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## **FINAL REPORT**

### **Focus Group Research Assessing Communication Approaches for the NSERC Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation**

**Prepared for  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada  
(NSERC)**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) commissioned Phoenix SPI to conduct focus group research to assess approaches and messaging that NSERC might use in communicating with businesses about working with universities and colleges to achieve their research and development (R&D) goals through NSERC's Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation. Launched in 2009, following input received from businesses and researchers, this strategy aims to help Canadian businesses realize greater value from their investments in R&D, to help students acquire the skills that businesses value, and to accelerate the commercialization of innovations.

In the focus group research, NSERC wanted to obtain feedback about potential communication approaches and messaging from two business populations:

- *NSERC clients*: businesses that already work with universities and/or colleges through NSERC programs;
- *Non-clients*: businesses that are actively engaged in R&D in Canada but that either do not currently work with universities and/or colleges at all, or do so, but not through NSERC programs.

Specifically, NSERC wanted to undertake qualitative research on communications messaging that highlight the value for businesses of working with universities or colleges to achieve their business goals. These messages will be used in efforts to increase awareness in Canadian companies that conduct R&D of the benefits of collaborating with post-secondary researchers. Furthermore, it is anticipated the results will be used to support NSERC communications related to its programs that fund academic researchers to partner with industry, and specifically that relate to the NSERC Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation.

A set of 16 focus groups was conducted from March 4 to 7, 2013, in the following cities: Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Vancouver. Two groups were conducted in each location: one with NSERC clients, and one with non-clients. All businesses represented in these groups were engaged in R&D, and the participants were mid- to senior-level executives directly involved in R&D at their companies.

**This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. Hence the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but cannot be generalized to the full population of businesses that undertake R&D in Canada or of NSERC client businesses.**

### Corporate Involvement in R&D

At each focus group, participants were asked to describe the nature of their company's R&D activities.

#### Type of R&D Activities Undertaken

Firms represented in this study engage in a variety of R&D activities, though the emphasis tends to be on *applied* research with a focus on commercialization, as opposed to general or basic research. In addition, while some of these firms undertake R&D activities related



to services, most of them focus on R&D activities related to products and processes. The focus groups included participants whose companies engage in one or more of the following types of activities: testing, prototyping, and developing products and innovations, improving existing products or services, developing new applications, improving existing applications, developing new processes, improving existing processes, simulations and testing, prototype design, and new technologies.

### Reasons for Undertaking R&D Activities

The firms represented in this study undertake research and development for a variety of reasons, but the three reasons identified most often were as follows:

- profitability;
- the desire or need to grow; and
- the need to remain competitive/maintain market share.

Other reasons that participants frequently identified included the desire or need to differentiate their firms from the competition, to improve efficiencies, to respond to client/customer demands and market needs, to maintain investor relations, and to adapt to changes/developments in their industries. A number of participants summarized their reasons for undertaking R&D by suggesting that it is a vital function for companies: if they do not engage in R&D, they will die.

### Main Challenges Related to R&D

When participants were asked about the top challenges that they face in conducting R&D, the two that they cited most often were the cost, financing, or funding of R&D and their limited in-house resources or capacity for conducting R&D. Participants also frequently identified a number of other major R&D-related challenges, such as the difficulty of finding the right collaborators, the time gap between investments and returns on R&D, the inability to know in advance how R&D will turn out (e.g., will it lead to successful commercialization?), and deciding which avenues of R&D to pursue.

### Sources of Information About R&D

During the focus group sessions, participants were asked what sources they use to get information about R&D. Sources that they cited most frequently included personal networks (e.g. colleagues, clients/customers), networking events, such as meetings and trade shows, trade publications, professional associations and accountants, universities and colleges, and the Internet. When looking for information about R&D on the Internet, the participants usually use a search engine, typically *Google*. Many participants also visit the websites of suppliers and other companies in their sector or consult online journals and publications and industry websites. NSERC clients and other companies that engage in partnered R&D indicated that they follow their trade publications and read peer-reviewed research to be aware of who the leading researchers are in their field.



## **Perceptions of Collaborating on R&D with Universities and Colleges**

### Prior Experience in Collaborating on R&D with Universities or Colleges

The participants' companies varied considerably in the overall length and depth of their experiences in collaborating with universities and colleges on R&D. As a result, their perceptions about this activity also varied widely. All NSERC clients and most non-clients who participated in the focus groups had some experience in collaborating with university or college researchers on their R&D activities. While most of the participants' experience was in working with universities, some had also worked with colleges. Examples of this experience included hiring or sub-contracting students and/or professors to collaborate on specific R&D activities, providing mentorship or job opportunities to students, using university or college facilities, equipment, and instruments, and having institutions conduct testing or third-party reviews. Many NSERC clients specified that they had participated in *Engage* grants (as well as in other NSERC programs).

The focus groups conducted with NSERC clients included a mix of companies that had either done a large amount of collaborative R&D through NSERC or companies that were on their first NSERC-supported grants. The former group was more likely to be involved in longer-term relationships with universities and colleges, collaborating throughout the life cycle of research projects and drawing on university and college capabilities to complement their own.

Companies that had worked with universities and colleges, but not through NSERC, were more likely to have engaged these institutions to address specific issues or problems regarding enhancements to existing products, processes and services.

### Perceived Benefits of Collaborating with Universities or Colleges on R&D

The benefits of collaborating with universities or colleges for R&D identified most often were access to expertise in a specific domain or area, and access to facilities, tools, or equipment not available within the firm. Other regularly identified benefits included access to human resources, exposure to new ideas or different ways of approaching a problem, increased credibility/legitimacy that comes with such collaboration (e.g. third-party review/validation), and access to potential employees/recruits.

### Concerns/Perceived Problems Collaborating with Universities or Colleges on R&D

The two most frequently identified problems or concerns about collaborating with university or college researchers on R&D activities related to managing intellectual property and aligning the differing priorities and agendas of industry and academia (typically, the focus on commercialization versus the focus on publishing and career development). Other frequently identified concerns included lack of continuity in the research process (for example, because of turnover in researchers), dealing with red tape/bureaucracy at universities and university business centres, keeping to timelines/working in a timely manner (businesses typically work within much tighter timelines when it comes to R&D), and maintaining the confidentiality of the research (managing the need to publish versus the need to maintain confidentiality in the race to be first to market).

### Perceived Value of Collaborating with Universities or Colleges on R&D

Only NSERC clients were asked about the perceived value of research collaborations with universities and colleges. In general, these clients reported that they do value research



collaborations with universities and colleges. But many agreed that this value varies from project to project: in some projects, the collaborations have been highly valuable, even crucial, but in others, they have been of limited or no value.

### Desired Attributes of Potential University and College Research Partners

When considering potential university or college research partners, participants are usually looking for one or more of the following: expertise in a specific area, consistency in specialization, specific equipment/resources, experience in collaborating with a business and/or prior experience in industry, continuity/fluidity in the research process (for example, availability of and access to research collaborators), dedication, enthusiasm, organization, the ability to respond to company guidance, a shared understanding of and interest in the research, timely collaboration, and an understanding of business needs or the business mindset when it comes to R&D (i.e., a focus on applied research/ commercialization).

### **Awareness and Perceptions of NSERC**

Most of the non-clients claimed to have been aware of NSERC prior to this study, but many were aware of it in name only. Their impressions of NSERC tended to be very general and included the impression that it provides government funding to subsidize research. Indeed, this was the impression of NSERC that the non-clients cited most frequently. Some of these non-clients also stated that NSERC provides opportunities for companies to collaborate with colleges and universities, promotes research, and is well funded in terms of research dollars.

Clients' impressions of NSERC tended to be either positive or very positive. These included the impression that its personnel are competent, knowledgeable, responsive, and helpful, that it is a professional and credible organization, that it is approachable and easy to deal with, that it provides good follow-up, that it is a successful funding organization, that its programs are well structured and beneficial, that it provides a good range/variety of programs, and that its timelines for applications tend to be good or reasonable.

### **Impressions of Current and Potential Communications Materials**

In this study, participants were asked to review and comment on three types of materials: material that NSERC currently uses to communicate with businesses about its partnership opportunities, potential messages for new communications materials, and sets of words or expressions that are sometimes used in messaging related to R&D.

#### Current NSERC Messaging

Impressions of current NSERC materials tended to be mixed: they consistently elicited a combination of positive, negative, and neutral feedback. Frequently identified strengths of this messaging included the following: it is direct and to the point, it covers the essential aspects of R&D, it is directive/action-focused, and it provides a logical sequencing of the stages related to R&D. Negative reaction typically included the following: the messaging focuses on the process instead of the goals/outcomes/benefits of working with universities and colleges, the messaging is too formulaic or "government-like" (e.g., "Find Highly Qualified People"), and the information is too vague or general. Especially among participants not familiar with NSERC programs, certain statements were seen as making claims that were hard to believe, because the participants doubted that a government agency could deliver on them.





Neutral reactions tended to be along the lines that the messaging is clear and easy to understand, is relatively standard/what one would expect, and provides basic or general information.

Many participants described NSERC's current messaging as at least somewhat effective in encouraging or motivating them to consider working with colleges or universities to help meet their R&D needs. Many other participants, however, described this messaging as not effective or not very effective in this regard. Regardless of their assessment of its effectiveness, the participants widely agreed that this messaging targets the most important areas in terms of R&D. Participants were therefore able to offer concrete suggestions for making the current messaging more relevant to them and thereby more effective.

**The main suggestion in this regard was to make sure the messages focused on meeting the needs of business, by identifying concrete results and outcomes or describing the value-added for business when it collaborates with universities and colleges.**

#### Potential NSERC Messages

Following the testing of current NSERC messaging, participants were asked to review potential messages for new NSERC communications materials. Two sets of potential new messages were reviewed; they were labelled sets A and B, and each contained six messages, labelled 1 to 6. Only one set was reviewed in each group. The messages in the two sets were similar. The main difference was that the messages in set B included a tagline at the start of each message.

Message 2 tested most positively in both its A version ("Access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment") and its B version ("use top technology: access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment"). This message was consistently identified as effective for the following reasons: it is pertinent and credible because it identifies one of the key reasons/needs for working with universities and colleges, it piques curiosity and motivates one to follow-up/look for more information, it suggests a focus on applied research, the value offered is clear, and it is short, simple, and to the point.

Message 6 tested least positively in both of its versions ("Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research" and "Lower your risk: Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research"). The main criticism was that the reference to risk reduction is too general and lacks credibility. Participants consistently stated that risk takes many forms and depends on context, so that one cannot credibly make a blanket statement about risk reduction.

In the feedback that the participants provided on the potential new messages, the following general suggestions and guidelines for making them more effective were made very frequently:

- Focus on the payoff/value-added to businesses (outcomes, not processes);
- Use language that is concrete and specific rather than vague and general (for instance, refer to "universities and colleges", not "post-secondary institutions").
- Shorter is better.
- Pique curiosity and interest.
- Use language and expressions that are familiar and important to businesses.



- Avoid statements that are hard to believe (such as “Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research”).
- Avoid statements that seem pretentious or pompous (such as “Build research collaborations with the brightest minds”).
- Avoid stock phrases and formulaic expressions (such as “Identify highly qualified future employees”).

### Target Audiences

When asked to what level in their firm such messages should be targeted, participants responded that the right level could vary with the size of the firm. For example, in smaller firms where there might be little or no division of labour, the best target would likely be the owner. In larger firms, it might be the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, the head of the R&D department (if there is one), or the head of Human Resources.

The participants were also asked whether the person who ultimately makes the R&D decisions in their companies would be likely to see these kinds of communications materials. In small firms, this would be the case, but there was relatively widespread agreement that in larger firms, the ultimate decision makers would not be likely to see or review actual communications materials. More likely, someone else would review this material, digest it, and then present the gist of it to the decision maker as a possibility to consider.

### Word Testing

After reviewing the potential new NSERC messaging, participants were asked to review six different expressions, each of which included two or three alternative words or phrases sometimes used in NSERC’s messaging. The participants were asked which alternatives were the most relevant or effective. Two sets of six expressions each were used in this study (labelled sets A and B). As with the potential messages, only one set was reviewed in each group.

**Generally speaking, the expressions that the participants preferred tended to focus on concrete outcomes, results, or benefits, or have a definite, clear, concrete reference as opposed to an indefinite, vague, or general reference.**

Specifically, the following expressions were widely preferred by participants:

- “Partner” and “collaborate” were preferred to “participate”.
  - “Leverage” was preferred to “match funds” or “contribute”, though in the French groups participants preferred the expression *contribuer* or *créer un effet de levier* to *verser un financement de contrepartie*.
  - “Talent” was preferred to “highly qualified people” or “new hires”.
  - “Grant” was preferred to “funding opportunity” or “government program”.
  - “Results” or “solutions” were preferred to “impacts” and “advances”.
  - “Applied research” was preferred to “basic research”.
  - “Networking event” was preferred to “match making event” or “mixer event”, though in the French group *activité de jumelage* was preferred to *activité de rencontre* or *activité de réseautage*.
  - “Innovation” was preferred to “research and development”.
- “Connect” was preferred to “meet”.



In the choice between “Post-secondary researcher” and “Academic researcher”, participants showed a widespread preference for a third option: “Researcher”. In the French groups, the corresponding choice was between *chercheur d’établissements postsecondaire* and *chercheur d’une université (ou d’un collège)*, and the latter expression was widely preferred.

### Conclusions and Implications

One of the noteworthy findings from this research is the ease with which participants provided feedback on the issues explored. Participants had very clear and definite views on the reasons that they undertake R&D, the main challenges that they face in this regard, and the benefits and potential concerns associated with collaborating with universities and colleges on R&D. This clarity on these issues translated into clear and definite feedback on NSERC’s communications materials and how to improve them.

Research and development is something firms usually undertake as a means to an end, not an end in itself. This came through very clearly and consistently in participants’ assessments of NSERC’s current and potential messaging. Indeed, their most frequent criticism of this messaging was that it does not focus enough on the value—the benefits in terms of outcomes—that businesses can derive from working with colleges and universities on R&D.

While we invite NSERC to review the detailed feedback that the participants provided on each element of the current messaging and each specific potential message, the following list summarizes the clear general directions that they provided on how to ensure that NSERC’s communications to businesses on the value of working with universities and colleges are relevant and useful in both form and content:

- Focus on the payoff to businesses to make sure that the value-added of collaborating is clear.
- Make statements that are concrete and specific rather than vague or general.
- Make statements as short and concise as possible.
- Avoid stock phrases and formulaic expressions, and use expressions that are familiar and important to businesses.
- Avoid making claims that may not seem credible.
- Avoid making statements that business people may find pretentious.

Some of these same themes emerged in the feedback that participants provided on the words and expressions often used in messaging by NSERC. Specifically, participants clearly preferred expressions that focus on concrete outcomes, results, or benefits or that make clear, concrete references.

Although this research involved a number of groups in different parts of the country, and two different audiences (NSERC clients versus non-clients), feedback on the communications issues explored tended to be relatively consistent. To the extent that there were differences, they tended to be between these two types of audiences rather than between regions. These differences are identified throughout the report, whenever they occurred. But it is worth noting that non-NSERC clients tended to be more critical of NSERC’s current and potential messaging in general, especially on grounds of credibility. Part of the reason may be that the non-clients’ relationships with universities and colleges were likely to be less involved than those of NSERC clients, or that the non-clients were not aware of NSERC’s grant offerings.





## RESUME

Le Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada (CRSNG) a mandaté Phoenix SPI pour réaliser une étude auprès de groupes de discussion afin d'évaluer des méthodes et des messages que le CRSNG pourrait utiliser dans ses communications aux entreprises à propos de la possibilité de travailler avec les universités et les collèges afin de réaliser leurs objectifs de recherche et développement (R et D) par l'entremise de la Stratégie en matière de partenariats et d'innovation (SPI) du CRSNG. Lancée en 2009 après la prise en compte des commentaires formulés par les entreprises et les chercheurs, la SPI vise à aider les entreprises canadiennes à optimiser leurs investissements en R et D afin d'accélérer la commercialisation de leurs produits et services et d'aider les étudiants participants à acquérir les compétences recherchées par les entreprises.

Dans le cadre de l'étude auprès des groupes de discussion, le CRSNG voulait savoir ce que pensent deux populations d'entreprises des méthodes de communication et des messages potentiels :

- Entreprises déjà clientes : entreprises qui travaillent déjà avec des universités ou des collèges par l'entremise des programmes du CRSNG;
- Entreprises qui ne sont pas clientes : entreprises qui mènent activement des activités de R et D au Canada, mais qui ne travaillent pas actuellement avec des universités ou des collèges, ou qui ne collaborent pas avec les universités ou collèges par l'entremise des programmes du CRSNG.

De manière plus précise, le CRSNG voulait entreprendre une recherche qualitative sur les messages à transmettre aux entreprises pour leur faire connaître l'intérêt de travailler en partenariat avec les universités ou les collèges afin de réaliser leurs objectifs commerciaux. Ces messages serviront à mieux faire connaître aux entreprises canadiennes qui effectuent de la R et D les avantages de collaborer avec les chercheurs des universités et des collèges. En outre, les résultats seront utilisés pour soutenir les stratégies de communication du CRSNG touchant ses programmes qui appuient les chercheurs universitaires dans les partenariats avec l'industrie, en particulier les programmes liés à la SPI du CRSNG.

Une série de 16 séances avec des groupes de discussion ont eu lieu entre les 4 et 7 mars 2013 dans plusieurs villes, soit Halifax, Québec, Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Calgary et Vancouver. Il y a eu deux séances dans chacune de ces villes : une avec les entreprises clientes du CRSNG, et une avec les entreprises qui ne sont pas clientes. Toutes les entreprises représentées dans ces groupes effectuent de la R et D, et leurs représentants étaient des cadres de niveau intermédiaire à supérieur qui participent directement aux activités de R et D au sein de leur entreprise.

**Cette recherche était de nature qualitative et non quantitative. Par conséquent, les résultats donnent une idée des opinions des participants au sujet des questions étudiées, mais on ne peut pas les généraliser à toute la population des entreprises qui mènent de la R et D au Canada, ni aux entreprises qui sont clientes du CRSNG.**



## **Participation de l'entreprise à la R et D**

Dans chaque groupe de discussion, on a demandé aux participants de décrire la nature des activités de R et D de leur entreprise.

