



Ireland



Alberta Relations

PROFILE

Capital: Dublin

Population: 4.90 million (2018)

Language: English, Irish

Government: Parliamentary Republic

Head of State: President Michael D. Higgins

Head of Government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister)
Leo Varadkar

Currency: Euro; \$1.00 = €0.6613 (2018 Average)

GDP: \$484 billion (2018)

GDP per capita: \$98,829.34 (2018)

GDP Growth Rate: 6.8 per cent (2018)

Inflation: 0.72 per cent (2018)

Unemployment: 5.69 per cent (2018)

Key Industry Sectors: Construction, machinery, vehicles and parts, food, metals, chemicals, lumber and wood processing, paper and paperboard, communications equipment, tourism

Sources: World Bank, Bank of Canada, Global Affairs Canada

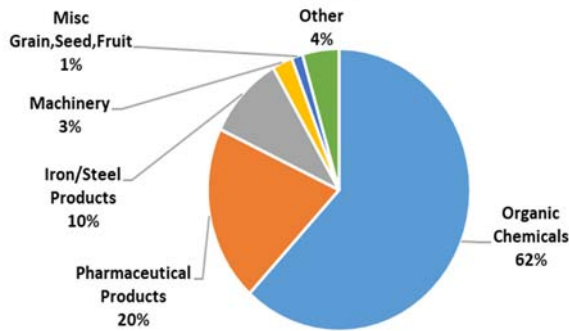
OVERVIEW

- Ireland is the birthplace of many beloved English-language authors, such as Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, Wilde and Shaw.
- As of 2016, Ireland has the youngest population in Europe with one third of the population under 25 years of age.
- Ireland ranked seventh out of 128 countries in the 2016 Global Innovation Index.
- The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 established the Irish Free State of 26 counties and ended over seven centuries of political domination by the United Kingdom (UK).
- Ireland withdrew from the British Commonwealth in 1948, and joined the European Economic Community, now the European Union (EU), in 1973.

RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Canada and Ireland established diplomatic ties in 1939. Today, there is dialogue and cooperation on best practices on education, healthcare, social and economic policies.
- Relations between both countries' parliaments have been particularly active since 1988, when the Ireland-Canada inter-parliamentary group was established. This group is the largest of its kind in Canada's Parliament.
- In April 2007, Ireland and Canada signed the Blue Skies air agreement, allowing Canadian and Irish air carriers to provide services between any city in Canada and Ireland. In the spring of 2014, year-round direct flights between Canada and Ireland were established by two carriers.
- Canada and Ireland cooperate closely at the United Nations, in the Human Security Network and during other international discussions to advance their common commitment to multilateralism, peacekeeping and development assistance, especially in relation to Africa.

Alberta's Merchandise Export to Ireland 2014 to 2018
(Total Average \$23 Million)



- Like Ireland, Canada has actively supported the Northern Ireland peace process by contributing to the International Fund for Ireland. The Fund has attempted to achieve lasting peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland since it was established by the Irish and British governments in 1986.
- The Working Holiday Programme agreement, signed by both governments in 2003, has been effective at strengthening ties between Canadian and Irish youth. This initiative gives young Canadian and Irish adults (under 35 years of age) the opportunity to work or vacation in the other country.

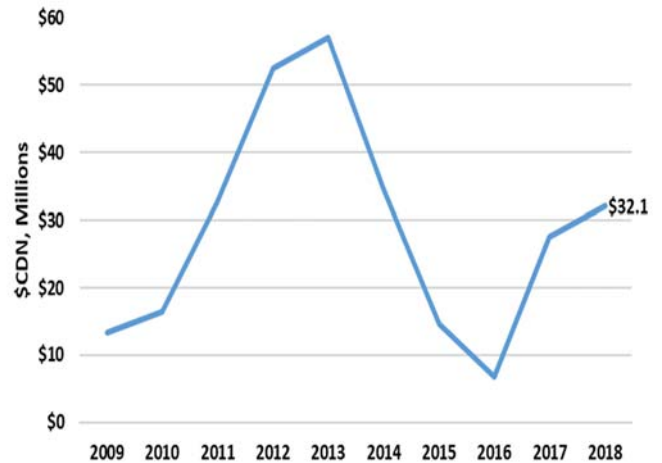
TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- In 2018, Irish foreign investment in Canada totaled \$8.1 million
- In 2018, Canadian investment in Ireland totaled \$9.9 million.
- Between 2014 and 2018, Alberta's exports to Ireland averaged \$23 million per annum, consisting mainly of organic chemicals, iron and steel products, pharmaceuticals, and machinery. The figures do not include trade in services (tourism, architecture and engineering, or information technology services).
- Between 2014 and 2018, Alberta's direct imports from Ireland averaged \$51 million. This included beverages, pharmaceutical products, optical, medical and other photographic equipment, and machinery. This figure does not include goods sold in Alberta that have arrived via distribution hubs in other provinces.

