

3. Country Report of Canada¹

As the information, communication and technology (ICT) sector continues to grow and expand around the world, Canada strives to maintain its position in an ever-growing and prominent tech economy. In order to maintain this position, Canada is attempting to be more productive and innovative within this sector (Lamb & Seddon, 2016). According to the Council of Canadian Academies, “innovation drives an economy’s ability to create more economic value from an hour of work, thereby increasing economic output per capita. The resulting productivity growth creates the potential for rising wages and incomes, and thus a higher standard of living” (Nicholson et al., 2013, p. xi). However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada ranks only 20 out of 29 international countries in the amount of value added by the ICT sector to national income (OECD, 2015). Therefore, Canada has much room for improvement in order to be a global leader in the ICT economy while ensuring that the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Canada is growing steadily from this sector. In order to achieve this goal, the Canadian government, institutions and society should focus more on the inclusion of female entrepreneurs and female success within the ICT sector. This report will focus on the current Canadian landscape of the technology industry concerning female entrepreneur involvement, participation, success, and barriers to entry.

3.1 Current Status of the ICT Sector of Canada

As of 2016, the technological sector of Canada contributed approximately \$117 billion to the total GDP, representing 7.1%. This represented a lower percentage of GDP behind the real estate, manufacturing, mining and construction sectors; and a higher proportion than the finance and insurance industries (Lamb & Seddon, 2016). The technological sector can be further broken down into six subgroups and each represent a proportion of the 7.1% to the total GDP. These subgroups include, information and communication technology (61.2%), architecture, engineering and design (18.4%), chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing (6.9%), aerospace (6.1%), scientific research and development (3.9%), and machinery and specialised manufacturing (3.5%; Lamb & Seddon, 2016).

Across Canada, there are approximately 71,000 technology sector firms, of which are employing over 864,000 Canadians, representing 5.6% of total employment. In addition, the technology sector employees earned an average annual salary of \$67,000, compared to the Canadian national average of \$48,000 in 2016 (Lamb & Seddon, 2016).

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The Canadian government also continues to invest more money into digital learning in order to improve technology sector outcomes. The Ministry of Finance 2017 Budget proposed providing \$50 million over two years to starting initiatives that will provide digital learning for boys and girls from kindergarten to grade 12. An additional \$29.5 million was proposed over five years for a new Digital Literacy Exchange program (Government of Canada, 2017). Promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has also been an important mission of the Canadian government. This is shown through their investment in PromoScience programs and by rewarding more STEM teachers. Another \$950 million over five years will be invested on a competitive basis to support a small number of business-led innovations that have the greatest potential to accelerate economic growth and ideally enhance Canada's global competitiveness in highly innovative industries (Government of Canada, 2017).

The Canadian government has also proposed a new approach to supporting Canadian entrepreneurs and innovators. They are working to make it easier for entrepreneurs in ICT to access and benefit from governmental programs by reducing the amount paperwork required, giving more timely and relevant services, and investing more money into Canadian entrepreneurs. To ensure this progression, Innovation Canada, a new sector of the ministry, will be established in order to lead the creation of economic growth strategies and initiate a review of business innovation programs (Government of Canada, 2017).