

## NSERC Management Response to

### The Evaluation of the Research Partnership Agreements Program (report submitted by BearingPoint, April 5, 2004)

#### Recommendation 1

RPA Agreements should be continued with those departments that are committed to actively participating in the program. Although this is a relatively high overhead program (per dollar of research funding awarded)<sup>1</sup>, this report has clearly demonstrated the benefits that accrue to all parties in this situation.

*NSERC Management will pursue partnership agreements that:*

- *meet the needs of the Government partner*
- *identify a clear role for the academic community*
- *that are consistent with NSERC's priorities and objectives*
- *and where the Government partner is actively committed to ensuring value added results that will be used*

#### Recommendation 2

Departmental researchers should be actively involved in the RPA projects whenever possible. The involvement of departmental researchers may lead to an increased access to and use of the research findings and provides the department with the opportunity to influence the direction of university research in its field of expertise. Active involvement in RPA projects is also likely to lead to greater sustained linkages between the department and university researchers and gives the department access to highly qualified personnel that it may want to recruit in the future.

*The direct involvement of government researchers and or policy makers will be strongly encouraged under any partnership agreements. Departments will be encouraged to establish mechanisms to support the participation of government researchers in projects.*

#### Recommendation 3

Program education is needed in some of the partner departments to dispel certain misconceptions regarding the program and to encourage departmental researchers to partner with the universities in order to conduct research that is of use to the department.

*Agreed. NSERC will work with partners to help facilitate this outreach activity.*

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<sup>1</sup> *This relatively high overhead became apparent, following a review of project files, and interviews with program officers. It is especially evident when comparing the RPA program administrative requirements (specifically the requirement to get three parties together and the high amount of reporting that is required) to other NSERC programs.*

#### Recommendation 4

Program officials should provide some help and/or templates for Intellectual Property (IP) agreements. Although the time required for the application approval process has decreased, the time required to develop and sign an IP agreement is still an impediment to the program in most cases. NSERC should develop templates for IP agreements and provide help to researchers in order to speed up the process.

*NSERC will pursue the development of common IP principles (as opposed to agreements) with the government partners. Efforts will also be made to ensure the industrial partners are made aware in advance of NSERC's position on IP and any common principles that it may negotiate with the government partners.*

#### Recommendation 5

For the smaller agreements (those with very few projects per year), and especially those in which the department places less importance on sustained linkages with university researchers, NSERC should explore ways in which its other programs can allow departments to contribute to university research without a program-specific MOU. This would simplify program administration and allow partner departments to have a broader range of programs in which to participate

*Agreed.*