



## Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants

Request for Applications

### **About Brain Canada Foundation**

Brain Canada Foundation (Brain Canada) is a national registered charity that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than two decades, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, and brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and to ensure that Canada has a robust pipeline of talent to remain at the forefront in the field of brain research. Brain Canada's vision is to understand the brain, in health and illness, to improve lives, and achieve societal impact.

The Canada Brain Research Fund (CBRF) is an innovative arrangement between the Government of Canada, through Health Canada, and Brain Canada Foundation, designed to encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments. The Fund supports the very best Canadian neuroscience, fostering collaborative research and accelerating the pace of discovery, in order to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians who suffer from brain disorders. To date, Health Canada has invested over \$155 million through the CBRF which has been matched by Brain Canada Foundation and its donors and partners.

[www.braincanada.ca](http://www.braincanada.ca)

### **About the Weizmann Institute of Science**

The Weizmann Institute of Science (WIS), located in Israel, is one of the world's leading multidisciplinary institutions of basic research. Weizmann Institute scientists have made a global impact in a variety of areas ranging from health and medicine to alternative energy and security and technology. WIS specific impact includes being credited for inventing amniocentesis, developing a block buster drug for multiple sclerosis, and developing encryption technology to power internet and smart cards.

<https://www.weizmann.ac.il/pages/>



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## Rationale

The *Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants* program aims to leverage strengths and foster international collaboration between researchers in Canada and the [Weizmann Institute of Science](#) in Israel. The program is intended to support hypothesis-driven research that will advance our understanding of the brain and brain disorders.

## Scope

The *Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants* program encourages innovative, unorthodox, and exploratory research that may be in the early and conceptual stages of project development but has potential for significant impact on our understanding of the brain. The research topic will focus on hypothesis-driven inquiries on the brain and nervous system, and may span the range of basic, translational, and clinical approaches, including:

- Basic research into fundamental properties and mechanisms, including functional studies based on the use of “-omics” data.
- Projects related to disease or dysfunction of the nervous system leading to new insights into fundamental biological mechanisms.
- Projects that experimentally test novel hypotheses addressing therapeutic or interventional approaches for brain disorders.
- Projects aimed at developing novel methods, if these methods allow new neuroscience questions to be answered.
- Projects, such as those using epidemiological, “-omics”, or other approaches, that will generate large datasets, if hypotheses are clearly stated.

## Grant Details

The *Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants* program has an overall funding envelope of \$1,500,000 CAD to support up to three grants of \$500,000 CAD each over two years.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Evidence clearly shows that increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research environments enhances excellence, innovation and creativity. Brain Canada and the Weizmann Institute are committed to excellence through equity and encourage applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply to our funding opportunities, which will promote the expression of diverse perspectives, approaches, and experiences, including those of underrepresented groups.

## Open Science and Open Access

Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute of Science encourage knowledge mobilization and open access to research inputs, outputs, and processes by making scientific information available to all. The sharing of scientific research inputs, outputs and processes should be “FAIR” (i.e., Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), should promote open education, open access publications, open data and materials, etc., and should be made available at the earliest opportunity.

Applicants are encouraged to become familiar with the principles that enable sharing data, information, tools, and resources by consulting the following resources:



- [Roadmap for Open Science](#) outlines the overarching principles and recommendations to guide Open Science activities in Canada for science and research funded by federal government departments and agencies.
- [FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable](#) are guiding principles to inform data management and stewardship of digital assets.

## Eligibility

This funding opportunity is open to research teams of two or more members and **must include a minimum of two independent investigators**. At least one independent investigator must be conducting research at, and affiliated with, an eligible academic institution in Canada, and one at the Weizmann Institute of Science, designated as co-Principal Investigators. Additional team members and collaborators may be included, as needed, to ensure the required expertise is present to carry out the proposed research.

Researchers in Canada are encouraged to visit the [Faculties and Departments](#) page from the Weizmann Institute of Science where they can consult the directory of faculty members from the departments of [brain sciences](#), [molecular neuroscience](#), and more.

