MCRI SELECTION COMMITTEE - COMITE DE SELECTION GTRC

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL CONSEIL DE RECHERCHES EN SCIENCES HUMAINES

FILE I DOSSIER: 412-2001-0026

PROJECT DIRECTOR / DIRECTEUR DU PROJET:

Professor Stephen R.G Jones

McMaster University (Economics)

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET:

Labour market institutions and outcomes: the Canadian International Labour Network

COMMITTEE COMMENTS / COMMENTAIRES DU COMITT:

While the committee treated all the Letters of Intent for a second MCRI grant on an equal competitive footing with all the other Letters of Intent, it took into consideration the results and accomplishments achieved under the first grant. The committee acknowledged the effort that the Project Director had made to renew the project. The Project Director has assembled a team of researchers that includes respected international scholars and scholars from across Canada. Team members with diverse expertise and new research sites have been added, and innovative ways of integrating graduate students into the program are proposed. The committee was very impressed by the concept of sponsored travelling workshops that would include student researchers, a concept it found original and positive.

However, the committee was not convinced that the renewal application addressed convincingly the Midterm Site Review Committee's recommendations regarding the establishment of a critical mass of cross-disciplinary scholars. This is an important aspect of the MCRI program and the MCRI committee strongly believes that different disciplinary perspectives and approaches serve to enrich a research enterprise. While the committee found that CILN has undoubtedly established a good network for collaboration and some of the research output is collaborative, this collaboration is almost exclusively within the discipline of economics. The committee recognized the effort the Project Director has made in his new submission to include more researchers from other disciplines on the team. Nevertheless it was not convinced that these scholars would play more than a marginal role in the development and conduct of the research. The Letter of Intent does not provide a persuasive, clearly specified description of how scholars from other disciplines, and their research, would be integrated into the on-going CILN program of research. Additional information regarding the direct involvement and potential contribution of these scholars to the research activities is required. It was not apparent to the committee that there are mechanisms in place that will allow the renewed team to broaden its disciplinary outlook, and, consequently, the impact of its research, in a meaningful and necessary way.

While the committee agreed with the Midterm Site Visit Committee that the team's scholarly production is excellent, it was not convinced that the new research to be undertaken was innovative. The committee commented that the proposal as described seemed to be searching for new, innovative research topics that

would produce more than an incremental contribution to research. It was not confident that the planned extension of the research would take a significant and groundbreaking step beyond what has already been accomplished by CILN.

The committee noted that some problems identified in the Midterm Site Visit Committee's report have not been resolved. It indicated that the links among the three projects could be stronger. It remarked that team members have successfully disseminated their research in the traditional scientific venues, but it also noted that the team had reported only 20 requests for CILN data. Since the team members had identified the collection of data as a major component of the original project, the committee found this worrisome.

Finally, although the committee considered that the proposed graduate student and postdoctoral seminars would be valuable, it would have preferred to see these seminars held at a time when they would overlap with the annual conferences. This would give CILN's junior researchers the opportunity to showcase their work to a wider, more experienced audience.

RECOMMENDATION / RECOMMANDATION:

The committee did not recommend that the Project Director and his team be invited to the next stage of this competition.

Program Officer: Gail Cook (613) 992-5131