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SCN Research Funding Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Stem Cell Network (SCN) has launched the second of two national research funding competitions planned for SCN's 2025 - 2029 cycle of strategic activity. This multimillion-dollar competition will support world-class, translational, regenerative medicine research, across the research continuum, to facilitate health, social, and economic benefits for Canadians. The competition opens on Monday, August 31, 2026, and will support research activities during the 2027 to 2029 period.

An Information Webinar was held on August 13, 2026, that included information about the competition and programs available, as well as a question-and-answer session with SCN community attendees. A recording of the webinar is hosted on [SCN's YouTube channel](#).

This funding competition includes Joint-Funded awards, in collaboration with the Azrieli Foundation and Breakthrough T1D in conjunction with their Canadian affiliate, JDRF Canada. Please see below for Joint-Funding Partner Specific FAQs.

Programs and Competition Process

WHAT ARE THE VALUE AND DURATION OF STANDARD SCN RESEARCH AWARDS?

Standard SCN awards values vary across the different programs. Details can be found in the guidelines for each program. The range starts at \$215,000 and goes up to \$700,000 per award. The funding term for all programs is 22 months, starting April 1, 2027. The values for joint funded awards are typically 20% higher than standard SCN awards – see the Joint-Funding Award Section of this FAQ, below, for more details.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR SCN FUNDING THROUGH THIS COMPETITION?

Regenerative medicine investigators can apply for funds from SCN only if they are based at a Canadian Tri-Agency eligible institution and they themselves are eligible to receive Tri-Agency 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 (ECRS)?

SCN is excited to once again offer the ECR Jump Start Awards program which is designed for early career researchers from the health, bio-engineering and social sciences research areas (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. 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 2026 COMPETITION?

Applicants must submit their proposal through 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. Please note: An [ORCID ID](#) is required to apply to SCN's funding programs.

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 a mandatory first step for all applications. The LOI phase will open on Monday, August 31, 2026, and completed LOIs must be submitted in [ProposalCentral](#) by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) on Monday, September 21, 2026. 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 Wednesday, October 7, 2026. The deadline for completed full applications is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (3:00 p.m. PDT) on Tuesday, November 24, 2026.

WHERE DO I FIND THE PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS HOSTED ON PROPOSALCENTRAL?

The program guidelines and LOI instructions for each program will be hosted on [SCN's website](#). If a LOI progresses to the full application stage, full application instructions for each program will be accessible on ProposalCentral and SCN's website.

WHEN WILL SCN FUNDING DECISIONS BE ANNOUNCED?

The deadline for applications is Tuesday, November 24, 2026. Complete applications will be reviewed by expert international scientific peer review panels and by SCN's Research Management Committee (RMC), which will make recommendations to SCN's Board of Directors for funding approval. See [SCN's website](#) for more information on SCN's peer review process. The target date for notifying all applicants of outcomes is March 2027.

WILL I GET A COPY OF THE PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS?

Peer review and RMC evaluation and feedback comments will be made accessible to the lead investigator through ProposalCentral for all eligible submitted applications.

WILL I BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO CONTINUE OR BUILD ON A PROJECT THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY FUNDED BY SCN?

Previously funded investigators are welcome to apply for funding. However, applications must address new aspects of research not covered in the previously funded project.

MY PREVIOUS APPLICATION TO SCN WAS NOT FUNDED. CAN I RE-SUBMIT A REVISED VERSION OF MY APPLICATION?

Yes, SCN welcomes the re-submission of applications from previous funding rounds that have been revised to address the concerns raised by SCN's international review panels. However, please note that all applications to SCN funding competitions are treated as new applications. If a project was submitted to a previous SCN funding round, it is at the applicant's discretion to address any issues raised in prior peer review feedback. Peer reviewers will not be provided access to prior peer review feedback for any previous version of an application.

IF I AM FUNDED BY SCN IN THIS COMPETITION, AM I REQUIRED TO SUBMIT PROGRESS REPORTS FOR REVIEW?

