

Promoting Bioscience education across Canada

The Canadian Biotechnology Education Resource Centre (CBERC) is changing its name to Bioscience Education Canada (BEC) in recognition of the expanding role of biotechnology in many fields of biological science. Under its new operating name, the national non-profit charitable organization will continue its mandate to improve the quality of bioscience education in Canadian schools and encourage more young Canadians to pursue studies and careers of Canada's growing bioeconomy.

“Biotechnology is not only impacting more fields of science but also spawning its own sub-disciplines such as genomics, proteomics and DNA bar-coding,” said Jeff Graham, chair of BEC's board of directors. “This expansion and diversification of biotechnology in both research and business will offer young Canadians more opportunities for careers in the biological sciences”.

At the national level, BEC supports the expansion of Canada's bioeconomy by educating students, teachers and the public about the socio-economic benefits of using biotechnology to create new drugs, novel foods, new fuels and solutions to environmental problems. BEC also collaborates with many regional and local education and business organizations to achieve better community understanding of these economic and social benefits.

BEC continues as the national program manager for the Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenge, a national science competition for high school students doing their own research projects in biological sciences. BEC also organizes an annual National Bioscience Educators' Conference for high school teachers. Other BEC programs include biotech lab courses and toolbox programs for teachers, public lectures and workshops and curriculum development projects in such fields as stem cell research, DNA bar-coding and biodiversity.

BEC delivers its programs through partnerships with such national organizations as the National Research Council, BIOTECCanada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and BioTalent Canada. BEC also collaborates with regional bioscience and science outreach organizations such as the Ontario Genomics Institute, BioAlberta, Genome Atlantic, The Biotechnology Initiative and Manitoba's Mindset education program to name a few. Among the private sector organizations that have supported BEC's programs are sanofi pasteur, Merck Frosst Canada, Monsanto and Bayer Canada.

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