



Communications: Reporting to Canadians On the Progress of Our Research

CONTEXT

Genome Canada's scientific leaders are conducting world-class research on issues of great interest to the public, decision-makers and industry. As an organization responsible for the use of public and partnered funds, Genome Canada and Genome Centres must report on its activities in a timely manner. To do so effectively, we must set standards of reporting and accountability for our researchers.

To date, Genome Canada's portfolio consists of 79 large-scale scientific projects including six technology platforms. Only one of the projects is completed and all technology platforms are in operation.

Information for the public about each of these projects and platforms is posted on six web sites (Genome Canada and Centres). With the exception of the Genome Québec site (it updates data quarterly on each project), the information is identical on all sites and staff has access to nothing more. However, the information is dated. It has not been updated since the project funding was announced. Some of the information is as old as 2002. Collectively, we have communicated 11 achievements out of the 80 scientific projects in the past four years. However, the information on our web sites does not reflect any outcomes.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Decision-makers have grown weary of hearing the research community and lobby groups argue for greater investments in R&D, year after year. In response, elected officials point to \$14 billion in R&D investments made by the federal government since 1997 -- \$600 million to Genome Canada in five consecutive budgets. As well, they lament the fact that organizations that receive the funding come short when the time comes to show a return on the investment.

Perhaps more than any other organization, research funded by Genome Canada is able to produce results within the funding life of many projects.

The following measures are proposed to improve on our duty to communicate progress and results on each of the projects that we fund and to demonstrate the relevance of the research to the public:

- a) By April 1 of each year, team leaders will be asked by the Genome Centre to update the lay description of their projects by providing the following information:
 - scientific achievements
 - changes in project description
 - relevance of research to the public and/or government priorities
 - published papers
 - recruitment and training
 - collaborations with other countries and organizations (universities, industry, etc)
 - list of funding partners and amount of contributions
 - Patents and other IP secured
 - Mainstream news articles
 - Coordinates of the PIs
 - estimated time for completion of research goals
 - Creation of a web site

- b) Genome Canada will update the information currently on the Web, return it to the Centers for approval by the team leaders. Genome Canada and the Genome Centres will then post on their respective web site.
- c) Genome Canada and Genome Centers will analyse the updates for selection of projects for each of our annual reports, for timely communication with decision-makers at the federal and provincial levels, and for other communications initiatives.
- d) Principal investigators will inform the Genome Centers within 48 hours after receiving confirmation that a scientific paper has been approved for publication by a journal.
- e) Principal investigators will inform the Genome Centre and Genome Canada within 48 hours of confirmation that a significant milestone has been reached in the project. Timing and format of the release of the information to the public will be negotiated between the PI, the Genome Centre and Genome Canada.
- f) Genome Canada will update project descriptions when a significant milestone has been made public and will post the update no later than the date at which the milestone is announced.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Communications with the public is a shared responsibility between the principal investigator and Genome Centres and Genome Canada. The Communications Director at the Genome Centre and the Vice-President, Communications at Genome Canada have primary responsibility for communications with the public. Communications Directors at the Genome Centre are professionals and can provide timely assistance and advice to principal investigators in their communications with the public and the media.

The principal investigator is responsible for providing timely information to the Genome Centre.