

Media Release  
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### **Guelph-Waterloo Partnership in Biotechnology begins Biotechnology Cluster Assessment Study**

The Guelph-Waterloo Partnership in Biotechnology (GWPB) is moving forward with an initiative that will help build and strengthen the life science activity in the region, thanks to financial support from the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation's (MEOI) Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Program (BCIP).

Made up of the University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, the City of Guelph, Canada's Technology Triangle Inc, Communitech Technology Association and the Guelph Partnership for Innovation (GPI), the GWPB will receive \$200,000 over the next five months to help build the region's capacity for sustained cluster development and technology commercialization in the areas of life science, biotechnology and bio-products.

"With this funding we will develop a strategy for maximizing the interface between our region's capacity in research and technology with the opportunities for bio-based industrial development," noted Alan Wildeman, vice-president (research) at the University of Guelph and co-chair of the GWPB at the official project announcement in July 2003.

With two months of planning and visioning behind it, the GWPB is set to present the first of three public information sessions on Wednesday October 29, 2003 at Grey Silo Golf Course (2001 University Ave East, Waterloo). The session will focus on the work plan developed by the lead consulting firm on the project – Strategic Health Innovations (SHI) – and will give local stakeholders an opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions to the project.

Interested persons will also have opportunities to participate in focus groups and working groups planned for the next few months. Feasibility studies and stakeholder consultations conducted over the coming months will help the GWPB to assess the region's current strengths in biotechnology and life science and to create an Action Plan for meeting the gaps within our regions identified in the process. If you would like to be involved in the event please contact either Erin Cheney or Linda Fegan for more information (See below for contact information).

Since the project announcement in July the GWPB has been busy building and refining a framework of activity for the project. In late August a competitive process was held to select a lead consultant for the project. Strategic Health Innovations (SHI) was awarded the contract and is actively engaged in moving the project forward.

SHI brings to the project an extensive background in the biotech field. In the past three years they have completed over 200 major projects focused on the emerging life science industry and have secured close to \$150 million for clients from the venture markets. The skill sets of the SHI project leads and strategists complement the goals and ambitions of the GWPB, and their international connections will bring the Guelph and Waterloo regions greater global exposure.

Biotechnology, considered an enabling technology for the life science sector, is readily used in this region. Industries currently using biotechnology include medical imaging, pharmaceutical manufacturing, environmental science, bio-informatics, and applications in the chemical and agricultural industries.

Under the larger banners of biotechnology and life science, the GWPB has identified a leading role for the regions and the universities in the research and development of technologies related to bio-based products and processes. The value of this emerging bio-based marketplace is forecasted to reach \$150 billion US by the end of this decade.

The bio-based platform links the molecular biology and agricultural production strengths of the University of Guelph and the bio-informatics and bio-engineering strengths of the University of Waterloo with receptor capacity in two of Ontario's key industrial areas, to create a continual chain of innovation from invention to industrial adoption.

Paul Guild, vice-president (research) for the University of Waterloo and co-chair of GWPB notes that "the collaborations within the Guelph-Waterloo Partnership in Biotechnology present excellent opportunities for two top notched institutions and their supporting communities to excel in the global biotechnology marketplace and enables us to build our foothold in the bio-based economy."

The BCIP is part of the province's Biotechnology Strategy, which has specifically targeted cluster development for the biotechnology sector and sets a goal of making Ontario one of the top jurisdictions in North America for biotechnology.

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