

**Science and Technology in the
United Kingdom**
By
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1. United Kingdom: S&T Opportunities for Canada

A mature S&T relationship exists between Canada and the United Kingdom, largely due to cultural, linguistic, personal and historical ties. There is no formal overarching Government-to-Government S&T Cooperation Agreement, although many bi-lateral arrangements (Memoranda of Understanding or MOUs) have been signed at an agency-to-agency level and a thriving network exists between researchers in most scientific disciplines. The Canada-UK Joint Declaration, signed by Prime Ministers Chrétien and Blair in June 1997 to invigorate bi-lateral collaboration between the two nations, provides a strong platform on which to build new partnerships in the future. Furthermore, Natural Resources Deputy Minister Peter Harrison (NRCan), in his new role as *Special Envoy to the UK for Science and Investment*, will be actively trying to enhance collaboration between Canadian and British scientists in the years to come.

A current trend in the funding of UK research is the concentration of resources into large collaborative programmes and Centres of Excellence, each with a critical mass of researchers, equipment and support. As well as stimulating interdisciplinary working and enhancing joint research activities at the national level, such concentration helps co-ordinate the UK's research activities and provides a natural focal point for enticing international collaboration. Linking international Centres of Excellence is already progressing at the European level and is a key mechanism in the 6th Framework Programme of the European Union, and the UK seems keen to extend this approach beyond Europe. The British Government also looks set to take a more serious approach to international collaboration, with the recently established Research Council UK Strategy Group (see Section 4: Trends) being assigned the task of "developing cross-council international science policy and the exploitation of opportunities for international partnerships".

In terms of research areas, the UK is strong and active in almost all scientific disciplines. However, the following provides a few examples of possible areas for collaboration: