



STRATEGIC OPEN CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS (OPEN CALL III)

SECTION A: OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

PrioNet Canada (PrioNet) is a Network of Centres of Excellence (NCE) (http://www.nce.gc.ca/nets_e.htm) established in November 2005 to address the challenges of prion diseases in Canada. Since 2005, PrioNet has been focused on the tripartite goals of: (1) mobilizing Canada's research strengths in bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs, or prion diseases), (2) training the next generation of prion researchers, and (3) providing science-based guidance to manage and prevent current and emerging TSE threats.

As part of its mandate, PrioNet supports research programs solicited from the Canadian scientific community through its "Open Call for Project Proposals." Applicants will be expected to submit proposals that contribute to one or more of three integrated research themes that are *anticipated to constitute PrioNet's research program when awards are announced in 2009*.

ELIGIBILITY

Researchers requesting PrioNet funding must be associated with a NCE-approved institution; must qualify for Network membership (see website <http://www.prionetcanada.ca>) and meet the funding requirements of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/3736.html>).

TERM

Two year non-renewable: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2011

IMPORTANT DATES

August 15, 2008	Announcement of Open Call
September 15, 2008	Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent
November 28, 2008	Invitation to submit Full Proposals
January 15, 2009	Deadline for submission of Full Proposals
March 31, 2009	Awards Announcement

BUDGET ENVELOPE - \$1.2 MILLION

PrioNet's goal in Open Call III is to fund three large-scale research projects, one from each integrated theme: Prion Ecology, Prion Biology, and Prion Preparedness and Prevention, that address the most pressing challenges posed by prion diseases today and that will derive socioeconomic benefits to Canada.

- Maximum research project award of \$200,000 per year for two years
- PrioNet's award will provide support up to a maximum of 75% of the total project budget per year for NCE eligible expenses
- Research projects must secure cash or in-kind support for at least 25% of the total project budget from external sources (e.g. industry, government, or non-government organizations)

Example (2 year budget):

PrioNet Contribution	\$400,000	75% of budget
External Support	<u>\$135,000</u>	25% of budget
Total Project Budget	\$535,000	100% of budget

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

According to the NCE standard Network Agreement regarding the Sharing of Net Revenues, please note section 8b. that “The parties shall negotiate the terms in good faith”.

CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED FUNDING OF AWARD

The funding of this research grant to the end of the term (fiscal year 2010-2011) is contingent upon the applicant’s receiving a successful annual project review performed by PrioNet’s international Scientific Advisory and Research Management Committees, and the continued funding of PrioNet under the NCE program.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

PrioNet will work proactively in collaboration with investigators to develop letters of intent (LOI) that meet all of the funding requirements. Upon receipt of LOI that do not fulfill all the components described in the section below, PrioNet will contact the Principal Investigator(s) with recommendations for LOI re-submission.

Projects for Open Call III must demonstrate all of the following components:

- Excellence of the research program with socio-economic benefits to Canada;
- Multi-disciplinary collaborations involving multi-provincial participation and/or international participation;
- Knowledge translation and exchange activities;
- Highly qualified personnel development;
- Formalized partnerships; and
- Milestones and deliverables clearly defined with measurable outcomes achievable within the funding period.

To be addressed in the proposal:

Excellence of the Research Program with Socio-Economic Benefits to Canada

- The extent to which the program will contribute to Canada's ability to lead in areas of research with high economic and social impact;
- Emerging social and ethical issues, where relevant;
- Special consideration will be given to research programs in areas and technologies critical to Canadian productivity, economic growth, public policy and quality of life;
- The relationship of the research program to similar work conducted in Canada and abroad.

Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration involving Multi-Provincial Participation and/or International Participation

- How the research and technology development links between academic institutions, federal and provincial agencies, and private sector participants;
- The multidisciplinary, multi-provincial aspect of the research program;
- Evidence that an effort has been made to include all suitably qualified groups;
- How resources have been optimized through the sharing of equipment and research facilities, databases and personnel;

- Participation in international projects is desired and will be given special consideration, especially when projects will be funded jointly with other governments. *Please note: NCE funding can only provide support for the Canadian component of international collaborations or for research activities of Canadian scientists during visits to foreign laboratories.*

Knowledge Translation and Exchange Activities

- Prospect for social innovation and the implementation of effective public policy through collaboration with the public sector;
- The impact, or potential impact, on the partners' science and technology capabilities and practices;
- Effective management and protection of intellectual property resulting from network-funded research;
- It is essential that knowledge transfer activities are identified. Special consideration will be given to projects with public outreach and networking with regulatory and/or health agencies;
- It is desirable that where possible, commercial potential be identified and a detailed implementation plan included.

Highly Qualified Personnel Development

- Training strategies that promote multidisciplinary and multisectorial research approaches and encourages trainees to consider the economic, social and ethical implications of their work;
- Training opportunities for graduate students and/or post-doctoral fellows that add to the pool of Canadian prion researchers;
- Special consideration will be given to programs which allow trainees the opportunity to rotate through several aspects of prion research within the network. *Please note: PrioNet has additional training programs available for students and post-doctoral fellows of funded projects.*

Formalized Partnerships

- Presence, nature and extent of contributions from the private sector and/or federal and provincial agencies, and prospects for increasing commitments as the work progresses.

Milestones and Deliverables

- It is essential that milestones and deliverables are clearly defined and must be measurable within the funding period of two years;
- It is desirable that the anticipated time line for milestones and deliverables be outlined in a Gantt chart.

RESEARCH THEMES

Open Call III relates to three new, integrated research themes that are reflected in PrioNet's updated strategic plan. PrioNet proposes effective prion disease risk management as the central goal and value of the network as it moves forward. These integrated themes require a collaborative, multidisciplinary network research approach involving both basic and social scientists to advance both the fundamentals of prion science, and the prion disease risk assessment and management for Canada.

The new integrated themes under which project proposals will be considered are as follows:

- I. **Prion Ecology** - This theme addresses the impact that prion contamination has on BSE and chronic wasting disease (CWD)-affected environments. In particular, continuing issues from the BSE crisis will be addressed to improve the worldwide perception and brand visibility of

Canadian beef. Examples of potential project areas for this theme may be: BSE monitoring and control, policy and mandated management of BSE, or CWD environmental management.

- II. **Prion Biology** - This theme addresses the fundamental science that remains to be explained, including understanding the novel and bizarre nature of prion infection, the significance of prion disease strains, the seeming “spontaneous generation” of prions in humans and cattle, and the chemical biology of prions to provide clues for diagnosis and treatment of these diseases. Some of the most noticeable gaps include understanding the neuropathological, immunological, and biochemical characterization of TSEs. Examples of potential project areas for this theme may be: propagation and pathogenesis of prions, biomarkers of prion disease treatments, prion strains and de novo prion diseases.
- III. **Prion Preparedness and Prevention** - This theme represents a key impact to prevent or effectively manage prion disease risks in Canada. For example, a growing problem is posed by CWD which is spreading geographically and among species. In the absence of effective control strategies, the entire North American herd of cervids including deer, moose, elk, and, potentially, caribou is at risk, with vulnerable communities such as First Nations or hunters also at risk. Examples of potential project areas for this theme may be: novel cross-species prion transmission, solutions to the management of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and its variants, or socioeconomic impacts of TSE-affected communities and vulnerable communities.

