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cutting-edge technology investments in order to flourish in global markets.

So far, there are more than 130 partners in the project, with \$950 million dedicated in funding.

"We're really good at starting companies in Canada," said Bains, explaining that one of the main goals is helping businesses scale up to become international competitors.

One of the superclusters identified is the Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster, which Halton Region and Southern Ontario are home to.

Bains was in Oakville earlier in the day on Nov. 13 to promote the supercluster initiative at Promotion, a company that deals in robotics within the nuclear industry.

"Our goal is to create good-quality middle-class jobs," said Bains, explaining that the initiative aims to

create 13,500 jobs over the next decade.

"A lot of job opportunities will come locally."

He also called on businesses in Halton to become involved with the initiative and its education aspect, encouraging youth to gain highly sought-after skills.

"The skills component is really critical," said the minister, speaking to a mismatch of people educated in certain fields, and other sectors desperately needing skilled employees.

He said that companies need to be willing to give youth opportunities to gain experience.

"We need businesses to step up," he said.

"Everyone has to step up to create opportunities for young people."

Bains took a moment to speak about the recent negotiation of the USMCA, which is set to replace NAFTA, but has yet to be ratified.

He called the talks

"Team Canada at its best," adding that the negotiations were long.

Trump's temporary tariffs on steel and aluminum hurt Canadian industry, but ultimately the Canadian auto sector came away with the ability to grow.

The area of intellectual property forced the Canadian negotiators to take a closer look at how the country values IP.

"This was a big wake up call," said Bains. "We're really behind on the IP game."

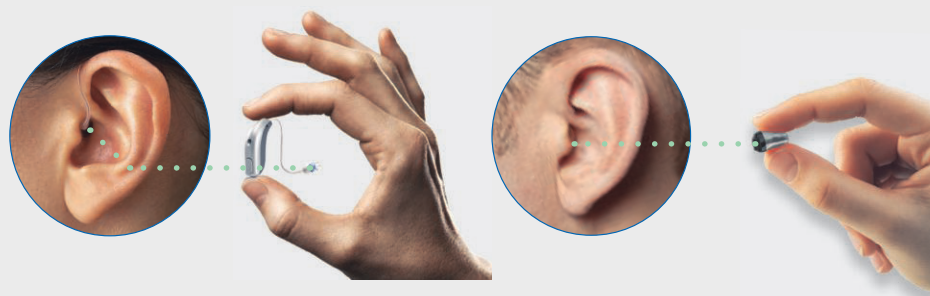
The USMCA has lengthened data protection terms and copyright terms, as well as changed procedures regarding patent office delays among other measures.

The minister added that along with European free-trade talks, the federal government is looking at how to eliminate historic trade barriers between provinces and territories.

"We have a lot more to do," he said.

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