

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Updated September 11, 2015)

Funding Eligibility and Partnering

1. I'm a basic scientist. Can I put a team together and apply?

Yes. We encourages applications that encompass the full spectrum of research that include basic research. But you must keep in mind that this program is intended to fund translational research i.e. innovative research leading to tangible applicable, and transferrable results for the biopharmaceutical drug R&D (global pharma industry). As stated in RFA, the intent of the competition is to support pre-competitive research with the goal of identifying, funding and supporting breakthrough technologies that enhance biopharmaceutical R&D productivity and accelerate the development of new, safe and effective drugs in neuroscience.

2. What is the definition of "multidisciplinary" for the purposes of a Focus on Brain team?

A multidisciplinary team is comprised of members from different disciplines, sub-disciplines, or professions who will each contribute specific value to the team in order to carry out the scope of the project. The most important consideration is that the team has the necessary mix of expertise to conduct the project, and the onus is on the team to convince the reviewers of this.

In addition, the members of the team have to be from at least two Canadian provinces one of which shall be the province of Quebec. The private sector (SMEs, Biotech, CROs) is eligible and the public-private partnerships are strongly encouraged.

3. Is it possible for a company to receive funding under the Focus on the Brain initiative?

Yes. Companies such as SMEs, biotech, and CROs are eligible and can submit an application as a leader or a collaborator, always with at least one academic, and receive up to 50% of the budget. However, multinational pharmaceutical companies are not eligible to receive funds.

4. If one has multiple potential partners, is it possible for PI or Co-PI to fill more than one application?

Yes.

5. I am just starting out as a researcher, can I apply for a Focus on Brain grant?

Yes. To build capacity and generate novel perspectives, Focus on Brain encourages the formation of teams that include nervous system and mental health researchers at all stages of their careers. However, the infrastructure necessary to perform the project must be in place.

6. I am a Post-doctoral fellow. Am I eligible to be listed as a co-applicant on an application?

No, a post-doctoral fellow cannot be a co-applicant for this program. The eligible investigators are those appointed by and working at a University, hospital, affiliated research institution or employed by SMEs in the field of life sciences, biotechnologies, biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics, engineering, imaging, or contract research organizations (CRO).

7. Is it allowable to add/change team members from the LOI to Full application stage?

In principle, no. Exceptionally, after a proper justification, and because we recognize the rapid pace of discovery in the brain sciences, there may be changes in the project description or team membership between LOI and full application. Changes that have been identified by Brain Canada/CQDM significant will be referred to the Chair of the Selection Committee. If there is agreement that the revisions have made the application more responsive to assessment criteria, the changes will be accepted. Revisions to team compositions that are based on advice from Brain Canada/CQDM will of course be accepted.

8. Do co-applicants need to reside in Canada to be eligible for funding through the program?

Yes. Collaborators from government, or other nations are welcome to strengthen teams, and can be listed as co-applicants; however, a co-applicant who resides outside Canada, or who works in the government, must support his or her portion of the team's work with other funds.

9. We anticipate that year one of our research program will encompass a greater portion of the \$1.5M allowable budget with a declining trend toward year three. Is it possible to submit a budget that does not follow the \$500,000 per annum allocation in order to meet the budgetary needs of the project?

Yes. If a different allocation of the \$1.5M total budget is required to facilitate the proposed research activities, applicants may provide a rationale for the different funding profile. The Selection Committee will determine whether the rationale provided warrants the change in the normal equal annual provision.

10. My institute requires the inclusion of an overhead recovery charge to the total cost of all research grants, contracts and agreements for research projects. What is the program's policy regarding the funding of indirect costs associated with conducting a research project?

The Focus on Brain grants cannot be used to pay institutional overhead. You should consult with your administration to determine if, under this condition, a Focus on Brain grant would be acceptable, *before* investing time and effort in preparing a LOI.

11. Is there an upper limit to the number of investigators who can be included on a team for the Focus on Brain grant?

There is no limit to the number of co-applicants on a team. What is important is that the team must include the range of expertise and experience required to carry out the proposed research. It is the applicant's responsibility to assemble the best possible team, to demonstrate how each team member is essential to the project, and to explain how the team will work together. The program grants importance only to true collaborations.

12. If the project is to develop a new and innovative instrument, can the various necessary parts be eligible for funding?

Although the acquisition of lab instruments is not eligible, the various parts necessary for building an equipment that constitute or is part of the final deliverable are eligible for funding– need to be reasonable as to the overall budget.

13. Are patent costs eligible in the program (filing a patent application)?

No but exceptionally it can be considered if the amount is reasonable.

14. Is there a prescribed structure for the budget regarding the respective academic and private contributions?

Yes, as provided in the application form. For SMEs, total contributions cannot exceed 50% of the budget.

