Version May 2026

BioCanRx Funding Competition
Open Call for Research Proposals
Cycle 3 Call 2

OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES:
ENABLING STUDIES PROGRAM
CLINICAL TRIAL PROGRAM
CSEI PROGRAM
CORE FACILITIES PROGRAM

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1.0 Overview

About BioCanRx: BioCanRx is a national, not-for-profit research and development organization dedicated to advancing translational cancer immunotherapy in Canada and increasing the number of innovative clinical trials available to cancer patients within our borders. We operate at the intersection of academic research, clinical development, manufacturing readiness, regulatory navigation, and health-system adoption. BioCanRx represents a network of over 330 scientists and clinicians, 17 NGOs and 59 industry partners working together to accelerate to the clinic the most promising immunotherapies and enabling technologies designed to save lives and enable a better quality of life. Since inception in March 2015, BioCanRx has leveraged and attracted over $156 million in partner funding and commitments to develop immunotherapies for cancer and has launched twelve clinical trials. By connecting investigators to critical core facility infrastructure and a robust network of expertise, BioCanRx creates an environment where innovative, complex translational immunotherapy projects can advance efficiently from proof-of-concept to clinic. Through access to specialized pre-clinical and clinical translation guidance, targeted training programs, advanced GMP manufacturing and GLP immunoassays infrastructure, and innovative trial design support, researchers are equipped to navigate the translational continuum. As a result of this multipronged approach, we have built a compelling portfolio of projects in our project pipeline that is developing highly innovative research for cancer patients across Canada.

BioCanRx is funded by ISED's Strategic Science Fund (SSF) from April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2029.

Background: In Spring 2024, we undertook consultations with the Canadian community of researchers, patient partners and individuals with lived experience, cancer patient organizations and representative groups, industry partners, and other interest-holders. We also engaged our Research Management Committee, Board of Directors, and Cancer Stakeholder Alliance (now the Cancer Community Partnership). These consultations encouraged BioCanRx maintain the research scope and breadth of eligible projects broad to ensure we are investing in the most promising innovations. In Spring 2026, BioCanRx consulted with the Cancer Community Partnership on the Clinical, Social, Economic Impacts Program and Patient Partnerships (now the Partnerships with People with Lived and/or Living Experience). BioCanRx also carefully reviewed Training and Equity, Diversity and Inclusions (now Training & Mentorship and Inclusive Research Design) that have been updated to reflect best practices in these respective areas.

New to this call is a language from the Federal Government of Canada (via the Strategic Science Fund) that is endorsed by BioCanRx on procuring goods and services in Canada – see Buy Canadian section 5.6.4).

Call Focus: This Open Call for Research Proposals will use BioCanRx's established translational research pipeline approach to fund projects aiming to advance promising cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies, and support the adoption of these types of therapies into the Canadian

healthcare system for both pediatric and adult cancers. Projects should clearly relate to BioCanRx's mission of *accelerating* the most promising cancer immunotherapies to the clinic to save lives and enable better quality of life.

Funding Envelope: ***The total funding envelope for this call for research proposals is up to $6 million. This amount will be allocated to support the strongest proposals submitted across all BioCanRx funding programs.***

Call Objectives & Research Scope: We are pleased to invite research proposals spanning various topics falling within cancer immunotherapy translation. For the purposes of this call, cancer immunotherapy is defined as all therapeutic products that modulate the immune system.

Proposals should aim to address at least one of the following objectives:

1. **Accelerate Cancer Immunotherapy Innovations from Bench to Bedside:** Develop and translate promising innovations from proof-of-concept through to clinical trial (i.e. Phase I/II clinical trials).
2. **Address the Clinical, Social, Economic, Legal, Ethical, Regulatory and Policy Elements of these Innovations:** Identify and address the facilitators and barriers to the adoption and integration of these therapies within the evolving regulatory and policy healthcare landscape across Canada.
3. **Support Technology Innovation through Core Facility Activities:** Canadian academic infrastructure and technologies that support the advancement and production of cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies.

This call for research proposals includes BioCanRx's established funding programs:

- **Enabling Studies Program:** Prepare and position cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies for clinical testing in patients, including GMP manufacturing and process development. Enabling Studies projects should result in either CTA submission packages or Quality (Chemistry and Manufacturing) packages.
- **Clinical Trials Program:** Phase I/II clinical trials of novel cancer immunotherapies that have been substantially developed in Canada.
- **Clinical, Social and Economic Impact (CSEI) Program**: Identify and address the facilitators and barriers to the adoption and integration of these therapies into Canadian clinical practice and healthcare system.
- **Core Facilities Program:** Manufacturing or research technologies and/or services that support the advancement and production of cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies.

Important: **Catalyst Program funding will not be included** in this competition due to reductions affecting organizations supported by the Strategic Science Fund. We are actively pursuing

partnership opportunities to enable a dedicated Catalyst funding call in the future and will keep our community informed as this work progresses.

You can find previously funded projects on this page: https://biocanrx.com/researchers/funded-projects/

2.0 Team Member Eligibility

Funded research team members (i.e., principal investigators) must be either: 1) based at a Canadian academic or research institution and must be eligible to receive Tri-Agency funding, or 2) Indigenous organization or government. Further details and requirements are included in the Letter of Intent and Full Application forms.

3.0 Key Dates & Information Session Webinar

- **Call launch**: Wednesday, June 17th, 2026
- **Information Session Webinar**: Thursday, June 25th, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET
- **Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply**: Wednesday, July 29th, 2026
- **Letter of Intent (LOI) submission deadline**: Wednesday, July 29th, 2026
- **Notification of LOI results and invitation to Full Application**: Early October, 2026
- **Full application submission deadline**: Friday, December 4th, 2026
- **Funding award start date**: Wednesday, March 31st, 2027
- **Public announcement of funding results**: April, 2027

Information Session

On Thursday, June 25th, 2026 at 1:00 PM ET, BioCanRx will host an information session on this Open Call for Research Proposals. You can register here. This information session will be recorded and made available here.

4.0 Specific Instructions for Each Funding Program

We seek applications for the Enabling Studies Program, Clinical Trials Program, Clinical, Social and Economic Impact (CSEI) Program, and Core Facilities Program.

4.1 Enabling Studies Program

Specific Program Details At-A-Glance

Project duration	1 to 3 years
BioCanRx budget request	Up to $750 00 (flexibility exists for well-justified proposals)
BioCanRx funding coverage	BioCanRx will fund up to 50% of total eligible project costs, to a contribution of $750,000. The remaining 50% must be provided as matching funds from eligible partners.
Required outputs	Enabling Studies projects provide financial support and resources for activities required to position immunotherapies or platforms for their translation to clinical testing, including Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) manufacturing and process development, analytical assay development, and preclinical Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) studies. Enabling Studies projects must result in one or both deliverables: • Clinical Trial Application submission packages • Quality (Chemistry and Manufacturing) packages

Program Details

The Enabling Studies Program funds work required to prepare and position immunotherapies and platforms for clinical testing in patients. It bridges the traditionally difficult-to-fund translation from the laboratory to clinical testing of cancer immunotherapies, including funding to support GMP manufacturing and process development. Activities eligible under the Enabling Studies program can include work to support:

- Comprehensive preclinical efficacy, safety, biodistribution, pharmacokinetic, and toxicology data packages
- Optimized GMP-compliant manufacturing processes
- Validated quality QC and release testing development
- Production of clinical- and preclinical-grade materials

- Completion of full-scale validation and engineering runs
- Regulatory engagement and readiness
- Regulatory dossiers
- Establishment of enabling manufacturing infrastructure and technology transfer
- Evaluation of pathways for clinical uptake and health system integration (also refer to CSEI program)

Proposals must outline preclinical scientific rationale for the positioning of the product/platform for clinical testing and highlight the anticipated impact of the innovation within the field. Proposals must clearly situate the proposed product/platform within the translational continuum and provide a realistic plan for transition into clinical testing beyond the end of the Enabling Studies Program funding.

