

Since its founding in 1916, the National Research Council of Canada has played a major role in Canada's scientific development. It functions today as a national science laboratory, a patron of Canadian scientific research and a vital link between the scientific interests of government, industry and the universities.

The Council's laboratory activities are concentrated in ten major research divisions concerned with various aspects of the life sciences, the physical sciences and engineering. NRC also offers numerous other scientific and technical services across Canada. These facilities, which are intended for a variety of users, are often too expensive or too specialized for most Canadian industries or scientific organizations to support on their own.

In all its research programs, NRC acts in response to Canada's changing needs and scientific priorities.

A large part of the laboratory work centres on basic or exploratory research aimed at the creation and application of new knowledge. In many cases, the results of such fundamental studies ultimately meet some practical need in society.

Applied research

Applied research is today focused on selected areas presenting long-term problems of national concern such as energy, food, building and construction and transportation. NRC also provides research support for the attainment of social objects such as public safety and security, protection of property, health and "environmental quality". Its network of associate committees, whose members are drawn from the universities, from industry and from government laboratories, provides an efficient means for studying, co-ordinating and promoting certain aspects of this research.

The extensive NRC research facilities complement the Council's role as custodian of Canada's primary physical standards, which include the measurement of length, mass, heat, electricity and time. NRC acts for Canada in international agreements concerning weights and measures.

In addition to its "in-house" research activity, NRC is also closely allied with Canadian industry through programs of research and development and through direct financial assistance.