

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND INSTRUCTIONS

BioCanRx supports biotherapeutic development research through [four research programs](#) and a number of [core facilities](#) along with strategic funding calls and partnered opportunities.

All research programs are targeted toward applicants who have already made substantial advances in their basic research programs and are now ready to work in collaborative, multidisciplinary, academic–industry teams to move their discoveries into the clinic in a rational, scientifically well-supported and highly disciplined fashion.

### GENERAL APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDELINES

As a [Networks of Centres of Excellence](#), BioCanRx evaluates all research proposals for scientific excellence and against BioCanRx’s network requirements.

Proposals determined to be seriously lacking in one or more of these criteria (INSERT LINK TO EVALUATION CRITERIA IN PERFORMANCE SECTION BELOW) are unlikely to be funded, regardless of scientific excellence or overall merit. The application process for BioCanRx funding opportunities is comprised of three phases: Query, Letter of Intent (LOI) and Full Application. Your completed LOI or full application must be submitted by email to [applications@biocanrx.com](mailto:applications@biocanrx.com) by the indicated deadlines. Please ensure that your application is complete (including all required signatures). These documents are available on the BioCanRx website or by contacting [BioCanRx](#).

#### **STEP 1 (RECOMMENDED): QUERY PHASE**

Please contact [BioCanRx management](#) at any time with a project proposal idea. We are eager to provide guidance as to the fit of your proposed project with our research investment mandate, and to provide preliminary feedback on the proposal’s alignment with our six evaluation criteria (below).

Where possible, we can assist you in connecting with other Network investigators, core facilities, collaborators or potential partners.

#### **STEP 2 (REQUIRED): LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) PHASE**

LOI deadlines are scheduled to align with the meetings of the [BioCanRx Research Management Committee \(RMC\)](#) which occur three or four times a year. The current submission deadlines are posted on [the funding opportunities page](#) and will be updated regularly. BioCanRx management can be engaged to provide feedback on the LOI as it is being developed.

BioCanRx management will conduct a preliminary review of LOI submissions, and proposals that are clearly misaligned with the BioCanRx mandate, or unsatisfactory in any of the six evaluation criteria will be triaged administratively (once a submission deadline has passed). Remaining LOI submissions will be evaluated by the RMC and successful teams will be invited to submit full applications. The full applications will be due at the submission deadline for the following RMC meeting.

### **STEP 3 (INVITATION ONLY): SUBMISSION OF FULL APPLICATION**

Complete a full application, according to the guidelines for the funding program of interest (consult our [Research program](#) webpage for details). Full application deadlines are scheduled to align with the meetings of the [BioCanRx Research Management Committee \(RMC\)](#) which occur three or four times a year. The current submission deadlines are posted on [the funding opportunities page](#) and will be updated regularly. BioCanRx management is available to provide feedback on the full application as it is being developed.

## ELIGIBILITY

The BioCanRx research application process is open to all investigators located at Canadian institutions eligible to receive peer-reviewed funding from the three federal research-granting councils (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC). If you have questions regarding your eligibility, or that of your institution, please contact Kelley Parato ([keparato@biocanrx.com](mailto:keparato@biocanrx.com)).

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

BioCanRx is committed to collecting and sharing information on the outputs and impacts of the research we support. Successful projects within our funding opportunities will be required to submit a bi-annual progress report and final report to BioCanRx. These reports will be made available to the Principle Investigator (PI) through the grant funding period and can be filled in as the research progresses or within defined timelines (to be set by BioCanRx). Progress of projects is actively managed by the RMC throughout the tenure of a successful award.

## FUNDING DECISIONS

Upon completion of review of full applications by the RMC, the funding recommendations are presented to the Board of Directors for approval. Once approved,

applicants will receive their results via email and will be informed of any recommendations made by the RMC in that process.

If your application is successful:

- You will become a network investigator.
- Your academic institution will become a network member and sign a network agreement regarding the terms of how your project funding will be managed, if it hasn't already.
- BioCanRx will create certain communications material specific to your project.
- You will be expected to mention BioCanRx's involvement when communicating publicly about the project.
- The Research Management Committee will review your project's progress twice a year to ensure it is on track and meeting their expectations.
- You and your HQP will be invited to participate in meetings and relevant workshops hosted by BioCanRx.

## REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION

### **LOI Review**

Prior to peer review by our RMC, BioCanRx will conduct a relevance review to ensure that LOIs are in alignment with the objectives and research priorities of BioCanRx. By submitting an LOI, the applicant is consenting to sharing the nominative information with both BioCanRx and any potential partners.

### **Full Application Review**

Once an LOI has been evaluated, the RMC will invite the principle investigator to submit a full application. The RMC will then evaluate the full application based on the six criteria (below). Note that our RMC does not only decide to fund or not fund projects. They may send back proposals for further elaboration and resubmission, fund portions of projects, or recommend multiple project teams to combine their proposals into one larger project. For more on this, please see our evaluation criteria (below). By submitting a full application, the applicant is consenting to sharing the nominative information with both BioCanRx and any potential partners.

