



Six of NSERC's prizes recognizing research excellence, partnerships and/or science promotion within the natural sciences and engineering across Canada were evaluated

Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering

E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowships

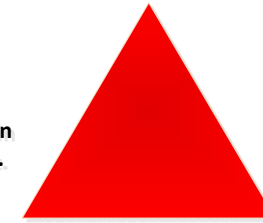
NSERC John. C. Polanyi Award

Brockhouse Canada Prize for Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Engineering

NSERC Awards for Science Promotion

Synergy Awards for Innovation

NSERC academic Prizes, in recognition of research excellence



Synergy Awards for Innovation, in recognition of collaborations that stand as a model of effective partnership between academia and industry, resulting in significant achievements in research and development.

NSERC Awards for Science Promotion, in recognition of individuals and groups who make an outstanding contribution to the promotion of science in Canada

NSERC'S PRIZES RECOGNIZE CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE NSE AND ARE...

- Designed to **celebrate exceptional examples of research excellence, partnerships and/or science promotion** within the Canadian natural sciences and engineering (NSE) community and to **recognize a wide range of accomplishments from researchers at different stages of their careers**, and highlight Canadian achievements in training, research, and innovation.
- Awarded to **support the generation of new knowledge and innovations, and for solving problems.**
- **Recognized for raising the scientific profile of a country, its institutions and individual scientists** resulting in increased productivity, opportunities for collaboration and greater attraction and/or retention of scientists.
- Recognized for contributing to the development of Canada's workforce by **generating opportunities for the career development** of recipients and the student's they may hire using the funds from their Prize.

NSERC'S ROLE

- NSERC is the **main source of funding for NSE research in Canada** and is therefore **well placed to recognize Canadian achievements in the NSE** through the provision of scientific Prizes.
- **Such recognition places the NSE in the academic, political and public spotlight**; thereby placing the NSE at the forefront of government policy and **fostering a culture of science and innovation** through the encouragement of more positive attitudes towards NSE.
- While other sources of scientific prizes exist within Canada, **NSERC's Prizes are often perceived as providing a higher level of prestige.** They are further distinguished as a result of their national scope, their consideration of all the NSE disciplines, and/or by the rigorous peer-review process for selecting prize recipients.

RECEIVING AN NSERC PRIZE...



DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF NSERC'S PRIZES

- The **monetary values** of NSERC's Prizes are **comparable to scientific prizes in other countries** recognizing research excellence in the NSE; Overall, recipients are satisfied with the monetary value of NSERC's Prizes, which are considered sufficient to: entice credible and serious nominations; convey the prestige of the award; and, make a difference in terms of supporting researchers.
- Additionally, the **majority of recipients are also satisfied** with the: length and scope of NSERC's Prizes; the guidelines on the use of funds; the timeliness of the decisions from the selection committees; the nomination process; and, the appropriateness of the selection criteria.
- Potential opportunities for improving the delivery of NSERC's Prizes include **increasing the number of impact reports submitted to NSERC** by Prize recipients and increasing the expectations around the reporting requirements for various Prizes.
- Some Prize recipients and key informants indicated that they would like to see **more exposure of NSERC's Prizes** and Prize recipients **in the mass media**. In the last few years NSERC's Communications Division has been actively engaged in the promotion of NSERC's Prizes, which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of media activities each year from 84 activities in 2011 to 181 activities in 2013.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF NSERC'S PRIZES

- The **operating ratio** for NSERC's Prizes from fiscal year 2010-11 to 2013-14 is **15.21 cents for every \$1 of prizes awarded** which is higher than the average ratio for two of NSERC's Directorates and the overall Council.
- While this is higher than the ratios for the two directorates which house NSERC's prizes: Research Grants and Scholarships (RGS) Directorate (4.24 cents) and Research Partnerships (RP) Directorate (6.56 cents); it is not entirely unexpected. Due to the limited number of Prizes awarded each year and the relatively smaller amounts of funding distributed through Prizes, in comparison with NSERC's other granting programs, as well as the additional cost of hosting the annual awards ceremony for Prize recipients

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation confirms a continued need for NSERC's Prizes to celebrate Canadian research and innovation in the NSE and to support the generation of new knowledge and innovations, and for solving problems.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The findings from the evaluation illustrate the need for an explicit and cohesive set of intended outcomes for NSERC's Prizes. While NSERC's Prizes are highly differentiated in terms of their eligibility criteria, value and objectives, the establishment of an organized set of intended outcomes for Prizes should reflect the common impacts across the six Prizes, such as recognition, increased capacity and career development, as well as the unique outcomes of individual Prizes.

RECOMMENDATION 2: It is recommended that the current reporting requirements for NSERC's Prizes are examined to determine whether they are sufficient to meet the needs of the Council, and if not, how these requirements may be improved. Reporting requirements exist; however, fewer than half of Prize recipients submit the impact reports requested by the Council. Unlike other NSERC funding opportunities, Prizes are awarded for past achievements and recipients are not required to submit their impact report to be eligible for future grants and/or prizes. Without these reports however, Prizes' staff are limited in the extent to which they can assess and understand the impact of Prizes within the NSE research community.

RECOMMENDATION 3: It is recommended that NSERC continue to work towards increasing the profile of its Prizes, and their respective recipients, using various communication tools including traditional mass media and social media. Raising the profile of Prizes and recipients is important as Prizes are known to contribute to positive impacts on NSE research, including more opportunities for collaborations and career advancement, as well as increased capacity, such as receiving additional funds for future research.