The co-Principal Investigators must be:

- Considered independent researchers at their respective institutions. Such an individual normally holds the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor; can initiate and direct their own independent lines of research as principal investigator; have full responsibility for running their laboratories; have full control of their research funds; and are permitted to supervise trainees, if applicable, as per their institution's policy. Postdoctoral fellows, research associates, or adjunct faculty are not eligible to apply.
- Conducting research at their respective institutions for the entire duration of the grant, and academic appointments must have started by the deadline for Full Application submission.
- Able to initiate the project on September 1, 2024, when funding is expected to begin.

**Only one application per research project can be submitted to this funding opportunity.** Individuals can be involved in more than one application; however, applications submitted must be distinct from one another.

Please note that applications may be related but cannot be identical to any other funded projects. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute immediately should overlap arise from funding awarded during the application and review process of this funding opportunity.

## Use of Funds

Funds must contribute towards the direct costs of the research project for which they were awarded and should be directly attributable to the project or activity being performed. Please note that grant funds must be allocated equally to research expenses incurred within Canada and Israel.

### Eligible Costs

These funds may be used to support any aspect of the research project, including:

- Salaries for technical and administrative personnel;
- Stipends of trainees;



- Supplies and materials;
- Maintenance of essential equipment and/or purchase of equipment that is currently unavailable but essential for the project;
- Provision of special services and user fees;
- Knowledge Mobilization, including, but not limited to, travel of the principal investigators and trainees for presentation of results at conferences, publication costs in peer-reviewed and open-access journals or repositories (including article processing charges), knowledge exchange activities (workshops, brochures, books), knowledge diffusion activities via online technologies (webinars, podcasts).

#### **Ineligible Costs**

- Salaries and consulting fees of any investigator or researcher holding an academic or research appointment;
- General office and lab equipment;
- Indirect costs or overhead costs associated with managing the research project.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute must be consulted on expenses that are not listed here to determine the eligibility of other categories of expenditure.

### **Criteria for Assessment**

*There will be equal weighting of the following criteria:*

#### **Innovation and Originality**

Quality of the project which, while solidly based in scientific principles and technical feasibility, offers new concepts and approaches, with the potential to change the paradigms of the field, open the field to new experimental directions, or address a critical barrier to progress in our understanding of the brain and nervous system.

#### **Feasibility**

The degree to which the proposed research can be successfully executed using the proposed methodology within the timeframe, budget, and resources available. Appropriate background and justification for the proposed research should be provided through literature citations and data from other sources. The team's potential to successfully complete the project based on their expertise and track record will also be considered.

#### **Potential for Impact**

The degree to which the new lines of research that could be developed from this project have the potential to fundamentally change our understanding of the brain and nervous system function in the long-term. In addition, the incorporation of sex- and gender-based analysis plus (SGBA+) and EDI principles in the design and execution of research is critically important for broadening the potential impact of the work and the potential for new knowledge to be translated into health benefits for all.



## Timeline

Launch of Request for Applications	December 7, 2023
<b>Deadline for Registration Form</b>	17:00 EST / 23:59 IST, February 8, 2024
Invitation to Full Application	February 12-16, 2024
<b>Deadline for Receipt of Full Applications</b>	17:00 EDT / 23:59 IDT, April 11, 2024
Notification of Decision	July 2024
Funding Begins	September 1, 2024

## How to Apply

Please note that this funding opportunity includes a Registration Form and a Full Application stage. Applicants must submit a Registration Form to be eligible to submit a Full Application. Please note that all communications to Brain Canada, including the submission of the Registration Forms, must include a carbon copy (CC) to Yael Karhash, Weizmann Institute, at [yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il). **It is the sole responsibility of the co-Principal Investigators to ensure their submission adheres to the requirements and are received by the deadlines outlined above. There will be no appeal to late submissions.** Brain Canada will acknowledge receipt of Registration Forms and Full Applications within two business days.

## Registration Form

Please click [here](#) to download the Registration Form.