Final Deliverable: Enabling Studies projects should result in either CTA submission packages or Quality (Chemistry and Manufacturing) packages. Projects outlining proof-of-concept or preclinical validation of products or platforms are out of scope.

Enabling studies are the most wide-ranging in terms of BioCanRx funded project budgets: historically, projects were funded by BioCanRx from $43,000 to $1.34M over the life of the grant. For the purpose of this call for applications, consider proposing a total BioCanRx-supported budget in the range of $750,000. While flexibility exists for proposed budget, BioCanRx funding is targeted to meet 50% of a project's total cost. The duration of the award is 6 months to 3 years.

To date, BioCanRx has funded 29 Enabling Studies with a total investment of $15.82M.

You can view previously funded Enabling Studies projects here.

4.3 Clinical Trials Program

Specific Program Details At-A-Glance

Project duration	1 to 3 years
BioCanRx budget request	Up to $1,000,000 (flexibility exists for well-justified proposals)
BioCanRx funding coverage	BioCanRx will fund up to 40% of total eligible project costs, to a maximum contribution of $1,000,000. The remaining 60% must be provided as matching funds from eligible partners.

Required outputs	Clinical Trial projects must have novel, Canadian content in their approach The required deliverables include clinical data required to evaluate the case for advancing the immunotherapy into later-stage clinical development.

Program Details

The Clinical Trials Program provides funds for Phase I/II clinical trials of novel cancer immunotherapies that have been substantially developed in Canada. Clinical Trials projects are expected to be academically driven and yield high content results (e.g., biological characterization).

The program is focused on clinical trials evaluating cancer immunotherapies and related immuno-oncology therapeutics, including but not limited to oncolytic viruses, cancer vaccines, cell therapies, therapeutic antibodies and antibody-based therapeutics, either as monotherapies or in combination. Proposals must outline the preclinical scientific rationale for the approach and highlight the anticipated impact within the field. BioCanRx will not fund clinical trials that duplicate technologies already in development within the pharmaceutical industry or that replicate trials for which other academic groups clearly have global leadership. Such proposals will be subject to administrative triage. The required deliverables include clinical data to evaluate the case for advancing the therapeutic into later-stage clinical development.

Proposals must clearly demonstrate the ability of the assembled team to conduct the clinical trial and the feasibility of the study. Project teams are required to be multidisciplinary and collaborative. This can be demonstrated by integrating BioCanRx core facilities into the project (e.g., for manufacture of the investigational product or analysis of clinical samples) and/or by conducting studies that involve multiple sites. Projects should also outline: a clear project management plan, timelines for patient accrual, and an anticipated end date for clinical data collection and evaluation.

In order to submit a proposal for funding under the BioCanRx Clinical Trial Program, **teams must be ready to have a pre-CTA consultation meeting with Health Canada within three months of the award start date, with an expectation that project teams submit a CTA within the following three months (6 months from award date). Preference will be given to project teams that are within three months of submitting a full CTA at the time of application. Note that BioCanRx will be monitoring the progress of clinical trial initiation closely, will consider modifying the project award, and transferring it to an Enabling Studies project, where applicable.**

Historically, Clinical Trial projects have been funded in the range of $400,000-$800,000. For the purpose of this call for proposals, consider proposing a total BioCanRx-supported budget of up to $1M. While there is flexibility in the proposed budget request, BioCanRx funding is targeted to support 40% of a trial's total cost. BioCanRx recognizes that the first contribution toward the cost of a trial is often the most difficult to secure and expects that the validation of the BioCanRx peer-review process should assist in efforts to secure additional partners. Therefore, applications may be made without all funding partners being finalized; however, BioCanRx will only release its funds if, within six months of the date of the award, the project leader provides letters of support from other partners demonstrating that the full costs of the trial have been secured. If needed, the BioCanRx network's management team will assist approved clinical trial projects in securing co-funding partners. The duration of the award is 1 – 3 years.

To date, BioCanRx has funded 16 Clinical Trial projects with a total investment of $10.7M.

You can view previously funded Clinical Trials projects here.

4.3 Clinical, Social and Economic Impact (CSEI) Program

Specific Funding Details At-A-Glance

Project duration	1 month to 3 years
BioCanRx budget request	Up to $215,000 (target midpoint; some flexibility exists for well-justified proposals)
BioCanRx funding coverage	Up to 100% of total project costs
Eligible applicants	Researchers, clinicians, health economists, policy experts, and interdisciplinary teams working within the Canadian context
Required outputs	Actionable, decision-informing deliverables with a credible knowledge mobilization plan

Program Purpose

The CSEI Program funds research and implementation projects that identify and address the social, legal, ethical, economic, regulatory, and health-system barriers limiting the progression of cancer immunotherapies through the translational pipeline and into patient care in Canada. Projects are ultimately accountable to the patients these therapies are intended to serve.

Patient-Centred Outcomes

Projects must clearly articulate how their deliverables contribute to improved outcomes for patients. From a patient perspective, success may include:

- Meaningful informed consent
- Integration of the patient voice in translational research
- Shorter time from clinical trial eligibility to treatment access
- More equitable access across geographic regions, including outside major urban centres
- Integration of post-treatment quality of life outcomes into evaluation frameworks
- Reduced financial toxicity (e.g., travel costs, lost wages, caregiver burden)
- Improved inclusion of underrepresented and underserved populations

What We Fund

CSEI-funded projects are expected to generate actionable, decision-informing evidence that advances patient-centred access, adoption, and integration of cancer immunotherapies into real-world health systems. Proposals should identify critical evidence gaps and develop implementation-ready solutions that facilitate the uptake, reimbursement, commercialization, scale-up, and sustainable delivery of BioCanRx-funded technologies, or technologies aligned with BioCanRx's research mandate, for pediatric, young-adult and adult cancers. Eligible activities include:

1. Development of methodologies, tools, and evidence frameworks to evaluate the clinical, economic, societal, and patient-reported impacts of cancer immunotherapies during product development and post-market implementation, including PROMs, PREMs, real-world evidence, and value-based healthcare assessments
2. Analyses of clinical translation, care delivery, and health-system implementation pathways for cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies
3. Approaches for meaningful, bidirectional engagement and capacity building involving PWLEs, family/support persons, researchers, healthcare providers, policy makers, and other end users throughout the translational pathway, including patient engagement and informed consent frameworks
4. Projects addressing regulatory, reimbursement, policy, commercialization, manufacturing, economic, or intellectual property barriers limiting progression and uptake of Canadian-developed cancer immunotherapies, including low-cost academic products
5. Policy development and implementation frameworks to improve national access to clinical trials, support health-system adoption, and facilitate sustainable delivery of cancer immunotherapies in Canada
6. Exploration of sustainable, decentralized, and/or alternative business and delivery models to promote timely and equitable access to cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies

7. Development and application of early and value-based health technology assessment (eHTA) methodologies and patient-centred value frameworks tailored to cancer immunotherapies or enabling platforms
8. Generation, harmonization, and mobilization of real-world evidence and data resources across Canada
9. Development of measurable frameworks and implementation strategies to evaluate and improve equitable access to cancer immunotherapies across diverse populations, regions, and healthcare systems, including interprovincial disparities and financial toxicity barriers

Historically, CSEI projects have been funded in the range of $100,000-$430,000. For the purposes of this call for proposals, consider proposing a total BioCanRx-supported budget of $215,000. The duration of the award is 1 year to 3 years.

Knowledge Mobilization Requirement
All proposals must include a credible, standalone plan for knowledge mobilization and translation. This plan should identify the relevant end users for anticipated deliverables, which may include patients, clinicians and healthcare providers, researchers, regulators, commercial partners, legal experts, payers, and policy makers. They should describe how findings will be translated into practice, policy, or decision-making. Projects are expected to engage relevant interest holders appropriate to the proposed objectives and implementation pathway throughout the project lifecycle.

To date, BioCanRx has funded 13 CSEI awards with a total investment of $2.93M.

You can view previously funded CSEI projects here.

4.3.3 CSEI and Research Project collaborations

Projects demonstrating clear, substantive integration with one or more BioCanRx-funded projects or active project proposals within the Enabling Studies or Clinical Trials program will be reviewed more favourably. This linkage should extend beyond thematic alignment and include defined points of interaction, shared milestones, coordinated deliverables, or co-development pathways that directly inform product advancement. These collaborative efforts are intended to accelerate the translation of BioCanRx-supported research and development activities.

Where direct linkage is not feasible and an alternative proposal is conceived, applicants must demonstrate formal engagement with key interest holders and end users positioned to implement project outputs and influence downstream translational decisions.

Substantive integration means at least one of the following clearly described in the proposal:

- Defined points of coordination between teams

- Shared milestones; or
- Co-development of deliverables.

4.4 Core Facilities Program

Specific Program Details At-A-Glance

- BioCanRx funding for 2 years
- BioCanRx funding budget request: up to $120,000 per year

BioCanRx will fund Canadian academic or research institution facilities that offer translational services and offerings (e.g., assay development, immune monitoring, GLP and GMP manufacturing). Funding from the Core Facilities Program provides a baseline level of support for core facilities that will be engaged in BioCanRx projects. Previously funded core activities include GMP vector manufacturing and GLP correlative assay development (including immune monitoring) for clinical trials:

- Immunotherapy Monoclonal Antibody Platform (IMAP), McGill University
- Molecular and Cellular Imaging Core (MCIC), BC Cancer
- Human Immune Testing Suite (HITS), McMaster University
- Biotherapeutics Manufacturing Centre – Virus Manufacturing Facility, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute
- Robert E. Fitzhenry Vector Laboratory, McMaster University
- Immunogenomics Core, University of British Columbia

This call for Core Facility support is open to diverse services that will meet the needs of BioCanRx-funded projects. However, for the purposes of this call, BioCanRx is not seeking to support regulatory, commercialization, or CRO-like services.

Proposals must highlight a management or organizational structure for the facility and demonstrate the track record of the facility in meeting project milestones and deliverables. The Core Facility Program supports the salary of HQP, minor expenses related to ongoing facility maintenance, certification and/or baseline operation for a maximum funding allocation of $120,000 per facility annually. There is an expectation that services offered to BioCanRx-funded projects should be budgeted on a cost recovery basis.

Refer to section 5.15 for Core Facilities application requirements.

4.5 Core Facility and Research Project Collaborations

BioCanRx is committed to leveraging and supporting Canadian academic core facilities that support the advancement and production of cancer immunotherapies in BioCanRx's pipeline. Core facilities that demonstrate evidence of planned collaborations and scope of work across multiple currently funded or proposed Enabling Studies or Clinical Trial projects will be scored more favourably.

Funding requests for the Core Facility Program must specify expected roles in upcoming BioCanRx projects when submitting the Full Application. To facilitate this, BioCanRx will provide a summary of Core Facility program and biomedical research program applicants invited to submit a Full Application (subject to consent at the LOI stage). Facility leaders and researchers are expected to collaborate where applicable, and to define the scope of work and anticipated needs.

5.0 General Requirements & Instructions

The following section outlines guidelines and instructions relevant to all research proposal and core facility submissions. Some sections will not be required for Core Facility proposals, and are indicated as such. See section 5.15 for specific requirements for the Core Facilities Program. For specific details, please refer to instructions in the Letter of Intent (LOI) and Full Application (FA) forms, as applicable.

5.1 Project Overview

Required at both LOI and FA stages (with some differences in specific application requirements).

As part of your application, you will be asked to list your project title, lead investigator, projected start date and end date, a lay language project description, summary of relevance and impact, key deliverables, and keywords.

Complementary Applications & Linkages Across Projects

Proposal teams can also consider coordination of complementary applications from different BioCanRx funding programs, where applicable. An example could include development of a clinical trial protocol for a novel therapeutic platform via the Enabling Studies program, in tandem with an application to the CSEI program to inform HTA analyses and PWLE partner participation to embed in the trial design in development.

Where relevant, proposals should maximize the use of Canadian academic or research institution core-like facilities (use of alternate third-party vendors or facilities must be well-justified). See also section 4.5 - Core Facility and Research Program Collaborations.

Also refer to Section 5.6.4 Buy Canadian.

5.2 Project Team

Required at both LOI and FA stages (with some differences in specific application requirements).

When assembling a team for this call for proposals, please note that BioCanRx highly values multidisciplinary and collaborative project teams. Project teams should be composed of individuals

whose combined expertise and collaborative approach enable the advancement of cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies toward clinical testing and evaluation. Teams are encouraged to include members who can effectively leverage opportunities for gaining translational biological insights from projects situated in or near the clinical setting, as well as those who can support and complement the integration of these therapies within clinical practice. People with lived and/or living experience (PWLE) bring expertise that strengthens research relevance, ethical rigour, and the translation of findings into patient-centered outcomes; BioCanRx views them as members of project teams, please see Section 5.9.

The LOI must identify a Lead Investigator responsible for project oversight and progress reporting to BioCanRx, any additional Principal Investigators requesting funds, and any Co-Investigators not requesting funds, including the lead Clinical Investigator where applicable.

At the time of the FA, you will be required to list all team members and indicate whether they are international, industry and/or end users. Specific instructions can be found in the application form.

If you plan to use core facilities invited to submit a FA, facility leader(s) should be listed as an applicant team member and should receive funding in the proposed budget to conduct the planned work. The core facility services budget should be developed in collaboration with the core facility leader or delegate. See also section 4.5 - Core Facility and Research Program Collaborations.

