



Guidelines

GÉNOME QUÉBEC
RECRUITMENT PROGRAM
HUMAN HEALTH

January 2010



GenomeQuébec

1 GÉNOME QUÉBEC MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Génome Québec is a private non-profit organization. Through partnerships with key players in life sciences at the national and international levels, Génome Québec contributes to strengthening the competitiveness of the system for innovation in genomics in order to maximize the socio-economic impact in Québec. This is achieved by funding major genomics research initiatives and putting in place the necessary tools for scientific and strategic development in the field.

Génome Québec's mission is to put genomics at the heart of the scientific and socio-economic development of Québec by increasing its impact and creating opportunities for its growth.

2 GÉNOME QUÉBEC RECRUITMENT COMPETITION–HUMAN HEALTH

2.1 Overview

Génome Québec and its partners wish to promote and facilitate the recruitment of researchers of international caliber who will help sharpen Québec's competitive edge in genomics applied to human health through their leadership and research excellence.

Candidates funded under this program must work in the field of human genomics or related sciences, such as proteomics, transcriptomics, pharmacogenomics, chemogenomics and metabolomics, including techniques such as bioinformatics, biomarkers, etc.

The Génome Québec Recruitment Program therefore aims at helping universities attract established researchers from outside Québec (minimum of 10 years of experience after their last university degree – Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S. etc.) who are recognized by their peers as leaders in the field of genomics. The initiative is intended to strengthen Québec's ability to attract top researchers from around the world in order to secure Québec's position as a leader in genomics research, and generate social and economic benefits.

There is a \$10 million funding envelope available for this program, which will be awarded as two \$5 million grants valid for a period of five years each. For this new program, Génome Québec requires a minimum 1:1 partner co-funding ratio; Génome Québec will therefore defray up to 50% of the eligible costs of the candidate's research project to a maximum of \$5 million. The remaining 50% will need to be assumed by academic, private or other partners (see section 5). Génome Québec funding can only be used for research activities conducted in university laboratories located in Québec

2.2 Eligibility criteria of candidates

Only university researchers that are eligible (as defined in point 1.2 of the Common Rules and Regulations for the three FRSQ research funds http://www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca/en/financement/regles_generales/regles_gen.shtml#03) and researchers expected to commence employment in a Québec institution between June 1, 2010 and May 31, 2011 (university, hospital research centre, other research centre and affiliated institutes) are encouraged to apply to the Génome Québec Recruitment Competition. All applications must be forwarded to Génome Québec through the research office or that of the vice-rector of the candidate's home institution.

3 APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

3.1 Competition timeframe

Action	Deadlines
Program guides posted online	January 29, 2010
Public information sessions	Week of February 8, 2010
Forms posted online	March 26, 2010
Submission of letters of intent	August 2, 2010, 5 p.m.
Submission of full applications	September 14, 2010, 5 p.m.
Notice of Award (NOA)	December 2010

3.2 Letters of Intent

Letters of Intent (LOIs) (visit www.genomequebec.com starting on March 26, 2010 to obtain the form) will be used to select the peers who will ensure the scientific review of submissions. LOIs will have no impact on candidate selection. They should include a brief introduction of the candidate (1 page), a summary of his or her research program and proposed research budget (1 page) along with a list of 10 potential reviewers (outside Québec). **Please note that submitting a LOI is a mandatory part of the process.** LOIs can be written in either of Canada's official languages.

LOIs must be submitted electronically by 5 p.m. on August 2, 2010 at the following address: concoursgq@genomequebec.com.

3.3 Full applications

Full applications must be presented using the form available on the Génome Québec Website www.genomequebec.com (as of March 26, 2010). They must meet the eligibility and evaluation criteria stipulated in section 3.5. Applications may be written in either official language.

Full applications must be submitted electronically (FTP transfer) by 5 p.m. on September 14, 2010.

In addition to a detailed description of the candidate's research program and proposed budget, full applications must include, among other documents, the CV of the candidate (FRSQ format), a description of the economic benefits and/or impacts for Québec and a description of the institutional support and funding plan that will ensure the continued development of the candidate's research activities beyond the five-year funding grant.