Please send the completed Registration Form, along with the required attachment(s), as a PDF file to [programs@braincanada.ca](mailto:programs@braincanada.ca) with a CC to [yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il) by **17:00 EST / 23:59 IST on February 8, 2024**. The PDF and accompanying attachments will need to be formatted using 12-point Time New Roman or 10-point Arial font, single-spaced, on a letter-size page with 1" minimum margins. The font size for figures and legends must be a minimum of 10 points. Use of a condensed font and spacing is not permitted. Registration Forms received in any other format, exceeding the word limits, incomplete, or late, will be rejected.

## Applicant Information

Brain Canada has implemented a demographic survey to evaluate the progress of its programs in fostering EDI. Please note that the survey will be sent via email, upon confirmation of the applicant's submission of the Registration Form. The information collected under this section will not be shared in an identifiable form with public, external stakeholders (e.g., Health Canada, funding partners), or reviewers, and will have no impact on the evaluation of submitted applications. All responses are completely anonymized and aggregated to ensure protection of the identity of any individual. Please see Brain Canada's [Privacy Policy](#).

## Project Summary

- Project title
- Keywords describing the research project (maximum 10 words)
- A summary of the proposed research project and its goals (maximum one page)

## Team Member Details

- List the names and affiliations of the co-Principal Investigators, co-Investigators, and team members, excluding trainees, ensuring the composition of the team meets the eligibility criteria outlined above. Please include a brief description of their roles in the proposed research project.



### Optional Information

- Provide names and contact information for up to three individuals who are knowledgeable in the research area and would be able to evaluate the application. Individuals should not have a conflict of interest.
- Individuals to whom the application should not be sent for review.

### Certification and Signatures

The co-Principal Investigators must certify that all members of the team have agreed to their inclusion in the application and allow them to represent the team throughout the application process. Please note that institutional signatures are not required at the Registration Form stage.

### Full Application

Full Applications must be submitted using Brain Canada's electronic grant management system, SmartSimple, by **17:00 EDT / 23:59 IDT on April 11, 2024**; access will be granted upon invitation to the Full Application stage.

The Full Application must be formatted using 12-point Time New Roman or 10-point Arial font, single-spaced, on a letter-size page with 1" minimum margins. The font size for figures and legends must be a minimum of 10 points. Use of a condensed font and spacing is not permitted. Applications received in any other format, exceeding the page limits, incomplete, or late, will be rejected.

### Project Summary

- Project title.
- Keywords describing the research project (maximum 10 words).
- A summary of the proposed research project and its goals (maximum one page).

### Lay Summary (maximum 300 words)

- Suitable for publication and understandable by the general public.

### Proposal (maximum 6 pages, including figures and legends, excluding references)

Proposals should include the following information, structured to best address the Criteria for Assessment outlined above:

1. The **overall objectives** to be achieved by the end of the funding period.
2. The **rationale** for undertaking the study now, including:
  - The current state of research on the topic and key knowledge gaps that motivate this study.
  - A statement about the innovation and originality of the project, preliminary evidence supporting the proposed research, and the research hypotheses.
3. The **work plan**, including:
  - The approaches, methods, and techniques that will be used to achieve the stated objectives; if applicable, outline the specific contributions of any collaborators involved in the project.
  - Methods of data analysis, including statistical methods and calculations to show that the study will be adequately powered.
  - Potential pitfalls or obstacles, and how they will be overcome.
4. The **expected outputs** from the study, and how the findings will be disseminated:
  - How the outcomes from the study will advance knowledge on the research topic.
  - Plans for making the data from the project available to other qualified researchers.
  - Plans for knowledge translation, exchange, diffusion, and dissemination, and how the project's findings will be adapted and shared with the target audience including broader



knowledge users. Applicants are encouraged to visit CIHR’s [Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning](#).

- The expected broad impacts of the results by referring to the main categories of research impacts: advancing knowledge, building capacity, informing decision making, health impacts, and broad economic and social impacts.

### Timeline and Anticipated Milestones

Indicate the key intermediate stages in achieving the overall objectives, and the projected timeframe for achieving them. A template will be provided at the Full Application stage.

### Sex, Gender, and Diversity Considerations (maximum two pages)

Throughout the research process, from conceptualization (research hypothesis development) to completion (knowledge translation), the removal of systemic barriers and biases to enact the practice of inclusion ensures that all individuals have equal access to and benefit from the results of the project.