5.3 Research Proposal

Required at both LOI and FA stages (with some differences in specific application requirements).

See the research program specific elements in the sections above for elements specific to Enabling Studies Projects, Clinical Trial Projects and CSEI Projects, as well as project eligibility and the general guidelines for research proposals falling under this project call. Specific instructions for developing your research proposal are described in the application form. Note that this section is not required for Core Facilities applications.

5.4 Project Management

Required for FA only.

As part of your application, you will be asked to describe how this project will be managed, including details of a dedicated project manager, and to provide a description of the alignment of milestones and deliverables to your proposed timelines. More details can be found in the application form.

5.5 Partnerships

Required at both LOI and FA stages (with some differences in specific application requirements). Note that eligibility criteria and definitions will not change.

5.5.1 General Partner Funding Guidelines

It is critically important to remember that fostering cross-sectoral and multi-institutional partnerships is at the heart of the BioCanRx's programming. Applicants should note that, when evaluating proposals, BioCanRx will focus more on the quality of partner engagement rather than the number of partners involved. A letter of support will be far more favourably received if it demonstrates a partner that clearly understands the scope of the project, can describe their specific role within it, and articulates the value they are contributing to the project and receiving from project involvement/participation, as opposed to a letter describing a large discount on a major piece of equipment, for example.

Partnerships with companies, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, charities, research institutions, hospitals, universities, and government bodies are valuable components of project proposals. Please refer to the BioCanRx's **Policy on Industry-Partnered Research** in preparation of your research project concept.

Signed Letters of Support/and or Notice of Award required for submission at the FA stage.

5.5.2 Specific Partner Funding Guidelines

In your Full Application, you will be required to list each confirmed partner that will support the project, indicate their contribution, provide letters of support/notice of award, and outline whether the contributions are matching or leveraged funds, and cash or in-kind. Please pay critical attention to the requirements of these different types of partner funds and **note that partner contribution requirements outlined in section 4 - Specific Instructions for Each Funding Program section are for matching funds specifically.**

5.5.2.1 Matching and Leveraged Funds

***Matched Funds**:* new, incremental contributions (of cash or in-kind) for eligible expenditures, which would not exist in the absence of a BioCanRx award funded via this competition. Eligible sources include non-federal partners or revenues (including donations).

Examples of eligible matched funds:

- Private-sector contributions earmarked to advance specific SSF-funded activities
- Provincial awards to support the advancement of SSF-funded activities or research projects in that province

Please note that matching funding can precede funding of the BioCanRx award start date, provided the following conditions are met: 1) the funds are from the same fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) of

the proposed BioCanRx award start date; 2) they are eligible matched funds that are complementary to a unique element described in your project proposal for which funding from BioCanRx is requested; 3) they are directly attributable to the receiving of a BioCanRx award, meaning the partner contribution would not have been made in the absence of the BioCanRx-funded project or was motivated by the intent to apply for funds from BioCanRx.

For example, a researcher may leverage data generated through a previous BioCanRx award to secure a provincial grant that supports the next phase of development for the same product. If the provincial application references the proposed BioCanRx project, the funds are disbursed within the same fiscal year as the proposed BioCanRx award start date, and the funds are used for eligible activities, they can be considered eligible matching funds.

Ineligible to be considered matched funds:

- Leveraged Funds (see definition below)
- Funding from federally-funded entities (e.g., CFI, Digital Research Alliance of Canada, SSF recipients, and organizations primarily funded by the federal government) and from federal departments and agencies
- Funding already used to meet a matching requirement for a federal program

***Leveraged Funds**:* existing investments in the ST&I ecosystem being leveraged to further the objectives of the funded research project. Includes cash or in-kind from federally-funded entities (e.g., CFI, organizations primarily funded by the federal government) and from federal departments and agencies.

Examples of leveraged funds:

- Existing NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR projects with work that will be complimentary to the SSF activities
- The rental value of CFI-funded equipment that is essential to the delivery of SSF activities
- Projects funded in collaboration with other SSF-supported recipients

5.5.2.2 In-kind contributions: The guidelines for calculating the value of in-kind contributions must align with following guidelines outlined here (which are accordance with the SSF Program Guidelines): In-kind contributions are defined as cash-equivalent goods or services that represent an incremental expense that would not otherwise be incurred, and which would have to be paid for with cash if not provided.

In-kind contributions:

- Must be relevant and central to the activities of the project proposal.
- Must be eligible expenses as per the this Guidelines document; and
- Cannot have been used to fulfill the matching requirements of other federal programs.

In-kind Calculation table

The table below is a non-exhaustive list of in-kind contributions, with an indication of how to calculate their value. If in doubt about a particular item, please contact BioCanRx.

Category	Acceptable valuation method	Not acceptable
Access to unique databases	Incremental cost of access	Cost of developing or maintaining database
Analytical and other services	Internal cost of services	Commercial cost of access
Equipment	Donated (used) - Fair market value - Company book value Donated (new) - Selling price to most favored customer (if stock item) - Cost of manufacture (if one of a kind) Loaned - Rental equivalent based on depreciation - Rental equivalent to highest-volume rate	List price or discounted list price Rental equivalents exceeding accepted values had the equipment been donated or sold Development costs
Hospitality	Cost	Alcoholic refreshments
Materials	- Unit cost of production for commercial products - Selling price to most favoured customer - Price for internal transfers - Cost of production of prototypes and samples	Development costs
Intellectual property	Fair market value of licensing and royalties	Cost of maintenance and litigation Licensing fees paid to partners
Professional and technical service contracts	Cost	
Salaries (General)	Actual salary cost (including benefits)	Salary overheads, external charge-out or consultant rates, cost of benefits outside the average market range.

Category	Acceptable valuation method	Not acceptable
Salaries (Academic researcher)	Actual costs to the institution for release time from teaching duties (e.g., the cost of hiring a sessional instructor for course release may be counted).	Academic faculty salaries
Salaries (Clinicians)	Portion of their salary for time devoted to working on SSF projects that are additional to their routine (including teaching or service work) activities	Remuneration already received for teaching or service work
Student stipends	Cost of the stipend equivalent to the portion of their time working on SSF work	The portion of time dedicated to non-SSF work
Software	- Most-favoured-customer cost for 1 licence per software package - Cost of equivalent commercial product (where donated software is not commercially available) - Cost of training and support (at the university/college site) for software by industrial partner personnel	Development costs
Travel costs	Travel and accommodation costs (generally aligned with the National Joint Council's Travel Directive or similar institutional directive)	
Use of facilities	- Cost of access to the facility - Internal rates for use of specialized equipment - Internal rates for value of lost production, resulting from downtime	

5.6 Research Budget

Required at both LOI and FA stages (with some differences in specific application requirements).

5.6.1 Research Funding Mechanism

As you are considering your budget, please note that as per the Strategic Science Fund requirements, funded projects **will NOT be granted no cost project extensions beyond the original award date**, and any unspent funds at the term of the award will be required to be returned to the Government of Canada. To prevent this from occurring, we expect that funded investigators aim to draw down their funds on a fiscal basis (e.g., April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026).

