

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RPC Advocates Market-Led Research to Improve Canada's Innovation Performance

Fredericton, April 21, 2009 - "To improve Canada's innovation performance, there must be more focus on market-led or applied research" says Eric Cook, CEO of RPC. Commenting on a recent BIOTEC Canada commissioned report that highlights access to venture capital as the number one problem facing the life sciences industry, Cook suggested that engaging the business community early in the research process helps to ensure the developments address specific industry needs and increases the probability that research will be commercialized. See: ["Raising Capital Concerns" \(New Brunswick Business Journal, April 21/09\)](#)

Canada's innovation system has been a chronic underachiever. In the most recent Conference Board of Canada performance report card, Canada receives a "D" grade and ranks 13th out of 17 countries. More disturbing is that, despite significant investments in research and development, Canada has been a consistent "D" performer since the 1980s. (See Figure 1).

REPORT CARD	
Economy	B
Innovation	D
Environment	C
Education and Skills	B
Health	B
Society	B

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Figure 1: Conference Board of Canada's Report Card on Canada Source: <http://www.conference-board.ca/HCP/default.aspx>

In the paper ["Beyond Curiosity: Achieving Prosperity with a Balanced Innovation System"](#), Cook reports that in 2004, the federal government invested more than \$4.4 billion in research and development yet we are not achieving expected results. Cook thinks this is because our strategy is not balanced. There are a number of well-funded research programs supporting fundamental research but very few supporting market-led or applied research.

Cook hopes that Canada will adjust its strategy to have a balanced approach to innovation and expects our innovation performance would improve. One of the few programs focused on applied research is the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP). In the most recent federal budget, the IRAP budget was increased to \$200 million. Cook sees this as a positive move but there is a long way to go to be balanced with the \$4.4 billion that is mostly invested in fundamental research.

About RPC

RPC is New Brunswick's Provincial Research Organization (PRO) providing SME's with contract R&D and technical services. RPC's complement of 100 scientists, engineers and technologists are supported by a 13,000 sq. meter facility housing world-class analytical chemistry and material-testing laboratories, extensive prototype design, manufacture and testing services and a wide variety of pilot facilities for the development and improvement of industrial and environmental processes and products.

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