

The Federal government, and to a lesser, though rapidly increasing extent, the Provincial governments, follows the general pattern as a major performer of research. However, it also has two additional and important roles which substantially influence the international activities of the other sectors. First, through financial and other forms of support, it can encourage, (or discourage), international activity. Second, it exercises on behalf of Canada the unique international role of representation and leadership vis-à-vis other nations and governments.

The last two decades have seen a growing interdependence amongst nations and a concomitant tendency for governments to become involved in major economic questions. As a major engine of economic development, science and technology (S&T) has therefore increasingly become the subject for government-to-government attention - a fact reflected in the almost explosive growth during this period of S&T activities in the major international organizations.

The Federal government has therefore obtained, through its international activities, a capacity to assist domestic S&T programmes. Through its membership in the many large multilateral organizations, it can nudge work programs into directions of value to Canadian domestic interests; through these programs and its bilateral relationship, it can facilitate the access of Canadian scientists and agencies to research and technologies of other countries; and it can secure participation in major joint collaborative activities beyond the national purse.

It is mainly, although not exclusively, with the opportunities presented by this role of the Federal government which has emerged in the 60's and 70's that this overview paper is concerned. Part I presents the case for international collaboration and a brief overview of its main characteristics and elements. Part II focusses on the Federal government context and, through it, the other sectors of the nation involved in S&T. Part III present a summary of main conclusions and recommendations.

Objectives of Paper

The objectives of this paper are to present for interdepartmental and subsequent Cabinet consideration:

1. An overview of international collaboration in S&T in which each individual issue can be viewed within the context of the whole;