MOHCCN DATA SHARING & USE PILOT

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Background/Introduction

Since its inception in 2021, the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network has made significant progress towards building its Gold Cohort, a cancer case resource that includes clinical and genomic data from 15,000 cancer patients treated in centres across the country. Sharing this data is a key rationale for the Network to accelerate research, support collaboration and ultimately benefit patients. The Network is now seeking to demonstrate the feasibility and scientific value of sharing and using the Gold Cohort through pilot projects.

Purpose

The aim of this call is to support pilot projects with a 6-month timeframe that demonstrate: 1) the feasibility and scientific value of accessing and using the Gold Cohort, 2) the power of the Gold Cohort to support collaborative and innovative approaches to data use (e.g., increased statistical power, sharing of complementary data), and 3) the feasibility of Network data sharing mechanisms.

Examples of project topics include:

- Discovering or validating biomarkers across Cohorts or cancer types
- Developing or validating analytic workflows
- Validating treatment effectiveness indicators
- Assessing eligibility criteria for whole genome sequencing as standard of care

Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

To receive funding, studies must:

- Be led by a Network Investigator at a Network Member Institution,
- Involve cross-site access to and use of Network Data, which will require a complete data access request and approval by the Network Data Access Committee.
- Clearly define the data needed for the study and demonstrate the data is available (e.g., on CanDIG Portal or confirmed with other Site(s)).
- Demonstrate the ability to begin work immediately and have appropriate resources available to complete the work in the short timeframe, including:
    - Ability to obtain REB approval (or amendment) and any other institutional approvals in a defined timeframe.
    - Analysis team and methods are already established.
    - Ability to access/download data on approval (using the CanDIG download mechanism or other mechanism – confirm with other Site(s) as needed).

- Demonstrate how the project will keep data received secure.

Applicants are encouraged to:

- Involve the use of Network Data from multiple Sites, to demonstrate value of the Gold Cohort.
- Involve cross-Site collaboration between Network researchers in data use where feasible.
- Access and use companion data beyond Gold Cohort data (to demonstrate complementarity of the Network).

The demonstrated readiness of the applicant Site/Investigator to make data available for pilot projects led by other Sites will also be considered as part of the evaluation (e.g., case completion, CanDIG node implementation, data ingestion, CanDIG node connection, confirmation from legal teams of readiness to share).

TFRI is committed to equity, diversity and inclusivity and strives to promote inclusive excellence in its research programs. We welcome eligible applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply for our funding opportunities.

Resources Available

Applicants and successful projects will have access to the following through the Network:

- Approximately 6000 cases from Years 1-3 (fiscal years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24) completed and ingested into multiple regional CanDIG Nodes and available for Network access,
- CanDIG Portal for data discovery (summary view and search) across connected Nodes to prepare a project application and data access request. Contact regional Consortium for access to the portal.
- Access to Gold Cohort data for REB-approved Studies through the Network Data Access Procedures.
- Sharing under the Network Master Agreement and Schedule H Data Access and Use Terms for the purpose of the approved Study.
- The ability for approved users to view and download Network Data securely through CanDIG. Additional data transfer mechanisms may be proposed as needed.
- Support from Consortia managers and IT teams to navigate data access processes and CanDIG data sharing mechanisms.
- Support from TFRI and the Data Sharing Sub-group with cross-site coordination.

Support Offered

- Up to $100,000 of MOHCCN (Health Canada) funding will be available per Project for a 6-month period
- A 1:1 cash match funding requirement applies (total project budget: $200,000)
- A maximum of five Projects will be supported; one from each MOHCCN Consortia

- Activities eligible for funding include those necessary to conduct the study, including:
    - IT and project management support with data transfer, download, storage, and analysis
    - Storage and compute resources
    - Bioinformatics salaries
    - Bioinformatics analyses

Review and Approval Process

- Successful applications will need to pass a two-stage review: 1) funding applications will be reviewed by TFRI and 2) the data access request from provisionally approved projects will need to be approved by the Network Data Access Committee.
- Successful projects will be funded through a non-case Research Project Grant Agreement (RPGA).
- Data access approval is conditional on obtaining local REB approval (or amendment) for the Study.
- Subject to required approvals and available resources, projects may request access to data to continue study activities beyond the funding period (default access period of 2 years).

