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Call for Collaborative Research Projects on the Brain

An initiative from CQDM and Brain Canada Foundation

UP TO \$2 MILLION AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE BRAIN RESEARCH PROJECTS

Deadline to participate in the selection round with a Full Application: 17:00 ET on May 28, 2025

(Please note that you must notify CQDM no later than 17:00 ET on May 21, 2025 of your intention to submit a Full Application)

Brain Canada Foundation (Brain Canada) and CQDM are joining forces to support **interprovincial** collaborative biopharmaceutical research and development (R&D) projects on the **brain**. This partnership creates a unique funding opportunity that brings together experts from academia and industry to support the development of platforms, tools and biopharmaceuticals that will pave the way for new advances in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders.

SCOPE AND RESEARCH AGENDA

This CQDM and Brain Canada initiative specifically focuses on brain research relevant to biopharmaceutical applications. The intent of the initiative is to:

- Increase research collaborations and partnerships between universities and companies in the life sciences industry in Quebec and other Canadian provinces and territories to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders.
- Foster technological maturation and industrial value creation leading to economic benefits for the project's stakeholders, Quebec and the rest of Canada.
- Promote the knowledge, capabilities and new technologies developed in public institutions, and facilitate uptake by industry.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Evidence clearly shows that increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research environments enhances excellence, innovation, and creativity. CQDM and Brain Canada are committed to excellence through equity and encourage applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply to this funding opportunity, which will promote the expression of diverse perspectives, approaches, and experiences, including those of underrepresented groups.

CALENDAR

Call for applications	February 26, 2025
Deadline to notify CQDM of intent to apply	May 21, 2025
Full Application deadline	May 28, 2025 at 17:00 ET
Notice of decision to applicants	October 2025
Funding start date	January 1, 2026 at the earliest

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants:

- Investigators must be affiliated with and conduct research at an eligible Canadian institution, [as defined by CIHR](#), for the full duration of the grant.
- The principal investigator must be based at a research institution in Quebec (university and affiliated hospital, research institute, public research center). They must work in close collaboration with at least one other independent researcher working in a research institution in another Canadian province or territory, as well as with at least one Quebec small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). **Please note:** College Centers for the Transfer of Technology [CCTT] and public laboratories funded by the federal government (such as the NRC) are not eligible to serve as the host institution, but team members and co-investigators from these institutions may receive up to 50% of the total budget as sub-sites under certain conditions. Please contact CQDM to confirm eligibility before applying.
- Investigators must be considered an independent researcher at their institution. Such an individual normally holds the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor; can initiate and direct their own independent lines of research as principal investigator; has full responsibility for running their research group; has full control of their research funds; and is permitted to supervise trainees (if applicable, as per their institution's policy). Postdoctoral fellows or adjunct faculty are not eligible to apply.

Eligible Projects:

- Research teams must include a minimum of two independent researchers, one from a research institution in Quebec and one from a research institution in another Canadian province or territory.
- R&D projects with biopharmaceutical industrial impact applicable to neuroscience, including the conduct of clinical studies.
- The technology readiness level must be between 1 and 6 at the start of the project.
- Socio-economic benefits must be generated for all of Canada and for the company partners involved in the project.
- At least two trainees (Master's student, PhD student, and/ or postdoctoral fellow) must take part in the project, at least one of whom must be based in Quebec.



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FUNDING

Grant Duration

Minimum 1 year, maximum 3 years

Funding start date

January 1, 2026 at the earliest

Budget

The project budget should be between \$500,000 and \$1M * ;

Between 20% and 30% of eligible expenses from the total budget submitted must be incurred by at least one research institution in a Canadian province or territory other than Quebec.

*Project size comprised between 1M\$ and 3.75M\$ are eligible. However, expenses exceeding 1M\$ will receive reduced financial support. Contact CQDM for more details.

Funding details

The combined financial support from CQDM and Brain Canada for eligible projects expenses will vary between 78-82% depending on the percentage of research expenses in Quebec versus outside of Quebec.

In addition, at least one eligible Quebec SME must contribute to the funding with a cash contribution. The expected contribution of the SME may vary according to the proposed activities and financing structure, but may not represent less than 20% of eligible expenses *in Quebec*. In-kind contributions are not eligible for the matched funding calculation.