ENERGY

- Ireland's natural gas comes from both indigenous production and imports. The Corrib gas field commenced production in December 2015 and it accounted for approximately 36 per cent of gas demand the following year. This number is expected to rise to 50 per cent in 2017/2018. At peak production, the Corrib Natural Gas field supplies Ireland with 60-65 per cent of its natural gas requirements.
- All of Ireland's natural gas imports come from the UK. Due to declining North Sea production, the UK is a net importer of oil and gas. It increasingly sources its energy imports from other countries, and this has an effect on Irish energy security.

Alberta Exports to Ireland (2009-2018)



- Ireland has no domestic oil production and is therefore completely dependent on oil imports. Approximately one-third of crude is imported from the North Sea, one-third from West Africa and one-third from North Africa.
- In June 2009, Calgary-based Vermilion Energy, an oil and gas producer, acquired Marathon Oil Corporation's 18.5 per cent non-operated interest in the Corrib field off the northwest coast of Ireland. On July 12, 2017, Vermilion and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board announced a strategic partnership whereby Vermilion will assume operatorship of the Corrib natural gas project and increase ownership to 20 per cent.
- In March 2011, Vermilion Energy was granted a Foreshore License for the Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline and construction on the pipeline began in December 2012.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- Ireland has a strong national research ecosystem with 14 priority areas for government investment in research. This research is being conducted across 38 research centers in Irish universities. These areas include technology, health and medical technologies, sustainable food, energy, manufacturing and materials, and innovation in services and business processes.

Clean Technology:

- Ireland's Energy White Paper outlined the need to improve the country's energy efficiency and renewable energy production. Wind has been identified as the most cost-effective renewable option for Ireland.
- As of 2017, the island of Ireland has 3,916 MW of installed wind energy capacity, providing over 2.5 million homes with power. Ireland also has 1 MW of solar power.
- In 2016, renewables contributed 9.1 per cent of the energy mix. Under the EU 2030 Renewable Energy targets, this needs to increase to 16 per cent.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT):

- Ireland is the second largest exporter of computer and IT services around the world and the sector accounts for over EUR 50 billion of exports from Ireland per annum.

- As of 2016, Ireland's ICT industry employed over 105,000 people and employment has risen by 40 per cent since 2010.
- Given its small size and highly networked companies and institutions, Ireland is an excellent location to interface with a broad range of national, European and global internet of things (IoT) stakeholders.
- A major IoT growth area is in Smart Cities. Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Limerick have set up smart cities projects and are actively seeking EU Horizon 2020 funding.
- The Irish telecommunication services market is forecasted to reach a value of \$3,065 million by 2021.
- Broadband infrastructure continues to expand in Ireland and consequently infrastructure equipment and services offer growing opportunities.

Life Sciences:

- This has been identified as a priority growth sector by the government. Foreign corporations have begun establishing themselves in Ireland. This movement has largely been attributed to competitive corporate tax rates, skilled labour and ease of accessing other European markets from Ireland.

Cultural Industries

- Ireland has become a key market for Canadian film and television production and co-production. Canada has a co-production treaty with Ireland, wherein qualifying productions are granted national status, and are eligible for federal and provincial tax credits and other funding.
- While Alberta and Ireland do not have a formal production relationship, Irish Film Board representatives have attended the Banff World Media Festival and Alberta has been host to Irish related filming.

