

2nd National Symposium on “Science Diplomacy,” organized by CSPC

The second Science Diplomacy symposium is being organized at a time when Canada is undergoing fundamental changes in policy directions surrounding international affairs. This year’s symposium on Science Diplomacy is particularly focused on bringing science diplomacy thinkers and practitioners together to share ideas on the following themes:

- What steps should Canada take to build capacity in science diplomacy so Canadian scientific excellence can be positively projected in the global arena?
- How can Canada best combine its strength in scientific excellence with an already established reputation of nation building/peace-making?
- What is Canada’s footprint in international collaborative projects in science and technology projects and how can it be improved?
- What is Canada’s contribution to major international challenges where the solution lies in science and technology and how Canada can boost its engagement?
- What are the current global trends and international practices in science diplomacy and what can Canada learn from them?

Many of the challenges that we face today are global in nature. Whether it’s tackling climate change, global food security, diminishing biodiversity, resource scarcity or fighting disease - global problems require global solutions. Interestingly, possible solutions to such challenges are all rooted in science and driven by technology.

Given the global nature of problems, it is imperative to place science at the heart of international agenda and to promote the interactions between scientific and foreign policy communities. ‘Science diplomacy’, a fluid concept, combines the Science and Technology tools with diplomatic tools of strategy and tactics.

Science diplomacy takes many forms: In recent news, the effective use of science to re-establish the broken political relations between [US and Cuba](#) is a classic example of ‘science for diplomacy’ where scientific missions from the US to Cuba, well established the ties between the two countries that led to formal negotiations and diplomatic relationship. Similarly, in December 2015, the [Paris Climate Conference \(COP21\)](#) brought 195 countries together on the table for a first ever legally binding global climate deal. This historic deal heeded to the scientific evidence and advice in order to achieve foreign policy objectives, a perfect example for ‘science in diplomacy’. Finally, there is a well-established role of ‘diplomacy for science’ where foreign policy offices representing their respective governments play an active role in facilitating targeted scientific collaborations for mutually acceptable solutions to common problems and to strengthen international trade. In each form, diplomacy can enormously advance science and technological advancement between nations.

CSPC has been the leading Canadian institution in promoting dialogue and capacity building in science diplomacy among other science policy topics. CSPC held the first [Science Diplomacy Session](#) with Dr. Nina Federoff, former Science and technology adviser to US Secretary of State in 2010. In 2013, CSPC held the first of its kind national [symposium on science diplomacy](#). Similarly, in 2015, CSPC organized an invigorating [symposium on diaspora](#) scientists highlighting Canada’s diverse scientific community and their natural disposition for promoting international collaboration and in strengthening Canada’s global position in scientific excellence. More recently, in June of this year, CSPC [hosted a breakfast session at the Parliament Hill](#) where Dr. Vaughan Turekian, Science Adviser to US Secretary of State, John Kerry, highlighted the importance of “Science Diplomacy in the 21st Century”.