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Government of Canada funds new projects to further grow the domestic biomanufacturing and life sciences sector

From: Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat

News release

New multidisciplinary projects across the country will prepare Canada for future health emergencies and build capacity

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Growing a robust, competitive, domestic biomanufacturing and life sciences sector ensures that Canada has access to critical vaccines, therapeutics and other life-saving medicines. The Government of Canada has been doing just that since the launch of Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy in 2021 with a \$2.2 billion commitment to develop cutting-edge biomanufacturing capabilities.

Today, the Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, on behalf of the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, announced nearly \$574 million in funding for 19 projects at 14 research institutions across Canada, through Stage 2 of the integrated Canada Biomedical Research Fund (CBRF) and Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund (BRIF) competition.

Through these investments in research, talent and infrastructure projects, Canadians will have access to made-in-Canada vaccines, therapeutics and other life-saving medicines and innovations. This will help strengthen the resilience of Canada's life sciences sector by supporting leading Canadian research in innovative technologies that keep us safe and boost our economy.

Projects receiving funding aim at:

- enhancing antibody discovery and therapeutics production;
- developing and optimizing self-amplifying RNA vaccines;
- establishing better rapid diagnostic tools that can identify emerging pathogens;
- leveraging artificial intelligence and other technologies to study how bacteria react to chemicals, with the goal of developing new antibiotics; and

- establishing a leading, national maternal-child health resource for disease surveillance and pandemic preparedness.

Each of the 19 projects is endorsed by one of the five research hubs that were established in Stage 1 of the CBRF-BRIF competition. These hubs combine the strengths of Canada's postsecondary institutions and research hospitals, industry and the not-for-profit sector to jointly improve health emergency preparedness and the overall health and well-being of Canadians. In addition, the hubs will help accelerate the translation of promising research into commercially viable products and processes. By strengthening research capacity and leveraging collaborations across the entire biomanufacturing ecosystem, Canada will be better prepared to face future pandemics.

Quotes

“With world-leading scientists and researchers established across Canadian leading research institutions, Canada is home to a competitive and robust biomanufacturing and life sciences sector. We made a promise to Canadians that we would rebuild the domestic sector. With this investment, our government is delivering on this promise by supporting the excellent innovations, collaborations and infrastructures necessary to rapidly respond to future public health threats and keep Canadians safe.”

—The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

“Today’s announcement marks another important milestone in our work to improve health outcomes for Canadians and strengthen our domestic biomanufacturing capacity. This investment will support innovative and world-leading research and science in the areas of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and surveillance to help prepare Canada for future health emergencies.”

—The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health

“The projects that we’re supporting today will strengthen our ability to supply medicines, vaccines and therapeutics for the benefit of Canadians. These collaborations between research hubs, postsecondary institutions and research hospitals will foster innovation across the country. Thanks to the work of experienced scientists in institutions at the cutting edge of innovation, Canada will be ready to respond to future health priorities.”

—The Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec

“The research funded through the CBRF will position Canada as a global leader in the biomanufacturing and life sciences sector. Most importantly, today’s investment will ensure that our nation’s brightest researchers and scientists are at the forefront of vaccine and therapeutic discoveries that will drive Canadian industry and equip Canada with the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to future pandemics.”

—Ted Hewitt, Chair, Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat;
President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

“Having access to state-of-the-art research facilities is critical for Canadians to respond to public health emergencies. Investments through the Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund are helping equip researchers with the tools they need to speed the discovery and development of new vaccines and antibiotics, innovative diagnostics, and work with the country’s biomanufacturing sector.”

—Roseann O’Reilly Runte, President and CEO, Canada Foundation for Innovation

Quick facts

- This investment builds on the crucial support provided through the first stages of CBRF and BRIF that enabled the creation of five new research hubs, as well as upgrades to Canada’s biocontainment facilities.
- Each of the 19 projects awarded funding includes one or more of these components: research, talent development and research infrastructure. As a result, a project may receive funding from CBRF, BRIF or both.
- The CBRF-BRIF competition followed a two-step competitive review process that evaluated the scientific merit and strategic alignment of the project proposals with the objectives of the funding opportunity and

the priorities of the Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy.

- Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy includes major investments to help build Canada's talent pipeline and research capacity. Investments include:
 - **CBRF**: \$250 million to create a program to support high-risk, applied research, training and talent development partnership projects. The program is administered by the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat, housed at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), on behalf of the three federal research funding agencies: SSHRC, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.
 - **BRIF**: \$500 million to support the biosciences infrastructure needs of postsecondary institutions and affiliated research hospitals. This fund is administered by the Canada Foundation for Innovation.
 - **Clinical Trials Fund**: Led by CIHR, the Clinical Trials Fund has supported the establishment of a clinical trial consortium, training platforms and clinical trials to support health emergency preparedness and boost the life sciences sector, aligned with the priorities of the Government of Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy.

- The government is also providing targeted support to scale up Canadian biomanufacturing companies and attract investment from leading multinational firms.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, the Government has invested more than \$2.2 billion in 38 different projects in the biomanufacturing ecosystem. Through the Strategic Innovation Fund, specifically, the government has invested in more than 16 projects since the beginning of the pandemic and the launch of the strategy.

Associated links

- Stage 2 integrated CBRF-BRIF competition results
- Government of Canada establishes new research hubs to accelerate Canada's vaccine and therapeutics production
- The Government of Canada announces biomanufacturing and life sciences strategy.
- Canada's biomanufacturing ecosystem gets major boost with new funding

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