Key Dates & Deadlines

- RFA Launch: June 2, 2025
- Application Deadline: July 13, 2025
- Review Period: July-August 2025
- Funding Announcement: August 10, 2025
- Agreement Execution and REB-approval: August 2025
- Funding Start Date: September 1, 2025
- Period of Award: September 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026
- Final Reports Due: April 30, 2026

Reporting Requirements

- Successful applicants will be required to collaborate with MOHCCN Working Groups/Committees throughout their project to support improvements to data sharing processes. Along with quarterly financial reports and a final scientific progress report, projects will be required to submit a 3-month project update.

Documents

- Request for Applications
- Application Template
- Data Access Request Form
- Cash Match Commitment Letter(s)

Research Administration Policies

Applicants and sponsoring Institutions are expected to observe TFRI's Research Administration Policy, as well as all Network Policies applicable to data sharing and use. This includes:

a. Certificates

Before TFRI funding is made available by institutions to their respective researchers the Applicants must first obtain from the sponsoring Institution all applicable safety certificates, where applicable, including:

1. *Biohazards*. For projects involving use of biological material, a certificate guaranteeing that the project will be conducted under conditions which satisfy the Canadian Biosafety Standard (CBS) 2nd edition (2015) and the Canadian Biosafety Handbook (CBH), 2nd edition (2015). (http://canadianbiosafetystandards.collaboration.gc.ca/)
2. *Animal Care*. For projects involving use of experimental animals, a certificate guaranteeing that all animals will be cared for and studied under conditions meeting the standards set forth in the Canadian Council on Animal Care's "Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals" Vol 1 (1993). (https://www.ccac.ca/)
3. *Human Studies*. For projects involving human subjects, a certificate stating that the protocols and methods have been reviewed by the Institutional Research Ethics Board and found to be acceptable in accordance with current edition of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: 'Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans' (2022) (www.pre.ethics.gc.ca). If studies use investigational compounds, regulatory approval from Canada's Health Protection Branch is also required.
4. *Use of Human and Biological Samples*. TFRI is committed to ensuring that highquality bio-specimens are used in research it funds, as these yield high, reproducible quality data. For this reason, TFRI requires all applicants for funding to certify that (i) all prospective (new) bio-specimens included in the TFRI-funded research will be collected in accordance with the standards set by the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (https://www.ctrnet.ca/en/resources/national-standards) and/or the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments Act (CLIA) of the United States (https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/CLIA/index.html) and/or (ii) all retrospective (old) bio-specimens used in the TFRI-funded research have come from a CTRNet or CLIA-certified bio-repository. Links to the CTRNet certification program registered biobanks can be found at https://biobanking.org/webs/certification. Applicants are required to submit evidence of current certification and participation in external quality assurance programs with the proposal.
5. *Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research*. TFRI endorses the guidelines set forward by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research on 'Human Pluripotent Stem Cells' now integrated into the 'Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2), Chapter 12. Section F (2nd edition)

(https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2 eptc2_2018_chapter12-chapitre12.html). Applicants are required to contact TFRI before submitting an application for support of cancer research requiring any use of human pluripotent stem cells.

b. Reporting

TFRI requires a final Scientific Research Progress Report per project and quarterly Financial Reports from each collaborating institution that includes the expenditures from all award funds. Terms of the MOHCCN funding from Health Canada require that an external audit be conducted annually (May/June) to verify the sources of cash match funds and the related expenditures incurred. TFRI also expects the applicant and collaborators to actively contribute to MOHCCN Committee/Working Group Meetings (e.g., Data Sharing Sub-group) and to participate in ad hoc check-ins from TFRI during the term of the project, to provide feedback on the data access procedures and mechanisms.

c. Project Title & Use of TFRI logo

Funded applicants will be designated as a "TFRI–MOHCCN Data Sharing and Use Pilot [Project title]". Investigators are expected to comply with TFRI and MOHCCN Visual Identity Guidelines as appropriate, to be found at: Logos, templates and visual guidelines

d. Employment Equity

TFRI is committed to compliance with the Canadian Employment Equity Act and to ensuring that our funded research programs provide equal employment opportunities to women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. All Funded Applications are required to employ non-discriminatory hiring practices in their workplaces.

e. Inclusion of sex and gender in research design where appropriate

Applicants are expected to include a statement in the proposal that they have considered sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA) as appropriate. The purpose of SGBA is to promote rigorous science that is sensitive to sex and gender and therefore has the potential to expand our understanding of health determinants for all people[1].

For inquiries, please contact:

Jessie Micholuk, MPH
Network Program Manager
Terry Fox Research Institute
Email: jmicholuk@tfri.ca

[1] Please refer to http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html for more resources on SGBA.

Kaitlin Hong Tai
Network Program Manager
Terry Fox Research Institute
Email: khongtai@tfri.ca