS

45. The Government of Saskatchewan should increase representation of export-driven entrepreneurs in the SINP to five per cent of the total.

CONCLUSION

In its *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, the government calls for a doubling of the value of Saskatchewan's exports by 2020. Much of that growth will come from Asian markets and Saskatchewan is well positioned in those markets – indeed, it is a Canadian leader in a number of them. But our province cannot take its trade successes for granted. Our relationships with Asia must continue to be nurtured. And they are relationships that go beyond commerce abroad: they encompass academic ties, investments here, immigration and friendships. The government must look at the big picture and a broad agenda as it pivots to Asia.

Exciting opportunities and an enhanced relationship with Asia await Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan-Asia Advisory Council is pleased to contribute to the discussion on how to best realize that future.