

2022-2025 SCN Research Funding Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In 2021 Stem Cell Network (SCN) was awarded three years of funding (2022-2025) by the Government of Canada to support SCN's continued goal to translate science from the lab to clinical applications, commercial products and public policy.

SCN's new multimillion-dollar national research funding competition will support world-class, translational, regenerative medicine research, across the research continuum, to facilitate health, social and economic benefits for Canadians. This new competition opens on **Wednesday, September 1, 2021**, and will support research activities during the 2022 to 2025 period.

Please note that funding in this competition is dependent on the completion of SCN's 2022-2025 contribution agreement with the Government of Canada.

In addition to the FAQs listed below, a 2022-2025 Funding Programs Information Webinar was held on August 17, 2021 that includes information about the competition and programs available in this competition, as well as a question and answer session with SCN community attendees. A recording of the webinar is hosted on [SCN's YouTube channel](#).

Programs and Competition Process

What are the value and duration of SCN research awards?

Award values vary across the seven programs. Details can be found in the guidelines for each program. The range starts at \$200,000 and goes up to \$3,000,000 per award. The funding term for programs also varies: three programs run for 24 months (*Impact Awards, Knowledge Translation Awards and Fueling Biotechnology Awards*), from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2024, and four programs run for 34 months (*Early Career Researcher (ECR) Jump Start Awards, Translation and Society Award, Clinical Trial Awards and the Horizon Awards*), from April 1, 2022 to January 31, 2025.

Who may apply for SCN funding through this competition?

Regenerative medicine investigators can apply funds from SCN only if they are based at a Canadian Tri-Council eligible institution and they themselves are eligible to receive Tri-Council funding. *To be eligible, investigators must meet the CIHR [definition](#) for independent researchers and all investigators must have an academic appointment that commences by the effective date of funding and extends until the final reporting date of the award.* ONLY the lead and co-investigators can

receive SCN funds. Collaborators are defined as Canadian or international collaborators who are not requesting SCN funding but who will be collaborating on the project.

Highly qualified personnel (HQP; e.g. graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, technicians or research associates) must be listed in the HQP section of the full application.

What opportunities exist for early career researchers?

SCN is excited to offer the *ECR Jump Start Awards program* which is designed for 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 research program with a translational regenerative medicine focus. This program is designed to help ECRs build or develop a stem cell program that can be pursued over the longer term. In addition, all SCN research programs have stated criteria for inclusion of researchers across the spectrum of career experiences. It is expected that translational research projects will be delivered by diverse, multi-disciplinary teams.

How does basic research fit within SCN's new funding program?

SCN's funding program reflects our translational mandate and the emerging Canadian regenerative medicine sector. In this competition the *ECR Jump Start Awards program* provides support to early career researchers who are developing regenerative medicine focused research platforms. The *Impact Awards program* provides researchers at all career stages with a funding avenue for early-stage translational projects that have the potential to develop novel therapeutic approaches for regenerative medicine.

How do I apply for funding from SCN for the 2022 competition?

SCN has modernized its funding application process for this 2022 competition. The previous application documents have been phased out and replaced with an online application process hosted through the [ProposalCentral](#) application portal. All investigators (Lead and Co-investigators) on a team should register and open an account on [ProposalCentral](#) prior to initiating an application. [ProposalCentral](#) accounts are not required for collaborators or highly qualified personnel (HQP; e.g. graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, technicians or research associates). The lead-investigator's institutional signing authorities (e.g department or grants administrators) are also required to have a [ProposalCentral](#) account in order to sign-off on the submission of the full application.

Is a Letter of Intent (LOI) submission required for all SCN funding programs?

Yes, a two-phase application process will operate for this competition: an LOI and a full application are required and must be completed through the [ProposalCentral](#) application portal. Completion of an LOI is mandatory first step for all applications. The LOI phase will open on September 1, 2021 and completed LOIs must be submitted in [ProposalCentral](#) by 11:59pm Pacific time on September 22, 2021. LOIs will be used to identify peer review requirements, gauge the level of interest in SCN's programs, and ensure projects fall within SCN's regenerative medicine mandate. Eligible LOIs

will be invited to submit a full application on Friday, September 24, 2021. The deadline for completed full applications is 11:59pm Pacific time on December 1, 2021.

Where do I find the program guidelines and detailed instructions for the completion of the application process hosted on ProposalCentral?

The program guidelines, LOI and full application instructions for each program will be hosted on [SCN's website](#) from September 1, 2021. Once an application is initiated in the LOI process on ProposalCentral, the full application instructions for each program will then be accessible in the "Download Instructions" section of the LOI or full application on ProposalCentral.

When will SCN funding decisions be announced?

The deadline for applications is December 1, 2021. All complete applications will be reviewed by expert peer review panels and by SCN's Research Management Committee, which will make recommendations to SCN's Board of Directors for funding approval. SCN will notify all applicants of outcomes in March 2022.

Will I get a copy of the peer reviewer comments?

SCN provides a letter summarizing the specific peer review and Research Management Committee (RMC) evaluation and feedback comments to the lead investigator for all eligible submitted applications.

Will there be a second funding competition round during the SCN's 2022-2025 cycle?

Yes, a second funding competition is planned to be held in fall 2022. It is anticipated that four funding programs will be available (*Impact Awards, Knowledge Translation Awards, Clinical Accelerator Awards and Fueling Biotechnology Awards*) and that awards in round two will run for 22 months from April 1, 2023 to January 31, 2025. The programs and timeline offered in round two may be subject to change.

