

GENOMICS WORKING IN SUPPORT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Génome Québec commends the Government of Canada's initiative that aims to improve maternal, newborn and child health

Montréal, November 14, 2014 – Génome Québec commends the dedication of the federal government, which today launched a call for proposals for projects aiming to reduce infant mortality and improve the health of mothers and children in developing countries. As mentioned by the Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie at the CHU Sainte-Justine, the federal flagship project is valued at \$3.5 billion, with \$370 million dedicated to the initiatives that will be selected under this call for proposals.

According to Marc LePage, President and CEO of Génome Québec, the Canadian strategy announced by Prime Minister Harper in May 2014 is, for Canada and Québec, a golden opportunity to leverage the solid expertise acquired in applied genomics research in human health since the inception of Genome Canada. "Thanks to combined federal, provincial and private funding, Canada was able to build a critical mass of expertise and develop cutting-edge infrastructures that are now enabling us to offer real solutions to concrete problems and make a meaningful contribution to the Canadian government's commitment," Mr. LePage stated.

Of the many projects being carried out right now in Canada in the field of genomics, some are able to offer practical public health management tools that can be exported to developing countries. A few examples include:

- ✓ Point-of-care testing for infectious diseases (bacterial and viral) with a high prevalence in developing countries. This fast, effective and affordable screening tool will help to better control antimicrobial resistance and can analyse all types of infections in less than an hour.
- ✓ A safer prenatal screening program. The technique used was made possible by the work of researchers who discovered that DNA present in maternal blood can be used to screen for genetic abnormalities.
- ✓ Programs to screen for neonatal diseases specific to targeted countries. Genomics is already being applied here at home to improve the health of Canadian mothers and children. This program provides an excellent opportunity to transfer our knowledge to other countries and make a real impact in the short term.

About Génome Québec

Since May 2000, Génome Québec has been the driving force behind the development of genomics in Québec. By supporting over 80 projects and 900 researchers and managing the operations of the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre, Génome Québec is helping to accelerate the discovery of new applications for genomics in strategic areas, such as personalized health care, forestry, the environment and agrifood.

The funds invested by Génome Québec are provided by the Government of Québec, the Government of Canada, through Genome Canada, and private partners. For more information, visit www.genomequebec.com

About Genome Canada

Genome Canada is a not-for-profit organization that acts as a catalyst for developing and applying genomics and genomic-based technologies across multiple sectors to create economic and social benefits for Canadians. For more information, visit www.genomecanada.ca

For more information

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