



News Release

For Immediate Release

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ONTARIO-FUNDED RESEARCH NOT MARKETPLACE FOCUSED AS PROMISED: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The province has not made good on its commitment to focus the hundreds of millions of dollars it spends funding scientific research on taking good ideas out of labs and ensure they get to the marketplace, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2009 Annual Report*, released today.

According to the Ministry of Research and Innovation's own website, the Ontario Research Fund, which was created in 2004, is intended to "support scientific excellence by supporting research that can be developed into innovative goods and services that will boost Ontario's economy." However, the audit found that most of the projects funded were for theoretical research that was not focused on commercial potential. Since its inception, the Fund has announced total program commitments of \$623 million.

Among the other significant findings in the Report:

- No grants have been awarded directly to Ontario's colleges since the Fund's inception, even though they are eligible and tend to support applied programs and research and help small- to medium-sized businesses develop new or improved technologies and processes for the marketplace.
- The government did not have an adequate process to ensure that the bigger capital projects it funded supported Ontario's strategic priorities or provided strategic benefits to Ontario. Instead, it generally based its funding on decisions of the federal Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), with the result that the province funded \$41.5 million worth of projects that did not directly support Ontario's strategic priorities.
- The Fund does not perform its own site visits to monitor research projects because it can receive the results of CFI site visits and audits of Ontario co-funded projects. However, the Auditor found that the government had neither requested nor received any of this information from the CFI.

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For more information and to view the full *2009 Annual Report*, please visit www.auditor.on.ca
Copies of the report are available by calling (416) 327-2381.