

Networks of Centres of Excellence

The Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) provide industry with the opportunity to access Canada's leading basic, applied and clinical researchers in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Established by the federal government, the NCE program aims to increase research excellence and improve Canadian industrial competitiveness. The networks link world-class researchers and industry throughout Canada on key projects organized around a common area of interest. Participation in a network leverages the effectiveness of all members. For example, university participants can pool their expertise and resources for major investigations on a scale that could not be attempted by traditional approaches. Business participants gain up-to-the-minute awareness of discoveries and avenues of exploration that could affect their operations in a future global market. Not only are the NCEs a source of advanced technologies, they also provide a substantial contribution toward the training of Canada's next generation of scientists and engineers.

Currently, five NCEs are specifically aimed at conducting R&D in the biomedical sector, and one that aims to improve the efficiency of health informatics.

Networks of Centres of Excellence Budget and Number of Scientists

Network	Budget (\$M) 1994-98	Number of Trainees	Number of Scientists
Canadian Bacterial Diseases Network	7.4	51	131
Canadian Genetic Diseases Network	15.7	52	128
Neuroscience Network	22.3	104	81
Protein Engineering Network	8.7	54	76
Respiratory Health Network (Inspiraplex)	10.3	85	47
HEALnet*	8.6	60	N/A
TOTAL	\$73.0	406	463

* HEALnet is not involved in biomedical research

Source: The Medical Research Council

The networks use state-of-the-art equipment. For example, the Canadian Bacterial Diseases Network and the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network have signed a joint three-year collaborative research agreement with SCIEX, one of Canada's developers of advanced instrumentation for bioanalysis, and the University of Alberta. This agreement is designed to facilitate the development of technologies that permit rapid characterization of the genes involved in bacterial and genetic diseases. It is expected to lead to advances in technology and the development of a faster (50-fold) and more efficient determination of DNA sequences.