



GenomeCanada

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Canadian Biotechnology Innovation and Commercialization (CBIC) Initiative

Guidelines

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1. Overview

Biotechnology as a multidisciplinary field leverages biological processes, organisms, or systems to develop products and technologies for various applications. It encompasses a wide range of sectors, including medicine, agriculture, and environmental science, with the potential to address global challenges and enhance quality of life. The field has been significantly revolutionized by genomics, which provides a deeper understanding of the genetic basis of life. This has enabled precise manipulation and understanding of biological systems at a molecular level, driving innovation across multiple sectors.

The Canadian Biotechnology Innovation and Commercialization (CBIC) initiative funds public-private research and development (R&D) projects that amplify the value of public investment in innovation and stimulate industry investment in research, innovation, and commercialization of genomics and biotechnology in Canada. The CBIC can de-risk investment in, and accelerate, the commercialization of Canadian genomics inventions and innovations by addressing real-world needs and opportunities identified by industry. CBIC projects are partnerships between Researchers and industry Receptors. The projects are co-funded by Receptors and other stakeholders and have the potential to generate significant innovation and co-investment at the interface of public and private industrial R&D.

2. Objectives

The key objectives of the CBIC initiative are to support Canadian public and private institutions, working in the field of genomics, to:

- Increase Canadian private-sector investment in **commercialization** of innovation derived from public R&D funding in genomics and biotechnology.
- Stimulate technological **innovation** and **implementation** through cooperative R&D between Research and Receptor organizations.
- Enable research investments that **de-risk opportunities** and secure follow-on funding from finance and industry.
- Foster and encourage **participation** in innovation and entrepreneurship by individuals from equity-seeking communities.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Projects must meet all the following criteria to be eligible for CBIC funding. Projects must:

- focus on innovation R&D (i.e., from invention to proof of concept through prototype demonstration);
- enable the invention, development, or application of a product, process, or service solution that features genomics and biotechnology;
- address a Receptor-defined opportunity or challenge;
- be a partnership co-led by a Researcher and a Receptor, with active and necessary roles for both (see Section 5 for CBIC project partner definitions);
- have the potential to generate significant social and/or economic impact and benefits for Canadian stakeholders (see Section 6 for a description of Benefits to Canada).

CBIC is not intended to fund:

- discovery research;

- commercial launches of already developed technology;
- low-risk R&D that can be serviced by capital markets; or
- projects, project components, or service provision (e.g., certain types of clinical trials) normally funded solely by the Receptor.

IMPORTANT: To be eligible for consideration, applicant teams must acknowledge during application submission that all conditions for Genome Canada’s flow of funds – including contribution, IP, and all other agreements – must be signed and secured by **by 09:00 (9 AM) EDT on March 17, 2025**. *Projects that fail to meet this deadline will not be funded.*

4. Available Funding and Term

- Applicants can request up to 1/3 of the project budget from Genome Canada.
- Genome Canada’s total contribution to an approved project must be a minimum of \$100,000 up to a maximum of \$2 million.
- Remaining project funding must be secured from other eligible sources, with total co-funding of at least 1:2 (Genome Canada: all co-funding sources) and the Receptor(s) providing funding that is equal to or greater than Genome Canada’s contribution (see also Appendix 1 for more on co-funding).
- Project duration should be two to three years.

5. Project Partners

Each CBIC project must be co-led by an eligible Researcher and a senior representative of a Receptor organization (see below and Genome Canada’s [Guidelines for Funding](#)). The project partnership must leverage the expertise and resources of each partner, and their respective roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined in the submission. The project team should include members with experience in industrial R&D for commercial development.

5.1 RESEARCHERS

A Researcher is defined as an individual who is a Canadian university or college faculty member, or an affiliated, non-commercial entity, such as a hospital or research institute. Researchers in not-for-profit corporations and registered charities may be eligible for CBIC if their organization has an explicit research mandate (without limitation to other mandates beyond research).

5.2 RECEPTORS

In general, a Receptor is an entity or consortia of entities that aims to implement the innovation or solution resulting from the CBIC investment by commercializing it or providing unrestricted access to the end-users, per their business model.

For the CBIC, eligible lead Receptors must be one of the following:

- **Canadian for-profit entities, i.e., domiciled in Canada (either public or privately held) of any size or stage of development; or**
- **foreign for-profit entities with business operations in Canada, i.e., producing goods or services within Canada or carrying out R&D in Canada (either public or privately held); or**
- **industry consortia; or**

- **non-profit organization that will freely provide the innovation, product, process or service to Canadian for-profit entities.**

Canadian-domiciled for-profit entities acting as Lead Receptors will be prioritized relative to those headquartered outside of Canada.