### Type d'activités de R et D

Les entreprises représentées dans cette étude participent à un large éventail d'activités de R et D, bien qu'il s'agisse surtout de recherche **appliquée**, axée sur la commercialisation, plutôt que de recherche générale ou fondamentale. En outre, si certaines entreprises réalisent de la R et D ayant trait aux services, la plupart mènent des activités de R et D sur les produits et les procédés. Les groupes de discussion étaient formés de participants dont l'entreprise réalise un ou plusieurs des types d'activité suivants : essai, prototypage, développement de produits et d'innovations, amélioration de produits ou de services existants, élaboration de nouvelles applications, amélioration d'applications existantes, mise au point de nouveaux procédés, amélioration de procédés existants, simulations et essais, conception de prototypes et nouvelles technologies.

### Pourquoi les entreprises font-elles de la R et D?

Les entreprises représentées dans cette étude font de la R et D pour une foule de raisons, mais les trois raisons le plus souvent mentionnées sont les suivantes :

- rentabilité;
- désir ou nécessité de croître;
- nécessité de demeurer concurrentielles ou de préserver leur part de marché.

Les autres raisons souvent indiquées par les participants comprennent les suivantes : se démarquer de la concurrence (par désir ou nécessité), réaliser des gains d'efficacité, répondre à la demande des clients et aux besoins du marché, maintenir les relations avec les investisseurs et s'adapter aux changements et aux avancées dans leur secteur. Selon plusieurs participants, leur entreprise mène des activités de R et D parce que cela est tout simplement une question de survie.

### Principaux défis associés à la R et D

En ce qui concerne les principaux défis associés à la R et D auxquels ils sont confrontés, les participants ont le plus souvent mentionné deux aspects : d'une part, le coût ou le financement de la R et D, et d'autre part, la capacité ou les ressources internes limitées pour faire de la R et D. Les participants ont fréquemment indiqué plusieurs autres défis de la R et D, notamment la difficulté de trouver les bons collaborateurs, le délai entre les investissements en R et D et leurs résultats, l'incapacité de connaître à l'avance les résultats de la R et D (p. ex., si l'entreprise pourra les commercialiser avec succès), ou encore savoir quelles avenues on devrait privilégier.

### Sources d'information sur la R et D

On a demandé aux participants dans les divers groupes d'indiquer quels canaux ils utilisent pour obtenir de l'information sur la R et D. Parmi les sources d'information sur la R et D le plus souvent indiquées, mentionnons les réseaux personnels (p. ex., les collègues et les clients), les événements de réseautage tels que les réunions et les foires commerciales, les publications spécialisées, les associations professionnelles et les comptables, les universités et les collèges, et Internet. Pour la recherche d'information dans Internet, les participants utilisent le plus souvent un moteur de recherche,



habituellement *Google*. De nombreux participants visitent également les sites Web des fournisseurs et des autres entreprises de leur secteur, ou consultent les revues et les publications en ligne, ainsi que les sites Web sectoriels. Pour leur part, les entreprises clientes du CRSNG et celles qui réalisent de la R et D en partenariat consultent les publications spécialisées et lisent les rapports de recherche évalués par les pairs afin de savoir qui sont les chercheurs de pointe dans leur domaine.

## **Perceptions de la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues**

### Expérience antérieure de collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues

La durée et la richesse de l'expérience de collaboration des entreprises avec les universités et les collègues varient considérablement, ce qui explique le large éventail de perceptions des participants à ce sujet. Les entreprises clientes du CRSNG et la plupart des entreprises non clientes qui ont participé aux séances de groupe ont une certaine expérience de la collaboration avec des chercheurs des universités et des collègues dans le cadre de leurs activités de R et D. Bien que la plupart des entreprises aient travaillé avec des universités, quelques-unes avaient travaillé également avec des collègues. Les exemples de cette expérience sont notamment l'embauche ou l'utilisation en sous-traitance d'étudiants ou de professeurs pour collaborer à des activités précises de R et D, le mentorat ou les possibilités d'emploi pour les étudiants, l'utilisation d'installations, d'équipement et d'instruments des universités ou des collègues et la demande aux établissements de réaliser des essais ou des examens par un tiers. Bon nombre des entreprises clientes du CRSNG ont indiqué avoir participé aux subventions d'engagement partenarial (SEP), ainsi qu'à d'autres programmes du CRSNG.

Les groupes de discussion étaient composés de différentes entreprises qui, soit avaient déjà réalisé de nombreux travaux de R et D collaborative par l'entremise des programmes du CRSNG, soit participaient pour la première fois à une subvention du CRSNG. Les entreprises du premier groupe étaient plus susceptibles d'avoir établi des relations à long terme avec des universités ou des collègues en collaborant aux projets de recherche pendant tout leur cycle de vie et en tirant profit des capacités des universités et des collègues afin de compléter leurs propres capacités.

Quant aux entreprises qui avaient travaillé avec les universités et les collègues, mais pas par l'entremise du CRSNG, elles étaient plus susceptibles de recourir à leurs services pour étudier une question ou un problème particulier afin d'améliorer des produits, des procédés ou des services existants.

### Avantages perçus de la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues

Les avantages de la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues le plus souvent mentionnés sont l'accès à une expertise dans un domaine ou un champ d'activités spécifique, ou à des installations, des outils ou de l'équipement dont ne dispose pas l'entreprise. Parmi les autres avantages souvent indiqués, mentionnons l'accès aux ressources humaines, l'exposition à de nouvelles idées ou à des façons différentes d'aborder un problème, la crédibilité ou la légitimité accrue qui accompagne une telle collaboration (p. ex., examen ou validation par une tierce partie), et l'accès à des employés potentiels.



### Préoccupations et problèmes perçus de la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues

Les deux préoccupations ou problèmes le plus fréquemment indiqués par les entreprises, pour ce qui est de la collaboration avec les chercheurs des universités ou des collègues pour les travaux de R et D, touchent la gestion de la propriété intellectuelle et l'harmonisation des différents programmes et priorités de l'entreprise avec ceux de l'université (en général, l'entreprise met l'accent sur la commercialisation, tandis que le chercheur universitaire privilégie la publication ou sa carrière). Parmi les autres préoccupations souvent mentionnées, indiquons l'absence de continuité dans le processus de recherche (par exemple, en raison du taux de roulement des chercheurs), la bureaucratie des universités ou de leurs centres d'affaires, le respect des calendriers (les entreprises sont habituellement confrontées à des délais plus serrés en matière de R et D), et la confidentialité de la recherche (dilemme entre le désir du chercheur universitaire qui veut publier ses résultats et l'entreprise qui veut que tout reste secret pour être la première sur le marché).

### Valeur perçue de la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collègues

Seules les entreprises clientes du CRSNG ont été interrogées à propos de la valeur qu'elles attachent à la recherche en collaboration avec les universités et les collègues. De manière générale, ces entreprises clientes indiquent qu'elles apprécient la recherche en collaboration avec les universités et les collègues. Mais bon nombre d'entre elles conviennent que la valeur varie d'un projet à l'autre : certains projets ont été extrêmement précieux, voire déterminants, tandis que d'autres ont été d'une valeur limitée ou sans intérêt.

### Attributs recherchés chez les partenaires de recherche éventuels des universités et des collègues

Lorsqu'ils envisagent une collaboration avec un partenaire de recherche dans une université ou un collègue, les participants recherchent habituellement un ou plusieurs des attributs suivants : expertise dans un domaine particulier, cohérence dans cette spécialisation, équipement et ressources spécifiques, expérience de la collaboration avec une entreprise ou expérience antérieure dans l'industrie, continuité et souplesse du processus de recherche (p. ex., disponibilité de collaborateurs pour la recherche et accès à ceux-ci), dévouement, enthousiasme, organisation, capacité de répondre aux orientations de l'entreprise, même compréhension de la recherche et même intérêt pour celle-ci, collaboration opportune et compréhension des besoins de l'entreprise ou de sa vision de la R et D (c.-à-d. que l'on met l'accent sur la recherche appliquée ou la commercialisation).

### **Connaissance et perceptions du CRSNG**

La plupart des entreprises qui ne sont pas clientes connaissaient le CRSNG avant de participer à l'étude, même si nombre d'entre elles ne le connaissaient que de nom. Leurs impressions au sujet du CRSNG étaient très générales, entre autres qu'il s'agit d'un organisme gouvernemental qui subventionne la recherche. C'était d'ailleurs l'impression la plus fréquemment indiquée par les entreprises non clientes au sujet du CRSNG. Certaines de ces entreprises ont aussi indiqué que le CRSNG offre aux entreprises des possibilités de collaboration avec les collègues et universités, qu'il fait la promotion de la recherche, et qu'il ne manque pas d'argent pour financer la recherche.





Les impressions des entreprises clientes à l'égard du CRSNG sont généralement positives ou très positives. Elles estiment que le personnel du CRSNG est compétent, bien informé, rapide et serviable, qu'il s'agit d'un organisme professionnel et crédible, facile d'approche, avec lequel il est facile de transiger et qui fait un bon suivi. Les entreprises clientes décrivent le CRSNG comme un organisme subventionnaire qui a du succès et dont les programmes sont bien structurés et avantageux, qui offre un bon éventail de programmes et dont les délais pour la présentation des demandes sont raisonnables.

### **Impressions au sujet du matériel de communication actuel et potentiel**

Dans cette étude, on a demandé aux participants d'examiner trois types de matériel et de formuler des commentaires à leur sujet : le matériel utilisé actuellement par le CRSNG pour communiquer avec les entreprises au sujet de ses possibilités de partenariat, les messages qui pourraient être utilisés dans du nouveau matériel de communication et un ensemble de mots ou d'expressions qui sont parfois utilisés dans les messages du CRSNG au sujet de la R et D.

#### Messages actuels du CRSNG

Les impressions concernant le matériel actuel du CRSNG sont partagées : il a suscité une combinaison de rétroaction positive, négative et neutre. Les forces couramment indiquées au sujet des messages comprennent ce qui suit : ils sont directs, ils couvrent les aspects essentiels de la R et D, ils sont de nature directive et axés sur l'action et ils présentent une séquence logique des étapes de la R et D. Parmi les commentaires négatifs, mentionnons : les messages mettent l'accent sur le processus plutôt que sur les buts, les résultats et les avantages de la collaboration avec les universités et les collèges, les messages sont des formules toutes faites ou du « jargon gouvernemental » (p. ex., « Trouvez du personnel hautement qualifié ») et l'information est trop vague ou générale. Selon certains participants, particulièrement ceux qui ne sont pas familiers avec les programmes du CRSNG, les énoncés semblent contenir des affirmations peu crédibles; ils doutent qu'un organisme gouvernemental soit en mesure de les réaliser.

Les participants qui ont eu des réactions neutres ont affirmé que les messages sont clairs et faciles à comprendre, qu'ils sont relativement standard et sans surprise et qu'ils présentent des renseignements généraux ou de base.

Nombre de participants, toutefois, ont indiqué que les messages actuels du CRSNG sont efficaces, car ils encouragent ou motivent les entreprises à envisager de travailler avec des universités ou des collèges afin de répondre à leurs besoins de R et D. Toutefois, plusieurs autres participants estiment au contraire que les messages ne sont pas efficaces ou très peu efficaces à cet égard. Néanmoins, la plupart s'entendent pour dire que les messages ciblent les secteurs les plus importants en termes de R et D. Par conséquent, les participants ont été en mesure de proposer des suggestions concrètes afin que les messages actuels soient plus pertinents pour eux, et donc plus efficaces.

**La principale suggestion est donc de s'assurer que les messages ciblent les besoins des entreprises, en soulignant les résultats concrets ou en décrivant la valeur ajoutée qu'elles retireront de la collaboration avec les universités et les collèges.**



### Messages potentiels du CRSNG

Après l'évaluation des messages actuels du CRSNG, on a demandé aux participants d'examiner les messages qu'on pourrait intégrer à du nouveau matériel de communication de l'organisme. Ils ont donc examiné deux ensembles de nouveaux messages potentiels, appelés A et B, qui contenaient chacun six messages, numérotés de un à six. Un seul ensemble était examiné par chaque groupe. Les messages des deux ensembles étaient similaires, la seule différence étant que chaque message de l'ensemble B était précédé d'un slogan.

Le message 2 a suscité le plus de réactions positives, dans la version « A » (« Accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe) et « B » (« Utilisez la technologie de pointe : accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe. »). Ce message a constamment été jugé efficace pour les raisons suivantes : il est pertinent et crédible parce qu'il indique une des principales raisons ou un des principaux besoins qui incitent les entreprises à travailler avec les universités et les collègues, il pique la curiosité et invite l'entreprise à faire un suivi ou à se renseigner davantage, il donne à penser que l'on privilégie la recherche appliquée, la valeur offerte est claire, et le message est court, concis et direct.

Le message 6 a suscité la réaction la moins favorable dans ses deux versions (« Réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe » et « Réduisez les risques : réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe »). La principale critique formulée à l'égard de ce message est que la référence à la réduction des risques est trop générale et manque de crédibilité. Les participants ont souvent indiqué que le risque prend de nombreuses formes et dépend du contexte, et qu'on ne peut donc faire de généralisation quant à la réduction du risque.

Dans la rétroaction fournie par les participants au sujet des nouveaux messages potentiels, les suggestions et commentaires généraux suivants ont très souvent été formulés pour les rendre plus efficaces :

- mettre l'accent sur le rendement ou la valeur ajoutée pour les entreprises (c.-à-d. les résultats, non les processus);
- utiliser un langage qui est à la fois concret et précis, plutôt que vague et général (p. ex., parler des « universités et collègues » et non pas des « établissements postsecondaires »);
- plus c'est court, mieux c'est;
- piquer la curiosité et susciter l'intérêt;
- utiliser un langage et des expressions qui sont familiers et qui revêtent de l'importance pour les entreprises;
- éviter les énoncés peu crédibles (tels que « Réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe »);
- éviter les énoncés qui semblent prétentieux, voire pompeux (tels que « Établissez des collaborations en recherche avec les plus brillants esprits »);
- éviter les phrases ou les expressions toutes faites (telles que, « Cernez d'éventuels employés hautement qualifiés »).

### Publics cibles

Lorsqu'on leur a demandé à qui ces messages devraient s'adresser dans leur entreprise, les participants ont répondu que cela dépendait de la taille de l'entreprise. Dans les petites entreprises, par exemple, où il y a peu ou pas de division des tâches, la meilleure personne à qui adresser le message serait probablement le propriétaire. Dans les



grandes entreprises, le message pourrait être adressé au chef de l'exploitation, au dirigeant principal des finances, au chef de la division de la R et D (s'il y en a un) ou au directeur des ressources humaines.

On a aussi demandé aux participants si la personne qui au bout du compte prend les décisions en matière de R et D dans leur entreprise serait susceptible de lire ce genre de matériel de communication. Dans les petites entreprises, ce serait le cas, mais en général les participants s'entendent pour dire que les décideurs dans les grandes entreprises ne verraient ni ne liraient probablement pas le matériel de communication. Il est plus probable qu'une autre personne le lira, le décantera, puis en présentera l'essentiel au décideur, parmi d'autres possibilités envisageables.

### Évaluation des mots et expressions

Après l'évaluation des nouveaux messages potentiels du CRSNG, les participants ont été invités à examiner six expressions différentes, chacune comportant deux ou trois énoncés de rechange parfois utilisés dans les messages du CRSNG. On a demandé aux participants lequel ou lesquels de ces énoncés étaient les plus pertinents ou les plus efficaces. Deux ensembles de six expressions chacun ont été utilisés dans cette étude (ensembles A et B). Tout comme dans le cas des messages potentiels, chaque groupe n'a examiné qu'un seul ensemble.

**De manière générale, les expressions préférées par les participants étaient surtout celles qui étaient axées sur les résultats ou les avantages concrets, ou qui avaient une connotation définie, claire et concrète, plutôt qu'une connotation indéfinie, vague ou générale.**

En particulier, les participants ont grandement préféré les expressions suivantes :

- les termes « établir un partenariat » et « collaborer » étaient préférés à « participer »;
- les participants aux groupes francophones préféraient l'expression « contribuer » ou « créer un effet de levier » à « verser un financement de contrepartie », alors qu'en anglais, le mot « leverage » était préféré à l'expression « match funds » ou au mot « contribute »;
- le terme « talent » était préféré aux termes « personnes hautement qualifiées » ou « nouveaux employés »;
- le mot « subvention » était préféré aux termes « possibilité de financement » ou « programme gouvernemental »;
- les mots « résultats » ou « solutions » étaient préférés aux mots « retombées » ou « percées »;
- l'expression « recherche appliquée » était préférée à l'expression « recherche fondamentale »;
- dans les groupes francophones, l'expression « activité de jumelage » était préférée aux expressions « activité de rencontre » ou « activité de réseautage », et en anglais, le terme « networking event » était préféré aux termes « match making event » ou « mixer event »;
- le mot « innovation » était préféré à l'expression « recherche et développement »;
- l'expression « établir des liens » était préférée au mot « rencontrer ».

En ce qui concerne le choix entre les expressions « Post-secondary researcher » et « Academic researcher », en anglais, les participants préféraient majoritairement une troisième option : « Researcher ». Dans les groupes en français, les choix correspondants



étaient entre « chercheur d'établissements postsecondaires » et « chercheur d'une université (ou d'un collège) ». La dernière expression était largement préférée.

### Conclusions et retombées

Un des résultats notables de cette recherche est la facilité avec laquelle les participants ont fourni de la rétroaction sur les questions étudiées. Les participants avaient des opinions très claires et très marquées sur les raisons pour lesquelles leur entreprise réalise de la R et D, les principaux défis qu'elle doit relever à cet égard et les préoccupations et les avantages potentiels associés à la collaboration en R et D avec les universités et les collèges. Comme ils avaient des opinions claires à ce sujet, ils ont pu formuler des commentaires précis, et clairs également, au sujet du matériel de communication du CRSNG et sur la façon de l'améliorer.

Pour les entreprises, la R et D est un moyen pour arriver à une fin, et non une fin en soi. Cela a été mentionné très clairement et souvent lorsque les participants ont évalué les messages actuels et potentiels du CRSNG. En effet, leur critique la plus fréquente au sujet de ces messages est qu'ils ne soulignent pas assez clairement la valeur – les avantages en termes de résultats – que représente pour les entreprises la collaboration en R et D avec les collèges et les universités.