PLATFORM FACILITIES

PrioNet’s four Platform Facilities provide the network with access to leading edge resources to facilitate research. It is desirable that the proposed project makes efficient use of these resources. Projects requiring the use of these resources will have to specify their requirements in both the proposal and the budget module. They include:

- **Chronic Wasting Disease Tissue Bank Platform** - For access to retained, catalogued materials from the Saskatchewan CWD surveillance program;
- **Pathogenesis and Bioassay Platform** - For experimentally inoculated rodents;
- **Animal Models and Transgenesis Platform** - For targeted transgenic and knockout mice for biological studies relevant to prion diseases;
- **Monoclonal Antibodies Platform** - For development and production of specific monoclonal antibodies.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION – FULL PROPOSAL

The project proposal must provide a complete and comprehensive budget utilizing the budget templates provided. The budget template must be completed not only for the PrioNet funding requested but also for each of the contributing partners; and lastly, a summarized budget template with the combined budget for the total project. A written justification must be completed and submitted with the proposal for each line item where a budget has been requested from PrioNet including what components of the project are funded by each partner (justification page). The justification must include details for each of the personnel to be hired, the percentage of time allotted for each position and the salaries/stipends for each; PrioNet Platform Facility use; equipment; materials and supplies; computing costs; travel expenses; administrative costs, management and networking; and other expenditures.

Project awards must be dedicated to technical salaries, stipends for trainees, consumables and specialty equipment, when justified. Travel to network meetings is not an eligible expense.

Funds for travel to PrioNet's Annual Scientific Meeting for PrioNet Scientific Members and nominees will be provided through the Administrative Centre, where applicable. PrioNet also has an established Education and Training program available to its Scientific Members and their trainees through the Administrative Centre (see web site <http://www.prioNetCanada.ca>). Funding provided by these programs should not be included in your project proposal.

To determine eligibility of expenditures, please follow the Tri-Council guidelines for Professors - Use of Funds (http://www.nserc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f3). Unless otherwise stipulated, the guidelines apply to the Tri-Council agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC). Where stipulated, the guidelines of the CIHR must be followed as PrioNet follows these guidelines.

Salaries and stipends according to the CIHR minimum and maximum levels must be followed:

CIHR Compensation-Related Salaries and Stipends

Institutional non-discretionary benefits normally include long and short-term disability insurance; life insurance; pension benefits; medical, vision and dental care benefits; and parental leave. Institutional non-discretionary benefits must not contravene Agency guidelines.

The stipends listed below are the minimum amounts that must be paid to trainees from a grant. They are also the maximum amounts that an applicant can request when applying for a grant and that the Agency will award. Once the grant is held, the grant holder may, at his/her discretion, provide a stipend to a trainee that is higher than the Agency minimum. Grant funds may also be used to supplement stipends received by trainees from other sources, including other Agency grants and individual training awards.

Eligible Expenses

- Salaries* and related federal, provincial and institutional non-discretionary benefits for work performed by research associates, research assistants and technicians. The rates of pay for research associates, research assistants and technicians shall be in accordance with the salary scale of the institution concerned.
- **A minimum stipend of \$17,850 per annum for a graduate student paid in whole or in part from a CIHR grant.**
- **A minimum stipend for a post-doctoral fellow with a PhD of \$36,750 per annum. Post-doctoral fellows with a PhD degree must begin their post-doctoral training within five years of obtaining their doctoral degree.**
- Fellows with a health professional degree such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, optometry, veterinary medicine, nursing or rehabilitative science, with or without licensure in Canada, may be supported during the first four years of research training. Registration for a master's or PhD degree is not a requirement. Those who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents of Canada will not be eligible for such support beyond the eighth year following receipt of their health professional degree. The minimum stipend levels for those with a health professional degree and holding licensure in Canada are dependent upon the number of years of academic experience since obtaining the health professional degree. For 0-2 years of postgraduate academic experience, a candidate will receive a minimum \$36,750 stipend per annum. For two or more years of postgraduate academic experience, a candidate will receive a minimum \$47,250 stipend per annum.
- Fellows with a health professional degree who do not hold licensure in Canada may be paid between \$17,850 and \$36,750 depending on the policies of the institution.
- Those with a health professional degree and a PhD may be supported during the first three years following receipt of the PhD (same stipend level as the fellows with a health

professional degree). If a PhD degree was obtained prior to studies for the health professional degree, CIHR will accept this as being equivalent to one extra year of experience. Each year of post-PhD training completed before the health professional degree will also be recognized as additional experience.