Due to the end of BioCanRx's federal funding via this cycle of SSF on March 31, 2029, all BioCanRx funds must be fully expended by March 31, 2029. Proposed projects should therefore be structured with BioCanRx-funded milestones, deliverables, and achievable objectives aligned with this funding timeline. Projects approved under this competition may continue beyond this date using confirmed partner contributions and/or other non-BioCanRx sources of support.

When developing your budget, please consider these requirements and their implications regarding project feasibility, plans on the use of BioCanRx versus partner funding, and project timelines. These factors will be critically evaluated by the RMC and by BioCanRx administration.

At the LOI stage, only a high-level budget summary will be required. In the FA, you will be asked to provide a detailed budget breakdown along with a budget justification that is aligned with your proposed Milestones and Deliverables. Applicants are encouraged to begin considering vendor selection and budget justification early in the application process. You will also be asked to provide quotes in support of your proposed budget and, where applicable, justify the selection of a non-Canadian vendor (see also section 5.6.4 Buy Canadian). Project proposals with unrealistic budgets will be triaged by BioCanRx. Note that compensation for PWLE is an eligible expense (see Section 5.6.3).

5.6.2 Guidelines

- To develop your budget, please use the Budget Template (to be linked in application form)
- Refer to the specific project funding type descriptions above for specific information regarding project duration maximums, budgetary envelopes and partnered matched fund expectations.
- We request a total project budget including your proposed BioCanRx funding request plus other partner expenditures:
    - The BioCanRx budget request should include **eligible** costs only (see definitions below);
    - Matched partner funds should include eligible costs only
    - Leveraged partner funds (if applicable) can include both eligible and non-eligible costs
- The budget will require you to outline partner **matching** and **leveraged** funds for **cash** and **in-kind** contributions (see definitions below).
- **Important note:** Only **MATCHING** funds contribute to the expected partner matching requirements of total project costs outlined in the section 4.0 - Specific Instructions for Each Funding Program section above (e.g., 50% of total project cost).
- **CSEI Projects:** CSEI projects do not require partner matched funding as a requirement; however we ask that you please describe partners and partner contributions toward this project.
- **Inclusion of budget items to support attendance to Summit4CI:** As a funded BioCanRx project, there is an expectation that principial investigators attend the annual Summit for Cancer Immunotherapy. As part of a project's proposed budget, we strongly encourage the inclusion of registration, travel and accommodations, and other eligible expenses related to Summit4CI

attendance. Note that this will now be the primary mechanism to support investigator participation in the Summit4CI for 2027 and 2028. Application-based travel awards are available to support HQP travel and accommodation costs (note registration is not covered by these awards).

- Note that this budget template is developed to parallel SSF requirements for BioCanRx financial reporting. This requires investigators to outline the aforementioned budgetary considerations across the following types of expenditures: 1) Research, 2) Mobilization of Knowledge/Technology Transfer, and 3) Networking.

5.6.3 Details of Project Expenditures

5.6.3.1 Eligible Activities & Costs

Research includes expenses related to:

- Incremental research costs, including salaries of researchers and research staff, related costs of students, highly qualified personnel (HQP), trainees
- Material and supplies
- PWLE partner compensation
- Professional and technical services, including consultants (e.g., for regulatory support)
- Equipment (except for Major Research Equipment, as described under *Ineligible Expenditures*); scientific collections; costs of computer hardware or software (except where the scale of costs fall within the mandate of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada); information databases
- Operations of core research facilities
- Direct cost of knowledge creation
- Research-related travel and accommodation costs**

Mobilization of knowledge or technology transfer includes expenses related to:

- Incremental knowledge mobilization and technology transfer costs, including salaries of staff, related costs of students, highly-qualified personnel (HQP, trainees)
- Policy development
- Tool development and evaluation
- Intellectual property protection

Networking includes expenses related to:

- Incremental networking costs, including salaries of staff, related costs of students, highly-qualified personnel (HQP, trainees)
- Seminars and workshops
- Networking meetings
- Conferences**
- Communications.

****Travel and Accommodation Costs:** Costs must be aligned with the National Joint Council's Travel Directive or similar institutional directive. For guidelines on the calculation of in-kind contributions, refer to the Government of Canada's *Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference and Event Expenditures* and *BioCanRx's Network Travel and Hospitality Policy*

5.6.3.2 Ineligible expenditures include the following:

- Indirect institutional costs
- Flat-rate charges for overhead costs (indirect costs)
- Principal investigator salaries
- Costs associated with the construction of, or major renovation to building and structures
- The purchase or lease of land
- Alcoholic refreshments
- The acquisition of major research equipment
- Costs associated with the lobbying of federal officials or public office holders (including by hiring outside firms or consultants)

5.6.4 Buy Canadian – Message from the Government of Canada's Strategic Science Fund Secretariat and Endorsed by BioCanRx

In recent months, the Government of Canada announced that it would extend the application of the Buy Canadian Policy to its grants and contribution programs. As a first step, we wanted to make you aware of the Policy's key definitions (see below) and overarching objective – namely, to strengthen opportunities for Canadian businesses in the context of procurement decision.

We recommend and encourage you to consider alignment with this objective and these definitions, to the extent that they are practicable and do not impede your ability to deliver on existing objectives while ensuring that costs are minimized. We are likely in the future to ask about the extent to which your processes align with the Policy to establish an existing baseline.

***Buy Canadian* Definitions**

"Canadian Supplier" means a supplier that has a place of business in Canada where it conducts activities on a permanent basis that is clearly identified by name and accessible during normal business hours; or, a joint venture where each member of the joint venture has a place of business in Canada where it conducts activities on a permanent basis that is clearly identified by name and accessible during normal business hours; and

- is registered and files taxes in Canada (e.g., GST/HST, corporate income tax);
- maintains a registered address in Canada and employs personnel and/or conducts day-to-day business activities in Canada; and
- will not subcontract work to non-Canadian suppliers or individuals located outside Canada, in a manner that results in minimal value-added activities being performed within Canada.

In assessing whether a supplier is Canadian, the contracting authority:

- may consider the nature of the industry or sector, the geographical location of the supplier, and the level of activity typically performed by other suppliers competing in the same sector;
- must provide the supplier with an opportunity to submit relevant evidence; and,
- must clearly document the rationale and supporting evidence for their decision.

"Canadian Good" means a good wholly manufactured or originating in Canada; or a product containing imported components that has undergone sufficient change in Canada in a manner that satisfies the definition specified under the Canada-United-States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) Rules of Origin. For the purposes of this definition, the reference to "territory of the Parties" in the CUSMA Rules of Origin is to be replaced with "Canada".

"**Canadian Service**" means a service wholly provided by (natural persons/individuals) based in Canada.

"**Canadian Content**" or "**Canadian Value-Added**" means:

- in relation to services, a Canadian Service or the proportion of the service contract performed by natural persons based in Canada; and
- in relation to goods, a Canadian Good or the value of the portion of the good produced in Canada or the difference between the dutiable value of the imported goods and the selling price, taking into account any value added by manufacturers and distributors, and including any costs incurred in Canada related to: research and development; sales and marketing; communications and manuals; customization, modifications, installation, and support; warehousing, distribution, and logistics; training and after-sales service.

