



Canada Foundation for Innovation  
Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation

## **Notes for a presentation**

**by**

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**to the**

**House of Commons  
Standing Committee on**

**Industry, Science and Technology**

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**Check Against Delivery**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. Today, I want to talk to you about the role of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) as a key player in Canada's science and technology enterprise through its investments in research infrastructure in universities, colleges, research hospitals, and research institutes.

As outlined in the national S&T Strategy, CFI's investments are critical to strengthening our capacity for innovation:

- by enhancing the quality and scope of Canada's research enterprise;
- by facilitating the training of highly qualified personnel – the human infrastructure that is the most important resource in a knowledge-based economy;
- and by promoting the development of technology clusters through programs that encourage collaboration between public research institutions and the private sector.

Since its creation in 1997, the CFI has committed more than \$3.8 billion in support of over 5,700 projects at 128 research institutions in 64 municipalities across Canada. These projects have covered a broad range of scientific disciplines, with considerable investment in the priority areas outlined in the S&T Strategy – environmental science and technologies; natural resources and energy; health and related life sciences; and information and communications technologies.

CFI's investments are made on the basis of a rigorous assessment of merit, using international standards to determine the potential of the project to increase the capacity of Canadian research institutions to compete internationally and to produce knowledge that will benefit all Canadians.

The 2007 federal budget and the federal S&T Strategy reconfirmed the CFI as an essential element of the

country's science and technology enterprise, and provided funding of \$510 million for another competition to be held before 2010.

After successfully completing an extensive consultation with stakeholders, the CFI recently launched a major competition for this \$510M, which will ensure that universities and colleges continue to play a central role in Canada's future prosperity and competitiveness.

This prosperity will depend increasingly on our ability to innovate – to generate knowledge and ideas from which are derived new products, services, and policies that create economic wealth, enhance social foundations, sustain the environment, and improve quality of life – concepts that are central to the Government of Canada's S&T Strategy.

The CFI's investments in research infrastructure complement those made in people and in the direct and indirect costs of research by the three federal research

funding agencies, the Canada Research Chairs Program, Genome Canada, and other federal programs. Together, these investments have had a profound transformative impact on Canada's R&D enterprise. The brain drain has been reversed as Canada has become a very attractive destination for researchers; and institutions have been able to greatly strengthen priority research areas identified in their strategic research plans.

However, the global S&T landscape continues to evolve rapidly and international competition is evermore intense. The S&T Strategy is therefore very timely in providing an articulation of the federal Government's priorities and policies in promoting S&T in Canada; and its clear commitment to sustain and promote Canada's competitiveness through investments in higher education R&D.

In conclusion, the CFI is successfully meeting its mandate of strengthening the capacity of Canadian research

institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development for the benefit of Canadians.

An ongoing, robust, state-of-the-art research enterprise is fundamental as Canada's economy evolves from its traditional dependence on natural resources to one based increasingly on knowledge, technology, and innovation.

Ensuring the success of this transition will require that the Government of Canada maintain its strong commitment to the nation's research enterprise. Canada's future economic prosperity and quality of life depend on this commitment.

Thank you/Merci.