3.3.1 Benefits and impacts for Québec's international competitiveness in genomics applied to human health

Institutions must describe the anticipated impact that a given candidate recruitment will have on their establishment and in Québec. The Génome Québec Recruitment Competition aims at promoting the recruitment of candidates with expertise that can generate tangible short- and long-term benefits for the development of human genomics research in Québec, thereby maximizing socio-economic benefits. Anticipated socio-economic benefits include, but are not limited to, Québec's broadened influence on the international scene, its ability to attract new research funding, training of highly qualified personnel, creation of high-level jobs, economic growth, development of products or new technological services, positive impacts on society, quality of life or health outcomes, enhanced knowledge or application by potential users, and the procuring of licences and/or the creation of start-ups and development of new policies.

Applications must include a plan describing how the recruitment of a given candidate will bring those benefits to Québec.

3.3.2 Alignment with the institution's strategic plan, scope of institutional support and sustainability of the funding

Special consideration will be given to the institutional environment in which candidates will be working. Other considerations will include the institution's demonstrated strengths in genomics, as evaluated by international standards of excellence, the importance of genomics in its strategic plan and its ability to sustain the benefits associated with the recruitment beyond the five-year funding period. The review of nominations will therefore involve the institution's capacity to ensure the future of the funded research and its ability to find additional funding, which, coupled with the Génome Québec grant, will allow the university covering the direct and indirect costs associated with a world-class research program in genomics.

Universities must demonstrate that they – or their affiliated establishments, hospitals and institutes, as the case may be – will provide candidates with the necessary support (e.g. time to conduct research by relieving them of their administrative and teaching duties, allocation of additional funds and facilities, administrative support, hiring of other professors) to spearhead a research program of international calibre. Institutions will be asked to explain how these commitments differ from those made for regular professors.

3.4 Evaluation process

Applications will be submitted to an evaluation process that will include a scientific assessment by international experts, and will be managed by the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec (FRSQ). The process will also include a due diligence review of the co-funding plan that falls under the responsibility of Génome Québec.

The results of the scientific reviews provided by the FRSQ and those of the due diligence review conducted by Génome Québec, will be submitted to the Génome Québec Board of Directors for a final decision.

Incomplete applications and those that do not comply with all the above-mentioned criteria will not be submitted to the evaluation process, and the institution will be notified of that decision in the days following the submission of the application.

Sections 3.5.1 to 3.5.4 will be assessed by international experts and managed by the FRSQ, while the due diligence review of section 3.5.5 will be conducted by Génome Québec.

3.5 Detailed evaluation criteria

3.5.1 Excellence of the candidate

Research career (positions held, awards and distinctions, etc.);

Publication track record (number of articles, impact factors, author ranking, etc.);

Capacity to raise funds (number and amount of grants, ability to secure funds as a principal investigator);

Experience in technological transfer;

Proven network of international collaboration;

Leadership skills (contribution to the development of research centres, management of large-scale initiatives, experience in managing multidisciplinary teams, ability to attract and train high-calibre students, etc.);

International recognition in the field of human genomics and capacity to influence this field of research (invitations as guest researcher, guest speaker or moderator of evaluation committees set up by recognized bodies, participation in organizing scientific events of international scope, etc.).

3.5.2 Quality of the candidate's proposed research program

Excellence and originality of the research;

Relevance of the proposed research given current scientific progress;

Scientific value of the methodology;

Achievability of the suggested objectives and deliverables within the stipulated timeframe;

Feasibility of the proposed research given the expertise of applicants and funding requested;

Scientific impact for the field of human genomics.

3.5.3 Benefits and impacts on Québec's international competitiveness in genomics applied to human health

Demonstration that the candidate's expertise can generate tangible short- and long-term benefits for the development of genomics research in Québec;

Demonstration that the proposed research optimizes or builds upon existing strengths in Québec;

Likelihood of applying the candidate's research findings in order to advance public policy or commercialize discoveries stemming from the research;

Quality of the plan to transfer and disseminate the results of the anticipated research;

Demonstration that the research findings will contribute to the creation of highly specialized jobs and to economic growth in Québec and/or that they will have a positive impact on society, quality of life, health, and the environment.

3.5.4 Alignment with the institution's strategic plan, quality of institutional support and plan for sustainability

Strategic importance given to genomics by the institution and its level of excellence in the field;

Importance of the role candidates will play within the institution or centre;

Quality of the institutional resources made available to candidates for their proposed research (space, equipment, administrative support, etc.);

Relevance of the proposed co-funding plan to the objectives of the proposed research;

Appropriateness and feasibility of the institution's plan for ensuring the sustainability of the candidate's activities at the end of the five-year granting period;

Quality of the institutional resources for the dissemination of the candidate's research findings;

Potential for collaboration between the candidate and other researchers working in the same or a similar area within the host institution or region, in Canada or abroad.