15. Salaries of PI from SMEs

In principle PI's salaries are not covered. On a case by case basis, there might be room to manoeuvre, to a reasonable extent – they will have to do research, but it won't be 100% of time if they are running a business as they are expected to be involved in many other things, both scientifically and business-related. . What we think is reasonable is to cover salaries for doing real research on the project being proposed, with an estimated amount of time dedicated to the project that is realistic in terms of scope and in agreement with corporate objectives of the SME. This needs to be well articulated in the proposal.

16. Can the CEO of the SMEs be named as co-applicant?

The name of the CEO is acceptable as long as he performs research within the project. In any case, the person named should have decisional power in the SME and pertinent scientific expertise. In certain case, the CSO might be more appropriate, since what we look for in the CV of the co-applicant is the relevant expertise to advance to project and show real collaboration with the academics.

Forms & Programmatic

17. How many LOI's do you expect will be invited to submit full applications?

Recognizing the efforts involved in preparing team applications, we have implemented a simple letter of intent process and in order to ensure a reasonable success rate, it is anticipated that the number of applications invited to full application stage will be about three times the number that can be funded.

18. How many teams will be funded in the competition?

According to the availability of funding, Brain Canada and CQDM anticipate supporting up to 5 teams in the competition.

19. Will this competition have the appropriate committee composition to review the applications?

The composition of the review committees will reflect as far as possible, the topics covered by the LOI's and subsequent invited full applications. They will be comprised of experts of international stature who are not applicants, mainly from outside Canada and who have been recruited according to the range of topics to be reviewed. Reviewers will be recruited from names suggested by Canadian neuroscientists; funding agency, professional society, and publication databases.

20. I have an idea for a proposal but am not sure if it meets the objectives of the program. How can I determine if my topic will be acceptable for a grant?

The RFA describes the broad scope of this competition. If you think your proposal falls within that scope, then we encourage you to submit a letter of intent. Brain Canada and CQDM staff are available for discussion if a researcher would like more information.

21. What is the deadline for receipt of LOI submissions?

Deadline for receipt of LOI submissions is Tuesday December 15th, by 4 PM EDT. Late submissions will not be accepted. Please see the Focus on Brain RFA for other important dates related to the competition. Please submit on Brain Canada's secured portal.

22. Can LOIs or full applications be submitted in French?

Yes. Applications in both official languages are accepted. Note that the scientific evaluators and the scientific advisory board members are mainly Anglophones. .

23. Are testing of off-label indications of an existing drug eligible?

No

24. What CV should I include?

Any governmental CV is accepted, notably the Common CV. FOR SMEs, please refer to question 16.

25. Can figures and pilot data be included in the LOI?

The intent of the LOI is to solicit ideas; however, the inclusion of figures and/or pilot data is allowed. It should be noted however that any figures and/or data would have to be included in the proposal summary of research which has been limited to 2 pages. In addition, anything extraneous to what is requested in the RFA will be removed from the submission before forwarding to reviewers.

26. Is a budget and budget justification required for the LOI's?

Yes. A high level, low detail budget and brief justification is required for the LOI stage of the competition.

27. At the end of the project, do we need to have a final product?

For Focus programs, the technology should be usable, although maybe not in its final form. Applicants should keep in mind that we are looking for translational research, oriented towards an application aimed to improve, enhance and improve the R&D process. The deliverable of the project must have valuable and tangible impact on biopharmaceutical drug R&D.

28. What about a project that would consist in validation of some concept in a clinical trial, would that be eligible as a project?

Yes

IP

29. If intellectual property arise from a Focus on Brain project, will the applicants and their respective institutions own the intellectual property?

The intellectual property generated under this funding program belongs and is totally owned by the investigators and/or research entities. The IP is to be managed according to the policies of all the research entities (not the CQDM) involved in a funded project.

Applicants and their institutions agree that a royalty free, non-exclusive license option will be granted to CQDM's industrial sponsors for the use of all the results generated by the project for R&D purposes only. The main conditions of the end-user license option will be negotiated before the beginning of the project and will take into account pre-existing (background) intellectual property as well as the contributions of each party. CQDM industrial sponsors do not have the right to commercialize the intellectual property resulting from the project or the pre-existing intellectual property, nor does this license prevent subsequent commercialization of the intellectual property by the research entities.

30. What happens if another company (third party) wants to have exclusive rights to commercialization?

IP owners can grant them the rights, the CQDM agreement does not cover commercial rights.

31. How does it work if background IP is necessary for the pharma members to use the technology once developed?

Depending on the nature of the IP, financial compensation might be considered. This must be discussed before the beginning of the project and will be included in the signed research agreement.

- All additional questions about the Focus on Brain program that are not found in the FAQ's should be forwarded to programs@braincanada.ca or to mthibault@cqdm.org. Where practicable, applicants will receive a response to their question within 48 hours of submission of their enquiry.