Nous invitons le CRSNG à examiner les commentaires détaillés formulés par les participants au sujet de chacun des messages actuels et potentiels. Toutefois, la liste suivante résume l'orientation générale claire qu'ils ont fournie afin d'assurer l'efficacité et la pertinence des communications du CRSNG visant à faire connaître aux entreprises la valeur de la collaboration avec les universités et les collèges, tant sur le plan de la présentation que du contenu :

- insister sur les avantages pour les entreprises, afin qu'elles comprennent la valeur ajoutée rattachée à la collaboration;
- présenter des énoncés concrets et spécifiques, plutôt que des énoncés vagues ou généraux;
- présenter des énoncés courts et concis, autant que possible;
- éviter les phrases et expressions toutes faites, et utiliser des expressions familières et qui revêtent de l'importance pour les entreprises;
- éviter les énoncés qui semblent peu crédibles;
- éviter les énoncés qui peuvent être jugés prétentieux par les entrepreneurs.

Les participants ont formulé ces mêmes réserves lorsqu'on leur a demandé leur opinion au sujet des mots et des expressions souvent utilisés dans les messages du CRSNG. Plus précisément, les participants préfèrent manifestement des expressions axées sur les avantages ou les résultats concrets et qui ont une connotation claire et concrète.

Même si cette étude a été réalisée auprès de plusieurs groupes dans différentes parties du pays et représentant deux publics cibles distincts (entreprises clientes du CRSNG par opposition aux entreprises qui ne sont pas clientes), la rétroaction sur les questions de communication étudiées a été relativement uniforme. Dans la mesure où il y a des différences, elles se manifestaient entre les deux types de publics, plutôt qu'entre les régions. Ces différences sont indiquées dans le rapport, lorsqu'elles se présentent. Toutefois, il faut souligner qu'en général les entreprises non clientes du CRSNG avaient tendance à être plus critiques à l'égard des messages actuels et potentiels du CRSNG, particulièrement en ce qui concerne leur crédibilité. Cela peut être en partie attribuable au fait que les relations des entreprises non clientes du CRSNG avec les universités et les



collèges sont probablement moins poussées que celles des entreprises clientes du CRSNG, ou à un manque de connaissance des entreprises non clientes des programmes de subventions offerts par le CRSNG.





## INTRODUCTION

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. to conduct focus group research to assess communication approaches and messaging.

### Background and Objectives

In 2009, following input received from businesses and researchers, NSERC launched the *Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation*<sup>1</sup> to help Canadian businesses realize greater value from their investments in research and development (R&D), to help students acquire the skills businesses value, and to accelerate commercialization. This strategy supports the agency's mandate to promote and assist research in support of business innovation by increasing businesses' awareness of the opportunity presented by working with Canada's research community.

Results to date of the Strategy have been strong. At present, a rapidly growing number of businesses work with researchers through NSERC (over 2,400 in 2011-12, up from 1,500 in 2009), NSERC trains more students than ever before with the skills businesses need (NSERC funded 10,000 students to work with industry in 2012, up from 8,000 in 2009), and businesses report high levels of satisfaction working with researchers through an NSERC-funded program (e.g. 94% described their joint research project as a success).

Despite these positive results, there is room for growth. In 2009, 7% of Canada's R&D conducting businesses were working with universities and colleges on partnered research through NSERC. Today, approximately 9% of Canada's R&D conducting firms use NSERC programs. Anecdotally, universities and colleges also report a similarly low level of business engagement.

To help NSERC reach its goal by 2014-15 of working with 3,000 firms each year, , NSERC wanted to obtain feedback from two business populations on potential communication approaches and messaging:

- *Existing business clients*: businesses that do work with universities and/or colleges through NSERC.
- *Non-clients*: businesses actively engaged in R&D in Canada but that do not currently work with universities and/or colleges, or that do not do so through NSERC.

Specifically, NSERC wanted to undertake qualitative research on communications messaging that highlight the value for businesses of working with universities or colleges to achieve their business goals. These messages will be used in efforts to increase the awareness about the potential for collaborations with post-secondary researchers of Canadian companies that conduct R&D, and to support NSERC communications related to its grants that fund academic researchers to partner with industry, and, specifically that relate to the NSERC *Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation*. Specific objectives of this research included the following:

- To assess the effectiveness of NSERC communication messaging about the value of research collaboration with universities and/or colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.nsercpartnerships.ca/docs/SPI\\_e.pdf](http://www.nsercpartnerships.ca/docs/SPI_e.pdf).



- To ensure that communications on the value of working with universities and colleges on partnered research are relevant and useful to businesses.
- To assess the impact of messages being shared with businesses about the *Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation*.
- To further tailor messages to effectively reach businesses that are not currently working with NSERC, or not currently partnering with universities and colleges, in order to engage them in the *Strategy for Partnerships and Innovation*.
- To engage business stakeholders who benefit from programs and initiatives under the Strategy and solicit their feedback.

## Research Design

To address the research objectives, a series of focus groups was undertaken. Information about the target audiences and the specifications that applied to the focus groups are presented below.

### Target Audiences

As noted above, the target audience for this study included two business populations:

- Businesses that do work with universities and/or colleges through NSERC (i.e. NSERC clients).
- Businesses actively engaged in R&D in Canada that do not currently work with universities and/or colleges through NSERC (i.e. non-NSERC clients).

In this latter group, recruitment efforts yielded a mix of companies that actively do work with universities and colleges but do not do so with NSERC, and companies that have little or no experience with such collaborations.

The following specifications applied to the focus groups:

- In total, 16 focus groups were conducted March 4-7 2013, with two groups in each of the following locations: Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Montreal (French), Quebec City (French), Calgary, Vancouver, and Halifax.
- In each location, one group was conducted with existing NSERC clients, and one group with non-clients.
- NSERC clients were recruited using lists provided by NSERC in electronic format. Non-clients were recruited using lists of potential recruits provided by NSERC (based on leads obtained through their existing partnerships and relationships with key associations and organisations), and augmented through various methods by Research House<sup>2</sup>, using the company's database and Scott's Business Directory.
- A background letter was prepared for potential participants requesting more information about the study. The letter, on NSERC letterhead, explained the purpose of the research, introduced Phoenix as the firm conducting it, offered assurances of confidentiality, encouraged participation, and provided a contact-person at NSERC in order to provide additional information and/or validate the research.

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<sup>2</sup> Under sub-contact to Phoenix, Research House was responsible for all recruitment and related logistics for this project.





- All businesses represented in this study were active in terms of undertaking R&D.
- Participants were corporate executives directly involved in R&D at their business.
- In each group there was a mix of participants by firm size and sector.
- Ten participants were recruited for 6-8 to show per group. Turnout was very good, with at least six participants in each group.
- Participants received incentives of \$200 to participate.
- The groups lasted two hours and were held in regular focus group facilities in all locations.
- During the group, participants reviewed material that NSERC currently uses to communicate with businesses about its partnership opportunities, as well as a number of potential messages that it is considering. Participants also reviewed sets of words or short phrases that included two or three alternatives that are sometimes used in messaging.
- The first set of groups that took place in Ottawa served to pre-test the moderator's guide and overall approach. The approach worked well, though some changes were made to the guide before the subsequent focus groups. The main change was to reduce its overall length. Other changes involved minor adjustments (e.g. changing the wording or location of a question).
- Sponsorship of the study was revealed (i.e. NSERC).

Phoenix ensured that all steps in the research complied with market research industry standards and guidelines, including those of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA).

**This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but cannot be generalized to the full population of businesses that undertake R&D in Canada or of NSERC client businesses.**

Findings tended to be quite consistent across all locations. Any noteworthy differences that emerged and were attributed to location are identified in the report.

Appended to this report are the following (in both official languages):

- Recruitment screener
- Moderator's guide
- Materials reviewed by participants
  - Current NSERC messaging
  - Potential NSERC messaging
  - Sets of words/short phrases
- Questionnaire evaluating potential NSERC messaging completed by participants.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section provides some basic background information about participants. This includes the sectors in which their companies operate and their roles and responsibilities with respect to R&D in their firms.

### Companies Operating in a Variety of Sectors

Companies represented in this research operate in a variety of sectors, which include the following:

- Agriculture/Agri-food
- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Automation technologies
- Bio-technology
- Construction
- Data management
- Engineering (electrical, environmental, mechanical)
- Environmental monitoring/services
- Energy
- Financial services
- Health
- Heating systems
- Information technology
- Life sciences
- Manufacturing
- Marine activities
- Medical/life sciences
- Mining
- Ocean technology
- Oil and gas
- Optics/Laser fibre optics
- Real estate
- Renewable energy
- Security
- Software
- Telecommunications
- Waste management/Recycling

### Participants Have Various Responsibilities With Respect to Firm's R&D

Participants in this research have various roles and responsibilities within their companies with respect to R&D. In line with the recruitment specifications, all are in managerial positions, with direct, hands-on responsibility for R&D activities undertaken by their business. Some participants oversee R&D activities in a general way, through the entire lifecycle of R&D activities, while others have more specific roles, which include:

- Project management
- Developing partnerships and collaborations
- Commercialization of products/services
- Research conception and design
- Product development
- Product enhancement
- Prototype development
- Product testing
- Business development/sales and marketing
- Compliance and regulatory issues.

Some of these roles and responsibilities clearly overlap. They are presented above as participants themselves identified them. Among the client participants, many identified themselves as being responsible for managing their company's projects with universities and/or colleges. Among participants from small companies, many were the owner/chief-executive of the company.







## CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN R&D

This section reports on companies' involvement in research and development. This includes the types of activities that companies engage in as part of their R&D, reasons for undertaking these activities, the main R&D-related challenges they face, and where they usually get information about R&D.

### Companies Engage in Range of R&D Activities, Related Mainly to Products

Companies represented in this study engage in a variety of R&D activities, though the focus tends to be *applied* research with a focus on commercialization, as opposed to general or basic research. In addition, while some undertake R&D activities related to services, most focus on activities related to products and processes.

Groups typically included participants whose companies engage in one or more of the following types of activities:

- product development/innovation
- improving/modifying existing products or services
- developing new applications
- improving existing applications
- developing new processes
- improving/streamlining existing processes
- simulations and testing (e.g. environmental testing)
- prototype design
- new technologies.

### R&D Conducted for Various Reasons, Mainly Related to Profitability, Growth, & Competitiveness

Participants collectively identified a variety of reasons why their firms undertake research and development. However, three reasons were identified most often, and sometimes in combination: profitability, the desire or need to grow (e.g. develop new products/new markets, expand internal capacities), and the need to remain competitive/maintain market share. Other reasons identified with some regularity included:

- A desire to distinguish or differentiate oneself from the competition, and/or enhance the company's reputation and credibility. This includes becoming a recognized expert or leader in an area or sector.
- The desire to improve efficiencies.
- Responding to client/customer demands or market needs.
- Maintaining investor relations (i.e. the need for a vision to engage investors).
- The need to adapt to changes, developments, and new challenges in one's sector.

A number of participants summarized the main reason for undertaking R&D by suggesting that it is a vital life function for companies (i.e. if they do not engage in R&D they die).

Some participants said that their company also undertakes what they considered to be basic research out of a desire to create new knowledge or learning. NSERC clients were more likely to identify this as a reason for undertaking R&D. For their part, non-clients



were more likely to identify the need to meet client or market needs or demands as a reason for undertaking R&D.

### **Financing & Limited Internal Resources – Main Challenges Related to R&D**

When it comes to the biggest challenges in terms of R&D, participants were most likely to identify two things: the cost, financing, or funding of R&D, and limited internal resources or capacity to undertake R&D. The latter includes a lack or absence of internal expertise (i.e. the need for specialized skill sets), and the need for special equipment/tools/instruments.

Participants also routinely identified the following as major challenges related to R&D:

- Finding the right collaborators.
- The time gap between investments in R&D and returns.
- The time required to undertake R&D activities or carry through a research program from start to finish.
- Inability to know in advance how an R&D project will turn out (e.g. will it lead to successful commercialization?).
- Deciding which research avenues should be pursued.
- Allocating resources and balancing R&D with the other imperatives and challenges of running a business.
- Generating buy-in for specific R&D activities within the company.
- Intellectual Property ownership issues when it comes to research collaborations/partnerships.

Some participants identified difficulty in finding the information they need and establishing/building fruitful partnerships/collaborations as challenges they face. Challenges mentioned infrequently include finding employees/new hires with the appropriate skill set, having to pursue R&D in an ad hoc or unstructured way due to the lack of a dedicated R&D unit in the company, and trying to keep up with changes or developments in one's sector.

### **Companies Access Various Sources for Information About R&D**

Participants identified a number of sources they use for information about R&D. Routinely-identified sources include professional associations, networks (e.g. colleagues, clients/customers, suppliers) and networking events (e.g. trade shows, conferences), trade publications, accountants, universities and colleges, and the Internet. A few clients also specifically identified their regional NSERC representative as a source of information about R&D.

### **Internet Searches Rely Primarily on Search Engines**

Information on the Internet is most often sought using a search engine. The search engine typically used is *Google*, but some also identified *Bing*. The key words they use in their searches vary, depending on what they are looking for specifically. A few participants said they sometimes use outside help to search for R&D information on the Internet. Specifically, they hire a company to search the Internet for R&D information using specific key words. Specific companies identified include NERAC and MDP Research.



Many also said they visit the websites of suppliers and companies in their sector or consult online journals, publications, and sectoral websites (e.g. Réseau Photonique du Québec, Information Technology Association of Canada, SciFinder). Some said they consult government websites, including the websites of the Canada Revenue Agency, the National Research Council, NSERC, Industry Canada, and Centres Collégiaux de Transfert de Technologie (identified in Quebec specifically).

In addition to websites, some use online forums such as UseNet, online professional networks such as LinkedIn, and social media, including Twitter, and YouTube.







## PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE R&D COLLABORATION

This section explores issues related to the experience of participants and their firms in terms of collaborating with college or university researchers for R&D activities.

### Collaboration with Universities/Colleges for R&D Takes Various Forms

In addition to NSERC clients, most non-clients have some experience collaborating with college or university researchers for their R&D activities. While most experience was in working with universities, some have also worked with colleges. These activities and relationships take a variety of forms, including the following:

- Hiring or sub-contracting students and/or professors to collaborate on various specific R&D related activities.
- Providing mentorship or job opportunities to students (e.g. giving them practical experience).
- Accessing university or college expertise in a certain area.
- Accessing facilities/equipment/instruments that are not available in-house or which complement in-house capacities.
- Getting the institutions to build prototypes, conduct testing, or other third-party reviews/validation.
- Funding industrial research chairs.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the large number of Engage grants, many NSERC clients volunteered that they had *Engage* grants (along with use of other NSERC programs).

The nature of the relationship, as well as its length, varies depending on the type of R&D activity. As well, there was considerable variety in the length and depth of participants' companies' experiences with universities and colleges. NSERC clients' relationships with universities and colleges were more likely to be longer and more involved than those of non-clients. That is to say they were more likely to engage in collaborations with universities and colleges throughout the lifecycle of a research project, drawing on university and college capabilities to complement their own capacities. Non-clients were more likely to engage universities and colleges towards the end of the research process, or to address a specific issue or problem regarding enhancements to existing products, processes and services.

Few of the non-clients that lack experience in this area said they have not considered partnering with college or university researchers. Those who have not considered this gave one of the following reasons to explain why:

- *Lack of need*: One reason given for not considering collaborating with college or university researchers was simply lack of need or the ability to carry out all research related activities in-house.
- *Lack of expertise in universities/colleges*: Another reason given for not considering this with was the perceived lack of expertise in universities or colleges. Specifically, given the sector or area in which the business is involved (e.g. specialized manufacturing), it was felt that there is little or nothing that universities or colleges could do to help with their research.



### **Access to Expertise & Resources – Main Benefits of Collaboration**

Participants were readily able to identify numerous benefits of collaborating with universities or colleges for R&D, and these perceived advantages were most often based on prior experience. However, the main benefits identified most often were access to expertise in a specific domain or area, and access to facilities, tools, or equipment not available internally.

Other regularly-identified benefits include:

- Help offsetting costs (including access to cost-effective expertise/manpower).
- Access to human resources that frees up internal resources for assignment to other projects.
- Exposure to new ideas or different ways of approaching a problem, especially near the beginning of a project.
- The credibility/legitimacy that comes from such collaborations (e.g. third-party review/validation, working with a reputable or well-recognized institution).
- Exposure/marketing (i.e. publicizing the fact that the company does research with universities/colleges, which can enhance a company's reputation).
- Networking opportunities and establishing further connections or relationships.
- Access to additional sources of information (e.g. publications, databases).
- Access to potential employees/recruits.

Benefits identified less often include access to funding/grants, the enthusiasm and energy of working with students, general help with the time and effort that research and development demand, helping create intellectual property, and helping create expertise in a specific area/sector. Some added that one of the benefits of collaborating with universities or colleges is that the relationship is mutually beneficial (i.e. it is a win-win situation). For example, universities and colleges benefit because their students gain experience working with business, which makes them more marketable.

### **Intellectual Property Management, Different Orientations to R&D – Main Concerns About Collaboration**

Whether or not they had direct experience in collaborating with a university or college, all participants were clearly able to identify concerns or problems collaborating with university or college researchers for R&D. The two most common concerns or problems in this regard were issues related to intellectual property and aligning the priorities and agendas of industry and academia when it comes to R&D.

Regarding the former, both business that are NSERC clients and non-clients clearly identified their need to be able to use and/or own any intellectual property developed by research collaborations. As such, ensuring that intellectual property ownership was clearly and quickly defined by both parties was identified as a critical element for the success of any project.

Regarding the latter, participants routinely observed that their research agenda typically focuses on commercialization, whereas the focus in academia tends to be on publishing and career development.



More generally, some participants felt that they (and other businesses) tend to carry out applied research, whereas universities and colleges were seen to carry out basic or fundamental research (i.e. research for the sake of research). It should be noted that both these concerns related primarily to working with universities as opposed to colleges.

Other perceived concerns that were regularly identified include:

- Keeping to established timelines/working in a timely manner. In this regard it was often observed that businesses typically work within much tighter timelines when it comes to R&D than universities and colleges.
- Lack of continuity or fluidity in the research process (e.g. turnover in researchers or students, lack of availability of/access to researchers during critical periods in the research).
- Maintaining the confidentiality of the research (i.e. controlling the publicizing of the research versus researchers' need to publish). In this regard, some participants mentioned that one of their concerns in collaborating with universities and colleges is that they, and particularly students that graduate, can also be or become competitors.
- Dealing with red tape/bureaucracy when dealing with universities or their business centres.
- Keeping researchers focused and on track.