5.7 Future Product/Enabling Technology Innovation Development Trajectory

Required for FA only.

A key objective of BioCanRx funding is to accelerate the translation of cancer immunotherapy innovations from the laboratory through to early phase clinical evaluation, with the ultimate goal of providing access of products and platform innovations to Canadian cancer patients.

In this section of your application, you will be asked to outline the anticipated next steps in clinical and/or commercial development of the product(s) and/or platform(s) in the proposed study. This will include, as applicable, a description of freedom to operate (FTO), the Intellectual Property (IP) that may be generated during the project, and the IP support available to the team.

For CSEI projects, please address the impact of the work on policy and practice, including how the project deliverables will be adopted by end users and interest holders to address facilitators and

barriers to uptake of BioCanRx-funded projects or technologies aligned with BioCanRx's mandate. Detailed instructions are outlined in the application form.

5.8 Knowledge Sharing, Technology Transfer, and Networking

Required for FA only.

It is expected that project leaders will share data and/or research deliverables arising from their projects with other network investigators in a timely fashion, whenever possible. In this section of the application, you will be asked to outline how this project will be networked with other prospective BioCanRx projects and network investigators.

5.9 Partnership with a Person with Lived and/or Living Experience (PWLE)

Required for FA only.

BioCanRx-funded research is enhanced by the involvement of patients, and therefore the partnerships with a person with lived and/or living experience (PWLE) in the development of projects is a mandatory requirement for all funded projects. PWLE partners should be engaged as early as possible in the development of a research project, as they will enhance the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization of your work, including any aspects that may impact patients in the future.

You will not be required to indicate who your PWLE partner(s) is/are at the Letter of Intent stage, however you should start considering of how you envision PWLE to partner on the duration of your project. As part of your full application, you will be required to name *at least* one PWLE partner and provide their contact information. The types of contributions, expectations, and time commitments (even estimated) should be clear and we understand that roles can evolve throughout the lifetime of the project. We strongly encourage you to obtain the perspectives of prospective PWLE partners at the LOI stage, where possible, and discuss compensation and recognition.

Also refer to section 5.6.3.1 noting that PWLE partner compensation is an eligible cost for your budget.

If you do not believe that your project would benefit from partnerships with PWLE at this stage, please email Anu Shukla-Jones (ashukla-jones@biocanrx.com) as soon as possible to discuss. Note that we envision this representing a *very small* cohort of applicants.

Resources and support:

To assist BioCanRx researchers in finding PWLE partners, we have invested annually over the past several years in the Learning Institute. This program runs in collaboration with the Summit for Cancer Immunotherapy and has been a great success in preparing PWLE to participate in research. From this initiative, BioCanRx has developed an internal database of PWLEs interested in partnership opportunities. If you require assistance in finding a PWLE partner for your research project, please reach out to Anu Shukla-Jones (ashukla-jones@biocanrx.com).

Please refer to the BioCanRx webpage for examples of how PWLE have previously partnered in BioCanRx-funded research.

BioCanRx has supported PWLE partnership projects, including GO-CART and the MARVEL program - both led by Drs. Dean Fergusson and Manoj Lalu and the OHRI Blueprint Translational Research Group. The outputs of GO-CART and MARVEL projects are incorporated into two of their websites on PWLE partnership and resources (https://www.ohri.ca/blueprint/patient-engagement), and PWLE engagement tools specifically for preclinical researchers (https://labpartners.ca/). We encourage you to review these resources to learn about how to engage with PWLE and what PWLE might expect of you and the research team. You can also review published work by this team here:

- Blueprint Translational Research Group. Promoting Patient Engagement in Early-Phase Clinical Trials: How Canadian Funding Agencies Can Help.
- Blueprint Translational Research Group. Patient Engagement in Preclinical Research Policy Brief.

For further examples of meaningful involvement of patients in research, please consult SPOR - Patient Engagement Framework and Ovarian Cancer Canada's Patient Partners in Research (PPiR) work.

5.10 Training, Development, & Inclusive Research Environments

Required for FA only.

As part of your Full Application, you will be asked to describe team composition and expertise, key technical and professional domains in which HQP will be trained through this project, planned project-specific training, research environment and recruitment practices, and mentorship and career support.

5.11 Inclusive Research Design

Required for FA only. This information will be requested to inform future BioCanRx funding opportunities and research funding advocacy efforts.

As part of your Full Application, you will be asked to, where possible:

- Identify barriers or challenges that could limit your project's relevance or applicability to all intended patient populations (for example, target sub-populations, equitable access to therapies, inclusion in clinical trials, adequate representation of PWLE);
- Summarize awareness of, or participation in, any formal or informal training related to Indigenous Rights and cultural safety in health research.
- Describe how social determinants of health have or could be considered in your research approach (for example, considering factors that affect different communities' access to and benefit from therapeutic developments and clinical studies);
- Explain how Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) considerations have been or could be integrated throughout your project's design, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization. Examples may include sex and gender differences, human life course (e.g., pregnant people, infants, children, youth, and older adults), cell or gene variant implications for subpopulations.
- Explain how common comorbidities, standard-of-care, interventions based on traditional practices, and disease trajectory were considered in your project.

Resources:
What are the social determinants of health? | Canadian Public Health Association
Health Portfolio Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Policy - Canada.ca

5.12 Intellectual Property

Required for FA only.

Please note that while questions surrounding IP will not be addressed at the Letter of Intent stage, they are a requirement of the Full Application and should be reviewed and planned for accordingly.

Representation of Intellectual Property

Proposed funded investigators must:

- Indicate that they own the Background IP or hold sufficient rights to the Background IP to permit the research project to be carried out and the Foreground IP to be exploited (i.e., practiced or commercialized).
- Indicate that no person or entity has alleged that the Background IP, or the use thereof by the proposed funded investigator(s), infringes or misappropriates third party Intellectual Property Rights.
- Indicate that, to the best of the proposed funded investigator's knowledge, no third-party Intellectual Property Rights will be infringed in carrying out a BioCanRx-funded research project.

- Indicate that the proposed funded investigators shall take appropriate steps to protect Foreground IP and enforce rights to the Foreground IP.

Intellectual Property (IP): all inventions, whether or not patented or patentable, all proprietary technical information, whether or not constituting trade secrets, and all copyrightable works, industrial designs, integrated circuit topographies, and trademarks, whether or not registered or registerable.

Background Intellectual Property (Background IP): any pre-existing Intellectual Property that is developed prior to, or independent of, the BioCanRx-funded project but is necessary to carry out the said project.

Foreground Intellectual Property (Foreground IP): any Intellectual Property conceived, produced, developed or reduced to practice in carrying out the BioCanRx-funded project.

As part of this Strategic Science Fund requirement for Representation of Intellectual Property, in your application, we will ask you to: 1) describe your Background IP (if any), 2) to list your patent applications and granted patents as they pertain to the funding proposal innovation(s) (if any), 3) and if using others' IP, describe relevant licenses or agreements in place with collaborators to conduct these research activities.

