GenomeQuébec

GenomeCanada

Genomics Innovation to Commercialization Program

Request for Applications

July 2025

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1. Overview

Biotechnology harnesses living organisms, their processes, and their systems to develop innovative products and solutions across a wide range of applications. It holds significant potential to improve quality of life while providing concrete answers to major global challenges.

The emergence of genomics has profoundly transformed this sector by offering a detailed and refined understanding of the genetic foundations of life. As a true driver of the bio-revolution, genomics is revolutionizing key sectors such as human health, agri-food, natural resource management, and environmental protection. These scientific advances now enable researchers to analyze and leverage biological systems at the molecular level, accelerating discovery, fostering innovation, and propelling research across multiple disciplines.

Public–private research and development initiatives focused on innovation offer a strategic opportunity to capture economic benefits aligned with regional priorities. The **Genomics Innovation to Commercialization Program (GIC Program)** supports collaboration between industry end users and the research community by targeting market-driven opportunities and specific industry needs. This approach is designed to stimulate private-sector investment in genomics research and unlock a wide range of possibilities. Genomics plays a key role in optimizing industrial processes, reducing operational costs, and fast-tracking the commercialization of high-value products—such as climate-resilient crops, advanced diagnostic tools, and personalized therapies.

2. Objectives

The GIC Program seeks to:

- increase private-sector investment in the **commercialization** of innovation derived from public R&D funding in genomics and biotechnology
- stimulate technological **innovation** and **implementation** through co-operative R&D between research and receptors
- 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-deserving communities

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for GIC Program funding, projects must meet all the following criteria:

- The project focuses on an innovation need defined by a receptor.
- It is a partnership between a receptor and researcher (and, optionally, additional partners), with active and necessary roles for all partners (refer to the Partnerships section).
- The receptor acts as Project Leader and is a Québec for-profit enterprise (FPE) conducting R&D in Québec.
- The researcher acts as Administrative Project Leader and is employed by an eligible institution (refer to Partnerships section).
- The project supports the invention, development or commercialization of a genomics-based or -enabled biotechnological innovation with a clearly articulated market opportunity.
- It will result in commercial and/or intellectual property (IP) outcomes that benefit the receptor.
- It has the potential to generate social and economic impacts and benefits (refer to the Benefits and Impact on the Receptor section).

The GIC Program is not intended to fund:

- Market research
- Commercial launches of already-developed technology
- Patent enforcement or litigation
- Projects, project components or service provision (e.g., routine analyses or certain types of clinical trials) that would normally be funded solely by the receptor

4. Partnerships

This program is designed to support receptors that have an economic interest in developing an idea or research into a commercial application.

Each project must be a partnership between **a receptor** and **researcher**, with optional support from one or more co-investigators and/or collaborators. The project partnership must require the expertise and resources of each partner, who are expected to play active and necessary roles in the project. Refer to the information below and Genome Canada's funding guidelines and policies.

Receptor

A receptor is a **for-profit enterprise** (startup, SME or large enterprise) with an economic interest in developing an idea or research into a commercial application.

To be eligible, the company must meet the following criteria:

- Be legally incorporated under applicable federal or Québec laws and registered with the Québec Enterprise Register
- Have its head office in Québec and the majority of its employees working in Québec

Projects must include one Receptor Project Leader. This person must own or be employed by the receptor, and cannot act as the researcher as well.

The Receptor Project Leader is expected to, among other activities: lead the development and execution of the project plan (with the researcher); provide resources, expertise and direction to deliver on project objectives; manage any regulatory or compliance issues; and lead research and/or commercialization efforts.

Receptor independence

A Receptor Project Leader cannot act as a researcher as well.

Researcher

Projects must include one researcher who acts as the Administrative Project Leader. Researchers must be employed by eligible institutions in Québec. These may include:

- **Post-secondary institutions;**
- **Research institutes or hospitals, or;**
- **Not-for-profit organizations with explicit research mandates**

The researcher is expected to, among other activities, support the development of the project plan with the receptor; provide critical resources or scientific and technical expertise and direction (where applicable) and administer project funds.

Researcher independence

Researcher leaders can own all, none or part of the receptor.

If the researcher has a position with the receptor, the receptor must have clear decision-making processes that are independent of the researcher.

5. Available Funding and Term

For each selected project, the funding structure will be as follows:

- **Genome Canada funding** must be equal to or less than the contribution provided by one or more receptors. This funding will be a minimum of $100,000.

