



# *Western Economic Diversification Canada - Strategic Priorities*

As a result of broad-based engagement across Western Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) has developed a strategic agenda to help create jobs and economic growth for western Canadians, focusing on the following priorities:

- Innovation;
- Industrial & Technological Benefits;
- Trade and Investment;
- Economic Growth Acceleration Opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples; and
- Skills Development and Training.

To achieve its mandate, WD will continue to lead a range of activities and deliver programs like the Western Innovation (WINN) Initiative and the Western Diversification Program (WDP) to foster innovation, support businesses and entrepreneurs, and strengthen western Canadian communities.

## **Innovation**

WD has built strong relationships with a wide range of innovators, businesses and not-for-profit organizations to help support the development and commercialization of cutting edge innovation. The department is also an active facilitator, enabling western Canadian businesses to capitalize on research, development and commercialization opportunities. WD is helping drive an innovative West, moving great business ideas from the test bench into the global and domestic marketplace. Specifically, WD strengthens innovation in the west by investing in projects that will:

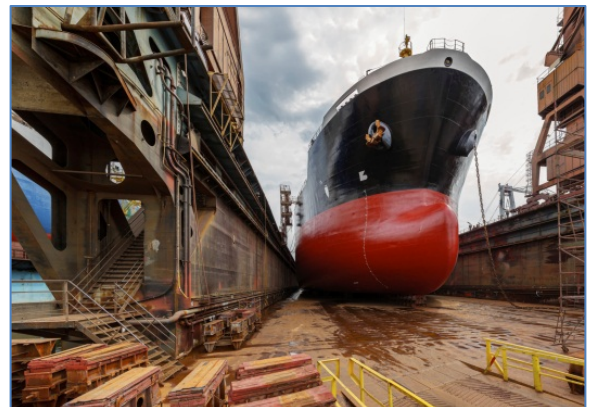
- Bridge the gap between Western Canada's science and technology (S&T) strengths and industrial research and development (R&D) activities and outcomes.
- Support commercialization of knowledge-based products, processes and services.

By bringing together key players across the innovation spectrum and investing in strategic projects that help support innovation, WD is positioning western Canadian businesses to succeed.

## **Industrial and Technological Benefits**

WD remains committed to securing new opportunities for western businesses, allowing them to thrive in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. The department plays a key role in helping western SMEs take advantage of federal procurement opportunities by acting as a business facilitator and promoting western Canadian companies and their capabilities to domestic and international audiences. WD helps businesses take advantage of future opportunities by:

- increasing global awareness of the strengths of Western Canada's aerospace, defence and marine sectors;
- facilitating opportunities to ensure more western Canadian stakeholders (e.g., research institutes, post-secondary institutions) are aware of ITB opportunities and what is required to successfully engage and maximize participation in the global supply chains of Prime Contractors and key partners; and
- strengthening the western Canadian aerospace, defence and marine sectors through strategic investments that support innovation, international competitiveness and growth.



Moving forward, the department will continue to support projects to promote Western Canada's presence at key international tradeshows, lead supplier development tours and assist SMEs in navigating the federal procurement processes.

### Trade and Investment

While the bulk of western Canadian exports may find their way into U.S. markets, there are tremendous opportunities for western companies in emerging markets. WD plays a key role in helping western Canadian SMEs compete internationally by:



- building the capacity of western Canadian companies and other organizations to engage in international business to increase their penetration in international markets;
- improving trade corridors of importance to Western Canada to support the flow of goods, services and people into and out of Western Canada to strengthen access to key global markets; and
- raising awareness of Western Canada's key sectors, strengths and capabilities in international markets, especially emerging markets, to promote trade and international partnerships as well as to attract foreign direct investment to the region.

Moving forward, WD will continue to focus on helping SMEs and industries to prepare for and participate in international business,

improving trade corridors of importance to Western Canada and diversifying markets and exports.

### Aboriginal Economic Development

WD continues to engage with western Aboriginal communities to promote job creation, economic growth and prosperity. The department has partnered with Aboriginal leaders and communities on initiatives that enhance access to business information, services, and training for entrepreneurs. WD supports Aboriginal economic development by:

- supporting greater Aboriginal peoples' participation in economic development opportunities;
- engaging with and involving Aboriginal peoples across the West and key federal players to identify opportunities for collaborative investment in support of business and economic development; and
- involving Aboriginal groups and partners to increase skills development, technical and trades training.

WD will continue to engage western Aboriginal communities to strengthen the economic development of western Canadian First Nations communities.

### Skills

With a growing economy, it is essential that businesses have access to the workers they need to compete. To help businesses grow, WD works closely with partners in industry and education to deliver skills development projects that strengthen a variety of sectors. Specifically, WD focuses its efforts on:

- increasing the capacity of western Canadian post-secondary institutions to train skilled workers in key sectors;
- increasing the availability of local training programs enabling western Canadians to acquire the skills they need where they live; and
- bringing industry and post-secondary institutions together to explore training partnerships and approaches to increase training capacity related to specific skilled trades.

WD's work helps equip students with the skills they need to access in-demand jobs and ensures that western Canadian industries have the skilled workers they need to continue to grow.