Some participants identified bad experiences in general as a concern or preoccupation. They explained that unless one has prior experience working with specific researchers, one can never know in advance how the relationship will work out. In some instances, there can be a bad fit between a business and an institution on a specific project. In such cases, the research projects yields little or nothing of value and turns out to have been a waste of time.

Most of them were also more likely to be identified by NSERC clients or more likely to be emphasized as important by NSERC clients – their relationships with universities and colleges tend to be more involved than those of non-clients. As most of the NSERC clients are more focused on universities than colleges, it is not surprising that these concerns and problems were more likely to be associated with universities than colleges.

### **Value of Research Collaborations Tends to be Project-Dependent**

NSERC clients were asked about the value to their company of research collaborations with universities and colleges. Generally speaking, they value research collaborations with universities and colleges, and some described such collaborations as essential. That being said, there was a widespread view that the value can vary from project to project, for the types of reasons identified above. For example, some projects have been very valuable, even crucial, while others have been of limited or no value. As noted above, if there is a bad fit between a business and an institution on a specific project, it might yield little or nothing of value.



### **Expertise & Shared Understanding – Main Attributes Sought in Research Partners**

When it comes to what businesses want in a potential college or university research partner, participants are usually looking for one or more of the following:

- Expertise, competence, or leadership in a specific area. This includes being up-to-date on recent or new developments (e.g. being up-to-date on regulatory frameworks).
- Access to specific facilities/equipment/resources (e.g. spectrometers). This includes up-to-date or cutting-edge equipment.
- Consistency in specialization (i.e. an expert who focuses in one area as opposed to dabbling in many areas).
- Prior experience collaborating with a business and/or prior experience in industry.
- Continuity in the research process. This includes availability of and access to research collaborators, as well as consistency in who one works with.
- Keenness, passion, dedication and enthusiasm – particularly in students (referred to by some as ‘attitude as well as aptitude’).
- Being well organized.
- The ability to listen and adapt to the needs, and timelines, of the company.
- A shared understanding or vision of the research challenges and a shared interest in the research.
- Timely collaboration.
- An understanding of business needs or the business mindset when it comes to R&D (i.e. focus on applied research/commercialization).



## **AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF NSERC**

This brief section reports on awareness and perceptions of NSERC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

### **Limited Prior Awareness of NSERC Among Non-Clients**

Most non-clients claimed to be aware of NSERC prior to this study, though many were aware of it in name only. A few seemed to confuse it with the National Research Council. Non-clients in Quebec City, Montreal, and Halifax were the least likely to have heard of NSERC.

### **Mixed Impressions of NSERC Among Non-Clients**

Not surprisingly, non-clients were much less likely to be acquainted with NSERC, and therefore much less likely to have an impression of it. Moreover, non-clients' impressions tended to be very general and were sometimes based on hearsay. The most frequently expressed impression was that NSERC provides government funding to subsidize research. Other impressions included the following:

- It provides collaboration opportunities for companies and universities/colleges.
- It promotes research.
- It is well-heeled in terms of research dollars.

Some non-client perceptions tended to be critical. Perceptions included the following:

- NSERC gets businesses to help universities and students more than the reverse.
- It funds basic as opposed to applied research.
- It needs to give more latitude to companies when it comes to funding requirements.
- There is too much paperwork involved in dealing with them.
- It does not provide enough assistance or support to business when it comes to dealing with universities.

### **Clients' Perceptions of NSERC Were Positive**

Clients' impressions of NSERC programs and personnel tended to be positive or very positive. These included the following:

- It is a very professional and credible organization.
- The people you deal with are competent, knowledgeable, responsive, and helpful. Some singled out their regional representatives in this regard.
- The organization and its people are very approachable and easy to deal with.
- It provides good follow-up.
- It is a very successful funding organization.
- Its programs are well structured and beneficial.
- It provides a good range/variety of programs.



- The timelines for applications tend to be good or reasonable.

Client comments of a critical nature were limited. These include reference to administrative requirements as sometimes 'heavy' or involving some effort to comply with, and the perception that NSERC programs seem designed more to help universities than businesses.

Some clients also felt that NSERC funds primarily basic (discovery) research. Some clients said they have had bad experiences with universities or colleges through an NSERC program, but they were not critical of NSERC for this.



## COMMUNICATIONS TESTING

This section presents participant feedback on communications messaging materials they were asked to review in this study. Participants were shown and asked to comment on three types of materials: material that NSERC currently uses to communicate with businesses about its partnership opportunities, potential messages for new communications materials, and sets of words or short phrases that are sometimes used in messaging related to R&D. Feedback related to each is provided below in separate sub-sections.

### CURRENT MESSAGING

Below is the text of the current NSERC messaging that participants were shown and asked to review.

English	French
<p><b>Find</b>  <b>Highly Qualified People</b>            Get fresh ideas and add top talent to your staff at minimal cost</p> <p><b>Build</b>  <b>Research Relationships</b>            Develop new research collaborations with university or college researchers</p> <p><b>Advance</b>  <b>Your R&amp;D</b>            Take your research and development to the next level</p>	<p><b>Trouvez</b>  <b>du personnel hautement qualifié</b>            Trouvez des idées nouvelles et intégrez les meilleurs chercheurs à votre personnel à un coût minime</p> <p><b>Établissez</b>  <b>Des relations de recherche</b>            Créez de nouvelles collaborations de recherche avec des chercheurs d'université ou de collègue</p> <p><b>Faites</b>  <b>progresser vos travaux de R et D</b>            Amenez vos activités de R et D à l'étape suivante</p>

### Mixed Impressions of Current NSERC Messaging

Impressions of current NSERC messaging tended to be mixed. The messaging typically elicited feedback that was positive, neutral, and critical.

Participants routinely identified the following as strengths or positive aspects of the messaging in general:

- The messaging is straightforward, direct, and to the point.
- It focuses on important issues and themes (i.e. covers the essential or major aspects of R&D).
- It is directive and action-focused (i.e. it uses action terms).
- The messaging relates well to the sequence of activities/stages related to R&D, and is logical and coherent.

Many participants also reacted positively to the way in which the messaging in each element is presented (i.e. starting with a single action-oriented word in larger font to introduce the message, following with identification of the direct object in smaller font, and ending with a short phrase providing more information in even smaller font).



Critical reaction typically focused on the following aspects of the messaging:

- While the messaging targets the right areas, there is a lack of focus on outcomes, goals, or results and too much emphasis on process.
- Related to the previous point, the messaging seems more targeted to the mindset of people in universities and colleges than to the mindset of people in industry.
- Too government-like (i.e. bureaucratic, use of jargon, focus on process).
- Certain statements raise issues of credibility (i.e. can NSERC really deliver this for a business?).
- The messaging lacks motivational power (i.e. the ability to pique interest/curiosity).
- It tends to be overly formulaic or 'what one would expect', which makes it a little stale.
- There is not much information provided, and the information that is provided is generic and lacks context.

Neutral reactions typically focused on the following:

- The messaging is clear and easy to understand.
- It is relatively standard and what one would expect from a government agency.
- It provides basic or general information.

### **Messages Focus on Key Areas, But Can be Made More Effective**

Many participants described the current messaging as being at least somewhat effective in terms of encouraging/motivating them to consider working with universities/colleges to help meet their R&D needs. Many others, however, described them as not effective or not very effective in this regard. While there was no clear-cut difference between target audiences, non-NSERC clients tended to be more critical of the messaging in terms of its effectiveness.

Regardless of their assessment of the messaging, there was widespread agreement that the messaging targets the right areas when it comes to what is important in terms of R&D for business. Therefore, participants were able to offer concrete suggestions for making the current messaging more relevant to them, and more effective (see below).





## **Review of Specific Elements of Messaging**

What follows is feedback provided by participants on each of the three elements of NSERC's current messaging. This includes strengths, weaknesses, and suggested improvements for each of the elements in the messaging.

### **Find**

#### **Highly Qualified People**

**Get fresh ideas and add top talent to your staff at minimal cost**

### **Trouvez**

#### **du personnel hautement qualifié**

**Trouvez des idées nouvelles et intégrez les meilleurs chercheurs à votre personnel à un coût minime**

Not surprisingly, this element of the messaging resonated most with participants who look to universities and colleges for recruits or potential hires. It also resonated with those, especially NSERC clients, who have experience working with university or college researchers even though they do not intend to hire them as staff. For these participants, the main strength of this message is that it addresses a need they have (i.e. personnel). Some also liked the specific references to 'top talent', and 'fresh ideas' which were seen as clear benefits and/or things sought when it comes to R&D.

For most other participants, however, these same elements elicited critical feedback. Criticism tended to focus on issues of credibility and issues of benefits to industry:

- 'Find highly qualified people' did not resonate with businesses' need to find trainable, talented future personnel. Participants repeatedly noted they are looking for trainability, positive attitude and similar qualities. Some expressed the view that while new graduates may be highly "educated" being "qualified" is a function of experience.
- To some, the expressions 'Find highly qualified people' and 'add top talent to your staff' sound a little pretentious and tend to lack credibility. They sound pretentious because there is a suggestion that people from universities and colleges will come to the rescue of business. They lack credibility, at least when one thinks about students, because they may be well educated but that does not necessarily make them highly qualified or talented in terms of the needs of business.
- The expression 'add top talent to your staff at minimal cost' makes a claim that is considered not credible or realistic (i.e. top talent does not come at minimal cost). Consequently, this formulation sounds more like a marketing ploy than a credible statement.
- This part of the current messaging is not results-oriented or solution-driven. In other words, the benefit to business is not clear. For example, businesses want solutions and results not 'fresh ideas'. To the extent that they want fresh ideas, it is for the results or solutions they help bring about. Some felt that this aspect of the messaging targets people in human resources departments as opposed to people involved in R&D.

This element of the messaging also generated a few questions. Some participants in the French groups described the expression 'chercheurs' as vague, and wanted to know who this refers to (i.e. students? professors?). Some non-clients focused on the word 'Find',



wanting to know who it is that helps them find these individuals. Finally, the expression 'minimal cost' did not work well for some participants, who expressed their concern by asking 'Minimal cost but at what price?' They were thinking specifically of non-financial issues when it comes to R&D, particularly issues related to intellectual property.

Suggested improvements to this element of messaging include the following:

- Include an outcome, goal, or benefit to this messaging (e.g. 'Access qualified people to help you find solutions to your R&D needs').
- Change 'minimal cost/coût minime' to 'cost-effective manner/coût compétitif' to make the statement more credible/believable.
- Remove the word 'highly'/'hautement' to make the statement about qualifications more credible/believable.
- Replace the expression 'highly qualified people' with something less formulaic.
- Focus on attitude as well as aptitude when referring to the qualifications of potential employees.
- Shorten the statement to 'Find expertise in your area'. This could widen the appeal of the message because the focus would no longer be on finding employees.

## **Build**

### **Research Relationships**

**Develop new research collaborations with university or college researchers**

## **Établissez**

### **Des relations de recherche**

**Créez de nouvelles collaborations de recherche avec des chercheurs d'université ou de collège**

There was widespread recognition that 'collaboration' and 'building relationships' are things that are sought by business and key to success when it comes to R&D. There also tended to be agreement that this element of messaging points to a key need (i.e. collaboration/partnerships). Some also liked the use of the expression 'new' because it suggests potential or possibilities in this area.

Despite this, feedback on this element of messaging was more likely to be critical than positive. The most frequently-made criticism was that this element of messaging does not focus on goals or outcomes (e.g. collaborate to what end?). In other words, it is not results-oriented or solutions-driven, which is something that is crucial for business. Some added that the current formulation seems structured with universities in mind, not businesses (i.e. collaborate for the sake of collaboration).

For some, this statement was seen as being too vague or general. Specifically, it brought to mind certain concerns they have (or would have) in collaborating with universities or colleges such as issues related to intellectual property, and publicizing research findings. In other words, it brought to mind certain questions about the nature of these research relationships and collaborations. Non-clients were more likely to raise such issues than clients.

The most frequently-made suggestion for improving this element of messaging was to incorporate a goal or objective (e.g. 'Build research collaborations/partnerships that solve your problems'/'Créez de nouvelles collaborations de recherche pertinentes a vos



besoins'). The only other suggestion made with any frequency was to change the expression 'relationships' with 'partnerships'. The latter was seen as suggesting a form of collaboration that involves a higher degree of engagement and commitment to an outcome than the expression 'relationships'. Other suggested changes include changing the expression 'build' to 'create' or 'develop', and removing the expression 'new'.

**Advance  
Your R&D**

**Take your research and development to the next level**

**Faites  
progresser vos travaux de R et D  
Amenez vos activités de R et D à l'étape suivante**

As with the previous element, this element of messaging was most likely to elicit critical feedback from participants because of the absence of any specific goal, outcome or result. Identifying such a goal, outcome, or result is important because advancing R&D is not a goal in itself for business. In the absence of the identification of such a goal, it is unclear what value working with universities or colleges can bring to them. Some added that this absence is particularly significant because this element of messaging tends to be the overarching element when it comes to R&D. In other words, it tends to encompass and give direction to the other two. Participants routinely observed that the expression 'Take your research and development to the next level' is vague and too open-ended (not to mention overused).

Some participants also questioned the credibility of this message based on their experience working with universities and colleges (but especially the latter). By way of explanation, they re-iterated some of the problems they encounter when collaborating with college or university researchers for R&D activities. These include aligning priorities/agendas, lack of continuity in terms of staff or personnel, keeping research focused and on track, and getting college or university researchers to work within the tighter timelines businesses tend to have. These types of problems tend to 'slow down' R&D. Consequently, the idea that working with universities and colleges will 'advance' their R&D does not necessarily reflect their experience. Finally, some found the message condescending because it implies that universities and colleges are ahead of business when it comes to R&D, which is not necessarily the case.

As with the previous element of messaging, the most frequently-made suggestion for improving this element was to incorporate a goal, objective, or outcome (e.g. 'Help achieve your R&D goals' or 'Help solve your R&D problems'). Other suggestions include:

- Focus on 'innovation' instead of 'R&D'.
- Focus on 'research' as opposed to 'research and development'.
- Remove the expression 'Take your research and development to the next level' since it adds nothing new to what precedes it (i.e. it adds nothing to 'Advance your R&D').
- Place this element first among the three elements since it represents the overarching goal for business.



### Suggestion of General Nature

One suggestion of a general nature that emerged as a result of the review of current messaging was the following: incorporate concrete examples or data to back-up or validate the statements.

### **Each Element of Message Set Considered Relevant to Some Participants**

Generally speaking, all three elements in the current NSERC messaging were considered important or relevant to participants. This is not surprising, given the widespread perception that the messaging covers the essential or major aspects of R&D. Advancing R&D was most often identified as the most important element, with participants sometimes re-iterating that it is the overarching element that encompasses the other two.

There was a difference between audiences in this regard. Non-clients were more likely to identify this element as most important, while NSERC clients were more likely to have different opinions on this or to identify certain other elements as equally important to them (i.e. potential hires, research collaborations).

### **MESSAGE TESTING - POTENTIAL MESSAGES**

Following the testing of current NSERC messaging, participants were asked to review potential messages for new communications materials. Two sets of messages were reviewed in this study (labelled sets A and B). Each set contained six messages. The sets were rotated across groups so that only one set was reviewed in each group. The messages in each set were similar, the main difference being that the messages in set B included a tagline at the start of each message. The tables below identify the messages in each set.

<b>Potential Messages Set A</b>		
<b>Message</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
1	Make your research dollar go farther by working together with academic researchers.	Maximisez les retombées de vos investissements dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.
2	Access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment.	Accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.
3	Identify highly qualified future employees by working with Canada's universities or colleges.	Cernez d'éventuels employés hautement qualifiés en travaillant avec des universités ou des collèges canadiens.
4	Build research collaborations with the brightest minds through Canada's university and college networks.	Établissez des collaborations en recherche avec les plus brillants esprits par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.
5	Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada's universities and colleges.	Trouvez des solutions aux défis en R et D dans les universités et les collèges canadiens.
6	Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research.	Réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe.



Potential Messages Set B		
Message	English	French
1	Maximize your investment: leverage your research dollar by working with college or university researchers.	Optimisez votre investissement : obtenez un rendement optimal de votre investissement dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.
2	Use top technology: access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment.	Utilisez la technologie de pointe : accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.
3	Hire the Brightest: work with university and college researchers to help identify top future hires for your business.	Embauchez les plus brillants esprits : travaillez avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires afin de cerner les meilleurs employés éventuels pour votre entreprise.
4	Partner for Success: build lasting research relationships with top research minds through Canada's university and college networks.	Établissez des partenariats gagnants : établissez des relations de recherche durables avec les meilleurs chercheurs par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.
5	Work on the Leading Edge: Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada's universities/colleges.	Soyez à l'avant-garde : trouvez des solutions à vos défis en R et D dans les établissements postsecondaires canadiens.
6	Lower your risk: Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research.	Réduisez les risques : réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe.

**Overview of Findings**

The message that tested most positively in both sets was message 2 ('Access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment'/'Use top technology: access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment'). It was routinely identified as being effective for the following reasons:

- Relevance/credibility: it rings true because it identifies one of the key reasons for working with universities and colleges.
- Because it is pertinent, it piques curiosity (i.e. would want to follow-up/look for more information).
- It has an applied focus.
- The value offered is clear.
- It is short, simple, and to the point.

Message 1 tested somewhat more positively in set B than in set A. Message 6 was least likely to test positively in both its versions. The main criticism of message 6 was that the reference to risk reduction is too general and lacks credibility. Risk takes many forms and depends on context, so one cannot credibly make a blanket statement about risk reduction. Suggested improvements were to change the expression 'Reduce' to 'Manage' and to re-write the message with a positive spin (e.g. 'Increase your opportunity for success').

In the feedback provided on the potential messages, the following general suggestions or guidelines were offered routinely as ways of making the messages more effective:

- Focus on the payoff to businesses. Messages should express the benefits in terms of outcomes, not processes or research for the sake of research.



- Make statements that are concrete and specific rather than vague or general (e.g. universities and colleges instead of post-secondary institutions).
- Shorter is better.
- Pique curiosity/interest.
- Ensure that the value-added is clear.
- Use language and expressions that are familiar to business and important to them.
- Avoid statements that seem to make questionable claims.
- Avoid statements that seem pretentious or even pompous.
- Avoid stock-phrases or formulaic expressions.

