



NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release:
November 20, 2003**

Biotechnology Council of Ontario: New Province-Wide “Council of Councils” Formed

November 20, 2003 – An announcement was made at the BioNorth 2003 Conference in Ottawa regarding the creation of the Biotechnology Council of Ontario (BCO). This new province-wide Council has been formed to advise government on all public policy issues facing the biotechnology industry and to advocate on behalf of the industry in Ontario. The BCO will also support the Province in its goal of creating the third largest biotechnology industry in North America.

The BCO represents the evolution of detailed consultation with industry, academia, key regions, and government. A Founding Steering Committee has been in place since early 2002, developing and refining the BCO concept. In early November 2003, key representatives from Ontario’s biotechnology industry gathered for a Roundtable discussion to define the framework for a provincial voice for biotechnology. This led to an agreement in principle to form the BCO, a major milestone for the biotechnology industry in the province. At the Roundtable, it was acknowledged that Dale Patterson, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Medical Discoveries Fund, will become the Chair of the Founding Steering Committee and MaRS Discovery District will serve as the Council’s Secretariat.

Prior to the BCO, Ontario lacked a strong advisory organization to represent the biotech industry across the province on public policy issues. The BCO will fill the gap in Ontario by creating a collective body to address key policy issues facing the biotechnology industry. According to Gord Surgeoner, President, Ontario Agri-Food Technologies, “Ontario’s strength has been our willingness to work together. The Biotechnology Council of Ontario builds on those synergies. We have, as different organizations, common issues and great opportunities best managed as a single entity. That entity is the Biotechnology Council of Ontario.”

The BCO will operate under key principles of inclusiveness and integration. The Council will be open to all biotechnology stakeholders in the province and will strive to fully integrate the interests of groups that span geographic and functional boundaries. The Council will be organized into Regional Councils, Cross Regional (Functional) Groups, and an Advisory Council. The Regional Councils will represent geographic regions across Ontario, while the Cross Regional (Functional) Groups will represent specific sectors in the province. The Advisory Council will facilitate collaboration among these stakeholders and act as an advisory body, communicating with all levels of government, particularly Ontario.



The BCO's policy platform will be based on the recently published OnTRAC benchmarking report on Ontario's Biotechnology sector. OnTRAC identifies four primary drivers of the biotechnology business model: human resources, the legal and regulatory environment, strategic partnerships, and the issues involving access to capital. The BCO will provide input to public policy to create focus on nurturing and strengthening each of these drivers to fuel a competitive environment for biotechnology and a strong domestic industry.

Throughout the remaining weeks of 2003, the Founding Steering Committee will be developing a long-term operating plan and identifying regional and cross regional (functional) chairs. The Council will also be preparing for a formal launch event in early 2004, planning the first BCO Public Policy Forum for the spring of 2004, and coordinating a presence at the May BioFinance 2004 Conference in Toronto, as well as at BIO 2004 in San Francisco in June.

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Background Information:

The Biotechnology Council of Ontario's Envisioned Organizational Structure can be located at http://www.marsdd.com/am_pressrel.html.

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Biotechnology Council of Ontario: Envisioned Organizational Structure

