

News release
For immediate release

To increase Québec's competitiveness and promote innovation

**GÉNOME QUÉBEC AND THE MDEIE ANNOUNCE A \$21.3 MILLION INVESTMENT IN
THREE COLLABORATIVE GENOMICS RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Québec City, October 3, 2007. Mr. Raymond Bachand, Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Montréal region, and Mr. Paul L'Archevêque, President and CEO of **Génome Québec**, today announced the first projects resulting from the **PRIVAC** program that will generate investments of \$21.3 millions in mixed private-academic genomics research projects.

Three projects were selected through the PRIVAC competition that Génome Québec launched a year ago during BioContact. These projects focus on the creation of two new platforms that will support applied research in genomics on a commercial basis, and the conducting of leading-edge research, with the private sector, on pharmacogenomics testing.

On the occasion of this announcement, Minister Bachand drew attention to the government's efforts to bring academic and industrial scientists closer together, and to stimulate the development of applications using the research conducted in Québec. "The PRIVAC competition is an excellent example of what we are trying to accomplish through Québec's research and innovation strategy, that is, to gradually transfer the fruit of our research investments to companies and have Québec benefit from the positive impact on the economy and employment."

The PRIVAC program was established by Génome Québec with a \$10 million contribution from the ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation. In accordance with the program's co-financing rules, private and institutional partners must invest at least two dollars for every dollar invested by Génome Québec. Consequently, of the \$21.3 millions in investments announced today, \$15.1 millions are from private and institutional investors and \$6.2 millions are from the MDEIE's contribution.

"Québec has developed extraordinary expertise in human genome decoding. These three projects bring genomics and its concrete applications closer together and illustrate the leverage created by Génome Québec's business model that not only promotes partnerships between the industry and universities, but also contributes to stimulating industrial investment in Québec," said Mr. Paul L'Archevêque, President and CEO of Génome Québec.

An international peer committee consisting of research scientists and industrial entrepreneurs selected the three projects. If a discovery results, the contracts binding the private and institutional partners to Génome Québec provide for Génome Québec's sharing in the benefits. All profits will eventually be reinvested in other structuring research initiatives.

"This research will enable genomics research, as a strategic sector, to contribute to significant scientific advancements and enjoy a more competitive position in international research and development to build the innovative, prosperous Québec we want for future generations," added Minister Bachand.

WINNING PROJECTS

1. Quebec Cardiovascular Pharmacogenomics Research Initiative.

Scientists: Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif, Ph.D., and Dr. Michael S. Phillips, Ph.D., of the Montreal Heart Institute, in partnership with Génome Québec, VIA Pharmaceuticals and partners Illumina, Invitrogen and Agencourt BioScience. **Budget: \$4,945,165**

This project aims to accelerate the development of the platforms needed for clinical pharmacogenomics testing in the treatment of cardiovascular diseases.

2. A genomic platform for RNA interference screening to identify signalling pathways involved in cancer.

Scientists: Dr. Daniel Lamarre, Ph.D. and Dr. Sylvain Meloche, Ph.D. of the Institut de recherche en immunologie et en oncologie (IRIC), in partnership with Génome Québec, Sigma-Aldrich Ltd., and the Institut de recherche en immunologie et en oncologie (IRIC). **Budget: \$8,169,484**

This project focuses on the creation of a high throughput screening platform that will be made available to academic and private laboratories for identifying therapeutic targets with a view to accelerating the development of new classes of drugs for a variety of pathologies, including cancer.

3. Genomics applied to the discovery and development of vaccines and immunotherapies.

Scientist: Dr. Rafick-Pierre Sékaly, Ph.D. of the Université de Montréal and the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Montréal, in partnership with Génome Québec, the pharmaceutical companies Argos Therapeutics, MDS Pharma Services, and the bioinformatics company Biosystemix Ltd. **Budget: \$8,156,919**

This project focuses on the creation of a high throughput platform for the quick and accurate monitoring of the immune response in the case of various diseases and infections, such as cancer, AIDS and viral hepatitis, in order to facilitate therapy optimization.

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About Génome Québec:

The mission of Génome Québec is to mobilize academic and industrial sectors with regard to genomics and proteomics research. This private non-profit organization invests and manages funds totalling over \$380 million from both the private and public sectors. Génome Québec currently manages projects in six major sectors: human health, bioinformatics, ethics, the environment, and forestry and agricultural sciences. To find out more about Génome Québec and genomics, visit its Web site at www.genomequebec.com.

Information:

Huguette Marcotte Communications
Huguette Marcotte, 514 951-0288
Evelyn Dubois, 514 527-3983 / cell 514 770-3983

Source:
Michel Leblanc, Vice-President, Public Affairs and Communications
Génome Québec

Isabelle Mignault
Press Officer
Office of Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Montréal region
418 691-5650