- Undergraduates being trained in research during the summer months are eligible to receive a minimum monthly stipend of \$1,313.

* Agencies defer to Canada Revenue Agency requirements.

CONTACT

For information or questions when developing LOI or Full Proposals, please contact Dr. Michelle Wong, Manager, Scientific Affairs and Training (mwong@prionetcanada.ca) or Janie Toth, Executive Director (jtoth@prionetcanada.ca) at the Administrative Centre.

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Gerald McGavin Building
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Tel: 604-222-3600

SECTION B: PROCESS FOR OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

GENERAL PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- In English; Use Arial font at a size of 11 pt; Set all margins at 1 inch
- Mark all pages, including Title Pages, with the PI surname and the word “Confidential” in the upper right page header (e.g. *Smith – CONFIDENTIAL*)
- Page numbers must be indicated in the bottom right page footer in the format of “page X of Y”.

PHASES

Research project proposals will be reviewed in two phases:

1. The first phase is based upon review of a Letter of Intent
2. The second phase is based on the review of a Full Project Proposal.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

LOI Document

1. The Title Page (use Appendix A - LOI Title Page template)
This includes the:
 - Project title;
 - Principal Investigator full contact information (including Administrative Assistant details, if applicable);
 - Co-Investigators full contact information; and,
 - Theme(s) selection - Prion Ecology, Prion Biology, and Prion Preparedness and Prevention.
2. Signature Page (use Appendix B – LOI Signature Page template)
Signatures are required from:
 - Principal Investigators; and

- Co-Investigators.
3. Project Summary (maximum 3 pages)
This includes a brief summary of:
 - The research program including research objectives; anticipated outcomes; multi-disciplinary collaborations involving multi-provincial participation and/or international participation; knowledge translation and exchange activities; highly qualified personnel development; formalized partnerships; and anticipated sources of external funding.
 4. Budget (use Appendix C – LOI Budget template) (maximum 1 page summary and 1 page per partner)
 - Estimated total cost of personnel, supplies, and equipment.
 - Include summary page per partner contributor.
 - For Alberta applicants seeking support from the Alberta Prion Research Institute, please contact Ron Clarkson (ron.clarkson@prioninstitute.ca) for confirmation.

LOI Submission Requirements

Please submit LOI via e-mail in one Adobe PDF document including all pages to: admin@prionetcanada.ca no later than midnight September 15, 2008.

Applicants must request an acknowledgement of receipt of the e-mail at the time the e-mail is sent. No changes can be made after submission without approval from the PrioNet Executive Director.

LOI Review Process

PrioNet will work proactively in collaboration with investigators to further develop LOI that meet all of the funding requirements. All LOI will be reviewed by PrioNet Administrative Centre staff before submission to the Research Management Committee.

The LOI will then be submitted to the PrioNet's Research Management Committee for review on scientific excellence, compliance with PrioNet's mission, NCE guidelines, and the project selection criteria (see "Research Proposal Criteria and Requirements" on page 2). Applicants at the LOI stage will be notified of the outcome of the review via e-mail by November 28, 2008. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a Full Proposal.

FULL PROPOSAL

Full Proposal Document

The Full Proposal should not exceed 15 pages excluding the Title Page, Signature Page, Budget Templates (with justification), Figures and Tables, References, and the CV module. The description of the Research Plan should not exceed 7 pages.

1. Title Page (use Appendix D – Full Proposal Title Page template)
This includes:
 - Project Title;
 - Principal Investigator full contact information (including Administrative Assistant details, if applicable);
 - Co-Investigators full contact information;
 - Theme(s) selection – Prion Ecology, Prion Biology, and Prion Preparedness and Prevention;
 - Amount of Funding Requested;