Yes, SCN operates a process of [Continual Review](#) on all funded projects. Submission of project progress and final reports to SCN management is **mandatory** and reports will be reviewed by SCN's 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.

DOES SCN OFFER GUIDANCE REGARDING THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN THE DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW OF SCN APPLICATIONS?

Yes. SCN's **Research Integrity and Responsible AI Use in SCN Funding Programs Policy** outlines expectations for the responsible use of generative AI in the development, review and administration of funding applications. Applicants may use generative AI to assist in preparing an application, provided they remain fully responsible for the scientific rationale, design, interpretation and overall integrity of the proposed research. The policy describes acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI, identifies when disclosure of AI use is required, and outlines expectations for the protection of confidential and proprietary information. It also prohibits peer reviewers from entering confidential funding applications into generative AI tools. Applicants should review the policy before preparing and submitting an application.

Eligibility and Requirements

DO I HAVE TO BE A FORMER AWARD RECIPIENT WITH SCN TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

No. SCN welcomes applications from all eligible stem cell and regenerative medicine researchers within Canada. Regenerative medicine investigators can apply for funds from SCN only if they are based at a Canadian Tri-Agency eligible institution and they themselves are eligible to receive Tri-Agency funding.

WILL APPLICATIONS FOCUSED ON GENE THERAPIES/CANCER OR CAR-T/SMALL MOLECULES/DRUGS/IMMUNOTHERAPY BE CONSIDERED?

The proposed project must be regenerative in nature and/or use stem cells or a 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-overlapping research activity. An applicant is limited to act as lead investigator on only one application per program, with a MAXIMUM of 2 applications per competition per lead investigator. (e.g., an investigator may lead one application to the Accelerating Clinical Translation Award program and lead one application to the Impact Award 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.

WHY ARE THE FUELING BIOTECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS AND CLINICAL TRIAL AWARDS NOT BEING OFFERED IN THIS COMPETITION?

SCN regularly reviews its funding programs to ensure they align with available resources and strategic priorities. For this competition, SCN has chosen to focus its available funding on a subset of research programs to maximize the impact of the competition. As a result, the Fueling Biotechnology Partnerships and Clinical Trial Awards are not being offered in this funding round. This decision should not be interpreted as a change to SCN's commitment to biotechnology commercialization or clinical translation.

Budget and Partnerships

WHAT ARE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE BUDGET EXPENSES FOR AN SCN PROJECT?

Budget expenditures must follow the Tri-Agency financial guidelines. Indirect Costs and Principal Investigator salaries are not eligible expenditures. Click on the link below to view the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#). Only eligible expenses for which investigators are requesting SCN support should be detailed in the application budget.

WILL NO-COST EXTENSIONS BE GRANTED IF I CANNOT COMPLETE MY RESEARCH IN THE REQUIRED TIMEFRAME?

No. SCN will **not** provide No-Cost Extensions for any awards in the 2025 - 2029 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?

No. 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, Genome Canada, New Frontiers Research Fund, IRAP) are ineligible **Direct Partnering Support** but can be used for **Leveraged Support**.

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

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARTNERING FOR SCN PROJECTS?

Yes. There are two types of partnering for SCN projects:

1. **Direct Partnering Support** (formerly ACTUAL Matching Funding)
Defined as support from partners that **directly** funds project specific work during the award period. *Contributions must be: i) cash or in-kind, ii) clearly tied to the project's aims and term, and iii) used for eligible project-specific activities or costs.*

*Eligible sources of Direct Partnering include funds from companies, non-profits, foundations, charities, research institutions, universities, hospitals, and provincial government bodies, **but excludes** federal funds, such as CFI and CIHR.*

2. **Leveraged Support** (formerly Ongoing Leveraged Funding).

Defined as support from partners that is **related** to the project but does not directly fund the proposed work. Leveraged contributions are: i) cash or in-kind, ii) related to the project and supportive of the broader research context (enables the work, improves capacity, contributes expertise/infrastructure), and iii) not budgeted for specific eligible costs in this application.

