

Harnessing Canadian Mathematical Power for the 21st Century

The Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems
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NEWS RELEASE

Swedish Royal Technology Mission visits *MITACS*

September 24, 1999 (Toronto)—A delegation from the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA), including H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, conducted a site visit to the Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems (*MITACS*) Network this morning.

As well as the King, the Swedish Ambassador to Canada, H.E. Mr. Jan Ståhl, and representatives from the Canadian Government were part of the delegation. The Academy was represented by professors and senior administrators, with IVA Chairman Dr. Björn Svedberg, as Chairman of the delegation. Four other Swedish academic institutions also took part: Lund University, Uppsala University, the Karolinska Institute and Chalmers University of Technology. Chalmers University was represented by its President, Professor Jan-Eric Sundgren.

The delegation also included about 20 heads of companies from many sectors of the Swedish economy such as SCA Hygiene Products Senior Vice President Claes-Göran Beckman, Ericsson Components President Sigrun Hjelmquist and AB Volvo Executive Vice-President Arne Wittlöv.

After a breakfast hosted by the University of Toronto, the delegation walked to the Fields Institute, home to the *MITACS* Head Office. There, they were welcomed by Dr. Don Dawson, *MITACS* Interim Program Leader and Director of Field's. Dr. Dawson, with the assistance of Dr. Arvind Gupta, *MITACS* Commercial/Industrial Theme Leader presented a brief scientific overview of *MITACS* to the delegation.

Following a question and answer period, Dr. Dawson closed the formal part of the event by thanking the King, the Ambassador and the delegation. He invited the delegation to enjoy some refreshments in the Fields Institute Atrium.

At the King's request, Dr. Dawson took him on a personal tour of the Institute. "I was impressed that His Majesty showed a real interest in the work being done in the Institute. He stopped in an office and asked the students what they were working on," says Dawson.

During its week-long visit to Canada, the delegation sought to learn from the experience of Canadian collaborations between industry and academe. As part of the Federal Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), *MITACS* is a prime example of such collaboration in action. Across the country, the *MITACS* Network consists of 21 research projects, subdivided into five theme areas: Biomedical, Industrial/Commercial, Information Technology, Trading/Finance, and Manufacturing. It brings together private and

public sector scientists to work on mathematical problems in key sectors of the Canadian economy.

Another key objective of the mission was to establish contacts with Canadian academics and industries. Dr. Dawson views the MITACS site visit as an opportunity to make such contacts: "We see real opportunity here to develop collaborative relationships with the organizations represented in the delegation—companies in all five sectors of MITACS research."

Dr. Gupta echoes his sentiments: "We were very pleased. At least five or six of the companies here today were interested in specific MITACS projects and research areas."

Dawson believes their interest comes from a real understanding of what mathematics can do. "There seems to be a real respect in Sweden for the way math contributes to industry," he says. "Mathematics can bring solutions from one discipline and apply it to another because it works with the underlying abstract formulation of problems. I think they were sincerely interested in building something like MITACS—formal linkages between industry and academe, on a large scale. I think they got the sense that MITACS is successful."

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