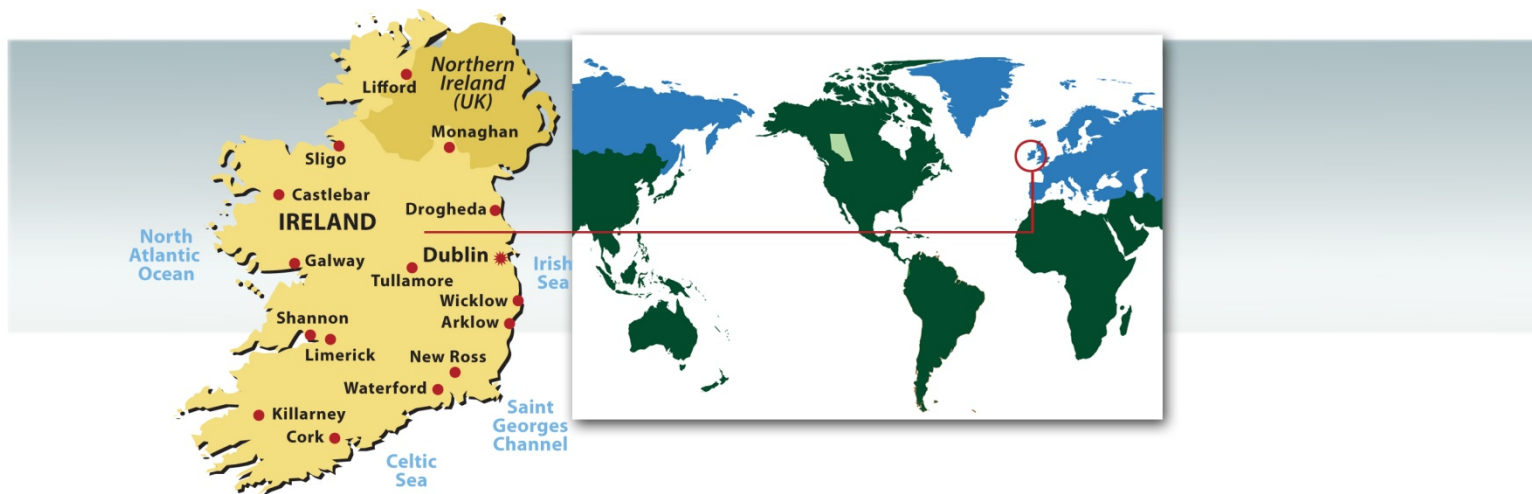


# Ireland – Alberta Relations



*This map is a generalized illustration only and is not intended to be used for reference purposes. The representation of political boundaries does not necessarily reflect the position of the Government of Alberta on international issues of recognition, sovereignty or jurisdiction.*

## PROFILE

**Capital:** Dublin

**Population:** 4.6 million (2012 est.)

**Languages:** English, Irish

**Government:** Parliamentary republic

**Head of State:** President Michael D. Higgins (elected in October 2011)

**Head of Government:** Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny (since March 2011)

**Currency:** Euro, CDN\$1.00 = €0.77, €1.00 = CDN\$1.29 (June 2012)

**GDP:** US\$210.4 billion (2012)

**GDP (PPP):** US\$ 194.7 billion (2012 est.)

**GDP per Capita (PPP):** US\$42,516 (2012 est.)

**GDP Growth Rate:** -1.2% (2008-2012 avg.)

**Inflation:** 0.5% (2008-2012 avg.)

**Unemployment:** 14.7% (2012)

### Key Industry Sectors:

pharmaceuticals, chemicals, computer hardware and software, food products, beverages and brewing, medical devices

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Ireland is the birthplace of many beloved English-language authors, such as Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, Wilde and Shaw.

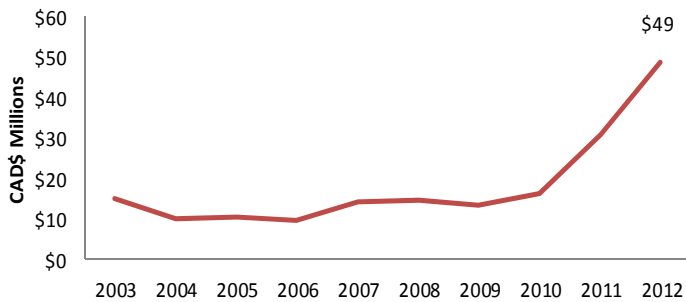
## IRELAND OVERVIEW

- 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); six counties in the north remained under British rule.
- Ireland withdrew from the British Commonwealth in 1948, and joined the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU), in 1973.
- Ireland was one of the 12 EU member-states that started circulating the Euro on January 1, 2002.
- In 2006, the Irish and British governments developed and began to implement the St. Andrew's Agreement, which in part devolves criminal justice and policing powers from Britain to Northern Ireland.
- In May 2011, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to visit Ireland since Irish independence in 1921. This state visit celebrated the harmonization of the relationship between Britain and Ireland.

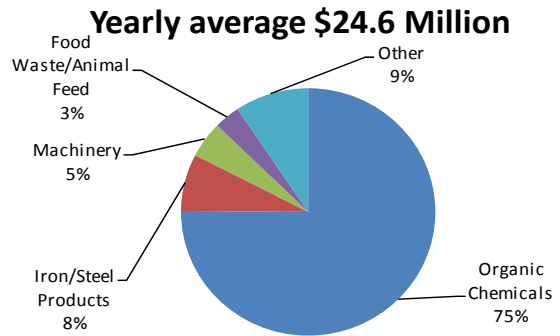
## RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Canada and Ireland cooperate closely at the United Nations, in the Human Security Network and other international fora to further their common commitment to multilateralism, peacekeeping and development assistance, especially in relation to Africa.
- 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.
- 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.
- Former Canadian General John de Chastelain served as the chair of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) in Northern Ireland from its foundation in 1997 until its dissolution in 2010.