- **Complimentary co-funding** must be secured from other eligible sources, with a minimum co-funding ratio of one to two (Genome Canada to all co-funding sources). Co-funding may be provided in cash and/or in-kind, if provided within Canada. It is important to note that co-funding cannot originate from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) or from agencies funded by ISED, such as the Tri-Council: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

- **Co-funding from Génome Québec** is available to cover eligible expenses incurred exclusively in Québec. This funding ranges between $100,000 and $300,000. It is important to note that partner contributions cannot come from the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie (MEIE) of Québec or from organizations funded by the MEIE.

This funding structure ensures a total project budget ranging **from $300,000 to $900,000 or more**, depending on the project.

The full amount of co-funding (received or committed) for the project must be confirmed before any funds can be disbursed. Génome Québec and Genome Canada reserve the right to withdraw their funding from any approved project that does not meet this requirement or if there are changes to the project's co-funding status.

Co-funders must provide reasonable documentation to support their financial viability and ability to provide the co-funding (see Genome Canada's funding guidelines and policies).

To receive funding from Génome Québec and Genome Canada, the legal agreement must be signed, and the conditions outlined in the Notice of Award (NOA) must be met **no later than March 10, 2026**. Additionally, all individuals holding key roles essential to the project's execution must be in place by this date. Failure to meet these requirements by March 31, 2026, will result in the cancellation of funding granted by Génome Québec and Genome Canada.

Projects must be completed **within a maximum timeframe of two years**. Selected projects must start no later than **March 31, 2026**. No deferral of the start date or extensions will be granted.

Funding granted by Génome Québec and Genome Canada will be disbursed to the academic partner. These funds must be used specifically to cover costs associated with activities directly related to the project's objectives, as approved in the budget, and carried out within the province of Québec.

5.1. Eligible Costs

In addition to the eligible costs described in Genome Canada's funding guidelines and policies, the following also apply to the GIC Program:

- Project budgets can include individual equipment items costing less than or equal to $100,000. Requests for more expensive equipment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Such expenses will be considered eligible only 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 allocation of Genome Canada funds for equipment cannot exceed 10 per cent of the approved Genome Canada funding, regardless of the total value of equipment expenses allowed. Eligible equipment costs that exceed this limit must be covered by other approved funding sources.
- Project budgets may include outsourced services costing no more than 25 per cent of the total budget. Requests for services from others beyond that amount will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Such services will be considered eligible only if they are specific to the project, crucial to its success, and cannot reasonably be completed by the project team.

Expenses funded by Génome Québec and Genome Canada must be incurred **no earlier than six months** prior to the date of the funding notice to be considered eligible costs.

5.2. Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs are detailed in the funding guidelines and policies of Genome Canada.

5.3. Eligible Co-Funding Sources

Various sources of private-sector co-funding, whether from Québec, Canada, or abroad, are accepted, provided that the expenses are incurred in Québec:

i. Private institutional funds, trust-held sources, or foundations
ii. Private companies and industrial consortia
iii. Firms and large corporations
iv. Non-profit organizations
v. Individuals
vi. Venture capital funds and other investment funds

Cash contributions as co-funding are preferred. However, in-kind contributions, defined as non-cash contributions that can be given a cash value, may be considered as co-funding if:

a. The value can be reasonably determined and supported by documentation. An example of acceptable supporting documentation is available in Genome Canada's funding guidelines.
b. The value of the contribution is based upon the fair market value of a tangible item and sufficient justification is provided. Supplier discounts are one example. However, institutional discounts generally offered to medical establishments or research facilities are not eligible as co-funding.

5.4. Ineligible Co-Funding Sources

The following are not considered eligible co-funding:

i. The value of previously existing intellectual property (IP) transferred to a project.
ii. Co-funding not associated to validation of principle.
iii. Co-funding from an organization supported by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and tri-agency programs (e.g., Networks of Centres of Excellence and Canada Research Chairs).

iv. Co-funding from an organization supported by the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie, such as CQDM, Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ), CRIBIQ, MEDTEQ, etc.

6. Submission and Evaluation Process

Team members from academia or the end-user organization who are interested in submitting an application under the Genomics Innovation to Commercialization Program can contact Génome Québec with any questions regarding eligibility and budget preparation (see the Génome Québec contact section).

Application preparation documents are available on the Génome Québec website. Applications must be submitted through the Génome Québec application portal. Please contact Génome Québec before noon (ET) on October 1, 2025, to obtain or activate your submission account.