### **Review of Specific Messages**

What follows is detailed feedback provided by participants on the potential messages. Given that messages in each set were similar except that those in set B included a tagline, they will be presented and reported on as paired sets (e.g. message 1A and 1B, message 2A and 2B). Differences in feedback or perceptions regarding specific versions of a message are identified wherever such differences presented themselves.

#### **Messages 1A and 1B**

- ***Make your research dollar go farther by working together with academic researchers. / Optimisez votre investissement : obtenez un rendement optimal de votre investissement dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.***
- ***Maximize your investment: leverage your research dollar by working with college or university researchers. / Optimisez votre investissement : obtenez un rendement optimal de votre investissement dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.***

Perceived strengths of both versions included references to value for money, achieving efficiencies, and the focus on a return, pay-off, or result. More generally, participants liked the fact the messages speak to the financial aspect of their business, which is a key issue.

Version B of this message tested much more positively than version A. These strengths were much more likely to be identified in version B. Participants reviewing version B reacted positively to the terms 'maximize'/'optimisez' and 'leverage'/'rendement optimal'. These were described as terms that business uses, understands, and considers important. As such, they are attention-grabbing and tend to pique one's curiosity. By comparison, those reviewing version A often described the expression 'make your research dollar go farther' as vague and indefinite, and therefore lacking in terms of making one want to go on to seek more information.

Another routinely-identified weakness in version A was the reference to 'academic researchers'. This expression did not resonate with participants because the term 'academic' suggests research for the sake of research, which is not the reason that businesses undertake research. By comparison, the reference in version B to 'college or university researchers' tended to elicit a positive reaction. In explaining why, participants explained that the expression is concrete and suggests a certain degree and level of expertise. It is worth noting that participants in the French groups tended to react critically to the expression 'chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires' in both versions. They tended to describe it as weak and vague (i.e. who is being referred to... students, professors?).



A number of participants described the statements as credible or reasonable, though NSERC clients were more likely to think this than non-clients. The question of credibility was more likely to be raised in the French groups, where participants sometimes drew attention to the expression 'obtenez un rendement optimal' used in both versions. The term 'optimal' was considered too strong by some. A few non-clients questioned the reasonableness of the claim made in both messages, explaining that the connection between the two parts of the message is not clear to them (i.e. the link between maximizing results and working with researchers). In this regard it was observed that there is no clear connection between spending/investing in research and a return on the investment.

Frequently-made suggestions for improving these messages include the following:

- Changing 'academic researchers' to 'university/college researchers (version A)
- Changing 'make your research dollar go farther' (version A) to something more definite and concrete.
- Changing 'chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires' to 'chercheurs universitaires et collégiaux' (both versions).
- Shortening the messages. This includes shortening version A to 'Make your research dollar go farther', shortening version B so that it ends after the word 'dollar', and shortening versions A and B in French so that they end with the word 'chercheurs'.

Other suggestions include changing the expressions 'working with' and 'working together with' to 'collaborating with', changing 'obtenez un rendement optimal' to 'maximiser votre rendement', and adding the word 'développement' (i.e. recherche et développement).

**In order to avoid repetition when identifying suggestions for improving subsequent messages, the following should be noted: In every message where reference is made to 'academic researchers' and 'post-secondary researchers' and 'post-secondary institutions', participants routinely suggested replacing these with reference to 'universities and colleges' and 'university and college researchers'. Therefore, this suggested improvement should be taken for granted in any message that includes such references.**

#### Messages 2A and 2B

- ***Access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment. / Accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.***
- ***Use top technology: access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment. / Utilisez la technologie de pointe : accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.***

In both versions, this message was the one that tested most positively with participants. It was routinely identified as effective for the following reasons:

- Relevance/credibility: it rings true because it identifies one of the key reasons for working with universities and colleges.
- Because it is pertinent, it piques curiosity (i.e. participants would want to follow-up on it and look for more information).



- It has an applied focus and points to the solution of a problem or satisfaction of a need.
- It is comprehensive/multi-faceted (i.e. it focuses on the need for people, facilities, and equipment).
- The value offered is clear. This includes not only providing what may be lacking in-house, but lending credibility to research through third-party verification.
- The message is short, simple, and to the point.

Perceived weaknesses or criticisms were relatively limited and focused on the following:

- The message is seen to be a little formulaic/standard, and therefore a little stale.
- The message raised an amber light because it sounds like these services could be costly.
- The expression “Use top technology” in version B is somewhat subjective, because what qualifies as top technology can be a matter of debate, depending on one’s field.
- The expression “Use top technology” in version B will not resonate with businesses who do not use top technology.
- It is unclear where the focus lies in version B. Specifically, technology differs from expertise so there seems to be a bit of mixed messaging.
- The claim could be interpreted as arrogant and one-sided, (and therefore not credible) by businesses who have leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment and by firms that universities and colleges go to for help instead of the reverse.

Generally-speaking, these issues were more likely to be raised by non-clients.

Suggested improvements to these messages were limited to the following and were not identified frequently:

- Shorten the messages (i.e. ‘Access leading edge expertise’ and ‘Use advanced technology’).
- Change the expression ‘equipment’ to ‘technology’ in version A.
- Remove the expression ‘Use top technology’ in version B.
- Revise both French versions as follows (see bolded text): ‘Utilisez la technologie de pointe : accédez **rapidement** à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l’appareillage de pointe’.

#### Messages 3A and 3B

- ***Identify highly qualified future employees by working with Canada’s universities or colleges. / Cerner d’éventuels employés hautement qualifiés en travaillant avec des universités ou des collèges canadiens.***
- ***Hire the Brightest: work with university and college researchers to help identify top future hires for your business. / Embauchez les plus brillants esprits : travaillez avec des chercheurs d’établissements postsecondaires afin de cerner les meilleurs employés éventuels pour votre entreprise.***





Reaction to both versions of this message tended to be mixed, with participants routinely identifying strengths and weaknesses in the messaging. Those who reacted most positively to the messages were participants who tend to look to universities and colleges as a source of potential employees. Among these participants, elements that resonated positively include references to 'future employees' and 'future hires' because this addresses a need. Many also liked the focus on working with universities and colleges as a way of identifying potential employees because it involves a vetting process that reduces the risk of hiring people who may not be qualified. A few, however, saw an amber light, suggesting that they are taking the risks, while universities and colleges are reaping the benefits by getting employment for their graduates.

Some participants were more likely to be neutral or indifferent to these messages, observing that they do not look to universities and colleges for potential employees. Because of this, the messages do not resonate with them.

Regardless of whether or not they look there for employees, participants reacted positively to the reference to 'Canada's universities and colleges' instead of referring to 'academic researchers' and/or 'post-secondary institutions'. Some participants also reacted positively to the qualifiers used to identify potential employees or future hires (i.e. 'the brightest', and 'top'). In explaining why, these participants observed that such qualifiers are attention-grabbing and point to a good investment. Most participants however, tended to react critically to the use of these qualifiers. Reasons routinely given to explain why include the following:

- The expression 'highly qualified' was seen to be not only formulaic and overused, but was also viewed as potentially inaccurate. While people recruited from universities and colleges may be well trained, that does not necessarily mean that they are highly qualified.
- Expressions like 'highly qualified' and 'brightest' focus on aptitude but not attitude (e.g. enthusiasm), which is also important to businesses when they consider hiring.
- The expression 'Hire the brightest' was seen to be overused and presumptuous. Some specified that it is presumptuous because the sector in which they work is so specialized that people in universities and colleges do not typically have the appropriate skill set required. Others described the statement as presumptuous because the goal of their research is commercialization and they are skeptical that anyone coming straight out of college or university can help them with this.

A few participants did not understand the structure of the message in version 2 (i.e. a tagline followed by a statement). As a result, they suggested that there is mixed messaging because of the reference to both 'hiring' and 'working with universities'.

Frequently-made suggestions for improving these messages include the following:

- Shorten version A to 'Identify highly qualified future employees.'
- Change 'highly qualified' to 'well trained' (version A).
- Change 'future' to 'potential' (version A)
- Focus on attitude as well as aptitude (e.g. 'Identify highly qualified and motivated future employees').



Other suggestions include the following:

- Change version A to 'Network with university and college researchers to help identify top future hires for your business.'
- Cut the term 'éventuels' (version B).
- Change the expression 'chercheurs' to something clearer and more definite.
- Revise version B in French as follows (see bolded text): 'Collaborez avec les plus brillants esprits'.

#### Messages 4A and 4B

- ***Build research collaborations with the brightest minds through Canada's university and college networks. / Établissez des collaborations en recherche avec les plus brillants esprits par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.***
- ***Partner for Success: build lasting research relationships with top research minds through Canada's university and college networks. / Établissez des partenariats gagnants : établissez des relations de recherche durables avec les meilleurs chercheurs par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.***

Reaction to both versions of this message tended to be critical, and to focus on two aspects of the messaging:

- *Lack of a goal/objective:* Participants routinely criticized both versions of this message for the absence of any business-related goal or objective in entering into research collaborations with universities and colleges. While some observed that it is important for them to build research collaborations, they added that this is not done for the sake of entering such relationships. Some added that these messages tend to reflect the attitude to research in universities and colleges as opposed to the attitude taken by businesses.
- *Presumptuous assumption about universities and colleges:* This messaging was also routinely criticized for the assumption that the 'brightest' or 'top' minds are in Canada's universities and colleges. If not untrue, it is an exaggeration to say this. Moreover, it seems to suggest that universities and colleges are doing businesses a favour by letting them engage in collaborative research.

Participants did react positively to certain aspects of the messaging, including:

- The focus on building research collaborations/a collaborative approach.
- The idea of engaging a broader community and networks.
- The idea of a relationship with universities and colleges specifically, because of the credibility and prestige this confers.
- The emphasis on a long-term relationship (version B).
- The reference to success (version B)

At the same time, participants observed that these positive aspects need to be anchored and contextualized in a vision of the collaborative process that addresses the needs or interests of business. Indeed, the suggestion offered most often to improve these messages was to include a goal or outcome that will resonate with a business audience.



Other suggestions include the following:

- Change the expression ‘Canada’s university and college networks’/‘réseaux d’établissements postsecondaires du Canada’. In addition to being too long it sounds too bureaucratic.
- Shorten version A to ‘Collaborate with the brightest minds through Canada’s university and college networks.’
- Change version B to ‘Network for success: build lasting research relationships through Canada’s universities and colleges’.
- Remove the reference to ‘the brightest minds’ (version A) and ‘top research minds’ (version B), or do not use the superlative case (e.g. use ‘bright minds’).
- Focus on attitude not just aptitude (e.g. refer to ‘interested/motivated/creative minds’.
- Use term ‘research’ only once in version B.
- Include the expression ‘profitable’ in both versions (e.g. ‘Build profitable research collaborations through Canada’s university and college networks’).

#### Messages 5A and 5B

- ***Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada’s universities and colleges. / Trouvez des solutions aux défis en R et D dans les universités et les collèges canadiens.***
- ***Work on the Leading Edge: Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada’s universities/colleges. / Soyez à l’avant-garde : trouvez des solutions à vos défis en R et D dans les établissements postsecondaires canadiens.***

Reactions to both versions of this message were mixed, with participants routinely pointing to both strengths and weaknesses in the messaging. Overall, however, version B tested more positively than version A.

What participants were most likely to view positively, as well as identify as the main strength in this message, was the reference to ‘finding solutions’. Some compared this message favourably to the version of message 4 they reviewed, recalling that the latter lacked a goal or objective that represents a clear benefit to business. Many also liked the use of the term ‘your’ in reference to finding solutions because it personalizes the benefit. Participants also routinely described the message as short and sweet. Positive assessments of version B included reference to the tagline ‘Work on the leading edge’.

Critical feedback tended to focus on two aspects of the messaging. First, many observed that while the message includes a reference to a goal or objective (i.e. finding solutions to R&D challenges), the goal is rather vague or indefinite. In this sense, some criticized the message for being too general and not really saying anything. Second, a number of participants detected a negative undertone to the message, which suggests that businesses cannot solve their own R&D problems. The corollary to this was that universities and colleges can solve these problems, which sounds pretentious. Another perceived negative undertone to the messaging was identified as the portrayal of R&D as a challenge instead of as an opportunity.



There was also some questioning by participants of the credibility of the message. While some described the idea of finding solutions to their R&D problems as a strong but credible claim, others felt it is too strong a claim to make. Specifically, there was a sense that the reference to 'finding solutions' is too categorical and therefore too optimistic. Some also felt that the reference to working on the leading edge in version B is presumptuous for two reasons. First, it is a blanket or general claim that cannot be justified because in many areas it is businesses, not universities and colleges that are at the forefront. Secondly, the expression itself is vague and somewhat arbitrary (i.e. what constitutes leading edge?).

Suggested improvements to these messages include the following:

- Change/shorten version A to: 'Your R&D solutions are at Canada's universities and colleges'.
- Remove the expression 'to your R&D challenges' in both versions.
- Change both versions as follows (see bolded text): '**Develop** solutions to your R&D challenges **with** Canada's universities and colleges'.
- Change both versions as follows (see bolded text): Find **support for** your R&D challenges at Canada's universities and colleges'.
- Remove the reference to 'Work on the leading edge' in version B.
- Remove the reference to 'development' in both versions and refer only to 'research'.

#### Messages 6A and 6B

- ***Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research. / Réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe.***
- ***Lower your risk: Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research. Réduisez les risques : réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe.***

In both versions, this message was the one that tested least positively with participants. It was routinely criticized for one main reason: its blanket claim about risk reduction. Most participants do not consider it credible to talk about risk reduction in a general way because risk takes many forms. Therefore, one cannot realistically claim to reduce risk across the board. Such a statement simply does not reflect reality, and therefore it does not identify an actual benefit for business. Some added that the lack of credibility is heightened by the fact that the statement refers specifically to reducing risk in relation to leading-edge research.

Other criticisms included the following:

- The specific reference to leading edge research limits the relevance of the message in two ways: first, its relevance is limited to businesses that engage in such research (most likely large firms, according to some); second, its relevance is limited to businesses that would go to universities and colleges for this reason.
- The reference to risk actually serves to heighten awareness of it instead of minimizing it (i.e. it makes it more of a concern instead of less of a concern).



- The terms 'lower' and 'risk' are not inherently positive, with the result that the messaging tends to focus on something negative.

Suggested improvements to the messaging included the following:

- Remove the reference to 'leading edge research' so that the message has a wider appeal.
- Soften the message by using the expression 'manage your risk' instead of 'reduce' or 'lower'.
- Change the message so as to give it a positive spin (e.g. 'Increase your chances of success').

### Suggestions of a General Nature

As noted when reviewing the first set of potential messages (i.e. 1 A and B), there was a widespread impression among participants that new NSERC messaging should refer to 'universities and colleges' or 'university and college researchers' rather than 'academic researchers', 'post-secondary researchers', or 'post-secondary institutions'. While not identified frequently, two other suggestions of a general nature were made regarding possible new messaging:

- *Use of a preamble:* If possible, new messages should include a general preamble referencing universities and colleges. In that way, this would not have to be revisited in each specific message. This would have the benefit of shortening each message, something participants generally favoured.
- *Among non-clients:* some participants felt that more specific terms than R&D would make them respond more positively. Some, especially smaller firms, noted that they do not see themselves as doing R&D; rather, terms such as "product development" were more applicable to their business, and would help them see the relevance to their business.
- *Combining messages:* Some of the potential messages complement one another, and therefore might be combined effectively. In at least one session, it was suggested that the following messages could possibly be combined: , messages 1 and 6, messages 2 and 5, and messages 3 and 4.

### **Targeting of Messaging and How it Would Influence Decision-Making is Likely to Vary by Firm Size**

When asked who within a business *should* be the right audience for such messaging, participants routinely observed that this would vary depending on the size of the firm. In smaller firms, for example, where there might be little or no division of labour, it would likely be the owner. In larger firms, it could be the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, the head of the R&D department (if there is one), or the head of human resources.

In some of the later focus groups, participants were probed further and asked if communications material such as this would likely be reviewed by the ultimate decision maker in the company regarding R&D-related decisions. Excluding small firms, where this could be the case, there was relatively widespread agreement that decision makers in larger firms would not be likely to see or review actual communications materials. The more likely scenario would be that someone else would review this material, digest it, and then present the gist of it to the decision-maker as a possibility to consider.



## WORD TESTING

Following the testing of potential messages for new communications materials, participants were asked to review sets of key words, or expressions sometimes used by NSERC in messaging related to R&D. Each set of expressions included two or three alternatives, and the goal was to explore which alternative(s) were most relevant or effective in the eyes of participants. In total, 12 sets of expressions were reviewed. These were divided into two sets of six expressions each (labelled sets A and B). As with the potential messages, the sets were rotated across the focus groups so that only one set was reviewed in each group.<sup>3</sup>

The table below identifies the expressions in each set.

<b>Lexicon Set A</b>		
<b>Expressions</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
1	partner / collaborate / participate	établir un partenariat / collaborer / participer
2	leverage / match funds / contribute	verser un financement de contrepartie / contribuer / créer un effet de levier
3	company / industrial partner / business	entreprise/ partenaire industriel / compagnie
4	highly qualified people"/ talent / new hires	personnes hautement qualifiées / employés de Talent/ recrues
5	funding opportunity / grant / government program	possibilité de financement / subvention / programme gouvernemental
6	post-secondary researcher / academic researcher	chercheur d'établissements postsecondaire / chercheur d'une université (ou d'un collège)
<b>Lexicon Set B</b>		
<b>Expressions</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>French</b>
1	results / solutions / impacts / advances	solutions / résultats / percées
2	applied research / basic research	recherche appliquée / recherche fondamentale
3	Technology Transfer Office / Industry Liaison Office	bureau de transfert de la technologie / bureau de liaison avec l'industrie
4	match making event / mixer event / networking event	activité de jumelage / activité de rencontre / activité de réseautage
5	innovation / research and development	innovation / recherche et développement
6	connect / meet	Établir des liens / rencontrer

## Overview of Findings

Generally-speaking, expressions preferred by participants (i.e. those considered more effective and relevant to them) tended to embody one or both of the following

<sup>3</sup> The expressions were tested in all groups except for the first set of groups in Ottawa. As noted in the introduction, the Ottawa groups served to pre-test the moderator's guide and the overall approach (including the timing allotted to each topic/issue). The pre-test revealed that the initial approach did not provide sufficient time to review the sets of expressions related to R&D. As this exercise was important to NSERC, adjustments were made following these focus groups to ensure sufficient time to test the expressions in all subsequent groups.



characteristics: focus on outcomes, results, or benefits; and have a definite, clear, or concrete reference as opposed to an indefinite, vague or general reference. Specifically, the following expressions were routinely preferred by participants:

- ‘Partner’ and ‘collaborate’ over ‘participate’.
- ‘Leverage’ over ‘match funds’ or ‘contribute’.
- ‘Talent’ over ‘highly qualified people’ or ‘new hires’.
- ‘Grant’ over ‘funding opportunity’ or ‘government program’.
- ‘Results’ over ‘solutions’ to ‘impacts’ and ‘advances’.
- ‘Applied research’ over ‘basic research’.
- ‘Networking event’ over ‘match making event’ or ‘mixer event’.
- ‘Innovation’ over ‘research and development’.
- ‘Connect’ over ‘meet’.