Please describe:

- How sex and/or gender considerations will be addressed in the research project. Research projects proposing to use only one sex or gender should provide strong justification from the scientific literature or preliminary data to support this decision.
- Description of any targeted research including diverse populations, such as that based on age, Indigenous identity, visible minority identity, or disability.

Applicants are encouraged to review CIHR’s [Online Training Modules for Integrating Sex and Gender in Health Research](#).

### Team Member Details

List the names, affiliations, and roles of the co-Principal Investigators, co-Investigators, and team members, excluding trainees, ensuring the composition of the team continues to meet the eligibility criteria and includes the expertise needed to carry out the proposed research project.

Biographical sketches (maximum four pages) of the co-Principal Investigators and all other faculty-level co-investigators and collaborators on the team must be submitted. A template will be provided at the Full Application stage. Biosketches are not required for consultants, trainees, technical personnel, or people with lived experience on the team.

### Letters of Collaboration or Support (Optional)

Applicants can submit up to two letters of support (maximum one page per letter) from collaborators, if applicable. The letters should explain the nature of the collaboration and outline the specific contributions of the collaborator(s) involved in the proposed project.

### Budget

A yearly budget must be provided, along with a written budget justification (maximum one page) describing the proposed costs in each of the major categories. A template will be provided at the Full Application stage. Please provide sufficient information to allow reviewers to assess the appropriateness of the cost allocation.





### Sources of Funding

A summary of other sources of funding, if any, related to the proposed project, including current or pending grant applications from any team member.

*Please note: Research applications may be related but cannot be identical to any other funded projects. It is the responsibility of the applicants to notify Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute immediately should overlap arise from funding awarded during the application and review process of this funding opportunity.*

### Institutional Approvals

Please outline what applicable approvals you will have in place for the Full Application deadline, and timeline for any addendums or additional approvals specific to the proposal that may need to be added thereafter (maximum one page). Please note that, if awarded, applicants will be required to provide documentation, where applicable, demonstrating institutional approvals and compliance with policies on the ethical use of human subjects, animals, and biohazards prior to funding release.

### Certification and Signatures

All signatures must be submitted with the application by the deadline for Full Application submission.

- Signatures of the co-Principal Investigators are mandatory for the application to be considered complete.
- Institutional Signatures: Signatures of the responsible officials of the institutions where the co-Principal Investigators will conduct the research are required.

## Review Process

### Registration Form

Registration Forms submitted by the deadline will undergo an administrative check and relevance review by Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute to ensure alignment with the scope of this funding opportunity and all eligibility criteria are met. All applicants will be notified regarding the administrative check and relevance review of their application. Eligible applications will be invited to the Full Application stage; ineligible applications will be withdrawn from the competition.

### Full Application

Brain Canada will manage the peer review process, in collaboration with Weizmann Institute. Full Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by at least two members of an external Peer Review Panel composed of researchers from Canadian and international institutions with broad experience and expertise in the relevant field(s). Brain Canada will take into account any conflicts of interest and other relevant considerations to ensure a balanced panel.

Based on the reviewer scores, the Peer Review Panel will discuss the top applications. The Panel will recommend to Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute the applications that have received a high merit score. Applicants will receive anonymized written reviewer comments. Applicants whose applications were discussed at the Peer Review Panel meeting will additionally receive Scientific Officer notes from the proceedings. Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute will not entertain appeals against the assessment of the Peer Review Panel.



## Confidentiality and Ownership

Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute will keep all materials submitted for this funding opportunity confidential and only share them with reviewers, Peer Review Panel members, and observers who have signed confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements. Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute do not claim ownership of intellectual property (IP) arising from the research they fund and expect that any IP arising from this funding is developed and commercialized according to the policies of the research institutions in which the research is performed.

## Communications

Recipients of the *Brain Canada & Weizmann Institute of Science Team Grants* must make every effort to attend events organized by Brain Canada and Weizmann Institute, and present their projects, if applicable, to demonstrate the importance and impact of their research.

## Contact Information

For more information, or if you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact Brain Canada at [programs@braincanada.ca](mailto:programs@braincanada.ca) with a CC to [yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:yael.karhash@weizmann.ac.il).