The deadline to submit applications is **October 1, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. (ET)**.

After the application deadline, Génome Québec will assess whether the applications received meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this call for proposals. Compliant applications will then be forwarded to an independent peer review committee for evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent peer review committee composed of scientific experts, industry representatives, and observers from Génome Québec, Genome Canada, and the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie. All committee members will sign a confidentiality agreement and will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest.

The committee will assess each application based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Appendix A. The committee will provide recommendations and advice to Génome Québec. Following the decision, the applicant team will receive a notice of decision along with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of their application.

If, at any point during the evaluation process, it is determined that the application does not meet the general eligibility criteria outlined in Appendix A, it will not be submitted for review by the committee.

Génome Québec reserves the right to modify the evaluation process if warranted by the complexity of the applications, the volume of applications received, or other factors. Any changes will be promptly communicated to the teams.

7. Benefits and Impacts on the Receptor

Projects under the GIC Program aim to generate both socio-economic benefits for Québec and commercial advantages for the end-user partners. Below are some examples of potential benefits:

- New or improved products for consumers in Québec
- Increased industry investment in R&D in the fields of genomics and biotechnology
- Improved profitability of Québec companies
- Increased follow-on investments in the end-user organization
- Development of new inventions and innovations in genomics and biotechnology
- Growth of Québec companies and strengthened international competitiveness
- Technical validation or risk reduction related to commercial opportunities for products or services
- Regional and national economic development, including job creation
- Talent attraction, training, and retention
- Greater diversification within Québec for-profit companies
- Development or expansion of innovation ecosystem services, capabilities, or connectivity
- Development of a sustainable bioeconomy
- Increased market share for bio-based products and solutions
- Other tangible benefits

8. Post-Award Management and Accountability

During the launch phase of the selected projects, each team must complete and return the following documents to Génome Québec by **February 16, 2026** (firm deadline):

- Intellectual Property Term Sheet
- Data Release and Resource Sharing Plan
- Private Sector Partner Identification Form
- Attestation for Research on Sensitive Technologies

Project accountability will be ensured through the submission of annual progress reports and a final report at the end of the project. At the discretion Génome Québec and Genome Canada, some projects may be required to report more frequently.

Génome Québec will use these reports to monitor project progress and support teams in achieving their objectives and milestones within the planned timelines and budgets.

All changes related to the projects will be managed by Génome Québec, which will inform Genome Canada of any decisions made.

9. Intellectual Property

Genome Canada recognizes a variety of IP forms—including patent applications, patents, trade secrets, designs, processes and proprietary datasets—as IP typically resulting from innovation R&D programs.

GIC Program funding is conditional on a legally binding IP agreement between the project partners. The agreement must address, at a minimum:

- The rights to use "background" IP required for the project
- The ownership of and rights to license new ("foreground") IP generated
- The management of new IP (e.g., filing and prosecution, maintenance and licensing)
- Responsibility and/or liability for patent litigation

10. Data Release and Resource Sharing Policies

Genome Canada's policies regarding data release, resource sharing, and access to research publications are referred to in its funding guidelines and policies. GIC Program funding is conditional upon Receptor Project Leader(s) agreeing to comply with these policies. Applicants must provide a data management plan as part of their full application. Genome Canada's policies recognize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of commercially valuable information and seek to balance openness and the protection of Canadian economic interests.

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.

11. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Génome Québec and Genome Canada recognize that research excellence and the relevance of resulting solutions are significantly enhanced through collaboration that draws on diverse perspectives and areas of expertise. Incorporating a range of viewpoints allows for a more thorough consideration of the ethical, social, and cultural dimensions of advances in bio-innovation. It also facilitates the inclusion of the values and concerns of the communities impacted, supporting the responsible development and deployment of new technologies.

This funding opportunity encourages teams to incorporate diverse voices and apply the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to strengthen the project's impact. This applies both to the outcomes and to the people involved and who benefit. If EDI does not appear to be relevant to a project, teams must explain the reason in their application.

The research should be conducted in line with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP®).

12. Génome Québec Contact

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APPENDIX A – Evaluation Criteria

To ensure that the program's objectives are met, applications are evaluated based on several criteria. These include the significance of the innovation derived from an omics or multi-omics technology on the part of the receptor, scientific excellence, the project's potential to secure follow-on funding through proof-of-concept validation, the potential for use, implementation, or commercialization by the receptor, and the socio-economic impact in Québec. The descriptions associated with each criterion are not exhaustive.