Will I be able to apply for round two funding to continue or build on a project begun in round one?

Funded investigators from round one are welcome to apply for funding in round two. However, applications must address new aspects of research not covered in the round one funded project. The 34 month awards in round one share the same end date (January 31, 2025) with all programs to be offered in round two, therefore round two should not be viewed as an opportunity to extend round one research.

My application to round one was not funded. Can I re-submit a revised version of my application in round two?

Yes, SCN welcomes the re-submission of round one applications that have been revised to address the concerns raised by SCN's international review panels.

If I am funded by SCN in this competition, am I required to submit progress reports for review?

SCN operates a process of continual review on all funded projects. Submission of a project mid-term and final reports to SCN management is **mandatory** and reports will be reviewed by SCN's Research Management Committee (RMC) to evaluate project progress and make recommendations for the continued release of funding for active awards.

Can I change direction once my research is funded?

SCN understands that evidence should guide research direction, so minor direction changes prompted by new data are considered understandable and potentially desirable. However, investigators should contact SCN prior to initiating substantive changes to the scope and research focus of any SCN funded project.

Eligibility and Requirements

Do I have to be a former award recipient with SCN to apply for funding?

No. SCN welcomes applications from all stem cell and regenerative medicine researchers within Canada.

Will applications focused on gene therapies/cancer or CAR-T/small molecules/drugs be considered?

The proposed project must be regenerative in nature and/or use a stem cells or regenerative medicine approach for addressing the proposed problem to be eligible for funding.

Can I submit an application for a project that is currently being funded by another agency or organization?

Yes, but the request to SCN must cover project work that is **distinct** and not supported by another agency or organization. This overlap between projects should be explained within the application.

Can a lead investigator submit more than one application to SCN?

All applications from an investigator must describe distinct, non-over-lapping research activity. A lead investigator may submit only one application as a lead investigator per program but can be the lead investigator on applications submitted to different programs (e.g., an investigator may lead one application to the *ECR Jump Start Awards program* and lead one application to the *Impact Awards program*). A lead investigator may feature as a co-investigator on another application to the same program if the proposed research activity is distinct.

Does SCN accept applications from outside Canada?

No, however international collaborators are encouraged and welcome on a project led by a Canadian-based investigator.

If my proposed clinical trial has not received Clinical Trial Application (CTA) approval by the application deadline, can it still be considered for funding?

A Health Canada Clinical Trial Application (CTA) No Objection Letter is **mandatory for the Clinical Trial Awards program** and should be attached if currently available. Proposed clinical trials that are in the process of obtaining CTA approval from Health Canada can be submitted to SCN for review but a CTA approval letter from Health Canada for the proposed trial must be in place and shared with SCN by February 21, 2022 to be eligible for funding.

Budget and Partnerships

What are considered eligible budget expenses for an SCN project?

Budget expenditures must follow the Tri-Council financial guidelines. Indirect Costs and Principal Investigator salaries are not eligible expenditures. Click on the link below to view the [Tri-Council financial guidelines](#). Only eligible expense for which you are requesting SCN support should be detailed in the budget section of the application.

Will No Cost Extensions be granted if I cannot complete my research in the required timeframe?
SCN will **not** provide No Cost Extensions for any awards in the 2022-2025 funding cycle.

Will budget requests that exceed a program maximum award amount be considered?

No. The funds requested from SCN must not exceed the maximum award amount listed in the guidelines.

Is administrative support an allowable SCN expense?

Administrative support is not an allowable expense. Administrative support is considered as institutional support and should be listed in the partner funding section.

Do I need partner matching funds to apply to an SCN program?

Yes. SCN-funded projects require partner support (in-kind or cash). Eligible partners include industry, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, research institutions, health charities and provincial governments. Please note, federal funders (e.g. CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, CFI, NCEs, Genome Canada, New Frontiers Research Fund, IRAP) are ineligible for matching.

Note: Although investigator salaries and indirect costs are not eligible budget items, they represent an accessible source of partner matching funds that must be listed as in-kind institutional support (investigator salaries at 10% and indirect costs at 40%).

Do I need a letter of support from a partner?

Yes, partner letters of support are required for actual matching support and letters of support should specifically include reference to the proposed project and any conditions placed on funding. Please provide a letter of support on the letterhead of each partner detailing the extent of their collaboration and a dollar value for their cash and/or in-kind contribution towards the project.

Do partner contributions need to be defined at the LOI stage?

The LOI submission should provide realistic estimates of the partner contributions. Once the LOI has been submitted, additional partners can be added and the precise details of all partner contributions to the project should be described in the submission of the full application.

Are partnerships with international companies permitted, or are the companies required to have a base in Canada?

Partnerships with foreign companies are welcomed and permitted. Note: the Fueling Biotechnology Partnerships Program requires the named partnering biotech to be an early-stage Canadian regenerative medicine biotech company; further details are available in the guidelines for this program.

Can industry partners receive a funds from an SCN award?

SCN can only directly fund eligible Canadian academic researchers at eligible Canadian institutions. Funds can be assigned within the budget to cover the costs of services provided by an industry partner.

Can industry partners be located outside Canada?

All SCN programs allow for matching funds from international partners. However, the *Fueling Biotechnology Partnerships* program requires the main receptor to be an early-stage Canadian biotechnology company. Please refer to the program guidelines for specific information.