

## The Innovation Research Program For Early Career Investigators Guidelines

*SCN will provide up to \$150,000 for early-career investigators (within the first five years of an initial academic appointment) to develop a stem cell research program with a regenerative medicine focus.*

### About the Stem Cell Network:

Supporting and building Canada's stem cell and regenerative medicine research sector has been the *raison d'être* of the Stem Cell Network (SCN) since its inception in 2001. Its work has been supported by the Government of Canada from the beginning, and most recently with an \$18 million commitment to fund research and training through 2019-22.

SCN's mandate is to act as a catalyst for the translation of stem cell research into clinical applications, commercial products and public policy. In just over 18 years SCN has forged a national community that has transformed stem cell research and moved it to the point where regenerative medicine is changing clinical practice. SCN has supported 170 research groups nationally; invested over \$100 million for translational research, leveraging \$116M in partner contributions; catalyzed 19 clinical trials and 21 biotech start-ups. In addition, SCN established the annual Till & McCulloch Meetings and has provided training for more than 3,000 individual trainees.

### The innovation Research Program:

SCN is pleased to invite full proposals under the *Innovation Research Program*. Funding through this program will support early-career researchers from the health, bio-engineering and social sciences (i.e. within first five years of an initial academic appointment) who are developing a stem cell research program with a regenerative medicine focus. To be eligible for funding proposed research projects must have a regenerative purpose and serve as a foundation for a translational program.

Innovative research activities can include, but are not limited to: development of new models; expression and epigenetic studies to understand behavior of stem and progenitor cells for health or disease; generation of unique datasets; proof-of-principle experiments; identification and characterization of compounds/drugs that target stem cell fate and function with the aim to

develop novel therapeutic approaches. In addition, projects that have a bio or tissue engineering focus and are relevant to stem cells and regenerative medicine are in-scope for this program.

For investigators wishing to pursue research related to the ethical, legal and social implications of stem cell and regenerative medicine, work may include but is not limited to: regulatory modernization, legal and policy challenges of emerging technologies, ethical governance, market access pathways, reimbursement, health system adoption, patient knowledge and engagement, privacy, data collection and usage, public education or awareness for consumers.

Innovation awards are for up to \$150,000 for for 18-months (starting August 1, 2020 & ending January 31, 2022). All applications require a project plan and supporting budget that details how the requested SCN funding will be allocated within the term of the award. Partnerships with foundations, institutions, health charities or industry are a valuable component of project proposals. Partnerships and leveraged funding (in-kind and/or cash) will increase the application's ranking. All project applications will be subject to peer review and assessment by the Stem Cell Network's Research Management Committee. In addition, applications that include collaborations with other Canadian-based investigators and have multidisciplinary expertise will also increase an application's rating.

Successful applicants will provide the SCN office with project reports as requested and will be regularly monitored by SCN's Research Management Committee to ensure appropriate progress is being made.

**Specific Criteria:**

- Projects can focus on developmental or high-risk, innovative research with the potential to be translated in the coming years;
- Projects can also focus on the policy, regulatory or ethical issues relevant to stem cell research;
- Innovative research activities can include, but are not limited to: development of new models; expression and epigenetic studies to understand behavior of stem and progenitor cells for health or disease; generation of unique datasets; proof-of-principle experiments; identification and characterization of compounds/drugs that target stem cell fate and function with the aim to develop novel therapeutic approaches. In addition, projects that have a bio or tissue engineering focus and are relevant to stem cells and regenerative medicine are in-scope for this program.

- In order to receive funding, successful applicants must execute a standard SCN Agreement, and take on all of the associated rights and obligations. These obligations include the requirement to provide SCN office with a project report as requested, and recognition of SCN as a funder.

#### **General Requirements:**

- Projects must be relevant to stem cells and regenerative medicine.
- Projects must demonstrate research excellence, innovation and the potential for translation.
- Research applications that are focused on cancer must be regenerative in nature and/or use stem cells for addressing the proposed problem.
- Projects should integrate sex and gender considerations into the research, when appropriate.
- Project milestones and deliverables must be realistic and reasonable based on the supporting budget.
- A trainee education plan must be submitted with funding applications.
- A knowledge mobilization plan must be submitted with funding applications, and adhere to the [Tri-Council Open Access Policy](#) to ensure research results are made publicly accessible.
- Each project must be distinct from any other application(s) submitted to SCN to avoid 'double dipping' across SCN's research funding programs.
- Investigators requesting funds from SCN must be based at a Tri-Council eligible institution and must themselves be eligible to receive Tri-Council funding.

#### **Full Application Contents:**

- Application form (document 1)
- Investigator CVs (document 2)
- Letters of support (document 3)
- Project budget for requested SCN funds (document 4)
- Supporting documents such as an approved Animal Utilization Protocol, Stem Cell Oversight Committee (SCOC) approvals for the use of human cells and tissues, approval to use biohazard agents and provisional patent filing should be submitted if applicable (document 5)
- Institution and investigator signatures form (document 6)

The deadline to submit the full application package to [info@stemcellnetwork.ca](mailto:info@stemcellnetwork.ca) is **Wednesday, April 1, 2020 11:59pm PT.**

A confirmation email will be sent within 48 hours of SCN receiving the submitted application package. If a confirmation email is **NOT** received from SCN within 48 hours of submission **it is the responsibility of the lead applicant** to contact SCN and ensure that the application package has been received by SCN.