Up to three (3) additional Receptors can be included in the project team in contributing and/or supporting roles. These Receptors can include:

- companies (private or public, Canadian or foreign-owned);
- industry consortia;
- government departments and agencies (federal, provincial, municipal, or **Indigenous governing bodies**);
- healthcare or public health organizations; and,
- not-for-profit organizations.

Receptors that are owned by or employ the lead Researcher must (1) disclose the nature and extent of the relationship in the proposal, (2) demonstrate that they have their own business office and staff, are physically separated from the Academic's laboratory and (3) be independently governed (e.g., by a dedicated executive team and Board of Directors). For simplicity, the Researcher is preferably only involved with the Receptor organization in an external advisory role. The Receptor must have clear decision-making processes independent of the lead Researcher.

5.3 PROJECT ROLES

In CBIC projects, both the Researcher and the Receptor must play integral roles in planning, leading and executing the project, and be jointly responsible for major project decisions.

The Researcher is expected to jointly develop the project plan (with the Receptor), provide critical scientific/technical expertise and direction, and administer project funds. The Receptor is expected to co-develop the project plan (with the Researcher), provide technical expertise and direction for technology implementation, manage regulatory issues, and lead research and/or commercialization efforts.

Each Receptor representative is responsible for administering project activities and associated costs within their organizations. The Receptor(s) must have access to the expertise and resources to contribute substantially to the project from both a technical and commercial perspective and to exploit the project outputs to the socio-economic benefit of Canada.

In projects with more than one Receptor, the group must appoint one Receptor Project Leader to represent all Receptors.

6. Impact and Benefits to Canada

Evaluation of CBIC proposals includes an assessment of the socio-economic benefits for Canadian stakeholders that could be realized if the project achieves its objectives. The potential benefits should be well-defined, quantifiable, and justified with:

- a techno-economic feasibility assessment of the proposed product, process, service or solution;
- a well-considered analysis of the opportunity being addressed;

- an assessment and risk-mitigation plan for any barriers to project success (e.g., technical, social, market, competition, policy, regulatory, supply chain, etc).

Examples of benefits sought in CBIC projects include, but are not limited to:

- increased industry R&D investment in genomics and biotechnology;
- increased follow-on investment in the growth and scaling of Canadian for-profit Enterprises;
- development of new genomics and biotechnology inventions and innovations;
- business growth and international competitiveness;
- technical validation or de-risking of commercial product or service opportunities;
- regional and national economic development;
- talent attraction and retention;
- commercial or public/private research partnerships; or
- other tangible benefits.

7. Intellectual Property

CBIC funding is conditional on a legally binding intellectual property (IP) agreement between the project partners. The agreement must address, at a minimum:

- rights to use 'background' IP required for the project;
- ownership of, and rights to license, new ('foreground') IP generated by the project;
- management of new IP (such as filing and prosecution expenses, maintenance, licensing); and,
- responsibility and/or liability for patent litigation.

Applicants are advised to contact their regional Genome Centre for guidance on IP policies and guidelines.

8. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) and Indigenous Truth, Reconciliation, and Engagement

Genome Canada is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment and ensuring equitable participation by people who live with diverse visual, motor, auditory, learning and cognitive abilities. We are acting on the evidence that achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research needed to advance knowledge and understanding and respond to local, national and global challenges.

Genome Canada encourages partners and applicants to increase the inclusion and advancement of equity-deserving and under-represented communities in leadership positions to enhance excellence in research and training. Equity-deserving and under-represented groups can include Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, members of other racialized groups, women, persons with disabilities, members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and early-career researchers. Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) should be key considerations for team management and composition.

Genome Canada is committed to Indigenous truth, reconciliation and engagement and the right of self-determination as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This commitment is reflected in our support for Indigenous data governance principles that are people- and purpose-oriented and that recognize the crucial role of data in advancing Indigenous innovation and self-determination.

Research done with Indigenous communities, on Indigenous lands and/or incorporating Indigenous knowledge has been under-recognized, under-valued, under-funded and often conducted in a culturally insensitive manner. Genome Canada recognizes that Indigenous communities have unique approaches to research that are rooted in their unique experiences and relationships with the natural world.

Research projects that address issues of relevance to Indigenous peoples are expected to include a plan to engage Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, in research design and practice. The plan should specify how Indigenous groups will participate on the research team and/or as users of the research, as well as how Indigenous knowledge systems will co-exist with and complement the project's other activities. Projects involving Indigenous research should be conducted with sensitivity, and only after carefully considering who will conduct the research and why and how it will be conducted. The research should be conducted in line with the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#), and the [First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession \(OCAP®\)](#).

9. Application Process

CBIC proposals are reviewed in two stages, as follows:

9.1 LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

The LOI is a summary of the proposed project and its value proposition. It describes the technical opportunity or solution, market opportunity, commercialization plan and potential socio-economic impact of the proposed innovation. Genome Canada will assess the project for eligibility and will notify the Regional Genome Centres of the decision within 10 business days of the submission deadline.

