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***CALL FOR PROPOSALS***  
***EXPLORE COMPETITION 2011***  
***DEADLINE: APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2011***

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*February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

## 1) SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

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The Explore program is designed to test new **unconventional** and highly innovative research projects that should strongly impact the drug discovery process.

Projects funded by this program must have the potential for a breakthrough discovery and the potential for a major change in the current paradigm or conventional wisdom. **Preliminary data are not necessary** for the application but the underlying premise must be strong, with sound rationale and the proposal must be focused on well defined goals.

This program encourages close interactions with the pharmaceutical industry. In that respect, each awarded project will be assigned a mentor (Senior Scientist) among CQDM pharmaceutical sponsors, providing support to the investigators in aligning the research toward the needs of the industry.

## 2) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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The Explore program is designed to demonstrate the feasibility of innovative ideas in the field of biopharmaceutical research. The projects can be risky as long as they address well-identified and crucial industrial bottlenecks of the drug R&D process.

For each research proposal submitted in this program:

- The research must be performed in the province of Quebec;
- The originality of the project is more important than the size and the experience of the research team;
- The program is widely open to the research community. The research could originate from single or multiple academic laboratories, hospital teams, biotechnology companies, contract research organizations (CROs) or any other entities. Please note that multinational pharmaceutical companies are not eligible for CQDM's funding. Public/private partnerships are not a requirement.

While no preliminary data is necessary, the rationale behind the proposal must be very strong and the applicants must clearly demonstrate how the scientific approach will be validated. Strong emphasis will be placed on the innovative character of the proposals where the potential impact of the research on the discovery or development of new drugs is clearly stated.

### 3) RESEARCH AGENDA

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This program aims to fund **early concept validation** of transformative enabling technologies addressing critical needs in drug discovery or development.

The research agenda of this competition is broad and covers all therapeutic fields and all research areas that could bring new tools for biopharmaceutical research, such as engineering, nanotechnologies, medical devices, diagnostics, translational medicine and imaging.

### 4) FUNDING SPECIFICS

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**Number of projects:** CQDM anticipates financing between 3 to 5 projects in each competition cycle.

**Duration:** Maximum 2 years.

**Total amount:** \$150,000 - \$300,000 over a two-year period.

**Eligible costs:**

- Salary of research personnel necessary for the project (students, post-doctoral fellows, technical/professional assistants);
- Material and laboratory supplies including services provided by third party suppliers necessary for the realisation of the project;
- Travel expenses (field work, collaborations);
- Intellectual property costs (patent application and maintenance fees during the funding period);
- Administrative costs (overheads), up to 15% of the eligible research expenses.

**Non eligible costs**

- Equipment or facilities (purchase or rental)
- Salary of the principal investigator and co-investigators

**Payment schedule:** Annual disbursements subject to satisfactory project progression and achievement of milestones.

## 5) EVALUATION PROCESS

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The review process will be performed in 3 steps:

- 1- **Selection by the CQDM Explore Advisory Committee.** This committee, mainly composed of industry representatives, will select up to 15 projects that will be subject to an external scientific evaluation. The selection will be based on innovation, potential impact of the research on the drug discovery process and capacity to address important needs of the biopharmaceutical industry. The evaluation will **only** be based on the review of **sections 1 and 2** of the application form (Section 1: Project summary; Section 2: Innovative character of the technology and impact on the drug discovery/development process).

The detailed evaluation criteria are:

### **A. Innovative character of the research**

- Potential to lead to a major change in paradigm or to a seminal discovery;
- Novelty of the technical approach;
- Positioning of the project in comparison with currently ongoing R&D;
- International competitiveness of the project.

### **B. Impact of the research project on the drug discovery/development process**

- Capacity to address critical challenges of the drug R&D process and urgent needs of the biopharmaceutical industry;
- Potential to open new therapeutic and research avenues;
- Capacity to significantly improve productivity in drug discovery (reduce costs, time to market and development risks).

- 2- **External scientific evaluation:** The projects selected by CQDM's Explore Advisory Committee will be evaluated by an international committee under the responsibility of the "Fonds de la Recherche en Santé du Québec (FRSQ)". The members of this committee will be chosen for their broad scientific and/or industrial knowledge related to the field of research proposals. While preliminary data are not necessary, the emphasis will be placed on the innovative character of the project, the quality of the rationale and the methodology proposed to validate the concept.

The detailed evaluation criteria are:

**A. Scientific excellence and feasibility**

- Overall scientific excellence of the project;
- Quality and logic of the rationale;
- Soundness of the methodology;
- Quality of the key experiments proposed to demonstrate the feasibility of the concept;
- Soundness of the budget in relation to the proposed research.

**B. Innovative character of the research** (as detailed in section 5.1)

**C. Impact of the research project on the drug discovery/development process** (as detailed in section 5.1)

- 3- **CQDM evaluation:** In parallel, CQDM will review aspects related to the intellectual property, potential ethical issues, corporate information (for private organizations) and any potential risk that may jeopardize the successful achievement of the research project.

**6) KEY DATES**

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Call for proposals	February 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Deadline for submission of the proposals	April 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Preselection by the Explore Advisory Committee	June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Scientific evaluation	August 2011
Final project selection	September 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Signature of a research agreement	November 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2011
Funding release and beginning of the projects	December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2011

**7) SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

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An electronic version must be submitted on a secure site **by April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at 5:00 PM** (<https://cqdm.firmex.com>).

Please contact Sonia Lanthier at [slanthier@cqdm.org](mailto:slanthier@cqdm.org) before **April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011** to obtain your username and password.

**The electronic version must include:**

- The signed application form in pdf format. The file must be identified as follow: *Last name of PI\_application*.
- Updated and complete common Canadian CV (FRSQ format) of the principal investigator (PI) and all the co-investigators. The file must be identified as follow: *Last name of PI\_Last name of co-investigator\_CV*. Investigators working in a private company may provide a standard CV.

CQDM representatives are willing to help all applicants better understand the specificities and objectives of this program. CQDM will organize information sessions in Montreal (March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011; location to be confirmed), Quebec and Sherbrooke (date and location to be confirmed).

**8) CONDITIONS FOR CQDM FUNDING**

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Intellectual property generated under this funding program will belong to the inventors and their affiliated research entities. A non-exclusive license option (royalty-free) will be granted to the CQDM industrial sponsors (the global organizations and their affiliates) for the use of the results for R&D purposes only. If background IP is needed to use the results, a non-exclusive license option to use the background IP will be also granted to the CQDM industrial sponsors. If it is the case, a financial consideration for the use of the background IP may be negotiated before the beginning of the project. CQDM industrial sponsors will have no right to commercialize the results or the background IP.

The main conditions of the end-user license option will be included in the research agreement to be signed before the beginning of the project.

The CQDM funding is conditional to the signature of a research agreement between CQDM and all the research entities involved in the project before November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT**

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