- Environmental Impact question (including related documentation as required); and,
 - Conflict of Interest questions (including related documentation as required).
2. Signature Page (use Appendix E – Full Proposal Signature Page)
Signatures are required from:
 - Principal Investigator;
 - Co-Investigators;
 - Department Head;
 - Dean of Faculty or designate; and
 - University Financial Officer.
 3. Project Team (maximum 1 page)
 - Brief description of the expertise of the PI and Co-Investigators.
 4. Project Summary (maximum 1 page; no more than 300 words)
 - This summary will be used as a basis for project descriptions on the PrioNet web site and communications materials.
 5. Research Plan and Integration with Theme(s) (maximum 7 pages)
 - Figures, Tables, and References are not included in the page count.
 6. Socioeconomic Benefit (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to page 2 of this document.
 7. Multi-disciplinary Collaboration involving Multi-provincial Participation and/or International Participation (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to pages 2-3 of this document.
 8. Knowledge Translation and Exchange Activities (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to page 3 of this document.
 9. Highly Qualified Personnel Development (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to page 3 of this document.
 10. Formalized Partnerships (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to page 3 of this document.
 - Include a signed letter of contribution from each Partner, including cash and in-kind support.
 - For Alberta applicants seeking support from the Alberta Prion Research Institute, please contact Ron Clarkson (ron.clarkson@prioninstitute.ca) for confirmation.
 11. Deliverables and Milestones (maximum 1 page)
 - Refer to page 3 of this document.
 12. Budget and Expenditures Justification (use Appendix F – Full Proposal Budget and Expenditures Justification template)
 - Refer to pages 4-6 of this document.
 13. Common CV
 - Use the Common CV format (<http://www.commoncv.net>). Any of the NCE, NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR templates can be used. Only include the CV of the PI.

Full Proposal Submission

Full proposals must be submitted two ways:

1. Send the original signed paper copy of the Full Proposal by January 15, 2009, via courier to:

PrioNet Canada
Suite 200, 2386 East Mall
Gerald McGavin Building
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3

Tel: 604-222-3600

2. Send an electronic copy of the Full Proposal in Adobe PDF by midnight January 15, 2009, via e-mail to: admin@prionetcanada.ca. If the file is too large to send via e-mail (or if it exceeds 8 megabytes), a copy of the Full Proposal in one PDF on a CD ROM will be accepted.

Applicants must request an acknowledgement of receipt of the e-mail at the time the e-mail is sent. No changes can be made after submission without approval from the PrioNet Executive Director. The original signed paper copy and the electronic copy MUST be the same. PrioNet assumes no responsibility for different proposal versions submitted by the applicant.

Full Proposal Review Process

The process for evaluation of Full Project Proposals is as follows:

1. The Full Proposals will be reviewed for scientific excellence by PrioNet's Scientific Advisory Committee.
2. PrioNet's Research Management Committee will review all proposals to ensure they are in compliance with PrioNet and NCE objections with respect to research theme priorities; socio-economic benefits; multi-disciplinary collaboration involving multi-provincial participation and/or international participation; knowledge translation and exchange activities, highly qualified personnel development; formalized partnerships; milestones and deliverables and budget requirements.
3. PrioNet's Research Management Committee will make recommendations to PrioNet's Board of Directors regarding the selection of projects and their funding levels.
4. PrioNet's Board of Directors will approve final level of funding for the Open Call. The successful applicants will be informed of the Board's decision.

SECTION C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PrioNet Canada's support should be acknowledged in all publications, posters, etc.

SECTION D: APPEAL MECHANISM

The Executive Director of the Network will review appeal requests and report to the Board of Directors. Appeals will only be considered on the basis of procedural errors. The Executive Director shall prepare a report on whether (and how) the appeal in question has unveiled procedural errors with the selection process. The Board will receive the Executive Director's report and decide whether to dismiss or to forward the appeal for further evaluation by an ad-hoc committee. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final. Should the Board of Directors favor further evaluation, the appeal mechanism is restricted to the selection process itself and excludes the Scientific Advisory Committee recommendations. The ad-hoc committee will review the issue and submit a report with recommendations to the Board for consideration. The Board will review the report and render a final decision on the appeal. The Board's decision will be communicated to the parties involved and to the NCE Directorate.