

**CIRTN-R2FIC 2022 National Meeting**  
*The Delta Hotel, Calgary, Alberta, November 8-9<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

**BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO CIRTN-R2FIC NETWORK:**

Diabetes is one of the fastest growing epidemic diseases in Canada, with over 10% of the population diagnosed with this disease and another 20-30% living with pre-diabetes. There is a growing need to train experts and scientists in this area, to fuel innovation and provide support to the government in managing the rising health and economic burden caused by diabetes. Insulin, discovered 100 years ago in Toronto, is a major determinant of blood sugar control. This hormone is produced by specialized cells within the pancreas called the islets of Langerhans.

With pilot funds from the Universities of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Toronto, Montreal, and the Montreal Clinical Research Institute (IRCM), we established the Canadian Islet Research and Training Network - Réseau de Recherche et Formation sur les Ilots du Canada (CIRTN-R2FIC) in mid-2020 to synergize opportunities for research and training focused on the biology of insulin and the pancreatic islets of Langerhans ([www.islets.ca](http://www.islets.ca)). Many complementary programs across Canada focus on islet biology or use pancreatic islets as a model, performing diverse research with a broad impact in science and engineering, regularly engaging with patient-partners and technology users at the Natural Sciences and Engineering (NSE)-Health Innovation interface. Thus, we leveraged this exciting opportunity to use 'islet biology' as a platform to create a **research-oriented training network**. Since the discovery of insulin 100 years ago, Canada has continually 'punched above its weight' in this field, and our network will continue this tradition of excellence. The CIRTN-R2FIC network brings together **47 islet-focused laboratories from 11 institutions across 5 Canadian provinces. Current membership includes 47 PIs and over 150 trainees.**

**CIRTN MISSION:** As a cross-Canada network bringing together a diverse group of scientists, CIRTN-R2FIC aims to provide a platform for:

- Accessible communication among islet researchers and trainees for the purposes of increasing collaboration and networking opportunities within the Canadian islet research community
- Enhanced mentorship and professional development opportunities in islet biology for trainees and investigators, at all levels
- Knowledge sharing and capacity building in islet research and training in Canada

**OVERVIEW OF CIRTN-R2FIC NATIONAL MEETING:**

As a network focused on bringing together Canada's islet research community, the National meeting will be a cornerstone opportunity to promote collaboration, networking opportunities and professional development workshops and seminars. The meeting will take place over 2 days, with the first day being the "**Scientific Day**" and the second day being the "**Training and Networking Day**".