- To be eligible, an SME must:
 - Have a significant participation in the project;
 - Have a place of business in Quebec, be legally constituted according to the federal or Quebec laws in force and be registered with the Quebec Enterprise Register;
 - Have R&D and/or production activities in Quebec;
 - Have 249 employees or less.

A portion of the required funding may come from other sources, including Canadian and foreign companies, foundations or non-Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie (MEIE) government contributions. Mitacs funding cannot be matched in this call for projects.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Only expenses incurred by Canadian research institutions are eligible:

- Fellowships and wages for research personnel assigned to the project (technicians, research assistants and associates, postdoctoral fellows and students);
- Laboratory equipment, consumables and supplies, as well as animal facilities and platform fees;
- Travel expenses (project-related travel, collaborations, conferences, etc.) and knowledge dissemination costs.
- Intellectual property costs (patent applications, patent maintenance fees for the duration of the project). Please note that costs related to intellectual property must be incurred by a research institution in Quebec to be eligible.
- The rental or purchase of small equipment of a maximum value of \$25,000 per item.
- Some subcontracting expenses to Quebec companies that are not partners in the project can be authorized when the activity is essential to the project and cannot be performed by the research institution.

The following expenses are **not** eligible:

- Expenses incurred by partner companies.
- Purchase or rental of equipment worth more than \$25,000. If the value exceeds \$25,000, the entire expense is ineligible.
- Salary of the principal investigator (PI), co-investigators, or any team members holding an independent academic or research position.
- Indirect and overhead costs. However, these costs may apply to some financial contributions to the project.
- Intellectual property costs incurred by a research institution outside Quebec or by the partner company.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that CQDM and Brain Canada must be consulted on expenses that are not listed here to determine the eligibility of other categories of expenditure. Applicants are encouraged to contact CQDM before the deadline to confirm the eligibility of expenses.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Deadline for the Full Application: 17:00 ET on May 28, 2025

Please note that you must notify CQDM no later than 17:00 ET on May 21, 2025 of your intent to submit an application (see point 2 below).

Steps for submitting an application:

1. Contact [Mathieu Paquette](mailto:mpaquette@cqdm.org), Director - Business Development, Team Lead Québec, to validate the eligibility of your project and obtain the application forms at the following address: mpaquette@cqdm.org.
2. Submit a half-page non-confidential scientific summary (including the project title, the names and affiliations of the researchers, and the names of the company partners) to the following address by 17:00 ET on May 21, 2025: appliquez-apply@cqdm.org.
3. Submit the completed application to appliquez-apply@cqdm.org by May 28, 2025.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Scientific merit and feasibility of the project;
- Quality of the commercialization plan;
- Uniqueness, competitiveness, and added value of the proposed technology;
- Quality of the collaboration with the team and private partner(s);
- Expected benefits for the private partners; and
- Socio-economical benefits for the province of Quebec and Canada.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The key evaluation steps are:

- An independent scientific evaluation based on the selection criteria listed above.
- A review of the non-scientific aspects of the project, including the level of commitment of the companies, the added value of the collaboration and the specific risks inherent to the project.
- The overall evaluation of the project by CQDM's scientific advisory board, which is responsible for making funding recommendations.
- Approval of the project by CQDM and Brain Canada.
- Approval of funding by the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie (MEIE).

The recipients will be notified in October 2025.

RESEARCH AGREEMENT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

- The research institutions and company partners that will be awarded a research grant must accept the terms and conditions of CQDM and Brain Canada and commit to sign a research agreement within 3 months following the receipt of the CQDM's approval letter.
- CQDM will provide the template of the research agreement which will precisely define the milestones to be reached, the timeline (Gantt chart) and the deliverables at the end of the project.
- An intellectual property agreement in which CQDM and Brain Canada are not involved will also have to be signed by all the research institutions and company partners associated with the project and attached to the research agreement.



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For any question regarding the eligibility of your project and for support, please contact **Mathieu Paquette**, Director - Business Development, Team Lead Quebec, at the following address: mpaquette@cqdm.org