*Eligible sources of Leveraged Support include universities, research institutions, hospitals, companies, non-profits, foundations, charities, and government bodies at any level, **including** federal funds.*

DO I NEED A LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM A PARTNER?

Yes, partner letters of support are required for Direct Partnering Support (excluding in-kind institutional/salary support). Letters of support should: i) specifically include reference to the proposed project, ii) describe any conditions placed on the contribution, iii) be on the letterhead of each partner, iv) detailing the extent of their collaboration, and v) provide 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.

CAN INDUSTRY PARTNERS RECEIVE 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.

WHAT ARE THE RESEARCH SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING FOR SCN FUNDING?

All applications for SCN funding must comply with the Government of Canada's [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern \(STRAC\)](#) and the [National Security Guidelines for](#)

[Research Partnerships](#) (NSGRP). Regenerative medicine (including tissue engineering or gene therapy) is identified as a [Sensitive Technology Research Area](#) under STRAC. For further information on research security requirements for research teams, at the application stage, and as a condition of funding, see SCN's "Guidance on Research Security" document.

SCN Research Funding Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Joint-Funded Awards

SCN is excited to collaborate with the [Azrieli Foundation](#) and [Breakthrough T1D](#) in this funding competition to offer joint-funding award opportunities. The collaborations represent a commitment to support research projects in regenerative medicine. In addition to joint-funding, these collaborations aim to amplify the impact of research through combined expertise and networks. Joint-Funded awards are typically 20% larger than standard SCN awards and have specific areas of focus:

1. Neurodevelopmental disorders in collaboration with the Azrieli Foundation. This joint-funding opportunity is available to the following programs: Impact Awards, Impact Awards: ELSI & HE Stream (including the NEW Impact ELSI & HE for Access, Affordability and Adoption (AAA) projects), Accelerating Clinical Translation Awards, and Early Career Researcher Jump Start Awards.
2. Type 1 diabetes in collaboration with Breakthrough T1D, in conjunction with their Canadian affiliate, JDRF Canada. This joint-funding opportunity is available to the following programs: Impact Awards, Impact: ELSI & HE Stream (NEW Impact ELSI & HE for Access, Affordability and Adoption (AAA) project only) and Accelerating Clinical Translation Awards.

Please consult the Joint-Funding Guidelines for each collaborating organization to ensure your project focus aligns with the opportunity.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THE JOINT-FUNDING AWARD OPPORTUNITIES?

Joint-funded awards with the Azrieli Foundation and Breakthrough TD1 are open nationally to lead applicants.

HOW CAN RESEARCHERS APPLY FOR JOINT-FUNDED AWARDS?

Applicants to SCN funding programs must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) and indicate they are applying for a joint-funded award. A full application through ProposalCentral is required for applicants that pass the LOI stage.

HOW WILL THE JOINT-FUNDED AWARD APPLICATIONS BE EVALUATED FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REVIEWED?

All applications for joint funded awards must provide a written justification statement at the LOI stage, that describes how the proposed project aligns with the joint-funding opportunity. This statement will be used by SCN and the relevant joint-funding award organization to assess eligibility for the opportunity and the progression of an LOI to full application. Applications found to be non-eligible for a joint-funding award will be considered for SCN's standard awards. Full applications for joint-funded awards will be subject to [SCN's two-stage peer review process](#).

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR A JOINT FUNDED AWARDS APPLICATION?

Applications will be accepted using the same application forms as standard SCN awards, with one notable difference: Applicants are asked to provide a written justification statement at the LOI stage that describes how the proposed project aligns with the joint-funding opportunity.

ARE THERE SPECIAL POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JOINT-FUNDING PARTNER AWARDS?

For successful applications, SCN and the joint-funding partner will each create separate funding agreements with each funded investigator's institutions. Jointly funded awards have the same continual review reporting requirements as standard SCN awards. In addition to submitting progress reports, lead investigators of SCN-Breakthrough T1D awards will be required to meet virtually with Breakthrough T1D once each year to discuss the overall project.