

**Small Business Policy Branch (SBPB)**  
**Proposal for Workshop Session at the 2007 CCSBE Conference in Kelowna**  
**“Collaborative Innovation in Canadian Small Firms”**

**Presenters:**

Presenter #1 - Innovation Policy Expert (to be confirmed)

Innovation Policy Sector

Industry Canada

235 Queen St. East

Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H5

Telephone:

Email:

Presenter #2 Donald Rumball (to be confirmed)

DAR Enterprises

Toronto, Ontario

Telephone: 416-762-4293

Email: [drumball@sympatico.ca](mailto:drumball@sympatico.ca)

Presenter #3 – Academic (to be confirmed)

Address: to follow

Telephone: to follow

Email: to follow

**Moderator:**

Chris Parsley, Manager, Research, Small Business Policy Branch, Industry Canada

235 Queen Street, 9th Floor East

Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H5

Email: [parsley.chris@ic.gc.ca](mailto:parsley.chris@ic.gc.ca)

**Background**

Innovation has become a necessary component of a successful business strategy among firms of all sizes. Many studies demonstrate that research and development (R&D) and technology-based innovation strategies are strongly associated with superior business performance. However, smaller firms may face limited resources for R&D and commercialization and, consequently, incur higher risks. In addition, the innovation process is not solely dependent on R&D, as factors such as human resource strategies and management capabilities of the firm are also key. Therefore, the need for collaborative R&D and commercialization is particularly critical for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) hoping to make gains in terms of innovation.

Industry Canada has recently completed five case studies on collaborative innovation by Canadian small firms which provides insights into new policy directions regarding university-private sector collaboration on R&D and commercialization. The variety of collaborative strategies used by the small firms had varying degrees of success and can be classified into two broad categories of activities: i) research-push, including spin-offs, from university laboratories and contract research; ii) commercial-pull collaborations including sponsored research, joint ventures and technology watches. The results highlight the importance for successful collaboration and commercialization of credible research, key individuals, the ability to access potential partners through networks, the availability of angel investors and appropriate support for incubation.

### **Objectives of a SBPB Session at CCSBE**

The CCSBE would provide an ideal forum for sharing the results of the case study research and provide a platform for a broader discussion of innovation policy. This workshop therefore works very well under the theme of this year's conference – "*Connecting Policy, Practice and Research*". The main objectives of a SBPB session would be as follows:

1. Share key findings of research conducted on the innovation case studies and the related policy implications.
2. Engage debate among academia, government and private industry representatives on the best approach in dealing with collaborative innovation among small firms. This debate could explore the role of government, potential collaborative efforts amongst government, academia and private industry.
3. Provide further research areas on collaborative innovation and commercialization, and indicate future potential policy directions.

### **Proposed Format of Session**

The session would take the form of a 3-person panel presentation followed by a discussion among the panel members and the audience. The presentations would be approximately 15 minutes each and would then be followed by a half hour discussion. The first presentation would focus on case study research undertaken by the SBPB. The next presentation would highlight the key policy areas of Innovation Policy Sector at Industry Canada. This would be followed by a presentation on the role of universities and collaborative innovation. The floor would then be opened up for discussion and debate.

### **Audience**

Conference participants will likely include academics, policy developers, and economic development agents.

### **Equipment and Room Requirements**

Audio visual aids, including LCD projector and screen. A computer may also be required.

### **Abstract:**

This workshop highlights recent case study research by Industry Canada on collaborative innovation by Canadian small firms. The research provides insights into new policy directions regarding university-private sector collaboration on R&D and commercialization. The results demonstrate the importance for successful collaboration and commercialization of credible research, key individuals, the ability to access potential partners through networks, the availability of angel investors and appropriate support for incubation. The workshop will also include a discussion from the perspectives of the key public policy areas affecting innovation and the role of universities in collaborative innovation.