

Launch of a New Research Program for the Mining Industry

École Polytechnique marks over a decade of successful collaboration with NSERC and Canadian industry

Montreal, Quebec, March 27, 2002 – Tom Brzustowski, President of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), today launched the NSERC-École Polytechnique-Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) Industrial Research Chair in the Environmental Management of Mining Wastes.

The announcement was made during an event to celebrate more than a decade of successful research partnerships between NSERC, École Polytechnique and Canadian industry.

Since 1990, NSERC and approximately 243 partners have invested close to \$65 million in support of research at École Polytechnique.

Dr. Michel Aubertin, the Senior Chair, will direct activities at École Polytechnique, while Dr. Bruno Bussière will lead those at UQAT. Nine industrial partners, including Barrick Gold Corporation, Noranda, Agnico-Eagle, Inmet, McWatters and Ressources Aur, will contribute \$1.75 million to the chair, while NSERC will invest \$1.6 million.

Dr. Aubertin will examine the stability of dams and other retaining structures that can rupture and cause waste to spill into the environment. "The operation of mines and the processing of minerals creates wastes that must be properly managed to protect the environment," he said.

Dr. Bussière, professor at UQAT and Junior Chair, will focus on methods to control the reactivity of wastes and the environmental discharge of soluble contaminants.

"The NSERC Research Partnerships Program gives us the excellent support that we need to attract and involve industrial partners. Their participation is especially important for engineering students, who develop their abilities through exposure to industry and to concrete world problems," said Mr. Réjean Plamondon, Director General of École Polytechnique.

Through its research partnerships programs, NSERC has funded 203 research projects involving researchers at École Polytechnique.

Dr. Tom Brzustowski, President of NSERC, stated: "The collaboration that we have with École Polytechnique and its many partners has created an exceptional synergy. Together, we are training many new students and future industrial researchers. These programs increase the innovative ability of our country and guarantee that emerging Canadian professionals will be properly trained for research."

The NSERC funding for the new chair comes from the Council's Industrial Research Chairs program. Besides the partners mentioned above, three specialized consulting firms: Dessau-Soprin, Golder Associés and SNC-Lavalin, are investing in the program as are the University of British Columbia and the Institut national de recherche scientifique. Other government partners include the ministère des Ressources naturelles du Québec and the Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum is also a sponsor.

NSERC is the primary federal agency investing in people, discovery, and innovation. The Council supports both basic university research through research grants and project research through partnerships among universities, governments and the private sector, as well as the advanced training of highly qualified people.

On February 12, 2002, the Government of Canada launched Canada's Innovation Strategy, two papers that lay out a plan to address skills and innovation challenges for the next decade. The paper released by Minister Rock was entitled Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity. It proposes goals, targets and priorities for Canada over the next decade to: create knowledge and bring ideas to market more quickly; ensure a skilled workforce in the new economy; modernize business and regulatory policies while protecting the public interest; and strengthen communities by supporting innovation at the local level. Today's announcement supports this strategy.

For more information about Canada's Innovation Strategy or to obtain a copy of either Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians or Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity, please call 1-800-O CANADA (1-800-622-6232) or visit www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca.

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NSERC Research Partnerships Project Awards
at École Polytechnique since 1990

15 Industrial Research Chairs

69 Collaborative Research and Development Grants

108 Strategic Project Grants

3 Industrially Oriented Research Grants

2 Cooperative Activities Project Grants

2 National Research Council (NRC)/NSERC Research Partnership Program Grants

2 Technology Partnerships Program Grants

1 Department of National Defence (DND)/NSERC Research Partnership Program Grant

1 Intellectual Property Management Grant

Total value: \$65 million.