### **Review Committee**

The RMC members are independent and international experts whose primary role is to evaluate research proposals and actively help BioCanRx monitor the progress of its projects. For more about our RMC, please see our [RMC page](#).

## **Evaluation Criteria**

To support the objectives of our mandate and the objectives of the NCE program, the following six criteria will be weighted during the evaluation phase:

Our Research Management Committee evaluates all Letters of Intent (LOIs) and Full Applications against Our six review criteria (below), broken down into a Science score and a Network score. At the LOI phase, the RMC's focus is on research excellence and strategic fit.

### **Science score (out of 5)**

- We will only fund outstanding science that is germane to our research portfolio.

### **Network score (out of 5)**

- Evidence of collaboration and networking
- Project management, which at this stage of clinical development is absolutely crucial to project success
- Knowledge exchange and transfer
- Integrated training plan
- Partnerships (expertise; financial support)

## **Our six review criteria**

### **RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND STRATEGIC FIT WITH BIOCANRX**

#### **Research excellence**

- The extent to which the proposed research is creative, innovative and likely to have a major impact on the cancer biotherapeutics field, as judged on an international level.
- The extent to which the proposed research builds on Canadian expertise and strengths in the cancer biotherapeutics field and the excellence of the research team.
- The extent to which the proposed objectives and hypothesis are clear.
- The extent to which the experimental and/or clinical methodology or approach is sound and takes into consideration the existing body of evidence, potential risks (e.g., experimental, clinical, patient), etc....
- The extent to which the research proposal identifies clear, tangible objectives and deliverables that are feasible in terms of scope, expertise, budget request, project duration, and available resources and research infrastructure.

### **Strategic fit**

- The extent to which the research proposal encompasses one or more of BioCanRx's areas of strategic interest (oncolytic viruses, immune cell therapy, antibodies) and aligns with one of the research programs indicated in the call (Catalyst Program, Enabling Studies Program, Clinical Trial Program, or Clinical, Social and Economic Impact Program).

### **NETWORKING**

The NCE Program and BioCanRx place an emphasis on projects that are collaborative and multidisciplinary. In general, BioCanRx expects projects to:

- Comprise at least two principal investigators (excluding non-funded collaborators) from at least two different institutions,
- Involve the aggregation, integration or comparison of the results of these investigators as a critical element,
- Bring together a project team with relevant disciplines, collaborators and receptors, and,
- Clearly describe appropriate and timely mechanisms (such as workshops and exchanges) to promote and foster collaboration.

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

BioCanRx places an emphasis on projects that are well managed. In general, BioCanRx expects projects to:

- Have a well thought-out and detailed plan to attack a specific research problem in an integrated fashion;
- Describe clear deliverables and milestones that are credible and achievable within the proposed timeframe of the project.
- In the case of Enabling Studies or Clinical Trial projects, identify a Project Leader and a Project Manager who have demonstrated the ability to manage and successfully complete large projects, and describe the project management approach for the current proposal.

### **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

BioCanRx is focused on translational research, rather than the fundamental discovery research that is funded by traditional granting agencies in Canada. This does not mean that projects must move into the clinic, marketplace or public policy within the timeframe of the project. However, where they do not, projects are expected to outline a clear translational path to do so, and to describe why the work proposed in the

application represents the next critical research steps toward that translational goal. **Projects should have a clear and feasible plan to apply and implement research outcomes.**

#### **TRAINING OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL (HQP)**

BioCanRx expects research investments to foster training of HQP to fuel innovative biotherapeutics discovery and translation into clinical deliverables, and provide unique opportunities to train the next generation of HQP so they are ready for positions in a variety of sectors involved in biotherapeutics research, development, clinical application, regulation and commercialization. Applicants should outline how the proposed project is positioned to contribute to providing unique training opportunities for HQP that are above and beyond the traditional academic track.

#### **PARTNERING**

A key mandate of BioCanRx is to foster partnerships with potential users of research we fund. As a result, our research budget catalyzes, but does not fully fund, BioCanRx projects. BioCanRx requires Catalyst and Enabling Studies projects to find partners for at least 50% of the total budget at the outset, and to continue seeking additional third-party funding if the project is approved. Clinical Trial projects are expected to secure at least 60% of their trial budget from partners. Partner funding must be cash and/or in-kind contributions by “NCE eligible sources.” NCE eligible sources include corporations, not-for profit organizations and government, but exclude the following federal funds: CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, CFI, other NCEs and Genome Canada.

In addition, the quality of partner engagement is considered. Highly rated partners are those that are engaged in the technology development process with Network Investigators, and that both benefit from and add value to the BioCanRx research projects (e.g., prospective industry partner, medical institution interested to adopt the technology).