



# Mitacs Converge: Industry Collaboration Simplified

Presentation to AIAC Pacific  
Information Workshop  
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# About Mitacs

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- ❖ National organization (20+ offices)
- ❖ 15 years in operation
- ❖ Almost 10,000 research projects
- ❖ 60+ academic partners

# Annual snapshot - 2013



**\$10.4M**  
PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT



**2000 +**  
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS



**900 +**  
INDUSTRY PARTNERS



**1700 +**  
RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS



**6300 +**  
STUDENTS CAREER-READY



**280 +**  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
BROUGHT TO CANADA



**50 +**  
UNIVERSITY PARTNERS



**260 +**  
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS WORKSHOPS

# The Mitacs network



## We work with ALL university departments

- ✓ Computer science
- ✓ Engineering
- ✓ Anthropology
- ✓ Economics
- ✓ Chemistry
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Health sciences
- ✓ Genetics
- ✓ Social work
- ✓ Forestry
- ✓ History
- ✓ Languages & linguistics
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Business
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Interactive arts
- ✓ Psychology
- ✓ *And more...*

## Industry and related partners include:

- Small & medium business
- Large business/MNEs
- Government
- Not-for-profit & hospitals

# Building research collaborations



- ❖ Large-scale, multidisciplinary projects
- ❖ 2,000+ research units a year
- ❖ Projects from \$15,000 to \$2M+
- ❖ All disciplines
- ❖ International graduate students & Post-Docs eligible
- ❖ Mitacs can facilitate discussions and look over applications



# Creating R&D management leaders

**Mitacs**  
Elevate

**\$57,500\***  
(\$25,000 – Industry,  
\$32,500 – Mitacs)

**\$50,000**  
Post-Doc Salary

**\$7,500**  
other project-related  
expenses

\*For each of 2 years

- ❖ 2 year postdoctoral fellowship
  - ❖ Research collaboration with private sector partner in BC
  - ❖ Professional skills & leadership development also provided
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- ❑ Open to any discipline
  - ❑ Competitive applications
  - ❑ 2 calls per year.



# International opportunities

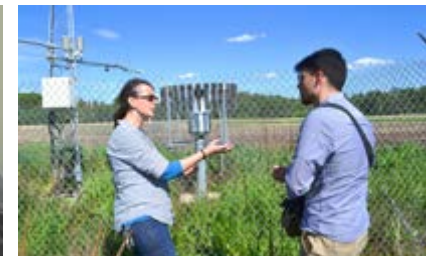


Current partners:

- India
- China
- Brazil
- Mexico
- Turkey
- Vietnam
- France (Sorbonne)

❖ Research collaborations for senior undergraduate & graduate students and their professors

- Building international collaborations
- Bringing the world's brightest students to Canada
- Supporting overseas research opportunities for students in Canada





## How We Got Here: Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) (now ITB)

We wanted to create a methodology that:

- ❖ Responded to the R&D needs of Obligor companies
- ❖ Matched MNEs with Canadian firms (SMEs) and universities to create multiple “instant”, simple PPCs
- ❖ Grew Canadian firms by connecting them with **global innovation supply chains**
- ❖ Utilized Mitacs matchmaking expertise
- ❖ Provided access to funding for Research, Innovation *and* Pre-commercialization
- ❖ Included HQP training and retention

This led to the formation of VARDEC in 2013

## Visual Analytics Research & Development Consortium of Canada (VARDEC)

- ❖ VARDEC is an Industry-led public private consortium
- ❖ Focus is on pre-competitive VA research & development
- ❖ Boeing is the lead ITB obligor and have received ITB credit for helping to establish the consortium
- ❖ Three principal components:
  - Industry Members
  - Researchers
  - Consortium Management

# What Did We Learn?

- ❖ ITB Obligators are hesitant to initiate relationships with Canadian SMEs due to the high cost of due diligence on the prospective partners.
- ❖ There is typically a lack of internal resources within the Obligor firm to manage these relationships internally.
- ❖ Non-ITB Obligor MNEs are also very interested in collaborating with Canadian industrial partners and Canadian researchers.
- ❖ Industry GROUPS/ASSOCIATIONS are enthusiastically supporting calls for proposals.
  - ❑ Meeting technology “gaps” through R & D, and attracting new (SME) members are consistent with their mandates.

# The Solution - Converge

- ❖ Converge “aims to grow Canadian firms by connecting them to global markets through innovation supply chain partnerships with MNEs (Multinational Enterprises) and Canada’s world-class academic community”.
- ❖ Developed from the public-private consortium model that was the core of Mitacs IRB (now ITB) strategy.
- ❖ Mitacs role:
  - MNE and topic identification
  - Identifying suitable partners within Canadian industry and academia
  - Managing and disbursing project funding
  - Supervision and management of individual projects
  - Reporting

# The Converge Process: Phase 1-“Proof of Concept”

- ❖ MNE, in consultation with Mitacs, nominates innovation challenge/topic and allocates funding “envelope”.
- ❖ Mitacs issues call for Letters of Intent (LOIs). Responses can come from companies (mainly SMEs), universities, or existing partnerships.
- ❖ LOI submissions reviewed by Mitacs and MNE.
- ❖ Selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. Others are referred to Mitacs’s BD team for possible opportunities for other Mitacs program funding.
- ❖ Full proposals developed with support and assistance from Converge team and BDs.
- ❖ Full proposals can be developed without going through the call/LOI steps if the MNE/SME relationship already exists.

# Converge: Phase 1

## “Proof of Concept” Projects - Description

- ❖ Combined funding from MNE and SME matched by Mitacs. (i.e. Mitacs funding is 50% of cash budget).
- ❖ Project is research focused and minimum 50% of cash budget must be spent on HQP stipends.
- ❖ HQP = Mitacs partner university graduate students and post-docs.
- ❖ Projects include milestones and success metrics to demonstrate “proof of concept” and lead to phase 2.
  - ❑ Estimated average project value (excluding in-kind) ~ \$60k.

## Converge: Phase 2

### “Pre-Commercialization” Projects

- ❖ *IF* proof of concept project is successful, **AND** MNE and SME are prepared to continue, **AND** continued funding support is warranted, partners are invited to apply for Phase 2 funding.
  - ❖ Combined funding from MNE and SME 50% matched by Mitacs. (i.e. Mitacs funding is one-third of cash budget)
  - ❖ Project is development, commercialization and training focused and minimum 1/3 of cash budget must be spent on HQP stipends.
  - ❖ Phase 2 HQP may include undergraduates and colleges.
- ❑ Estimated average project value (excluding in-kind) ~ \$300k.

# Where Are We?

- ❖ A Call For Proposals on behalf of an ITB Obligor has been conducted: 2 Canadian SME partners identified for Proof of Concept projects.
- ❖ Engagement with several MNEs is underway and many have agreed to a Program Participation Agreement (1<sup>st</sup> Step).
- ❖ Agreements with Funding Partners under negotiation to increase the resources available for the Converge program.



# THANK YOU!!

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