Participants tended to have no strong preferences when it comes to the expressions company / industrial partner / business, often observing that use can vary depending on context or circumstances. However, some participants noted that “partner” denoted a greater stake in the project by the researcher and so was preferred on that basis. Preferences were generally divided when it came to a choice between ‘Technology Transfer Office’ and ‘Industry Liaison Office’.

In terms of the choice between ‘post-secondary researcher’ and ‘academic researcher’, there was widespread preference for a third option: ‘researcher’ (because both terms, ‘past-secondary’ and ‘academic’ were viewed as being not very business-like). In the French groups, the choice was between ‘chercheur d’établissements postsecondaire’ and ‘chercheur d’une université (ou d’un collègue)’. The latter expression was widely preferred.

### **Review of Specific Words/Phrases**

What follows is detailed feedback provided by participants on each of the 12 sets of words/phrases. The sets are organized into three categories: those that elicited clear preferences, those that tended to elicit mixed impressions, and those that tended to elicit no strong preference. Consequently, sets of statements will not be reviewed sequentially, in the order in which they are presented in the table above (i.e. the statements in Set A followed by those in Set B). Rather, the statements will be reviewed based on the extent to which they elicited preferences among participants. That being said, when reviewing the feedback provided by participants it is important to remember that each set of statements was reviewed by approximately half the participants, not by all participants.

### **Statements that Elicited Clear Preferences**

- ***applied research / basic research***
- ***recherche appliquée / recherche fondamentale***

The expression ‘applied research’ was almost unanimously preferred to ‘basic research’. The main reason was its emphasis on practical results or useful/implementable research. In short, it expresses the type of research typically undertaken by business. By comparison, ‘basic research’ sounds too academic or theoretical and conveys the idea of doing research for the sake of research. A few also preferred ‘applied’ to ‘basic’ research because it makes research sound tailored and specific, while ‘basic research’ sounds generic.



Participants who preferred the expression ‘basic research’ explained that this is the type of research they tend to engage in. Therefore, the expression speaks to them in the same way that ‘applied research’ speaks to others (i.e. it conforms to their basic understanding of what they do when they do research). Indeed, some participants observed that one’s preference depends on the type of research one does or wants to do.

- ***post-secondary researcher / academic researcher***
- ***chercheur d’établissements postsecondaire / chercheur d’une université (ou d’un collègue)***

When it came to the choice between ‘post-secondary researcher’ and ‘academic researcher’ in the English groups, there was widespread preference for a third option: ‘researcher’, pure and simple. In the French groups, there was a widespread preference for the expression ‘chercheur d’une université (ou d’un collègue)’. It should be noted here that when reviewing potential messages, participants in the English groups had routinely observed that they would prefer references to ‘universities and/or colleges’ over references to ‘post-secondary institutions’ or ‘academic researchers’. Consequently, it is safe to assume that English-speaking participants, like their French-speaking counterparts, would prefer the expression ‘university and/or college researcher’ (even though this option was not presented to them when testing expressions).

In explaining why they did not like the expression ‘academic’, participants in the English groups routinely indicated that it suggests research that is theoretical as opposed to practical, or research undertaken for the sake of research (i.e. without a specific purpose or goal). They explained that this is not the type of research that they tend to undertake. For their part, participants in the French groups routinely explained their preference for the expression ‘chercheur d’une université (ou d’un collègue)’ by saying that it is more concrete and specific, and sounds higher calibre than *chercheur d’établissements postsecondaire*. These views were echoed in the English groups, where participants described the expression ‘post-secondary researcher’ as vague and said that it actually makes them focus on the word ‘secondary’ as opposed to the expression ‘post’. In other words, it makes some think of a lower level of education and/or lower degree of expertise or qualification (i.e. high school).

- ***connect / meet***
- ***Établir des liens / rencontrer***

The expression ‘connect’ was widely preferred to the expression ‘meet’. Routinely-given reasons to explain this preference include the following:

- It has a clearer, more definite meaning than the expression ‘meet’. There is a focus on networking and possible collaboration, whereas ‘meeting’ is much more vague or indefinite in meaning.
- It is result or goal-oriented, while ‘meeting’ is open-ended.

It is seen to be a more accurate expression in this context, in that it suggests a professional encounter. By comparison, ‘meeting’ tends to suggest a personal or non-professional encounter.





- ***funding opportunity*** / ***grant*** / ***government program***
- ***possibilité de financement*** / ***subvention*** / ***programme gouvernemental***

The expression ‘grant’ was widely preferred to ‘funding opportunity’ or ‘government program’, especially in the English groups. In the French groups, a number of participants preferred ‘possibilité de financement’ or a variation on it, such as ‘possibilité d’appui financier’ or ‘opportunité de financement’.

The expression ‘grant’ was preferred primarily because of the clarity of the expression. A grant was routinely described as funding or money that does not have to be repaid or that comes with few if any obligations or requirements. By comparison, the expression ‘funding opportunity’ seemed more nebulous and could entail any number of conditions or requirements (e.g. interest rates, the need to pay the money back). To some, a ‘funding opportunity’ also sounds more precarious or less certain than a ‘grant’. Some participants in the French groups who preferred the expression ‘possibilité de financement’ explained that the expression ‘subvention’ brings to mind social assistance (bien être social).

Some NSERC clients preferred the expression ‘government program’, explaining that it implies the idea of a formal structure or framework and thereby provides a sense of credibility.

- ***match making event*** / ***mixer event*** / ***networking event***
- ***activité de jumelage*** / ***activité de rencontre*** / ***activité de réseautage***

In the English groups, the expression ‘networking event’ was widely preferred to ‘match making event’ or ‘mixer event’. However, in the French groups ‘activité de jumelage’ was preferred to ‘activité de rencontre’ or ‘activité de réseautage’.

The main reason for preferring the expression ‘networking event’ was the emphasis on making contacts, and by implication the formal/professional nature of the encounter. By comparison, it was suggested that the expressions ‘match making event’ and ‘mixer event’ have a more social, informal meaning. It was suggested, for example, that a match making event sounds like an event organized for people to meet a possible mate, while a ‘mixer event’ sounds like something that happens on university and college campuses (i.e. getting professors and students together or upper and lower level students). ‘Mixer event’ was also described by some as too vague and indefinite an expression, with no clear goal implied or suggested.

Those who preferred the expression ‘mixer event’ suggested that it conveys the idea of a shared interest, while the preference in French groups for ‘activité de jumelage’ was based on the impression that it suggests the idea of a payoff or benefit.

Other possibilities that were suggested include ‘collaborative event’ and ‘activité de maillage’.

- ***innovation*** / ***research and development***
- ***innovation*** / ***recherche et développement***

While some participants expressed no preference, and suggested that either expression could be used, most preferred ‘innovation’ to ‘research and development’. The most frequently-given reason was that ‘innovation’ is more goal- or result-oriented than



‘research and development’. In this regard, some explained that research and development (especially ‘research’) is the process, while innovation is the goal. Some suggested that the term ‘innovation’ focuses on inventing, which is what they see themselves as doing. In this sense, ‘innovation’ is the better term because it coincides with the self-perception some have of themselves. Finally, it was suggested that innovation as a term captures the excitement involved in the research process. By comparison, ‘research and development’ gives the impression of a long drawn out process that may or may not yield any practical results.

Participants who preferred the expression ‘research and development’ either explained that it is a commonly used and understood expression, or suggested that it is the more fundamental expression because ‘innovation’ presupposes ‘research and development’.

‘Innovative research’ and simply ‘research’ were suggested as possible alternatives.

- **results / solutions / impacts / advances**
- **solutions / résultats / percées**

‘Results’ and ‘solutions’ were widely preferred as expressions to ‘impacts’ and ‘advances’. Of the two, however, ‘results’ was more likely to be preferred. While both were routinely described as focusing on achieving an end or accomplishing a goal, ‘results’ was more likely to be described as an expression that businesses use. Participants often said they like it because it conveys the idea of a concrete or practical end. By comparison, a solution may solve a problem, but not necessarily with a practical result (e.g. solving a mathematical problem). The expression ‘results’ resonated especially with non-clients, while NSERC clients were more likely to express a preference for one or the other of these two expressions.

Participants who did not choose ‘results’ or ‘solutions’ were more likely to prefer the expression ‘advances’. In explaining why, they usually said that it conveys the idea of innovation and discovery and of going deeper/pushing the envelope. Some also said that the expression is not often used and therefore has the charm of novelty. On the critical side, it was suggested that the expression seems to apply more specifically to certain fields (e.g. medicine) and therefore may not be relevant to businesses in general.

### Statements that Tended to Elicit Mixed Impressions

- **leverage / match funds / contribute**
- **verser un financement de contrepartie / contribuer / créer un effet de levier**

The expression ‘leverage’ was widely preferred to ‘match funds’ or ‘contribute’, particularly in the English groups. Nearly all those who did not prefer ‘leverage’ chose ‘contribute’ instead of ‘match funds’. In the French groups, participants tended to be split between a preference for ‘créer un effet de levier’ (‘leverage’) and ‘contribuer’ (‘contribute’).

‘Leverage’ was often described as a term that is commonly used by industry and therefore relevant. Participants often said they like it because it conveys a sense of dynamism. More specifically, it conveys ideas of development, of synergies, or of multiplicative effects. Some said they like it because it is more goal-oriented than the other two terms. Finally, a few said they prefer it because it has a strategic sense that is adaptable to



different situations (i.e. it is a versatile term that can mean different things in different contexts).

Reasons for preferring the term 'contribute' included the impression that it emphasizes the idea of cooperation, and conveys the idea of giving with no strings attached. By comparison, one of the reasons 'match funds' tended to be criticized was because it conveys the idea of funding that is conditional or has strings attached. Others did not like it because it suggests to them the idea of a ceiling or upper limit based on a 50/50 split in funding. A few explained that the expression has a governmental ring to it, reminding them of shared-cost programs between the federal and provincial governments. Finally, some participants in the French groups found the expression itself long and heavy (i.e. 'verser un financement de contrepartie').

- ***partner / collaborate / participate***
- ***établir un partenariat / collaborer / participer***

The expressions 'partner' and 'collaborate' were clearly preferred to the term 'participate'. Both 'partner' and 'collaborate' were described as effective and relevant to participants because they clearly point to the idea of working together in a way that is mutually beneficial and implies a shared interest or shared stake. By comparison, the expression 'participate' was regularly described as vague or indefinite.

When it came to a choice between the expressions 'partner' and 'collaborate', however, participants tended to be divided. Those who preferred the expression 'partner' explained that the former implies a relationship that is more formal, definite, or permanent, and that suggests a higher degree of commitment or engagement to an outcome than the expression 'collaborate'. This is something they tend to want or look for when it comes to working with universities or colleges.

On the other hand, those who preferred the expression 'collaborate' explained that they like the more fluid, open-ended sense conveyed by the expression. What they do not like about 'partner' is precisely the more formal, permanent, legalistic implications of the expression. Some explained, for example, that 'partner' sounds too bureaucratic and suggests the idea of red tape and having to jump through administrative hoops. A few others said the expression makes them a little uncomfortable because it conveys a sense of being tied into something long-term that is not completely clear or would need to be specified (i.e. what type of partnership?). By comparison, collaborating is less formal. It could potentially lead to a partnership, but it does not necessarily imply one.

There was no clear-cut difference between NSERC clients and non-clients regarding these expressions, with members of both audiences preferring one or the other. That being said, in the English groups clients were generally more likely to prefer the expression 'partner', while non-clients were more likely to prefer the expression 'collaborate'. In the French groups, non-clients were more likely to prefer the expression 'collaborer', while clients tended to prefer a third option: 'coopérer' ('to cooperate').

- ***Technology Transfer Office / Industry Liaison Office***
- ***Bureau de transfert de la technologie / bureau de liaison avec l'industrie***

Participants tended to be divided when it came to the choice between 'Technology Transfer Office' and 'Industry Liaison Office', though there was no evident difference by



audience type. Though divided, however, participants were more likely to prefer the expression 'Industry Liaison Office'. Reasons given for this preference include the following:

- It suggests the idea of cooperation
- It is welcoming or inviting
- It is an accurate description of what such an office does
- The expression focuses on the business/puts it front and centre.

In some cases, participants explained why they preferred this expression by pointing out what they didn't like about the expression 'Technology Transfer Office'. This includes the following:

- The word 'transfer' suggests the idea of giving something up. Businesses can be sensitive about this, especially as it concerns issues of intellectual property. It was suggested in this regard that the word transfer be cut from this expression.
- The expression has a 'gatekeeper' feeling to it, suggesting a barrier business has to cross or breach.

The main reason given for preferring 'Technology Transfer Office' was the dynamic nature of the expression. Specifically, it emphasizes activity and gives the impression of doing something.

Some participants expressed no preference and thought either expression could be used. It was also suggested that the expressions actually suggest different things, and therefore that both should be used. Finally, 'Project management office' was suggested as an alternative expression.

- ***highly qualified people*** / ***talent*** / ***new hires***
- ***personnes hautement qualifiées*** / ***employés de talent/ recrues***

The expression 'talent' was widely preferred to 'highly qualified people' or 'new hires' in the English groups. In the French groups, participants tended to be divided by audience. Non-clients tended to prefer the expression 'personnes qualifiées' (instead of 'personnes hautement qualifiées'), while most clients felt that each expression could be used. A couple, however, preferred 'employés de talent'.

Participants often explained their preference for 'talent' by observing that it suggests a range of attributes that people in industry are typically looking for in people they work with or hire. This includes expertise, enthusiasm, creativity, and potential. Some said they prefer the expression because it is simple and clear.

Those who did not prefer 'talent' were more likely to prefer the expression 'highly qualified people'. Those who preferred this expression tended to focus on the word 'highly', explaining that it sets the bar high in terms of qualifications, with a focus on the best and the brightest. It should be noted, however, that few participants actually preferred this expression. Indeed, the expression was much more likely to be criticized for being too formulaic and overused. Many also felt that it focuses only on aptitude (i.e. expertise), and not attitude which is something important to business. Others felt that the expression is not accurate in the context of someone coming directly from a college or university. They explained that while these people have expertise, they are not necessarily highly qualified



because the latter requires on-the-job training and experience. In other words, the expression lacks a bit of credibility because it suggests that someone is fully job-ready, which is rarely if ever the case with new hires or recruits.

Those who preferred the expression 'new hires' said they liked the reference to newness and youth it implies. On the other hand, others felt that the term 'new' suggests a lack of experience (e.g. junior employees or neophytes).

### **Statements that Elicited No Strong Preference**

- ***company / industrial partner / business***
- ***entreprise/ partenaire industriel / compagnie***

While many participants expressed a preference for one or another of these alternatives, preferences did not tend to be strong or categorical. Of the three, the expression 'business' was most likely to be preferred, and the preference usually explained on the basis of common usage or self-identification (i.e. it is the term commonly used or the one participants themselves typically use to refer to their organization). There was a relatively widespread impression that all three expressions were relevant or could be used, and that the extent to which one was more appropriate than another would depend on circumstances or context.





**APPENDIX**







## Recruitment Screener

### Profile characteristics:

- 16 focus groups in eight locations (2 per city): Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, and Halifax. Groups in Montreal and Quebec City to be conducted in French, the rest in English.
- All businesses taking part in this study must be active in terms of undertaking R&D.
- All participants to be corporate executives: manager or director level employees that work on R&D at the business.
- In each location, one focus group would be conducted with existing NSERC clients, and one group with potential clients. Lists to be used to support recruitment.
- In each group there will be a mix of participants by firm size and sector.
- 10 participants to be recruited for 7-8 to show per group.
- Participants to be paid \$200.
- Sponsorship of study to be revealed (i.e. NSERC/Government of Canada).
- Groups to last two hours and be conducted in regular focus group facilities.

### Distribution of groups:

Date:	March 4	March 5	March 6	March 7
Location:	Ottawa	Toronto	Calgary	Vancouver
6:00 pm	Clients	Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients
8:00 pm	Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients	Clients
Location:		Saskatoon	Quebec City	Halifax
6:00 pm		Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients
8:00 pm		Clients	Non-clients	Clients
Location:		Montreal		
6:00 pm		Clients		
8:00 pm		Non-clients		



**Recruitment Screener**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling on behalf of Phoenix, a public opinion research firm. We've been commissioned by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), an agency of the Government of Canada, to conduct a series of discussion groups with business executives of companies that undertake research and development, R&D.

Each discussion group will last up to two hours. People who take part will receive a cash honorarium of \$200 to thank them for their time, and light refreshments will be served. Participation in the research is completely voluntary. All information collected in the discussion group will be used for research purposes only, in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

Before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix of people in each of the groups. May I ask you a few questions?

- Yes
- No (THANK AND DISCONTINUE)

**ASK NSERC CLIENTS:**

1. Your name and contact information were provided to us by NSERC because your company takes part in one or more NSERC programs to support your R&D activities. Could you please confirm for me that this is accurate - that your business does use one or more NSERC programs to help you with your R&D requirements?

- Yes 1 CONTINUE
- No 2 EXPLORE TO ENSURE FIRM IS NOT AN NSERC CLIENT. THANK AND DISCONTINUE

**ASK NON-CLIENTS:**

2. Is your company actively involved in research and development, R&D, in support of your business? This can be R&D related to new products, processes or services.

- Yes 1 CONTINUE
- No 2 EXPLORE TO ENSURE FIRM IS NOT ACTIVE IN R&D. THANK AND DISCONTINUE

**ASK EVERYONE:**

3. We need to speak with a manager or director in your company that has direct, hands-on responsibility for R&D activities undertaken by your business. Are you the best person to speak with about this or is there some other manager in your company better placed to discuss related issues?

- Yes, respondent is responsible for R&D 1 CONTINUE
- No, someone else in company is responsible FOR 2 GET NAME/CONTACT INFO OTHER INDIVIDUAL. CONTACT HIM/HER.



