

Re\$earch Money

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MITACS enhancing international links

One of the most industry-savvy Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) hopes to use more than \$1.1 million in funding under the new International Partnerships Initiative (IPI) program to extend its research activities into the global arena. The Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems (MITACS) NCE will use the funding to establish a research program with six centres and networks in the European Union, the US, Australia, Germany, Mexico and China – the latter made possible with supplementary funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

"The plan is to have a big win this year ... we have to be out in the international community because if we don't, someone else will," says MITACS scientific director, Dr. Arvind Gupta. "The IPI gives us the flexibility to network and hold training events with each side paying for their own research and bringing industrial partners together."

MITAC has already negotiated preliminary agreements with its six international partners and is now seeking additional funding to expand them. Gupta says he has initiated discussions with, among others, IDRC and the Department of International Trade and Foreign Affairs. The NCE has also set aside \$100,000 to develop new partnerships.

"We won't let a good idea slip through our hands," he says. "This program is really forward-looking for government. It's a good sign that they see the value of reaching out to the world."

MITACS plans to use its involvement in the Banff International Research Station (BIRS) to hold meetings with international delegations. BIRS is jointly administered by MITACS in conjunction with the Pacific Institute for Mathematical Sciences and US and Mexican partners.

MITACS has gained a sterling reputation in Canada for its many industry partners and its hugely successful industrial internship program, which was singled out in the new S&T Strategy as a model for the government's own internship program.

"The internship program is a low-cost way to involve companies that would not otherwise do research," says Gupta. "We need to create a research culture and have more companies doing research. And by developing projects around internships, people are more likely to stay in Canada."

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