3.5.5 Quality of the co-funding plan

Compliance of the co-funding plan with the eligibility co-funding guidelines described under section 5;

Adequacy of the level of co-funding;

Feasibility of the co-funding plan, that is, the likelihood of being able to secure co-funding from other sources for eligible research costs.

4 FUNDING

4.1 Eligible expenses

Eligible costs that may be covered by Génome Québec funds include:

- salaries: salaries and benefits for students (post-doctoral, PhD, MSc), trainees, technicians, managers and support staff needed for the efficient operation of the research infrastructure, but excluding the salary for the candidate and for researchers currently paid by the host institution;
- costs related to the general maintenance of research equipment used to carry out the proposed project, except insurance premiums;
- services from Génome Québec technological centres or similar centres;
- standard laboratory supplies, including consumables;
- support for research into GE³LS aspects of the candidate's project (if applicable);
- small equipment costs (laptop computers, projectors, scientific equipment) up to a maximum of \$10,000 per unit (before taxes);
- inflation rate costs for salaries, not to exceed 2% annually;
- reasonable and low administrative costs (see list below). Administrative costs must not exceed five percent (5%) of the non-administrative costs of the budget.
 - costs for the communication of results, including the costs of developing Web-based information (including Website maintenance fees) and circulating results through traditional media as well as video or CD-ROM;
 - page charges for articles published, including fees to ensure open access to findings (e.g. publication costs in an open access journal or costs of providing open access to an article);

- costs of preparing a research manuscript for publication;
- costs of translating research findings for dissemination purposes;
- costs of holding a workshop or seminar, whose activities relate directly to the funded research (including non-alcoholic refreshments or meal costs);
- travel and subsistence costs (meals – excluding alcohol – and accommodation), which include reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for research conferences and collaborative trips, air travel corresponding to the lowest rate available, not to exceed full economy fare, and travel cancellation insurance.

4.2 Non-eligible expenses

Non-eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- salaries – including bonuses – for the candidate or for any other researcher paid by the host institution;
- lab equipment purchases with a unit value exceeding \$10,000;
- costs of the construction, renovation or rental of laboratories or supporting facilities;
- monthly fees for the rental or installation of lines (telephone or other links);
- monthly Internet access fees at the institution or at home and the rental or purchase of cellular phones, personal data assistants (BlackBerry, Palm Pilot, Pocket PC, etc.), including service plans and long-distance and local fees;
- costs of entertainment, hospitality and gifts, for example, for the purposes of networking with colleagues and meeting with staff;
- costs of bonuses and staff recognition;
- education-related costs, such as thesis preparation, tuition and course fees;
- costs related to professional training or development, such as computer or language courses;
- costs involved in the preparation of teaching material;
- costs of basic services, such as heat, lighting, water, compressed air, distilled water, vacuums and janitorial services offered to all laboratories in a research facility;
- insurance costs for buildings and equipment;
- costs associated with regulatory compliance, including ethical review, biohazard or radiation safety, environmental assessments, or provincial or municipal regulations and by-laws;
- monthly parking fees for vehicles, unless specifically required for field work;
- sales taxes to which an exemption or rebate applies;
- patenting expenses;
- the costs of moving a lab;
- costs of alcoholic beverages.

Please note that leveraged funds (co-funding) can be used to cover certain expenses not paid by the Génome Québec funds, including the candidates' salaries, the renovation of laboratories used by the candidate, the fees associated with their release from teaching duties and relocation fees for candidates and their families.

5 CO-FUNDING

Génome Québec requires that at least 50% of eligible costs for the recruitment of the candidate and his or her research project be financed through leveraged funds (co-funding) from other eligible sources.

Génome Québec considers as acceptable the following co-funding sources, which may be Canadian or foreign:

- institutional funds;
- trust funds or foundations;
- departments and agencies of the federal government, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and tri-agency programs (e.g. Networks of Centres of Excellence);
- private corporations;
- benevolent organizations;
- individuals;
- venture capital or other investment funds;
- Canada Foundation for Innovation – CFI : Funding from the Infrastructure Operating Fund (FEI) will be eligible if used to operate and maintain equipment needed to reach the objectives of the research program.