A) General Eligibility Criteria

1. The project must focus on the application of an omics or multiomics technology such as genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, bioinformatics, genetic engineering, synthetic biology.
2. The project must demonstrate the potential to generate significant impact in human health, biofood, natural resources, or the environment, and create socio-economic benefits for Québec.
3. The project must involve the participation of a Québec for-profit company (the receptor) and a researcher (the academic partner) as the primary collaborators, with active involvement from both parties.
4. The research project must take place in Québec.

B) The Need for Innovation Based on an Omics or Multi-Omics Technology

1. The ability of genomics or other omics or multi-omics sciences to address the specific need identified by the receptor
2. The innovative nature of the proposed solution, which must offer a significant improvement over existing or alternative approaches

C) Scientific Criteria

1. Scientific excellence of the proposed research, as confirmed through peer review. Particular emphasis will be placed on the extent to which the research will establish a proof-of-concept supporting the implementation or commercialization of an omics or multi-omics innovation within the defined context.
2. Feasibility of key milestones, including the alignment of proposed timelines, objectives, and overall project goals with a realistic and critical path to success.
3. Quality of the scientific environment in which the research will be conducted.

D) Next Steps in the Implementation or Commercialization Process

Applications will be evaluated based on one of the following two pathways:

1. **Potential to obtain follow-on funding:**
    a. Identification of potential sources of follow-on funding
    b. Evidence of the project's eligibility and potential for implementation or commercialization by the partner company
    c. A clear need for proof-of-concept validation, for example, as a prerequisite to qualify for downstream funding
d. Leverage potential, including a financing plan for subsequent phases and the identification of prospective public and private funding sources

2. **Potential for implementation or commercialization of the technology by the receptor:**
    a. Description of how the receptor intends to integrate the project results
    b. A clear plan for the uptake and application of results generated by the project
    c. Justification of the need for validation of principle for the receptor
    d. Description of the anticipated impact of the proof-of-concept validation on the company

E) Commercialization Plan

The pathway toward the commercialization or implementation of the innovation by the receptor is clearly defined and realistically achievable:

1. The proposed approach is grounded in a proven business model.
2. The proposed approach is feasible within a realistic timeline.
3. The funding sources supporting this approach are identified and realistic.
4. Legal, social, economic, logistical, and other barriers have been identified, and a strategy is described to minimize their impact.

F) Social and Economic Benefits

1. The quality of the knowledge transfer, dissemination, mobilization, uptake, implementation, or commercialization plan, as applicable, for the expected research outcomes
2. A clear demonstration of how the proposed research will contribute to job creation and economic growth in Québec, along with an assessment of its societal impacts, including but not limited to food security, environmental

sustainability (e.g., greenhouse gas reduction, carbon neutrality, circular economy, sustainable development), climate change adaptation, public health, or quality of life

3. Anticipated impacts quantified and presented as realistic and achievable

G) Project Stakeholders

1. The researcher, receptor and key personnel are well-qualified and experienced in the project field, based on their credentials, past projects, publications and other considerations.
2. The receptor and researcher have a true partnership, with each having appropriate and necessary roles in the project, including involvement in project leadership, contribution of specific knowledge and resources, and execution of certain activities.
3. The composition of the team and recruiting strategies consider equity, diversity and inclusion whenever possible.
4. Sufficient consideration has been given to ensure that individuals or communities involved in the project can participate meaningfully (as participants, users, or beneficiaries).

H) Market Opportunity Analysis

- Sufficient consideration has been given to the target market potential of the innovation (quantified, if possible), as well as to the analysis of potential competitors.
- Clarity in identifying end users and/or beneficiaries
- Relevance and specificity of the targeted customer segments
- Justification of targeted geographic areas (local, national, international)

I) Financial aspects

1. Financial and budgetary control process
    a. Budgeted costs comply with the definition of eligible costs (subsection 5.2);
    b. Budgeted costs align with the proposed research plan and activities; the balance between the anticipated costs and the potential benefit of the proposed research is clear;
    c. The project's budgeted costs are reasonable.

2. Co-funding
    a. The proposed co-funding plan complies with the eligible co-funding guidelines outlined under subsection 5.3;
    b. Supporting documentation is provided, which may include letters of commitment or signed agreements from co-funding sources, supplier quotes, or confirmation of grants received;
    c. A demonstrated connection between the proposed co-funding and the project's objectives.

GenomeQuébec

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