## Alberta Merchandise Exports to Ireland 2003-2012



## Alberta Merchandise Exports to Ireland 2008-2012



### ECONOMY

- Since the global financial crisis started in 2008, the contraction in the Irish economy has been significantly more severe than in other west European countries.
- Following the collapse of the construction sector and the decline in consumer spending and business investment, the export sector, dominated by foreign firms, has become a driving force behind the Irish economy.
- Agriculture, once the most important sector in the Irish economy, has been dwarfed by industry and services.
- On November 28, 2011, the Irish government agreed to enforce austerity measures as well as financial and structural reforms, to gain access to a €85 billion EU/IMF lending facility. Ireland also received bilateral loans from the UK, Sweden and Denmark.

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Between 2008 and 2012, Alberta's exports to Ireland averaged CAD\$24.6 million. Top export products included organic chemicals, iron and steel products and machinery.
- During the same period, Alberta's direct imports from Ireland averaged CAD\$47.6 per year, including alcoholic beverages, pharmaceutical products and machinery. This figure does not include goods sold in Alberta that arrived via distribution hubs in other provinces.
- Ireland's foreign direct investment in Canada amounted to CAD\$2.5 billion in 2012, while Canadian direct investment to Ireland reached CAD\$15.8 billion in that same year.

### ENERGY

- The only producing indigenous gas source in Ireland began producing in 1978 and has diminished quantities of gas still available. While Ireland has proven natural gas reserves of 350 billion cubic feet (bcf), they produced just 13.53 bcf in 2010. As such, Ireland imports about 96% of its natural gas.
- In June 2009, Calgary-based Vermillion Energy, an oil and gas producer, acquired Marathon Oil Corporation's 18.5% non-operated interest in the Corrib field off the northwest coast of Ireland.
- In March 2011, Vermillion Energy was granted a Foreshore License for the Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline and construction on the pipeline is began in December 2011. Once completed, the Corrib Natural Gas field will supply Ireland with almost 60% of its natural gas requirements.

### EDUCATION

- The U of C has a student exchange agreement with the University of Limerick and the Quinn School of Business of University College Dublin.
- The University of Calgary (U of C) runs an annual group study program in Ireland to explore Ireland and the Irish culture.
- Irish institution and researcher are actively involved in the projects of the Landscape Ecology Research Group, a vibrant team conducting ecological, evolutionary and human dimension research located in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary.
- SAIT Polytechnic has signed an articulation agreement with Dublin Institute of Technology for three degree paths for graduates of Hospitality Management and Travel and Tourism diplomas.

### EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- The mobile communications market, including equipment and carrier services, is expected to grow despite the sharp economic downturn. Mobile data services are showing particular strength.
- Broadband infrastructure continues to expand in Ireland and consequently infrastructure equipment and services offer growing opportunities.

### IMMIGRATION/SKILLED WORKERS

- Ireland continues to be a top source country for workers to Alberta. Alberta employers are actively recruiting workers from Ireland, in part because of lower barriers, including language, credential recognition, licensing requirements, as well as similar occupational health and safety standards and education systems.
- Between 2007 and 2011, 348 immigrants from Ireland chose Alberta as their destination, 79% of which were economic immigrants.
- During the same period, 1,384 Irish temporary foreign workers and 93 Irish students were issued permits to work or study in Alberta. Top areas of employment included industrial electricians, telecommunications workers, registered nurses, carpentry, truck driving, brick laying and transit drivers.
- Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training is working with the Further Education and Training Awards Council from Ireland to compare certification and training standards of select apprenticeship programs in both countries to expedite the qualification of Irish journeypersons to work in Alberta.

- Enterprise and Advanced Education 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; powerline technician; steamfitter-pipefitter; and welder.
- 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.

## COMMUNITY

- 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 Alberta Cup were held in Edmonton on July 9, 2011.
- 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. A variety of Irish plays were performed from June 29 to July 3, 2011 at La Cité Francophone and at the Carrot Coffee House.

## RECENT VISITS/MISSIONS

- 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.
- October 2012: His Excellency Ray Basset, Ambassador of Ireland, made his official visit to Alberta.
- October 2012: Calgary Economic Development led a delegation of companies to the Working Abroad Expo in Dublin to recruit skilled workers.
- October 2009: The Honourable Mary Coughlan, T.D., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment for Ireland, visited Alberta to explore trade and investment opportunities.
- January 2009: Alberta's Minister of Finance and Enterprise visited Ireland to get additional information regarding Ireland's successful financial services cluster development.
- July 2008: Alberta's Advanced Education and Technology Minister travelled to Dublin to learn more about Enterprise Ireland.
- May 2008: Irish Ambassador Declan Kelly visited Alberta.

## DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- Ireland's Ambassador to Canada is His Excellency John Raymond (Ray) Bassett.
- The Honourable Loyola Hearn is Canada's Ambassador to Ireland.
- Ms. Bridget Cahill is Ireland's Honorary Consul General in Edmonton.
- Mr. John Cameron Milliken is Ireland's Honorary Consul General in Calgary.



For more information, contact:  
 Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations  
 Phone: 780-427-6543 Fax: 780-427-0699  
[albertacanada.com](http://albertacanada.com)  
[international.alberta.ca](http://international.alberta.ca)