



Scientists working on ISTC-funded project in Russia

S&T and industrial workshops: During this period, Canada supported a series of workshops and related events to develop ideas for ISTC research projects and collaboration between Canadian and FSU experts, as well as to promote industrial linkages.

All these events were successful in generating new project ideas from former weapons scientists of priority interest in key Canadian S&T or industrial sectors. They also provided valuable opportunities for Canadian scientists to meet with their FSU counterparts, with the ultimate goal of creating long-term strategic partnerships.

BENEFITS TO CANADA

The benefits of Canadian participation in the ISTC and STCU go well beyond a WMD threat-reduction program. For example, Canadian companies, departments and research institutions that become involved as collaborators in research projects or that fund their own research projects as partners³ can benefit from early and privileged access to new technologies developed at moderate cost by world-class scientists in Russia, Ukraine and other former Soviet states.

Such access to new technologies can contribute to the research goals of many government departments and research organizations, while also enabling Canadian companies who forge partnerships with top FSU scientists to meet their R&D needs on a cost-competitive basis. A number of outreach events were held in 2006-2007, leading to the identification of several new companies, departments and other organizations interested in participating in ISTC and STCU projects and activities. As of March 2007, a total of 17 Canadian companies had signed on as official partners at the ISTC and 50 at the STCU.

CLOSED NUCLEAR CITIES

Russia's nine closed nuclear cities (CNC) are home to the Soviet Union's main nuclear weapons research, design, and production facilities and were created for the express purpose of supporting these facilities. The existence of the CNC was kept so secret that they did not appear on Soviet maps and were known only by postal codes associated with large cities in their vicinity. Even now, access to these cities remains highly restricted, with requests for entry having to be submitted months in advance.

During the Soviet era, star scientists were plucked out of top universities to work at institutes in various closed cities. Not only were they paid higher than average salaries to compensate for their limited mobility, they enjoyed access to privileges such as consumer goods and quality health care that most ordinary citizens could only dream of. However, throughout the 1990s, the economic situation in the nuclear cities mirrored that of Russia as a whole, and the decline in living standards was further exacerbated by the dramatic reduction in subsidies from the central government.

While workers are now paid their wages on time, Rosatom has warned that up to 13,000 positions in these cities will be eliminated.⁴ A number have either retired or found private-sector employment, but the problem remains intractable in these cities, where alternatives are few and far between.

To date, Canada has funded a total of 14 regular ISTC projects in the CNC. These projects are worth about US\$3 million at the All-Russian Research Institute of Experimental Physics in Sarov (formerly Arzamas-14) and the Russian Federal Nuclear Center in Snezhinsk (formerly Chelyabinsk-26).

⁴ Source: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (Global Threat Reduction Programme – Closed Nuclear Cities).

³ See attached information on partners and collaborators.