4. Approximately how many people work in your company in Canada? Please include part-time employees as full-time equivalents. READ LIST IF NECESSARY; GET MIX.

- Under 10 employees 1
- 10-25 employees 2
- 26-50 employees 3
- 50-100 employees 4
- Over 100 employees 5

5. In what industry or sector does your business operate? If you are active in more than one sector, please identify the sector most relevant to your company's R&D activities.

Record sector: \_\_\_\_\_

ASK NON-CLIENTS:

6. Approximately how many years has your company been in operation? THANK AND DISCONTINUE IF FIRM HAS BEEN IN OPERATION FOR TWO YEARS OR LESS.

Record number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever attended a discussion group or interview which was arranged in advance and for which you received a small sum of money?

- Yes 1
- No 2 GO TO END SECTION

8. Within the past two years, have you attended a discussion group or interview on the topic of research and development?

- Yes 1 THANK AND DISCONTINUE
- No 2

**RECORD GENDER BY OBSERVATION**

- Female 1
- Male 2

The group discussion will take place on (DAY OF WEEK), (MARCH/DATE), at (TIME). It will last two hours. People who attend will receive \$200 to thank them for their time, and light refreshments will be served. Would you be willing to attend?

- Yes 1
- No 2 THANK AND DISCONTINUE

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the discussion group will be held? It will be held at \_\_\_\_\_. Please tell people you are there for a focus group. I would like to remind you that the group is at (TIME) on (DATE). We need you to arrive 15 minutes early. At the facility, you will be asked to produce photo identification, so



please remember to bring something with you. Also, if you use glasses to read, please remember to bring them with you because you will be asked to read something.

The group will be video-taped for research purposes and members of the NSERC research team will be observing the discussion from an adjoining room. You will be asked to sign a waiver to acknowledge that you will be video-taped during the session. All information collected will be used for research purposes only and administered in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

As we are only inviting a small number of people to attend, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at \_\_\_\_\_ at our office. Please ask for \_\_\_\_\_. Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the discussion group.

***Could I please confirm your name, phone number and email address?***

\*\*\*\*\*

RESPONDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

FOCUS GROUP TIME/LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_



**Caractéristiques des participants :**

- Nous tiendrons une série de 16 séances de discussion dans huit villes. En particulier, deux séances de discussion auront lieu dans chacune des villes suivantes : Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montréal, Québec et Halifax. Les séances se dérouleront en français à Montréal et à Québec. Toutes les autres séances se tiendront en anglais.
- Toutes les entreprises qui prendront part à l'étude devront être engagées activement dans des activités de R.-D.
- Tous les participants seront des dirigeants d'entreprise : des gestionnaires ou des employés de direction qui se chargent de R.-D. dans l'entreprise.
- Dans chaque ville, un groupe de discussion réunira un ensemble de clients actuels du CRSNG, tandis que l'autre groupe réunira d'éventuels clients. Des listes serviront à soutenir les démarches de recrutement.
- Dans chaque groupe de discussion, nous veillerons à établir une composition variée sur le plan de la taille des entreprises et des secteurs d'activité.
- Nous recruterons 10 participants afin que sept ou huit personnes se présentent dans chaque groupe.
- Tous les participants recevront 200 \$ en contrepartie de leur participation.
- Nous révélerons le commanditaire de l'étude (c.-à-d. le CRSNG/gouvernement du Canada).
- Les séances dureront deux heures et se dérouleront dans les installations habituelles pour la tenue des séances de discussion.

**Répartition des séances :**

Date :	4 mars	5 mars	6 mars	7 mars
Lieu :	Ottawa	Toronto	Calgary	Vancouver
18 heures	Clients	Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients
20 heures	Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients	Clients
Lieu :		Saskatoon	Québec	Halifax
18 heures		Non-clients	Clients	Non-clients
20 heures		Clients	Non-clients	Clients
Lieu :		Montréal		
18 heures		Clients		
20 heures		Non-clients		



### Questionnaire de sélection

Bonjour, je m'appelle \_\_\_\_\_. Je communique avec vous au nom de Phoenix, une maison de recherche sur l'opinion publique. Le Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie (CRSNG), un organisme du gouvernement du Canada, nous a chargés de réaliser une série de séances de discussion auprès de dirigeants d'entreprises qui effectuent de la recherche-développement, ou R-D.

Chaque séance de discussion pourrait durer jusqu'à deux heures. Les participants recevront une rétribution de 200 \$ en guise de remerciement pour leur participation. De plus, des rafraîchissements seront servis. Vous êtes tout à fait libre de participer ou non à cette étude. Tous les renseignements recueillis lors de la séance seront utilisés exclusivement dans le cadre de l'étude et seront traités conformément aux lois visant à protéger les renseignements personnels.

Avant de vous inviter à participer à la séance, nous devons vous poser quelques questions pour veiller à ce que la composition de chacun des groupes de discussion soit variée. Puis-je vous poser quelques questions?

Oui

Non (REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN À L'ENTRETIEN)

#### QUESTION POUR LES CLIENTS DU CRSNG :

1. Le CRSNG nous a communiqué votre nom et vos coordonnées parce que votre entreprise prend part à au moins l'un des programmes du CRSNG pour soutenir vos activités de R.-D. Pouvez-vous s.v.p. confirmer que c'est le cas – c.-à-d. que votre entreprise participe à l'un ou à plusieurs des programmes du CRSNG pour vous aider à satisfaire à vos besoins dans le domaine de la R.-D.?

Oui

1

CONTINUER

Non

2

APPROFONDIR POUR CONFIRMER QUE  
L'ENTREPRISE N'EST PAS UN CLIENT DU CRSNG.  
REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN À L'ENTRETIEN

#### QUESTION POUR LES NON-CLIENTS :

2. Est-ce que votre entreprise est engagée activement dans la recherche-développement, ou R.-D. pour soutenir ses activités? Il peut s'agir d'activités de R.-D. liées à de nouveaux produits, processus ou services.

Oui

1

CONTINUER

Non

2

APPROFONDIR POUR CONFIRMER QUE  
L'ENTREPRISE N'EST PAS ENGAGÉE DANS LA R.-D.  
REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN À L'ENTRETIEN

#### QUESTION POUR TOUS :

3. Nous devons parler avec un(e) gestionnaire ou un directeur/une directrice, dans votre entreprise, qui est responsable et se charge directement des activités de la R.-D. qu'effectue votre entreprise. Est-ce que vous êtes la personne la mieux disposée pour aborder ces sujets ou est-ce qu'il y a un(e) autre gestionnaire mieux placée dans votre entreprise pour discuter d'enjeux de cette nature?

Oui, le/la répondant(e) se charge de la R.-D.

1

CONTINUER



Non, quelqu'un d'autre s'en charge dans l'entreprise 2 OBTENIR LE NOM ET LES COORDONNÉES DE CETTE PERSONNE. COMMUNIQUER AVEC CETTE PERSONNE.

4. Combien de personnes environ travaillent dans votre entreprise au Canada? Veuillez compter les employés à temps partiel en équivalents temps plein. LIRE LA LISTE AU BESOIN; VEILLER À OBTENIR UNE COMPOSITION VARIÉE.

Moins de 10 employés	1
10 à 25 employés	2
26 à 50 employés	3
50 à 100 employés	4
Plus de 100 employés	5

5. Dans quelle industrie ou dans quel secteur d'activité votre entreprise œuvre-t-elle? Si votre entreprise est engagée dans plusieurs secteurs, veuillez signaler le secteur le plus pertinent compte tenu des activités de R.-D. de votre entreprise.

Inscrire le secteur : \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION POUR LES NON-CLIENTS :

6. Depuis combien d'années environ est-ce que votre entreprise est en exploitation? REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN À L'ENTRETIEN SI L'ENTREPRISE EST EN EXPLOITATION DEPUIS DEUX ANS OU MOINS.

Inscrire le nombre d'années : \_\_\_\_\_

7. Avez-vous déjà participé à un groupe de discussion ou à une entrevue organisée à l'avance et reçu une somme d'argent en échange de votre participation?

Oui	1	
Non	2	PASSER À LA DERNIÈRE SECTION

8. Au cours des deux dernières années, est-ce que vous avez participé à une séance de discussion ou à une entrevue portant sur le sujet de la recherche-développement?

Oui	1	REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN À L'ENTRETIEN
Non	2	

INSCRIRE LE SEXE SELON VOS OBSERVATIONS

Femme	1
Homme	2

La séance de discussion aura lieu le (JOUR DE LA SEMAINE) (DATE), à (HEURE). La séance durera environ deux heures. Les participants recevront 200 \$ en guise de remerciement pour leur participation et des rafraîchissements seront servis. Est-ce que vous aimeriez participer à cette séance?



Oui	1	
Non	2	REMERCIER ET METTRE FIN

Avez-vous un crayon à portée de la main? Je vais vous donner l'adresse où aura lieu la séance. Elle aura lieu au \_\_\_\_\_. À votre arrivée, veuillez indiquer qu'on vous attend pour participer à un groupe de discussion. Permettez-moi de vous rappeler que la rencontre aura lieu à (HEURE), le (DATE). Nous vous demandons d'arriver 15 minutes à l'avance. À votre arrivée, on vous demandera de présenter une pièce d'identité avec photo; n'oubliez donc pas d'en apporter une. De plus, si vous avez besoin de lunettes pour lire, veuillez les apporter. Il est possible qu'on vous demande de lire quelque chose.

Nous enregistrerons la discussion sur bande vidéo pour les besoins de l'étude et des membres de l'équipe de recherche du CRSNG observeront la séance à partir d'une pièce voisine. Nous vous demanderons de signer un formulaire de renonciation indiquant que vous êtes au courant que la séance sera enregistrée sur bande vidéo. Tous les renseignements recueillis ne seront utilisés que pour les besoins de l'étude et seront traités conformément aux lois visant à protéger les renseignements personnels.

Étant donné que nous n'invitons qu'un petit nombre de personnes, votre participation est très importante pour nous. S'il vous est impossible de vous présenter, pour une raison ou pour une autre, veuillez communiquer avec nous afin que nous puissions trouver un remplaçant. Vous pouvez nous joindre à nos bureaux au \_\_\_\_\_. Veuillez demander \_\_\_\_\_. Quelqu'un vous téléphonera la veille de la séance de discussion pour vous rappeler la rencontre.

Puis-je confirmer votre nom, votre numéro de téléphone et votre adresse électronique?

\*\*\*\*\*

NOM DU/DE LA RÉPONDANT(E) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 N° DE TÉLÉPHONE AU TRAVAIL : \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADRESSE ÉLECTRONIQUE : \_\_\_\_\_  
 HEURE/LIEU DE LA SÉANCE : \_\_\_\_\_

Merci.





## Moderator's Guide

### Introduction (5 minutes)

- Introduce moderator/Phoenix
  - Thanks for attending/value your being here
  - Explain general purpose of focus group discussions:
    - Gauge *opinions* about issues/ideas/products
    - Not a knowledge test; no right or wrong answers (interested in opinions)
    - Okay to disagree; want people to speak up if hold different view
  - Tonight, we're conducting research on behalf of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada or NSERC. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to explore issues related to communications approaches for corporate research and development, including working with universities and colleges to address R&D goals.
  - Looking for candour and honesty; comments treated in confidence; reporting in aggregate form only; taping and note-taking for report writing purposes only; observers behind one-way glass.
  - If you have a cell phone, please turn it off.
  - Any questions? ACCEPT BRIEF QUESTIONS BUT DO NOT LINGER.
  - Roundtable introduction: When you were recruited for this study, you said your firm is engaged in R&D. I'd like to go around the table and have you tell us:
    - Your first name
    - In which sector your company operates
    - Your role with respect to R&D at your company.
- 

### Corporate Involvement in R&D (35 minutes)

I'd like to start with a few questions about your company's involvement in R&D.

1. First, what type of activities does your company engage in as part of its R&D?

Probe [if needed]: - developing/improving products, processes, services  
- applied/general research

2. Why does your firm undertake R&D activities?

Probe [if needed]: -competition  
-profitability  
-growth/need for new sources of revenue  
-client/customer/supplier demands or needs  
-nature of product/technology  
-reduce costs  
-customer demand for new products/processes



3. What are some of the biggest challenges your company faces with your R&D?

- Probe [if needed]:
- cost
  - access to expertise/people
  - access to risk capital
  - commercialization/licensing
  - finding customers
  - building relationships

4. Where do you usually get your information about R&D?

- Probe [if needed]:
- suppliers
  - clients
  - Internet
  - other

5. Focusing specifically on the Internet, can you talk about how you search on the web for information?

- Probe [if needed]:
- search engines used?
  - search terms used? (not product-specific)
  - use of on-line industry directories (D&B, etc.)?
  - often get outside help searching for information? If so, from whom?

### Perceptions of University/College R&D Collaboration (15 minutes)

6. How many of you have experience collaborating with college or university researchers for your R&D activities? [HAND COUNT] What does/did this look like—what was the nature of the relationship and activities?

- Probe:
- partnership with a university researcher/college
  - long-term/short-term

7. For those of you who do not have experience in this area, have you or your company considered partnering with a college or university researcher? Why/why not?

8. In your view, what could be the benefits of collaborating with colleges or universities?

- Probe:
- speed up R&D activities
  - address short-term challenges
  - help off-set costs
  - help minimize risks
  - access resources/facilities
  - access expertise
  - results/outcomes for the business

9. Do you have any concerns or problems collaborating with college or university researchers for your R&D activities? If so, what concerns or problems?



ASK CLIENTS:

10. How valuable are research collaborations like this to your company when it comes to your R&D activities? Why?
11. What do you look for in a potential college or university research partner?

**Awareness & Perceptions of NSERC (10 minutes)**

ASK NON-CLIENTS:

12. Before being recruited for this focus group, how many of you were aware of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada or NSERC? [HAND COUNT]

ASK EVERYONE:

13. [FOR NON-CLIENTS, ADD: For those of you aware of the agency] What's your overall impression of NSERC? Why do you say that?

Probe: -positive/negative  
-reasons for impression

For those of you less familiar with NSERC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council is an agency of the Government of Canada whose mandate is to promote and support research and innovation in Canada through various programs and services.

**Communications Testing (35 minutes)**

MESSAGE TESTING - CURRENT MESSAGING

Like many organizations, NSERC uses various communications tools to make businesses like yours aware of its programs and services. I'm now going to show you some material that NSERC uses to communicate with businesses about its partnership opportunities. Please take a moment to read the material and then we'll talk about it. The focus here is on the text, the words themselves, not on the visual presentation. Any questions?

HAND OUT SHEET WITH CURRENT MESSAGES. GIVE PARTICIPANTS A MINUTE TO READ MATERIAL.

It looks like everyone has finished....

14. What's your overall impression of this material? Why do you say that?

Probe: -positive/negative  
-reasons why

15. In your view, are these messages effective in terms of encouraging or motivating businesses like yours to consider working with colleges/universities to help meet your R&D needs? Why/why not?



16. What, if anything, do you think is particularly well done in terms of the messages being conveyed? Why?

Probe: -perceived strengths of each message

17. What, if anything, is not well done with respect to these messages? Why?

Probe: -perceived weaknesses of each message  
-suggestions to strengthen messages

18. Which of the three messages is most relevant to you and your business? Why?

19. Which of the three messages is least relevant to you and your business? Why?

### MESSAGE TESTING - POTENTIAL MESSAGES

NSERC is considering developing new communication materials. Tonight we're going to look at a number of potential messages that NSERC is considering and we'd like your impressions of them. Again, the focus here is on the text - the messages themselves - not on the visual presentation of them. This time, though, we'll look at the messages one at a time.

I'm going to hand out a sheet with all six messages on it that we will be discussing. Please have a look at the messages and, before we discuss them, rate each message in terms of its effectiveness in encouraging or motivating you and your company to consider working with colleges/universities to help meet your R&D needs. You can do so using a short questionnaire I will also hand out. At the top of the questionnaire, please write in that this is Set (A or B). Once everyone has finished rating each message, we'll talk about them one at a time.

HAND OUT QUESTIONNAIRE AND MESSAGES DOCUMENT. THERE ARE TWO SETS OF MESSAGES: EACH SET CONTAINS SIX MESSAGES (LABELLED SET A OR SET B). ROTATE SETS ACROSS GROUPS AND THE ORDER THAT MESSAGES ARE DISCUSSED WITHIN EACH SET. ONCE PARTICIPANTS HAVE RATED ALL MESSAGES, CONTINUE.

Let's start with message number \_\_\_\_\_,

20. What's your overall impression of the message? Why do you say that?

Probe: -positive/negative  
-reasons why

21. What is the main point or message being communicated? Is it being communicated effectively? If not, why not?

22. What do you like about the message? Why? Anything else?

23. What do you not like about it, if anything? Why? Anything else?

24. Do you have any suggestions on how this message could be improved?

REPEAT QUESTIONS FOR EACH MESSAGE. WHEN ALL MESSAGES HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED, CONTINUE



25. In your opinion, which of these messages is **most** effective in terms of encouraging or motivating businesses like yours to consider working with colleges/universities for your R&D needs? Why?
26. And in your opinion, which of the messages is **least** effective in terms of encouraging or motivating businesses like yours to consider working with colleges/universities for your R&D needs? Why?

### Word Testing (15 minutes)

As was evident when looking at communications messaging related to R&D, there are a number of words that can be associated with R&D activities. I'm going to hand out a one-page document with a list of some of these that I would like to review with you. Each set of words or short phrases includes two or three alternatives that are sometimes used. There are six sets in total. We'll go through the sets of words one at a time.

HAND OUT LEXICON SET A OR SET B (ROTATE ACROSS GROUPS), THEN GO THROUGH THE WORDS ONE SET AT A TIME.

Let's start with... [ROTATE ACROSS GROUPS]

27. Which word or words in this set are most effective or relevant to you? Why do you say that? Any of the words problematic? If so, why?

The next set is....

REPEAT FOR ALL SETS, THEN CONTINUE.

### Conclusion

28. Any final thoughts or advice for NSERC as it works to build awareness of its partnership initiatives?

For those of you who are interested, here is a brochure of NSERC programs and services that support corporate R&D, as well as a report on the impact of the programs.

HAND OUT BROCHURES/REPORTS OR SHOW WHERE IN ROOM TO PICK THEM UP.