9.2 FULL APPLICATION

The full application provides a detailed explanation of the project research, development, and commercialization plan and budget. Full applications are reviewed first by a panel of external experts, and then by the Genome Canada Oversight and Review Committee (ORC). The ORC is provided with the entire proposal package along with the reviews.

The ORC includes external professionals with extensive experience in industrial R&D, technology implementation and commercialization, intellectual property, investment and other relevant areas. The ORC assesses all eligible CBIC applications and technical expert reviews to provide additional viewpoints and consistency across project reviews and is involved in the ongoing oversight of funded CBIC projects (see Appendix 1). The ORC provides recommendations on project funding to Genome Canada's Board of Directors, who have final authority for funding decisions.

All reviewers and ORC members engaged by Genome Canada are signatories to confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements with Genome Canada to ensure that information is kept in strict confidence and that reviewers are not biased by conflicting professional obligations or financial considerations.

10. Contacts

All documentation and information related to proposal submissions and follow-up must be submitted to Genome Canada through a regional Genome Centre. Contact your regional [Genome Centre](#) with questions about the initiative and application process.

Appendix 1. Exceptions to Genome Canada's Guidelines for Funding

A1.1 DATA RELEASE AND SHARING POLICIES

Genome Canada's policies regarding Data Release and Resource Sharing, and Access to Research Publications are referred to in Section 2.2 of the [Guidelines for Funding](#). CBIC funding is conditional upon Project Leaders agreeing to comply with these policies, and CBIC applicants must provide a Data Release and Resource Sharing Plan as part of their Full Application. The Genome Canada policies recognize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of commercially valuable information and seek a balance between openness and protection of Canadian economic interests.

As set out in the policies, applicants may request an exemption from data sharing requirements. Exemptions will normally be confirmed early in the application process upon mutual understanding of the nature of the data and information in question.

A1.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS

Eligible and ineligible costs in Genome Canada-funded projects are listed and described in Genome Canada's [Guidelines for Funding](#).

Exceptions under the CBIC to the eligible costs listed in the Guidelines:

- Project budgets can include individual equipment items with costs less than or equal to \$100,000 per item. Requests for more expensive equipment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will only be considered eligible expenses if the equipment is specific to the project, crucial to its success, and cannot reasonably be funded by other sources or accessed by other means.
- The collective use of Genome Canada funds for equipment cannot exceed ten percent (10%) of the approved Genome Canada funding, regardless of the total amount of equipment expenses allowed. Any eligible equipment costs in excess of this limit must be covered by other approved funding sources.
- Project budgets may include services from others with a total cost less than or equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total budget. Requests for services from others above that amount will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and considered eligible only if the service provided is specific to the project, crucial to its success and cannot be reasonably completed by the project team.

A1.3 CO-FUNDING

Genome Canada's general guidelines regarding co-funding and eligible sources are in Section 5 of the [Guidelines for Funding](#).

Additional co-funding requirements under the CBIC:

- The co-funding provided by the Receptor(s) may be derived from their own resources or from funds provided to the Receptor(s) by another source.
- 100% of the co-funding (received or committed) for the project must be confirmed before funds can be released to the project, unless otherwise specified by Genome Canada. Genome Canada reserves the right to withdraw its funding for any approved

project that does not meet this requirement or if there is a change in a project's co-funding status.

- In exceptional circumstances, e.g., when the Receptor is a nascent start-up company, it is allowable to confirm Receptor co-funding year-by-year, as long as all co-funding for the first year is secured and a well-developed and feasible plan for securing the remaining co-funding is in place at the time of the release of Genome Canada funds to the project.

A1.4 PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Conditions for Release of Genome Canada Funds

Genome Canada's guidelines regarding the conditions for release of Genome Canada funds to a project are in Section 6.2 of the Guidelines for Funding.

An IP term sheet that is legally binding and signed by all concerned parties must be provided, or IP terms must be provided as part of a broader, legally binding agreement executed by all concerned parties, before Genome Canada flow of funds.

Management of Funding and Project Reporting

Genome Canada's requirements regarding the management of project funds and project reporting are described in Section 6.3 of the Guidelines for Funding.

Additional requirements for managing funds and reporting on projects under the CBIC:

- Funded projects must submit to their Administrative Genome Centre on a periodic (generally, semi-annual) basis, information and data as prescribed by Genome Canada and the Genome Centre in terms of timing, format and content, which will allow for the ongoing assessment and monitoring of performance. Some projects may be required to report more frequently if deemed necessary by Genome Canada.
- The CBIC Oversight and Review Committee (ORC) will review progress reports submitted by the project teams and make recommendations to Genome Canada on whether funding should be continued, modified or cancelled.



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