FUNDING OPPORTUNITY - Canadian Precision Health Initiative Data Governance Program for Distinctions-Based Indigenous Partners

In relation to the Canadian Precision Health Initiative, Genome Canada will support the development of Indigenous-led, distinctions-based data governance frameworks and practical tools to strengthen Indigenous data sovereignty and enable safe, ethical and culturally grounded precision health governance.

Overview

The Canadian Precision Health Initiative (CPHI) aims to strengthen Canada's ability to generate, steward and use genomic and health data to improve health outcomes, support innovation and advance more precise, equitable care. Achieving this requires governance models that not only address individual privacy and consent, but also uphold the collective rights, interests and authority of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples over data that identifies, describes or can be used to make inferences about their communities.

This investment recognizes the need for governance approaches that extend beyond individual consent to uphold collective Indigenous rights in precision health. As data systems become increasingly connected, governance frameworks must also evolve to support Indigenous authority over data and its use. Strengthening approaches to governance, stewardship and trust is critical to building a precision health ecosystem that is both effective and equitable.

This need is particularly important in precision health, where genomic, health and administrative data are increasingly linked to generate new insights. While these connections can create significant opportunities for research and improved care, they also raise important issues related to how collective Indigenous rights, interests and authorities are recognized and upheld within data governance systems.

Through the CPHI Data Governance Program for Distinctions-Based Indigenous Partners, we are working to help address these issues by fostering reciprocal capacity with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners. The program will advance distinctions-based approaches for community-level governance.

Grounded in Genome Canada's commitments to **UNDRIP** and the **TRC Calls to Action**, this program is intended to advance an ethical, responsible precision health ecosystem across the complete data lifecycle—from collection and access to analyses and benefit-sharing.

The opportunity

Through this funding opportunity, Genome Canada will support eligible Indigenous partner organizations to develop distinctions-based, Indigenous-led data governance frameworks, protocols and operational tools that can guide how genomic, health and related data are managed and, where appropriate, within the CPHI and across the wider precision health ecosystem.

Objectives

- Build reciprocal capacity between CPHI and Indigenous partner organizations to support safe, ethical and culturally grounded precision health data governance.
- Advance First Nations, Inuit and Métis data governance frameworks, access protocols and oversight models that reflect distinctions-based rights, mandates and priorities.
- Develop practical, implementable tools, such as consent pathways, data-sharing agreements, access controls, benefit-sharing frameworks and lifecycle deposition guidance.
- Support Indigenous authority over decisions regarding the collection, use, access, reuse, sharing and long-term stewardship of Indigenous genomic, health and related data.
- Strengthen Genome Canada readiness to work in genuine partnership with Indigenous Peoples and to align precision health infrastructure with Indigenous data sovereignty.

Funding streams and eligible recipients

The program will include three dedicated distinctions-based streams for Indigenous partner organizations with recognized mandates and authority related to the governance of data about, from or relating to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, communities and territories.

Stream	Eligible recipient(s)
First Nations	First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)
Inuit	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Métis Nation(s)	Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Métis National Council (MNC), Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO); Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN-S), Otipemisiwak Métis Government of Alberta (OMG). * *These organizations may determine whether to apply independently or, where appropriate, collaboratively.

Required activities

- Develop Indigenous-led, distinctions-based governance frameworks that define decision-making authority, oversight, accountability and stewardship responsibilities for genomic, health and related data.
- Conduct culturally grounded engagement and consensus-building with relevant communities, governments, organizations and knowledge holders, with appropriate protocols, resourcing and compensation.

- Create practical tools and resources that can be adopted by Indigenous partners, CPHI, researchers, data stewards and approved users, including engagement checklists, consent pathway templates, data access processes and benefit-sharing frameworks.
- Define lifecycle deposition guidance for data collection, storage, access, analysis, linkage return of results, withdrawal, archiving and long-term stewardship.
- Support two-way capacity building so Indigenous partner organizations can advance their mandates, and Genome Canada can strengthen its internal readiness to implement governance requirements of data about, from or relating to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, communities and territories.

Funding available and term

- Genome Canada's maximum contribution is up to $750,000 per funding stream.
- Funding is for a term of up to two years.
- Co-funding is encouraged but is not required where it may compromise Indigenous-led oversight, participation or decision-making.
- Eligible costs must be aligned with Genome Canada's **Guidelines for Funding** and may include community engagement, governance development, knowledge-holder participation, project coordination, technical expertise, travel, meetings, tools, templates, capacity-building activities and knowledge mobilization.

Application process

PROPOSAL

Applicants will submit a proposal outlining the planned distinctions-based, Indigenous-led governance work and its intended outcomes. The proposal should demonstrate a sound approach to co-development, Indigenous leadership and decision-making, capacity building, and the development of practical and sustainable frameworks and tools. It should also provide sufficient information on the project team, work plan, budget and oversight to demonstrate that the proposed work is achievable and positioned to deliver meaningful benefits.

Proposals will be assessed against the evaluation criteria below. For proposals approved for funding, a Notice of Award (NOA) will be issued setting out specific conditions of funding, including requirements to address structured review feedback through an iterative process.

Recipients will have opportunities to clarify and strengthen their work plans, budgets and intended outputs through constructive dialogue, while respecting distinctions-based priorities and Indigenous partners' authority over the proposed governance work. The NOA will specify the required responses, revisions and timelines. Reviewers will review responses provided to determine whether the relevant conditions of funding have been met.

Evaluation criteria

SCOPE OF FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS

- How well does the proposal build technical and governance expertise within the applicant organization and partner communities?
- Will the resulting tools be practical, accessible and suitable for Indigenous communities, Genome Canada, researchers, funders and data stewards?
- Does the proposal address governance across the full data lifecycle, including access, secondary use and benefit-sharing?
- To what extent are the proposed agreements, consent models, or standards practical and specific?

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

- Does the project demonstrate clear pathways for benefits to accrue for Indigenous communities, as defined by those communities?
- Will the project strengthen Indigenous capacity for data governance, research oversight and stewardship of genomic, health and related data?
- Does the project support Genome Canada readiness to implement governance requirements in practice for data from/about Indigenous Peoples?
- Is there a clear plan for ownership, maintenance and evolution of frameworks and tools beyond the project term?

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

- How realistic and achievable are the proposed work plan, milestones and timelines?
- Is the budget reasonable, transparent and proportional to the proposed activities?
- Are roles, accountabilities, decision-making processes and oversight structures clear and appropriate?
- Are inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility principles reflected in team management, participation and project delivery?

Timeline

Timing	Milestone
Fall 2026	Funding opportunity released
February 1, 2027	Applications due
February-March, 2027	Initial proposal assessment and issuance of Notices of Award specifying conditions of funding.
Spring and Summer 2027	Iterative structured feedback and responses to conditions of funding, according to timelines specified in the NOA; projects begin.

Project management and oversight

All funded projects must adhere to Genome Canada's **Guidelines for Funding** and any program-specific conditions of funding.

Projects must have sufficient project management and financial capacity to support engagement, reporting, coordination and delivery of required outputs.

Project reporting will include regular progress reporting and a final report following completion. Genome Canada may convene funded partners, advisors and relevant CPHI teams to support shared learning, alignment and implementation of governance tools for data about, from or relating to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, communities and territories across the initiative.

Funded partners will retain authority over community-defined governance outputs and decisions regarding the use, access and sharing of Indigenous data and knowledge.

Contact

All documentation and information related to proposal submissions and follow-up must be submitted to Genome Canada through a regional Genome Centre. Please contact Genome Canada for additional details.