

Sweden – Alberta Relations

International and Intergovernmental Relations

Alberta



PROFILE

Capital: Stockholm

Population: 9.2 million (2007)

Language: Swedish

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Head of State: King Carl XVI Gustaf

Head of Government: Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, The Moderate Party (since 2006)

Currency: Swedish Krona
\$1CDN = 5.87 SEK (July 2008)

GDP: US\$455.0 billion (2007)

GDP (PPP): US\$335.4 billion (2007 est.)

GDP Per Capita (PPP): US\$36,600 (2007 est.)

GDP growth rate: 2.8% (2007 est.)

Inflation: 2.2% (2007 est.)

Unemployment: 6.1% (2007)

Key Industry Sectors: iron and steel, precision equipment (bearings, radio and telephone parts, armaments), wood pulp and paper products, processed foods, motor vehicles.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Only 7% of Sweden is cultivated. Most of Sweden looks much like the Canadian Shield.
- The internationally popular furniture store IKEA was founded in Sweden in 1943.

SWEDEN OVERVIEW

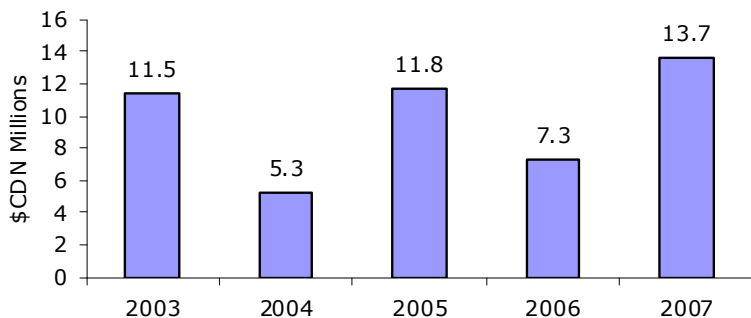
- Despite its European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) membership, Sweden has a long-standing policy of neutrality, having repeatedly refused to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO).
- Sweden is one of three EU15 nations (aside from Britain and Denmark) that have not joined the common currency (Euro). Sweden voted against Euro membership in 2003.
- Sweden has a rich resource base including the largest timber reserves in the EU, hydroelectric power and iron ore.
- Sweden has developed an excellent manufacturing base, specializing in precision manufactured goods such as telecommunications, automobiles, aeronautics and machinery. Swedish manufacturers such as Ericsson, Volvo, Scania and Bofors are known worldwide.

- Sweden spends more of its GDP on research and development than any other country, with research split between university-based and corporate research. The research done in the corporate sector is mainly in transportation, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals.
- Sweden's corporate tax rate is now one of the lowest in the EU and it has a very business-friendly environment.

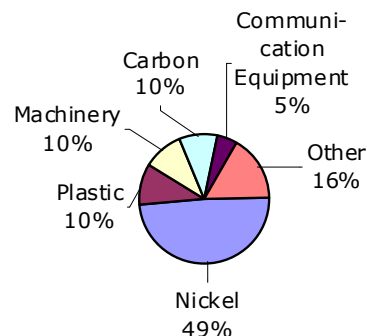
RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Two Swedish regions – Norrbotten and Västerbotten – are members of the Northern Forum, as is Alberta.
- Sweden is an important Nordic country with a strong commitment to trade. It is an active advocate in the World Trade Organization (WTO) for liberalizing global trade.
- In June 2004, a delegation of various Swedish forestry companies visited Alberta, and met with government officials to discuss aspects of Alberta's Forest Protection.

Alberta's Merchandise Exports to Sweden (2003-2007)



Alberta Merchandise Exports to Sweden (2007)



TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- From 2003-2007, Alberta's exports to Sweden averaged \$10 million per annum, including nickel, carbon, and plastics.
- Between 2003 and 2007, Alberta's imports from Sweden averaged approximately \$229 million annually, consisting primarily of heavy machinery, furniture, telecommunications equipment, and pharmaceuticals.
- Sweden is the 9th biggest foreign direct investor in Canada, with \$8.5 billion in 2007, up from \$2.3 in 2006.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

- Sweden is one of the most advanced countries in the world in terms of its telecommunications and Internet infrastructure and usage, consistently ranking among the leading countries in terms of fixed-line, mobile phone, personal computer (PC), Internet and broadband penetration.
- Sweden's excellence in the field of research and development (R&D) adds to its appeal as a business location. With clusters of established research facilities and a highly skilled labour force, Sweden remains an attractive location for firms engaged in high-tech businesses requiring considerable investment in R&D.

COMMUNITY

- There are close to 94,000 Albertans of Swedish descent.
- The first Swedes to arrive in Alberta settled near Wetaskiwin in 1892. The Swedes in this region were mainly farmers migrating from the United States in search of affordable and available farmland.
- Swedes were instrumental in the organization of co-ops in Alberta and were active members of the United Farmers of Alberta.
- Alberta's Swedish community is active through many Scandinavian cultural associations. Every year, the associations put together a pavilion for Edmonton's Heritage Days Festival.
- In July 2003, Scandinavia was the Feature Country showcased during the annual Klondike Days Festival.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

- The University of Alberta (U of A) has co-operation agreements with several universities throughout Sweden, including the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Swedish Red Cross College of Nursing & Health, Lund University, Umea University, and Uppsala University.
- The U of A is a leader in Nordic Studies with its Canadian Institute for Nordic Studies.
- The Scandinavian Program at the U of A is the only degree-granting program in Scandinavian Studies in Canada.

- The University of Calgary has student exchange agreements with Uppsala University, Jokoping University, University of Kalmar, University of Orebro, and Umea University.
- Mount Royal College has partnerships with Uppsala University and Savonia University in Nursing.

RECENT VISITS

- February 2007: Visit of Her Excellency Ingrid Iremark, Swedish Ambassador.
- June 2006: Alberta Minister of Health and Wellness lead a mission to meet with Swedish health policy makers as Alberta and Sweden face some similar challenges within their health systems.
- October 2005: Alberta Minister of Environment travelled to Sweden to examine waste management initiatives and renewable energy facilities.

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- Sweden's Ambassador to Canada is Her Excellency Ingrid Iremark.
- Canada's Ambassador to Sweden is Mrs. Alexandra Volkoff.
- Mr. Patrick Carlson is the Honorary Consul for Sweden in Calgary.
- Ms. Kristina Williams is the Honorary Consul for Sweden in Edmonton.

