



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Genome Canada launches competition to strengthen Canada's leadership in bioinformatics and computational biology

New tools will markedly advance our understanding of life in its molecular detail

OTTAWA – June 21, 2012— Genome Canada with support from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), today launched the 2012 Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Competition. This research fund will help create the next generation of tools needed to deal with the massive amounts of data produced by modern genomic technologies and allow researchers to better understand the biology of living things.

Bioinformatics expands the use of genomics data through the research, development or application of computational tools and approaches. It enables better ways to acquire, store, organize, archive, analyze and visualize data.

“The Harper Government is supporting Canada’s research leadership in genomics, an area that has the potential for significant social and economic benefits,” said the Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for Science and Technology. “Through this investment, we are supporting the development of new tools and methods necessary to keep Canada at the leading edge of this fast-growing field.”

Pierre Meulien, President and CEO, Genome Canada, said: “The genomics research community has an urgent need for efficient computational tools to collect and analyse data. Genome Canada has made it a priority to invest in this area so that key economic sectors from forestry to fisheries, agriculture to environment, energy to mining and human health have the ability to reap the full value of genomics research.”

Computational biology helps make sense of genomics data through computational analysis, modelling, and prediction. New experimental, computational and theoretical tools in biology will lead to a much greater understanding of life in its molecular detail and maximize the impact of genomics research in health and life sciences, among other areas.

The competition involves \$5 million from Genome Canada and \$1.25 million from CIHR. Of this, \$4 million will support large-scale projects by multi-disciplinary teams to develop robust, user-friendly tools needed by the genomics research community. As well, \$2.25 million will support small-scale projects by individuals or groups to propose innovative ideas with the potential for significant impact. CIHR’s funding preference will be in support of the smaller scale projects. The projects, in collaboration with Canada’s six regional Genome Centres, are expected to secure an additional \$4 million in co-funding for the large-scale applied projects.

Dr. Alain Beaudet, President, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, said: “CIHR is pleased to partner with Genome Canada on this important initiative, especially given the vast potential applications to research that could come out of new tools and methodologies in this essential field. The more effectively we can analyze and interpret genomic data, the greater our understanding of life at its most fundamental level.”

Genome Canada is a catalyst for developing and applying genomic sciences that create economic wealth and social benefit for Canadians. We work in partnership to invest in and manage large-scale research and translate discoveries into commercial opportunities, new technologies, applications and solutions. We build bridges between government, academia and industry to forge a genomics-based public-private innovation focused on key life science sectors. For more information, visit www.genomecanada.ca

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada’s health research investment agency. CIHR’s mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 14,100 health researchers and trainees across Canada. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

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