



LETTERS OF INTENT

EXPLORE COMPETITION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2012

PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 21TH, 2012

December 1st, 2011

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

The main goal of the CQDM Explore program is to support new **unconventional** and highly **innovative** research projects that could strongly impact the drug discovery process. It is designed to fund **early concept validation** of cutting edge tools or technologies addressing critical needs in drug discovery or development.

Projects funded by this program must have the potential for a **breakthrough discovery** that could lead to an important change in the current paradigm or conventional wisdom. 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. The projects can be risky as long as they address well-identified and crucial industrial bottlenecks of the drug R&D process.

This program is designed for researchers who are interested in establishing closer links with the pharmaceutical industry. In that respect, CQDM has developed a unique mentoring program where senior scientists from the six pharmaceutical sponsors of the Explore program provide support to the researchers in aligning their research towards the needs of the industry. CQDM values these types of interactions as they provide networking opportunities, facilitate access to industrial resources (databases, equipment, etc.) and could accelerate the validation of the technologies at a larger scale.

For each research proposal submitted in this program:

- The innovative character of the project and its disruptive potential for biopharmaceutical research will be considered in priority;
- The program is widely open to the research community. Senior as well as junior scientists are welcomed to submit an application. A special attention will be paid in the evaluation process to avoid any bias toward the track record of the investigators. The research could originate from single or multiple academic laboratories, hospital teams, biotechnology companies, contract research organizations (CROs) or any other entities. In contrast to the Focus competition, public/private partnerships are not required and single laboratories are eligible and encouraged to apply. Please note that multinational pharmaceutical companies are not eligible for CQDM's funding;
- The research must be performed in the province of Quebec.

RESEARCH AGENDA

The research agenda for this competition is broad and covers all sectors of activities and research areas that could generate tools that could significantly increase the productivity of biopharmaceutical research. Examples include: engineering, biomaterials, nanotechnologies, medical devices, diagnostics, informatics, instrumentation optics, imaging, etc... A list of possible research projects that can be funded by CQDM is provided on our Web site at <http://www.cqdm.org/en/cqdm/areas-activity.php>.

FUNDING SPECIFICS

Number of projects

CQDM anticipates financing 3 to 5 projects in each competition cycle.

Duration

Maximum 2 years.

Total amount

\$150,000 - \$300,000 over a two-year period. Please note that the amount requested must be well justified and will be taken into account in the final selection of the projects.

Eligible costs

- Salary of research personnel necessary for the project (students, post-doctoral fellows, and 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 and collaborations);
- Intellectual property costs (patent application and maintenance fees during the funding period);
- Administrative costs (overhead), 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 are subject to satisfactory project progression and achievement of milestones.

EVALUATION PROCESS

CQDM's funding will be awarded following a competitive process in two stages.

1- Preliminary application (Letter of intent)

Applicants must submit a letter of intent (using the form available on our Web site at www.cqdm.org) describing the project before February 21th, 2012. The selection of the letters of intent will be overseen by the CQDM's Explore Advisory Committee. This committee, mainly composed of industry representatives, will select approximately 15 projects that will be subject to an external scientific evaluation. Only applicants whose letter of intent is selected will be invited to submit a full project proposal.

The evaluation of the letters of intent will be focused on the following weighted criteria:

- Innovative character of the research: 40%;
- Positioning and competitiveness of the project: 30%;
- Potential impact on the drug discovery/development process: 30%.

The applicants are strongly encouraged to clearly underline these aspects in their proposals. The text written in each section should be complementary; therefore, the applicants must avoid repetitive information.

The innovative character of the project will be evaluated according to the novelty of the approach or the technology as well as the capacity to deliver new results with a disruptive potential on biopharmaceutical research.

The technology or the approach proposed should be benchmarked to ongoing or existing research at the international level. The differentiating factors should be clearly stated as well as the added value of the technology or tool with regards to their future potential applications.

The technology or tools generated from the project should address a critical need faced by the biopharmaceutical industry and bring a breakthrough that can significantly increase the productivity of the research (decrease the risk, cost or time of drug development) or open-up new research avenues.

All relevant sections of the letters of intent will be also evaluated for the soundness of the scientific approach from a global perspective. The scientific excellence will be evaluated in depth at the stage of the full application. Furthermore, the applicants are encouraged to work with the technology transfer offices of their institutions (when applicable) to complete the letters of intent.

2- Full proposal

The full applications will be evaluated by an international committee under the responsibility of the FRQS (Fonds de la Recherche du Québec – Santé) and a risk analysis performed by the CQDM. The results of both assessments will be presented to the Explore Advisory Committee who will make recommendations to the CQDM's Board of directors who, in turn, will make the final selection of the research projects to be funded.

KEY DATES

Call for proposals - launching	December 1 st , 2011
Deadline for submission of the letters of intent	February 21 th , 2012
Announcement of the selected letters of intent	April 5 th , 2012
Deadline to submit full proposals	June 12 th , 2012
Final selection announcement	September 24 th , 2012
Signature of a research agreement	November 26 th , 2012
Funding release and beginning of the projects	December 3 rd , 2012

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

An electronic version must be submitted on CQDM's secure site **by February 21th, 2012, at 5:00 PM** (<https://cqdm.firmex.com>). Applicants must contact Lise Beauchemin at lbeauchemin@cqdm.org before **February 14th, 2012** to obtain their username and password.

The signed application form should be in PDF format. The file must be identified as follow: *Last name of PI_LOI*.

Please remove all the security features on the PDF version of the documents.

The application form is available on our Web site at www.cqdm.org.

The font "Arial" size 11 must be used to fill in the application form. The text must be typed at 1.15 line spacing. The text should be limited to the space allowed for each section. The application must be signed by the principal investigator, the co-investigators and their respective research entities.

CQDM representatives are willing to help all applicants to better understand the specificities and objectives of this program. CQDM will organize an information session in Montreal that will be accessible through the Web (January 18th, 2012; location to be confirmed). Furthermore, specific meetings could be organized on a per request basis.

CONDITIONS FOR CQDM FUNDING

Pre-existing intellectual property (IP) necessary for carrying out the proposed project must be free of all encumbrances.

IP 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 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 also be granted to the CQDM industrial sponsors. In this case, the use of the background IP will be negotiated between the parties. The CQDM industrial sponsors will have no right to commercialize the results or the background IP.

A research agreement will need to be signed between CQDM and all the research entities involved in the project within 2 months following the final selection announcement (before November 26th, 2012). The research agreement will include, without limitations, the following aspects:

- A clear description of the project including main steps, milestones, deliverables and the role of each investigator;
- A detailed budget and payment schedule (annual) including the portion that will be allocated to each research entity;
- A commitment from all the research entities and the investigators involved in the project to perform the research;
- The main terms and conditions of the licence option in favour of the CQDM industrial sponsors for the use of the results generated by the project (and background IP, if necessary) for research and development purposes;
- Basic representations and warranties by the research entities including the required rights, consents and/or approval to perform the research project;
- Disclosure and publication requirements;
- Confidentiality obligations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Judith Caron
Director of Programs
(514) 766-6661 ext. 2195
jcaron@cqdm.org

Mounia Azzi
Director of Programs
(514) 766-6661 ext. 2194
mazzi@cqdm.org