5.13 Research Security

Researchers applying to funding must be aware of the Government of Canada's recommendations and guidelines for research security, data management, and privacy. In addition, investigators should be aware of their Institutional policies and practices as they relate to research security and research partnerships.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to their institutional research security office or compliance office for training and information. Applicants are also encouraged to use the resources provided by the Government of Canada through the Safeguarding Science training modules and the Safeguarding Your Research portal, including guidance on conducting open-source due diligence, training on various elements of research security, and information on mitigating research security risks and mitigating economic and/or geopolitical risks in sensitive research projects.

In alignment with Government of Canada guidelines and policies, BioCanRx collects information in its research funding applications that aims to:

- Assess the sensitivity of the proposed research;
- Prevent the funding of research projects aiming to advance a Sensitive Technology Research Area (STRA) if any project team members are associated with a Named Research Organization (NRO); and
- Assess the risk level of private sector partner organizations involved in the proposed research

At the time of application, Principal Investigators applying for BioCanRx research funding will be expected to:

1. Answer questions in the application related to the sensitivity of the proposed research, including whether the proposed research aims to advance a Sensitive Technology Research Area (STRA)
2. If the project aims to advance a STRA, collect and compile the required attestation forms from research project team members
3. If required based on the screening questions in the application, develop a risk mitigation plan (with institutional support) that addresses private sector partner risks

5.14 Open Access and Research Data Management

Funded investigators must ensure compliance and alignment with the federal Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications and the Research Data Management Policy. The funded investigator should adopt **Open Science principles** that maximize the value of all research activities, including by making negative research findings accessible where possible.

These policies should be considered when developing your section on Knowledge Sharing, Technology Transfer & Networking activities described above in your full application (if applicable).

5.15 Core Facilities Specific Requirements and Instructions

Both Letters of Intent and Full Applications to the Core Facilities Program have some specific requirements to consider when crafting an application.

<table>
<tr><th>Common sections across all applications:</th><th>Sections unique to Core Facilities applications:</th></tr>
<tr><td>At the LOI stage:
Project Overview
At the FA stage:
Project Overview
Project Team
Project Management
Budget and budget justification
Knowledge Sharing, Technology Transfer and Networking
Training, Development & Inclusive Research Environment
Intellectual Property
Research Security</td><td>At the LOI stage:
Activity Summary
At the FA stage:
Activity and Performance
Projected Activity – including linkages with other BioCanRx projects
Impact of Planned/Potential Facility Upgrades
Facility Publications (past 12 months)</td></tr>
<tr><th>Sections unique to ES/CT/CSEI FA stage</th><td></td></tr>
</table>

• Research Proposal • Partnerships • Future Product/Enabling Technology Development Trajectory • Partnerships with Persons with Lived and/or Living Experience • Inclusive Research Design	

Activity, Performance, and Impact sections are meant to evaluate the activity and capacity of the facility in the 12 months prior to and 12 months following the start of the requested period of support. You will be required to provide details about ongoing and upcoming projects supported by the facility and outline partner involvement.

6.0 Letter of Intent Evaluation Criteria

6.1 Evaluation Criteria for LOI Submissions

- Relevance to the Open Call for Proposals objectives and BioCanRx mandate
- Readiness and alignment of project goals to the BioCanRx specific research program (i.e., Enabling, Clinical Trial, CSEI, Core)
- Scientific excellence, creativity and innovation, in an international context
- Clear proposed objectives and hypothesis, and sound research methodology
- Tangible deliverables that are achievable in terms of scope, expertise and resources
- Multidisciplinary and collaborative nature of the proposed team
- Appropriateness of partners to support the delivery of the proposed objectives (i.e. through expertise or resources)

6.2 Program Specific Evaluation Criteria (assessed at both LOI and Full Application Stages)

6.2.1 Enabling Studies Program

Our Research Management Committee will evaluate **Enabling Studies** projects for:

- A project with outcomes that would support advancement to a clinical trial eligible for funding through the BioCanRx Clinical Trials Program
- Critical experiments, manufacturing, analytical, quality, and/or regulatory activities, that will lead to a clinical trial application (CTA) and bolster its chances of approval by Health Canada

- Strength of the translational rationale and positioning of the therapeutic product and/or enabling technology within the development pathway toward clinical evaluation
- Feasibility of the proposed development strategy, including manufacturing readiness, regulatory planning, technology transfer considerations, and anticipated downstream clinical implementation
- Potential of the enabling platform (when applicable to the proposal) to support broader Canadian cancer immunotherapy development capacity or future BioCanRx-supported projects

6.2.2 Clinical Trial Program

Our Research Management Committee will evaluate **Clinical Trial** projects for:

- Canadian innovation that is an integral element of the trial's approach
- Therapies with a reasonable expectation that the healthcare system could support and adopt if a trial succeeds at Phase III
- Strength of the scientific and translational rationale supporting clinical evaluation
- Criteria are met with respect to pre-CTA consultation meetings and CTA submission timelines
- Ability of the proposed trial to generate meaningful biological, clinical, translational, and/or implementation insights that inform future development decisions
- Strength of multidisciplinary integration across clinical, translational, manufacturing, analytical, regulatory, and/or PWLE-informed components of the project, where applicable

6.2.3 Clinical, Social and Economic Impact (CSEI) Program

Our Research Management Committee will evaluate **CSEI** projects for:

- Likelihood that project deliverables will be adopted by relevant end users and meaningfully address social, legal, ethical, economic, regulatory, commercialization, reimbursement, or health-system facilitators and barriers to the uptake of cancer immunotherapies and enabling technologies developed through BioCanRx pipeline or aligned BioCanRx's mandate
- Degree to which the project addresses critical evidence gaps and unmet needs in policy, practice, implementation, equitable access, or health-system readiness
- Strength of linkage(s) to other proposed BioCanRx projects for this funding call, including defined points of coordination, shared milestones, co-development of deliverables, **or** strength of engagement with ultimate end users/interest holders of the CSEI project outputs and deliverables
- Strength, appropriateness and meaningfulness of engagement with relevant interest holders and end users, including PWLEs, clinicians and healthcare providers, researchers, regulators, commercial partners, legal experts, payers, and policy makers, as appropriate to the proposed objectives and implementation pathway

- Feasibility and credibility of the proposed approach for knowledge mobilization, implementation, and translation of project outputs into real-world policy, practice, commercialization, reimbursement, or care delivery settings
- Extent to which the project feasibly incorporates patient-centred, equity-informed, and implementation-focused approaches that improve relevance and applicability across diverse populations and healthcare contexts

6.2.4 Core Facilities Program

Our Research Management Committee will evaluate **Core Facilities** proposals for:

- Track record, expertise and operational reliability of the core facility
- Alignment of the core facility to anticipated needs of BioCanRx-funded projects
- Accessibility and capacity to work with BioCanRx investigators
- How BioCanRx funding will play a role in future, projected activity (i.e, how this investment will facilitate ongoing operations of the Core Facility)

Note that Core Facilities proposals will not be evaluated for involvement of PWLE partners, commitment and involvement of partners (other than those engaging on research proposals), or any other sections that are not included in the Core Facilities Program application forms (Refer to section 5.15).

7.0 Full Application Evaluation Criteria

BioCanRx's Research Management Committee will evaluate Full Application submissions to make funding recommendations, which include recommendations for conditional funding contingent on project proposal revisions.