As well, if anyone would like an NSERC official to contact them to tell them more about how NSERC programs and services might help support their corporate R&D, please leave me your business card, or if you don't have a card with you, your contact information. I will pass this on to NSERC, and someone will contact you.

**THANK PARTICIPANTS. COLLECT ALL MATERIALS.**



## Introduction (5 minutes)

- ❑ Présenter l'animateur et présenter Phoenix.
- ❑ Remercier les participants d'être présents/signaler que leur participation est très importante pour nous.
- ❑ Expliquer l'objectif général des séances de discussion :
  - Jauger les *opinions* au sujet d'enjeux, d'idées, de produits;
  - Il ne s'agit pas d'une évaluation des connaissances; il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses (ce sont vos opinions qui nous intéressent);
  - Il est permis d'être en désaccord; nous souhaitons vous entendre si vous avez un autre point de vue à partager.
- ❑ Ce soir, nous réalisons une étude pour le compte du Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada, ou CRSNG. La séance de discussion de ce soir vise à aborder des enjeux liés à des démarches de communication dans le contexte de la recherche et du développement en entreprise, y compris la collaboration avec des universités et des collègues pour la réalisation d'objectifs de R.-D.
- ❑ Nous vous demandons d'être francs et honnêtes; les commentaires seront traités de manière confidentielle; seuls des résultats globaux seront communiqués; nous ferons un enregistrement vidéo et nous prendrons des notes uniquement pour les besoins de la préparation du rapport; il y a des observateurs derrière le miroir sans tain.
- ❑ Veuillez éteindre la sonnerie de votre téléphone cellulaire si vous en avez un.
- ❑ Avez-vous des questions? ACCEPTER DES QUESTIONS RAPIDES SANS TOUTEFOIS S'ATTARDER.
- ❑ Tour de table pour les présentations : Lorsque nous vous avons invités à participer à cette étude, vous avez indiqué que votre entreprise est engagée dans la R.-D. J'aimerais faire un tour de table pour que chacun d'entre vous...
  - nous dise son prénom;
  - indique le secteur d'activité de son entreprise;
  - précise son rôle dans le contexte des activités de R.-D. au sein de son entreprise.

---

## Engagement de l'entreprise dans la R.-D. (35 minutes)

Pour commencer, j'aimerais aborder quelques questions au sujet de l'engagement de votre entreprise dans la R.-D.

1. D'abord, quel genre d'activités votre entreprise effectue-t-elle dans le cadre de ses efforts de R.-D.?

Pistes [au besoin] : - développement/amélioration de produits, de processus, de services  
- recherche appliquée/générale



2. Pourquoi votre société entreprend-elle des activités de R.-D.?

Pistes [au besoin] :

- concurrence
- rentabilité
- croissance/besoin de nouvelles sources de revenu
- demandes ou besoins des clients/consommateurs/fournisseurs
- nature du produit/de la technologie
- réduction des coûts
- demande des consommateurs pour de nouveaux produits/processus

3. Quels sont certains des plus grands défis auxquels votre entreprise est confrontée dans le contexte de ses activités de R.-D.?

Pistes [au besoin] :-coût

- accès aux compétences/personnes
- accès au capital de risque
- commercialisation/octroi de licence
- trouver des consommateurs
- établir des relations

4. En général, où obtenez-vous les renseignements dont vous avez besoin au sujet de R.-D.?

Pistes [au besoin]: - fournisseurs

- clients
- Internet
- autre sources

5. En ce qui concerne l'Internet, pouvez-vous me dire comment vous cherchez de l'information en ligne?

Pistes [au besoin]: - moteurs de recherche utilisés ?

- mots-clés utilisés? (non-liés à un produit spécifique)
- utilisation de botins industriels en-ligne (D&B, p.ex.)?
- obtenez-vous souvent de l'aide externe pour chercher de l'information? Si oui, de qui ?

**Perceptions à l'égard de la collaboration avec les universités/collèges dans le contexte de la R.-D. (15 minutes)**

6. Combien d'entre vous avez fait l'expérience de la collaboration avec des chercheurs d'un collègue ou d'une université dans le cadre de vos activités de R.-D.? [COMPTER] Quelle forme prend/a pris cette collaboration — il s'agissait de relations et d'activités de quelle nature?

Pistes : -partenariat avec un chercheur d'université/un collègue

- à long terme/à court terme



7. Pour ceux d'entre vous qui n'ont pas d'expérience en la matière, est-ce que votre entreprise ou vous-même avez envisagé d'établir un partenariat avec un chercheur d'un collège ou d'une université? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?
8. À votre avis, quels sont les avantages qui pourraient découler de la collaboration avec les collèges ou universités?

Pistes : -accélérer les activités de R.-D.  
-surmonter des défis à court terme  
-contribuer à contrebalancer les coûts  
-contribuer à réduire autant que possible les risques  
-accès aux ressources/installations  
-accès aux compétences spécialisées  
-résultats/aboutissements pour l'entreprise

9. Est-ce que la collaboration avec des chercheurs de collège ou d'université dans le cadre de vos activités de R.-D. vous inspire des préoccupations ou vous pose des problèmes? Si c'est oui, quels sont ces préoccupations ou problèmes?

QUESTION POUR LES CLIENTS :

10. Dans quelle mesure des collaborations de recherche de cette nature sont-elles intéressantes pour votre entreprise pour ce qui concerne vos activités de R.-D.? Pourquoi?
11. Qu'est-ce que vous recherchez chez un éventuel partenaire de recherche d'un collègue ou d'une université?

### Connaissance du CRSNG et perceptions (10 minutes)

QUESTION POUR LES NON-CLIENTS :

12. Avant que nous vous invitons à participer à cette séance de discussion, combien d'entre vous connaissez le Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada, ou CRSNG? [COMPTER]

QUESTION POUR TOUS :

13. [POUR LES NON-CLIENTS, AJOUTER : Pour ceux d'entre vous qui connaissent l'organisme] Quelle est votre impression générale au sujet du CRSNG? Et pourquoi donc?

Pistes : -positive/négative  
-raisons sous-tendant l'impression

Pour ceux d'entre vous qui connaissent moins le CRSNG, le Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie est un organisme du gouvernement du Canada dont le mandat consiste à promouvoir et à soutenir la recherche et l'innovation au Canada au moyen de divers programmes et services.





## Mise à l'essai des communications (35 minutes)

### ÉVALUATION DES MESSAGES – MESSAGES ACTUELS

À l'instar d'un grand nombre d'organisations, le CRSNG recourt à divers outils de communication pour renseigner les entreprises comme les vôtres au sujet de ses programmes et services. Je vais maintenant vous montrer du matériel dont le CRSNG se sert pour communiquer avec les entreprises au sujet des possibilités de partenariat qu'il offre. J'aimerais que vous preniez quelques instants pour lire le document. Nous allons en discuter par la suite. Dans le cadre de cet exercice, nous nous intéresserons avant tout au texte et aux mots qu'il contient, pas à la présentation visuelle. Y a-t-il des questions?

DISTRIBUER LA FEUILLE PRÉSENTANT LES MESSAGES ACTUELS. ACCORDER QUELQUES INSTANTS AUX PARTICIPANTS POUR QU'ILS LISENT LE DOCUMENT.

On dirait que tout le monde a terminé...

14. Quelle impression globale ce document vous a-t-il laissée? Et pourquoi donc?

Pistes : -positive/négative  
-raisons expliquant l'impression

15. À votre avis, est-ce que ces messages sont efficaces pour ce qui est d'encourager ou de motiver les entreprises comme les vôtres à envisager de travailler avec des collèges/universités pour contribuer à la satisfaction de leurs besoins de R.-D.? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

16. Quels sont les aspects particulièrement réussis, s'il y en a, pour ce qui concerne les messages communiqués? Pourquoi?

Pistes : - points forts perçus de chaque message

17. Quels sont les aspects qui ne sont pas réussis, s'il y en a, pour ce qui concerne ces messages? Pourquoi?

Pistes: - points faibles perçus de chaque message  
- suggestions pour renforcer les messages

18. Lequel des trois messages est le plus pertinent pour vous et pour votre entreprise? Pourquoi?

19. Lequel des trois messages est le moins pertinent pour vous et pour votre entreprise? Pourquoi?

### ÉVALUATION DES MESSAGES – MESSAGES POSSIBLES

Le CRSNG envisage de mettre au point du nouveau matériel de communication. Ce soir, nous allons examiner un certain nombre de messages possibles qu'envisage le CRSNG. Nous aimerions connaître vos impressions à l'égard de ces messages. Encore une fois, nous nous intéresserons surtout au texte – c'est-à-dire aux messages – et pas à la présentation visuelle des messages. Toutefois, dans le cadre de cet exercice, nous allons examiner un message à la fois.



Je vais maintenant vous distribuer une feuille qui présente les six messages que nous allons aborder. Veuillez prendre connaissance des messages. Avant que nous n'en discutons, veuillez aussi évaluer chaque message au chapitre de son efficacité pour ce qui est de vous encourager ou de vous motiver, votre entreprise et vous-même, à envisager de travailler avec des collègues/universités pour contribuer à la satisfaction de vos besoins en R.-D. Vous pourrez le faire sur le bref questionnaire que je vais également vous remettre. En haut du questionnaire, veuillez inscrire qu'il s'agit de la Série (A ou B). Quand tout le monde aura terminé son évaluation de chacun des messages, nous en discuterons, un message à la fois.

DISTRIBUER LE QUESTIONNAIRE ET LE DOCUMENT PRÉSENTANT LES MESSAGES. IL Y A DEUX ENSEMBLES DE MESSAGES : CHAQUE ENSEMBLE (SÉRIE A OU SÉRIE B) RÉUNIT SIX MESSAGES. ASSURER UNE ROTATION DES ENSEMBLES ENTRE LES GROUPES AINSI QU'UNE ROTATION DE L'ORDRE DE DISCUSSION DES MESSAGES DANS CHAQUE ENSEMBLE. LORSQUE LES PARTICIPANTS AURONT ÉVALUÉ TOUS LES MESSAGES, CONTINUER.

Nous allons commencer par le message numéro \_\_\_\_\_,

20. Quelle impression générale ce message vous a-t-il laissée? Et pourquoi donc?

Pistes : -positive/négative  
-raisons expliquant l'impression

21. Quel est le principal enjeu ou message communiqué? Est-ce que cet enjeu ou ce message est communiqué de façon efficace? Si c'est non, pourquoi pas?
22. Qu'est-ce que vous aimez au sujet de ce message? Pourquoi? Y a-t-il autre chose?
23. Qu'est-ce que vous n'aimez pas au sujet de ce message, le cas échéant? Pourquoi? Y a-t-il autre chose?
24. Est-ce que vous avez des suggestions au sujet de la façon dont on pourrait améliorer ce message?

RÉPÉTER LES QUESTIONS POUR CHAQUE MESSAGE. LORSQUE TOUS LES MESSAGES ONT ÉTÉ DISCUTÉS, CONTINUER.

25. À votre avis, lequel de ces messages est le **plus** efficace pour ce qui est d'encourager ou de motiver les entreprises comme les vôtres à envisager de travailler avec des collègues/universités pour la satisfaction de leurs besoins de R.-D.? Pourquoi?
26. Et à votre avis, lequel de ces messages est le **moins** efficace pour ce qui est d'encourager ou de motiver les entreprises comme les vôtres à envisager de travailler avec des collègues/universités pour la satisfaction de leurs besoins de R.-D.? Pourquoi?

### Évaluation des mots (15 minutes)

Comme l'a révélé notre examen des messages de communication en matière de R.-D., un certain nombre de mots peuvent être associés aux activités de R.-D. Je vais vous remettre un document d'une page présentant une liste de certains de ces mots, que j'aimerais examiner avec vous. Chaque ensemble de mots ou de petites expressions comprend deux ou trois possibilités qui sont parfois utilisées. Il y a six ensembles au total. Nous allons examiner un ensemble de mots à la fois.



DISTRIBUER LE LEXIQUE A OU B (ASSURER UNE ROTATION ENTRE LES GROUPES), PUIS EXAMINER UN ENSEMBLE DE MOTS À LA FOIS.

Commençons par... [ASSURER UNE ROTATION ENTRE LES GROUPES]

27. Lequel ou lesquels des mots de cet ensemble seraient le plus efficaces ou pertinents, de votre point de vue? Et pourquoi donc? Est-ce que l'un ou plusieurs des mots sont problématiques? Si c'est oui, pourquoi?

Le prochain ensemble est ....

RÉPÉTER POUR TOUS LES ENSEMBLES, PUIS CONTINUER.

## Conclusion

28. En terminant, est-ce que vous aimeriez communiquer d'autres idées ou des conseils au CRSNG pour l'appuyer dans ses efforts pour faire connaître ses initiatives de partenariat?

Pour ceux d'entre vous que ça intéresse, vous trouverez ici une brochure au sujet des programmes et services du CRSNG qui soutiennent la R.-D. en entreprise, de même qu'un rapport traitant des répercussions de ces programmes.

DISTRIBUER LES BROCHURES/RAPPORTS OU MONTRER OÙ ON PEUT LES PRENDRE.

Dans la même veine, si vous souhaitez qu'un(e) représentant(e) du CRSNG communique avec vous pour vous donner de plus amples renseignements au sujet de la façon dont les programmes et services du CRSNG pourraient contribuer à soutenir vos activités de R.-D. en entreprise, veuillez me laisser votre carte d'affaire ou, si vous n'en avez pas, vos coordonnées. Je transmettrai l'information au CRSNG, et quelqu'un communiquera avec vous.

**REMERCIER LES PARTICIPANTS. PRENDRE TOUS LES DOCUMENTS.**



## Materials Reviewed by Participants

### Current NSERC Messaging

<p><b>Find</b> <b>Highly Qualified People</b> Get fresh ideas and add top talent to your staff at minimal cost</p>	
<p><b>Build</b> <b>Research Relationships</b> Develop new research collaborations with university or college researchers</p>	
<p><b>Advance</b> <b>Your R&amp;D</b> Take your research and development to the next level</p>	

<p><b>Trouvez</b> <b>du personnel hautement qualifié</b> Trouvez des idées nouvelles et intégrez les meilleurs chercheurs à votre personnel à un coût minime</p>	
<p><b>Établissez</b> <b>des relations de recherche</b> Créez de nouvelles collaborations de recherche avec des chercheurs d'université ou de collègue</p>	
<p><b>Faites</b> <b>progresser vos travaux de R et D</b> Amenez vos activités de R et D à l'étape suivante</p>	



## Potential NSERC Messaging

### SET A

1. Make your research dollar go farther by working together with academic researchers.
2. Access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment.
3. Identify highly qualified future employees by working with Canada's universities or colleges.
4. Build research collaborations with the brightest minds through Canada's university and college networks.
5. Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada's universities and colleges.
6. Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research.

- 
1. Maximisez les retombées de vos investissements dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.
  2. Accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.
  3. Cernez d'éventuels employés hautement qualifiés en travaillant avec des universités ou des collèges canadiens.
  4. Établissez des collaborations en recherche avec les plus brillants esprits par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.
  5. Trouvez des solutions aux défis en R et D dans les universités et les collèges canadiens.
  6. Réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe



## Potential NSERC Messaging

### SET B

1. Maximize your investment: leverage your research dollar by working with college or university researchers.
2. Use top technology: access leading-edge expertise, facilities and equipment.
3. Hire the Brightest: work with university and college researchers to help identify top future hires for your business.
4. Partner for Success: build lasting research relationships with top research minds through Canada's university and college networks.
5. Work on the Leading Edge: Find solutions to your R&D challenges at Canada's universities/colleges.
6. Lower your risk: Reduce the risk associated with leading-edge research.

- 
1. Optimisez votre investissement : obtenez un rendement optimal de votre investissement dans la recherche en travaillant avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires.
  2. Utilisez la technologie de pointe : accédez à un savoir-faire, à des installations et à de l'appareillage de pointe.
  3. Embauchez les plus brillants esprits : travaillez avec des chercheurs d'établissements postsecondaires afin de cerner les meilleurs employés éventuels pour votre entreprise.
  4. Établissez des partenariats gagnants : établissez des relations de recherche durables avec les meilleurs chercheurs par l'entremise des réseaux d'établissements postsecondaires du Canada.
  5. Soyez à l'avant-garde : trouvez des solutions à vos défis en R et D dans les établissements postsecondaires canadiens.
  6. Réduisez les risques : réduisez les risques liés à la recherche de pointe.



## Sets of Words/Short Phrases

### Set A

- (Verb): partner / collaborate / participate
  - (Verb): leverage / match funds / contribute
  - (Noun): company / industrial partner / business
  - (Noun): “highly qualified people” / talent / new hires
  - (Noun): “funding opportunity” / grant / government program
  - (Noun): post-secondary researcher / academic researcher
- 
- établir un partenariat / collaborer / participer
  - verser un financement de contrepartie / contribuer / créer un effet de levier
  - entreprise/ partenaire industrielle / compagnie
  - personnes hautement qualifiées / employés de Talent/ recrues
  - possibilité de financement / subvention / programme gouvernemental
  - chercheur d'établissements postsecondaire / chercheur d'une université (ou d'un collège)



## Sets of Words/Short Phrases

### Set B

- (Noun): results / solutions / impacts / advances
  - (Noun): applied research / basic research
  - (Noun): Technology Transfer Office / Industry Liaison Office
  - (Noun) match making event / mixer event / networking event
  - (Noun): innovation / research and development
  - (Verb): connect / meet
- 
- solutions / résultats / percées
  - recherche appliquée / recherche fondamentale
  - bureau de transfert de la technologie / bureau de liaison avec l'industrie
  - activité de jumelage / activité de rencontre / activité de réseautage
  - innovation / recherche et développement
  - Établir des liens / rencontrer





**Questionnaire**

**NSERC Focus Groups**

Please rate each of the messages in terms of its effectiveness in encouraging or motivating you and your company to consider working with colleges/universities to help meet your R&D needs.

**SET:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MESSAGE 1:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 2:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 3:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 4:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 5:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 6:**

Not at all effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very effective 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



### Séances de discussion du CRSNG

Veillez évaluer chacun des messages au chapitre de son efficacité pour ce qui est de vous encourager ou de vous motiver, votre entreprise et vous-même, à envisager de travailler avec des collègues/universités pour la satisfaction de vos besoins de R.-D.

**SÉRIE :** \_\_\_\_\_

**MESSAGE 1 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 2 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 3 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 4 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 5 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**MESSAGE 6 :**

Pas efficace du tout			Neutre		Très efficace
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>