



International  
Cancer Genome  
Consortium

## The International Cancer Genome Consortium announces the launch of 8 Cancer Genome Projects

Toronto, November 18, 2008 – The International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) today announced the commitments of 11 funding organizations in 8 countries to generate comprehensive, high-resolution analyses of genomic changes for 8 forms of cancer found across the planet. Each organization will be coordinating studies of at least one specific type or subtype of cancer, with each project expected to involve specimens from approximately 500 patients and estimated to cost \$20 million (USD). ICGC projects will use common standards of data collection and analysis that were proposed in the ICGC Goals, Structure, Policies and Guidelines released in April 2008. Over the next decade, additional nations and organizations are expected to join the ICGC so that up to 50 types of cancer will be thoroughly studied. Ultimately, the project will generate datasets that are 25,000 times larger than the Human Genome Project. The ICGC will make its data rapidly and freely available to the global research community.

Following the creation of the ICGC at a meeting in Toronto in October 2007, the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, hosted the 2008 ICGC Workshop from November 15 – 17, 2008, which was attended by more than 100 scientists. The first cancer genome projects to be launched by the ICGC include:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Funding Organization</b>	<b>Tumor Type</b>
Australia	National Health and Medical Research Council	Announcement Imminent
Canada	Ontario Institute for Cancer Research	Pancreas
China	Chinese Cancer Genome Consortium	Stomach
France	Institut National du Cancer	Liver (alcohol and associated etiologies) Breast (HER2-positive)
India	Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology	Oral Cavity
Japan	RIKEN, National Cancer Center and National Institute of Biomedical Innovation	Liver (virus-related)
Spain	Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation	Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
United Kingdom	The Wellcome Trust; Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute	Breast (several subtypes)

Furthermore, the latest call for proposals published in the Health Theme of the European Union's 7th Research Framework Programme includes a research topic to support European participation in the ICGC. Additional efforts that are underway to secure funds and mount projects in other jurisdictions will be announced at a later date. The ICGC projects being announced today will complement a large US-based pilot project called the TCGA (The Cancer Genome Atlas) which oversees projects related to cancers of the brain (glioblastoma multiforme), lung (squamous carcinoma) and ovary (serous adenocarcinoma).

“The Consortium has made substantial progress since the policies and guidelines were released last April” said Thomas Hudson, MD, of the ICGC Secretariat, which is based at the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research in Toronto. “Such catalogs will be valuable resources for all researchers working to develop new and better ways of diagnosing, treating and preventing cancer.”

Worldwide, more than 7.5 million people died of cancer and more than 12 million new cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2007. Unless progress is made in understanding and controlling cancer, those numbers are expected to rise to 17.5 million deaths and 27 million new cases in 2050.

Once thought of as a single disease, cancer is now understood to consist of a large number of different conditions. In almost all forms, however, cancer changes the genetic blueprint, or genomes, of cells, and causes disruptions within normal biological pathways, leading to uncontrolled cell growth. Because genomic changes are often specific to a particular type or stage of cancer, systematically mapping the changes that occur in each cancer could provide the foundation for research to identify new therapies, diagnostics and preventive strategies.

ICGC member organizations and participating centers have agreed upon common standards for informed consent and ethical oversight to ensure that all samples will be coded and stored in ways that protect the identities of the participants in the study. To maximize the public benefit from ICGC member research, data will be made rapidly available to qualified investigators. In addition, all Consortium participants will agree not to file any patent applications or make other intellectual property claims on primary data from ICGC projects.

The International Cancer Genome Consortium is one of most ambitious biomedical research efforts since the Human Genome Project. The Consortium will help to coordinate current and future large-scale projects to understand the genomic changes involved in cancer. This genomic information will accelerate efforts to develop better ways of diagnosing, treating and preventing many types of cancer.

For more information and updates about ICGC activities, please visit the website at: [www.icgc.org](http://www.icgc.org).

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