Please note that funds provided by the Government of Québec and the organizations it finances (Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec, Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la nature et les technologies, Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture, NanoQuébec, etc.) are not eligible sources of co-funding under this program. In addition, suppliers' discounts are not considered eligible as co-funding.

Co-funding contributions in cash are encouraged. However, in-kind contributions, defined as non-cash eligible budget items, which can be assigned a cash value, may be considered as co-funding if:

- the value can be reasonably determined and supported by documentation;
- the expenditure represents an item that would otherwise have to be acquired with funds belonging to the project.

A budget and detailed co-funding plan must be provided at the time of application and 75% of the co-funding must have been secured upon presenting the candidate's application. Organizations making cash or in-kind contributions to the candidate will need to provide a letter confirming their support. A feasible, well-developed plan to secure the remaining 25% of the funds must also be presented.

All in-kind contributions must be auditable by outside experts.

6 GRANT ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Conditions of release of Génome Québec funds

To release the funds it allocates every quarter, Génome Québec requires that these minimum conditions be met:

- Signed agreements between Génome Québec, the contracting organizations (private and academic), the candidate and co-funding partners. The agreements must address core issues, such as the nature of financial contributions, intellectual property, the commercialization process, project management, the role of the scientific advisory board, funding terms, the termination policy, financial policies, a well-developed plan for the release of data, the sharing of resources from the project and the publication of results, etc. Contracts must also be in compliance with the agreement between Génome Québec and the ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE).
- Budget and milestones revised in accordance with the recommendations of the review panel and approved by the Génome Québec Board of Directors.
- Appropriate certification for funding requests involving human subjects, human embryonic stem cells, animals, biohazards, radioactive material and possible effects on the environment.
- Receipt by Génome Québec of funds from MDEIE.
- Documentation confirming that the 75% co-funding has been secured.

6.2 Monitoring scientific progress and managing funds

Génome Québec must meet the MDEIE's requirements regarding evaluations, audits, responsibility and accountability, while also having access to information that enables it to evaluate the ongoing productivities of the funded researchers and their programs.

Funded investigators are responsible for taking part in this process and providing the appropriate performance and evaluation data, and this in compliance with Génome Québec's requirements. Génome Québec's responsibilities include implementing mechanisms for evaluating the ongoing productivity and results of all of the research activities and investigators it funds and determining whether funding should be continued, decreased, suspended or cancelled.

Accountability requirements are further described in the document entitled *Instructions for investigators and finance department personnel*, available on request.

6.2.1 Monitoring scientific progress

An **annual** scientific progress report detailing the achievements to date (reaching of objectives, publications, patents, etc.) will need to be submitted for each investigator funded by the Génome Québec recruitment program. Génome Québec, however, reserves the right to review the frequency of its monitoring of scientific progress, based on a specific program's complexity and level of risk.

6.2.2 Financial project management

A project expenditure report, prepared and approved by the organization's finance department, must be submitted to Génome Québec no later than the 15th working day after the end of the **financial year**. This report must include a breakdown of salaries and benefits as well as supporting documentation for the expenses incurred.

All expenses funded by sources other than Génome Québec must be illustrated separately in the expenditure report. Such expenses must be accompanied by all applicable supporting documents. In addition, proof of the contribution of each co-funding organization will have to be supplied.

6.2.3 Interim review

At the MDEIE's request, all investigators and research activities funded by the Génome Québec recruitment program are subject to a review process, coordinated by the FRSQ, approximately midway through the project. The purpose of this review is to enable international experts mandated by the FRSQ to determine whether the approved objectives have been or are in the process of being achieved and whether the investigator should continue to receive funding for his research activities.

6.2.4 Final reports

In the three-month period following the completion of a given genomics research project, each funded investigator must submit the following documents to Génome Québec: a final report describing the project results (publications, patents, training of highly qualified personnel, etc.), a final financial report reconciling actual expenditures with budgeted and received amounts and lastly, a report on the actual status of all results obtained through Génome Québec funding and made available to the entire scientific community. A final payment, equal to 50% of the last semiannual disbursement, will be withheld until these final reports are submitted.

7 GÉNOME QUÉBEC RESOURCE PERSON

Nancy Fournier, PhD

Programs Director

Génome Québec

630 René-Lévesque Blvd West, Suite 2660, Montréal, (Québec) H3B 1S6

Phone: 514 398-0668, ext. 224

Fax: 514 398-0883

nfournier@genomequebec.com