Sustainable Building:

- With energy use in buildings accounting for over 31 per cent of total energy consumption, Ireland has committed to reducing its total energy consumption by 20 per cent by the year 2020.
- Building regulations and standards have been amended significantly since 2002, establishing a new approach to construction and renovation to prescribed energy standards.
- Recommendations for a better national renovation strategy, "Towards Large Scale Deep Energy Renovation: Unlocking Ireland's Potential" was released in February 2017

AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

- The agri-food industry is Ireland's oldest and largest indigenous industry. This sector is estimated to export up to 90 per cent of its production to 175 countries worldwide.
- Agricultural output is dominated by beef and milk production (69 per cent of total agricultural output). Total Irish exports to Alberta were worth approximately \$30 million in 2016. This mainly consisted of beverages (\$16 million) and beef (\$8 million).
- Ireland has a total land area of 6.9 million hectares, 4.5 million of which is used for agriculture and a further 0.73 million hectares used for forestry. Of the agricultural area, 92 per cent is devoted to grass, and 8 per cent to crops.

EDUCATION

- Between 2012 and 2016, 152 citizens of Ireland had international study permits come into effect for Alberta.
- The University of Calgary (UCalgary) has a student exchange agreement with the University of Limerick and the Quinn School of Business at University College Dublin.
- UCalgary runs an annual group study program in Ireland to explore Irish culture.
- Irish institutions and researchers are actively involved in projects for Landscape Ecology Research Group. This vibrant team conducts ecological, evolutionary and human dimension research at UCalgary's Faculty of Environmental Design.
- SAIT has signed an articulation agreement with Dublin Institute of Technology for three degree paths for graduates of Hospitality Management, and Travel and Tourism diplomas.
- MacEwan University is partnered with the Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) for a student exchange in business and biotechnology. MacEwan's Child and Youth Care program sends a yearly study tour to AIT and has established an agreement with AIT's Master of Arts in Social Care program.
- In 2016, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local Union 146 partnered with Advanced Education (AE) to administer and audit welder testing in Ireland. AE staff delivered exams and audited competency assessments to speed up the qualification process for highly specialized and experienced welders. This also reduces the risk of a shortage of welders for upcoming plant shutdown projects in the event that labour demand for welders exceeds supply from Alberta and the rest of Canada.

- AE has produced fact sheets to help employers interested in hiring skilled tradespeople from Ireland in the following occupations: carpenter; crane operator; electrician; instrument technician; insulator; ironworker; plumber; power line technician; steamfitter-pipefitter; and welder.

IMMIGRATION AND COMMUNITY

- Ireland continues to be a top source country for workers to Alberta, in part because of lower barriers, including language, credential recognition, licensing requirements, as well as similar occupational health and safety standards and education systems.
- From 2014-18, 2,553 citizens of Ireland became Permanent Residents of Canada, with Alberta as their intended destination. Approximately 92 per cent were economic immigrants, including applicants, spouses, and dependents.
- During the same period, 864 citizens of Ireland had Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) work permits come into effect for Alberta.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 147 citizens of Ireland had international study permits come into effect for Alberta.
- In order to provide tangible labour market intelligence and credential information to employers recruiting international workers in the engineering field, a labour supply study and credential comparisons was recently completed for engineering occupations in Ireland.

CULTURE AND TOURISM

- Over 4.4 million Canadians (or 14 per cent of the population) claim some Irish ancestry, making Irish the fourth-largest ethnic group in Canada. Approximately 539,160 Albertans are of Irish ancestry.
- The Irish Sports and Social Society, based in Edmonton, promotes Irish culture through dance, music and drama. The Society also strives to foster intercultural understanding and cooperation.
- The Irish Cultural Society in Calgary organizes Irish cultural activities and attempts to reinforce the collective identity of Calgarians of Irish descent.
- Gaelic Football, a traditional Irish sport, is played across Alberta with teams in Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary.
- The Edmonton Chapter of the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce encourages the growth of hundreds of Irish and Canadian businesses in the Greater Edmonton Area.
- In the summer of 2011, the Serca Festival of Irish Theatre, a celebration of Irish theatre, took place in Edmonton.

RECENT VISITS

- November 2017: His Excellency Jim Kelly, Ambassador of Ireland to Canada, made his official visit to Alberta.
- January 2013: The Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations led a mission to Ireland to discuss the EU's Fuel Quality Directive and Alberta-Ireland economic relations.

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- Ireland's Ambassador to Canada is His Excellency Jim Kelly.
- The position of Canada's Ambassador to Ireland is currently vacant.
- Ms. Doodie Cahill is Ireland's Honorary Consul General of Ireland in Edmonton.
- Ms. Deirdre Halferty is Ireland's Honorary Consul in Calgary.