7.1 General Evaluation Criteria

Scientific Alignment and Relevance

- Fit to call objectives and BioCanRx's mandate
- Potential benefit to Canada in terms of clinical, social, and/or economic benefit
- Clearly articulated expected impact that aligns with project objectives, proposed deliverables, and downstream translational pathways.

Scientific Excellence

- Scientific excellence, creativity and innovation, in an international context
- Scientific feasibility, rigor and appropriateness of the proposed work
- Appropriateness of the proposed methodology, analytical approaches, and implementation strategy relative to project objectives

Team, Partnerships and Ecosystem Strength

- Multidisciplinary and collaborative nature of the proposed team, including where appropriate, the integration of translational, clinical, implementation, policy, manufacturing, commercialization, and/or PWLE expertise
- Team members' demonstrated contributions, expertise, and alignment with project objectives and activities, and their capacity to support the work
- Commitment and level of involvement of project partners, and potential for new partner engagement

Project Management Plan and Feasibility

- Clear project management plan (milestones and deliverables, timeline, human and financial resources)
- Appropriate budget and budget justification relevant to the proposed objectives, including considerations of SSF funding requirements and (e.g., no opportunities for project no cost extensions, BioCanRx funds must be spent before March 31, 2029, even if a three-year project is proposed)
- Feasibility of achieving proposed deliverables within the proposed project period and available resources

Translation, Mobilization and Capacity Building

- Knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and networking
- Potential contribution to the BioCanRx network and broader Canadian translational ecosystem
- **Quality of the proposed training environment and opportunities for HQP, including exposure to multidisciplinary, translational, clinical, regulatory, manufacturing, implementation, commercialization, and/or patient-oriented research environments and patient partnerships, as appropriate to the project and with consideration for accommodations and accessibility needs of all project team members, including persons with disabilities
- ** Quality and appropriateness of mentorship, career development, and trainee support plans

Inclusive Research Design and Meaningful PWLE Engagement

- Meaningful involvement and integration of PWLE partners on the research team
- Proposed project provides appropriate training opportunities for HQP to fuel innovative cancer immunotherapy and enabling technology translation into clinical deliverables
- **Consideration of SBGA+, social determinants of health, and patient experience factors in research design, implementation, analysis, interpretation and knowledge mobilization

- ** Extent to which the proposed research environment, recruitment & retention practices, collaborations, and project activities foster inclusivity, accessibility, and meaningful participation across disciplines, career stages, and communities
- ** Whether the team has demonstrated awareness of factors that may influence the applicability, uptake, and benefit of project outputs across diverse patient populations and healthcare settings

** **About these criteria:** these criteria reflect and build upon current best practices for equity, diversity and inclusion and research excellence and adapted with consideration for applicants to BioCanRx. These criteria will be assessed on a satisfactory / not satisfactory basis and will not be incorporated into the ultimate funding score. Where requirements are deemed not satisfactory, applicants may be required to address identified gaps or provide additional information prior to release of BioCanRx funds. The activities associated with these criteria will also be requested as part of bi-annual project progress reporting. Funded investigators may be required to take part in webinars and other training opportunities aligned with these activities.

To support ongoing improvement of our programming, we will also seek researchers' feedback on any facilitators or barriers they experience in undertaking activities that support capacity building, inclusive research design, and meaningful PWLE engagement (e.g., funding, training, resources, or other supports).

7.2 Program Specific Evaluation Criteria

See section 6.2.

8.0 Reporting Expectations

Funded project leaders will be required to submit formal progress reports to the BioCanRx Research Management Committee (RMC) every six months and may be asked to present to the RMC. The review is intended to provide ongoing advice that will maximize the project's chances of success. However, BioCanRx reserves the right to reduce or cancel a project budget, with an appropriate lead time, if the project is clearly not meeting its milestones and deliverables, or providing the anticipated value.

Please note that future interim and annual progress reporting for funded projects will be completed using an online grant management system.

9.0 Criteria for the Release of Approved Funding

All applications will be subject to review and recommendation by the BioCanRx's Research Management Committee at both the Letter of Intent and Full Application stages. All project investments must be approved by the BioCanRx Board of Directors. Following Board approval, the following conditions must be fulfilled if funding is to be released to the project:

All Project Types

- ❑ Execute and return the BioCanRx Acceptance of Award
- ❑ Executed BioCanRx's funding agreement by funded researchers and their research institution's appropriate signatories
- ❑ Compliance with BioCanRx's Research Security Plan and Intellectual Property Policy
- ❑ You may be required to provide a revised budget and/or project timelines and milestones and deliverables contingent on specific recommendations by the RMC

Additional requirements for Clinical Trial Projects

- ❑ Provide BioCanRx with a copy of Health Canada approval for the trial (upon execution)
- ❑ Provide BioCanRx with a copy of notice of REB approval for the trial (upon execution)
- ❑ Provide BioCanRx with a copy of the trial budget submitted to the REB (upon execution)
- ❑ Provide BioCanRx with letters of support from partners showing that the full costs of the trial have been secured, and required leverage obtained (as requested by BioCanRx administration)
- ❑ Provide BioCanRx with confirmation that adequate liability measures/insurance are in place for the study (as requested by BioCanRx administration)

Unless a further extension is granted by the BioCanRx Board of Directors, if these conditions have not been met within six months of the notice of award date, the award will be cancelled.

10.0 Application & Submission Process

Step 1. Notice of Intent (NOI). The NOI is for administrative purposes only. Please send a brief email with the **Subject: Open Call – Notice of Intent [lead investigator surname]** noting your intention to apply to applications@biocanrx.com.

Please indicate the following:

1) project lead
2) funding program for which you will be applying (Enabling Studies, Clinical Trial, CSEI, and/or Core Facility)
3) draft project title (if known)

The deadline for submission of the NOI is the same as the deadline for LOI submission, however, applicants are encouraged to submit their NOI as early as possible.

Step 2. Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI stage is your opportunity to assemble a multi-disciplinary team and propose a research project to BioCanRx's Research Management Committee (RMC). The RMC will evaluate LOIs based on their alignment with BioCanRx's research mandate and eligibility within one of the established funding programs (Enabling Studies, Clinical Trials, CSEI, and Core Facilities).

How to access the LOI: Optimy Grant Management Platform. Note that instructions on how to use this platform is available when you click on the link. Note that the application platform is in English. If you wish to submit an application in French, please contact applications@biocanrx.com for relevant materials.

Step 3. Invitation to the Full Application. Following review by BioCanRx's Research Management Committee, successful LOIs will be invited to submit a Full Application and will receive further instructions on how to apply.

Step 4. Full Application Submission. Full application submissions will also be reviewed by BioCanRx's Research Management Committee. Instructions on how to submit your FA will be provided at the time of invitation.

11.0 Confidentiality and COI Statement

All proposals submitted to BioCanRx will be kept confidential; all reviewers of submitted material will have signed a Confidentiality Agreement and Conflict of Interest declaration with BioCanRx.

12.0 Contact Information

Please direct questions about the program and application process to Dr. Megan Mahoney, Director of Scientific Affairs and Training Programs (memahoney@biocanrx.com).