

# Canada's Technology Access Centres (TACs)

Accelerating innovation through industry partnerships with colleges, polytechnics and cégeps

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**T**echnology Access Centres foster innovation and strengthen competitiveness in Canada from coast to coast. Since 2012 NSERC has been partially funding TACs at Colleges and cégeps across Canada. TACs provide ready access for industry, most often in close geographical



Photo: Lambton College

proximity to a TAC, to specialized technology, equipment, and expertise—particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—with the goal of enhancing their ability to increase productivity, competitiveness and innovation. And, of course, there are the opportunities for students to participate and gain experience in real-world work projects.

The concept for the TACs is based on the successful Centre collégial de transfert de technologie (CCTT) model developed over the past few decades by the Government of Québec.

TACs provide capabilities and capacity that serve their local/regional companies' innovation needs. They help businesses advance their services,



Photo: Red River College

processes and products. This may include advice on specific company challenges, specialized technical assistance, collaborative applied research and development projects focused on the companies' agendas. Another form of service is specialized training, often related to new types of equipment and processes.

Currently, there are 30 TACs across Canada; more are expected to be founded in the coming years.

## **TACs aim to help build resilient regional economies.**

funding. They are regional innovation hubs for particular sectors/clusters and encourage industry to gain access to advanced technologies, equipment, services and expertise, and innovation support services delivered by college faculty, staff and students that they would not typically be able to access due to financial constraints or internal resources.

The SAIT Green Building Technologies (GBT) and the Institut du véhicule innovant (IVI) at

TACs strive to be a one-stop-shop and—in addition to the services provided in-house—connect companies to services not offered by a TAC such as additional sources of advice, service, expertise and

Cégep de Saint-Jérôme are but two of them: for a complete list with links, please, refer to: <http://tech-access.ca/en/members/>

The current TACs serve the research and innovation needs of a specific regional economic cluster representing nine technology sectors: Advanced manufacturing, Agriculture, Construction technology, Digital media and graphic communications, Environmental technology/biotechnology, Food technology, Healthcare technology, Nanotechnology, Transportation.

In 2015, the TACs formed Tech-Access Canada. Its website provides always-current information and access to the TACs: <http://tech-access.ca/> ■

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*Dr. Luiken spearheaded establishment at Lambton of the first NSERC Industrial Applied Research Chair for Colleges. Prior to joining Lambton College, she was Vice-President Research Alliances, National Capital Institute of Telecommunications (NCIT), Ottawa. At NCIT, Maike founded and led the Ottawa Photonics Research Alliance (OPRA), and cofounded the Ottawa Wireless Research Alliance (OWRA).*