The Canadian **Donation and Transplantation** Research Program

Programme de recherche en **don et transplantation** du Canada

2026 — 2030

STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	02
Strategy at a Glance	03
Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Values	04
The Evolution of CDTRP	05
Five Research Themes	06
Research Infrastructure	07
How we developed this plan	08
Strategic Goals and Objectives	12
Action Plan	14
Governance and Implementation	17
Acknowledgements	18

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CDTRP is hosted by the University of Alberta, which is located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples, including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. As a national program, CDTRP also acknowledges that its community spans Indigenous lands across Canada, and we recognize and respect the enduring presence, stewardship, knowledge, and rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in all regions where our members live and work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Donation and Transplantation Research Program (CDTRP) exists to serve the donation and transplantation research and innovation community and the people most affected by this work. Its efforts are grounded in collaboration, equity, and a commitment to ensuring that knowledge leads to meaningful improvements for patients, families, and donors. As an independent not-for-profit organization operating in a constrained and complex funding environment, CDTRP must make deliberate choices about where to focus its efforts, how to use its resources, and how to work with partners. This five-year strategic plan provides a clear, values-driven direction to guide decisions, support community priorities, and sustain CDTRP's role as a trusted national platform for donation and transplantation research and innovation.

Over the next five years, this plan will guide CDTRP's activities and resource allocation, with a focus on strengthening core operations and advancing priorities identified by the community. It establishes four strategic goals and eleven objectives aligned with CDTRP's mission, vision, and values, supported by a flexible action plan that enables the program to respond to evolving national and international developments in donation and transplantation. The plan prioritizes increasing capacity to support current and future research, advancing patient, family, and donor-centred research, enhancing collaboration across the community, and strengthening network operations and outreach. It also creates opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new collaborations with organizations whose mandates and strengths complement CDTRP's role across the donation and transplantation research and innovation ecosystem.

Progress will be reviewed regularly by CDTRP's Board and Executive Committee to ensure transparency, accountability, and continued alignment with community needs. Together, these efforts position CDTRP to serve the community effectively amid constrained funding and the organization's desire to create meaningful impact.

> **Serving the donation and transplantation research and innovation community and the people most affected by this work.**

STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

1 Increase Capacity within the Donation and Transplantation Research Community

- Build capacity for knowledge mobilization and science communication to amplify research impact.
- Ensure meaningful participation in research by building the knowledge and skills of all research contributors.
- Enhance engagement with underrepresented communities to improve equity in research and health outcomes.

2 Advance Patient, Family, and Donor-Centered Research to Drive Innovation and Impact

- Expand the use of patient-reported outcome and experience measures to better evaluate the patient-centered impact across research projects.
- Strengthen sustainable partnerships with patient, family, and donor partners to co-lead research across the continuum from basic science to clinical implementation.
- Drive innovation that bridges fundamental biology with improved clinical outcomes, patient and family experiences, and long-term well-being.

3 Enhance Collaboration and Connection Across the Donation and Transplantation Research Community

- Outline priority clinical outcomes to focus on nationally and engage decision-makers so that research funding and efforts are targeted toward outcomes with the greatest health-system and patient impact.
- Build more connections across the donation and transplantation communities to accelerate innovation and improve research outcomes by fostering research-driven discussions and knowledge exchange.

4 Optimize CDTRP Network Operations and Outreach

- Ensure long-term sustainability by maintaining a competitive grant success rate and demonstrating the value and impact of CDTRP-supported research.
- Expand national and international partnerships to amplify CDTRP reach and align efforts across the donation and transplantation ecosystem.
- Implement a long-term communications strategy that includes media, public relations, and digital engagement to support research awareness and uptake.

VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, AND VALUES

Vision

Every wish to donate is fulfilled and transplantation is transformed from a treatment to a lasting and sustainable cure.

Mission

Drive advances in Canadian donation and transplantation research and mobilize knowledge.

Purpose

1. Enhance collaboration among Canadian donation and transplantation research communities in the natural, health, and social sciences through an international trans-disciplinary network of researchers, patients, families, and donors, and partner organizations.
2. Collaboratively lead areas of research identified as patient, family, and donor priorities through five inter-related themes.
3. Maximize the effectiveness of research teams through support with funding development, project development and management, patient, family, and donor partnership, and knowledge mobilization.
4. Support research teams to mobilize new knowledge to ensure patients, families, and donors, health care systems, partners, and stakeholders equitably benefit from research results.
5. Maximize the integration of cross-cutting research priorities in all CDTRP-supported projects:

Sex and gender, anti-racism, and anti-ableism	**Pediatric, adolescent, and elderly**	**Indigenous populations**	**Policy, commercialization, and knowledge transfer**	**Patient, family, and donor partnership**

Values

Collaboration. We amplify knowledge, impact, innovation and equity in donation and transplantation through collaboration and partnership.

Compassion. We prioritize the well-being and voices of those impacted by donation and transplantation.

Resourcefulness. Innovation and resilience enable us to advance research and improve outcomes.

Dedication. Our commitment to donors, patients, and families drives continuous progress and meaningful change.

Ambition. We strive for a future where every donation opportunity is realized and every transplant lasts a lifetime.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CDTRP

In April 2013, under the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) chronic diseases signature initiative, the Canadian National Transplant Research Program (CNTRP) was born with a network grant in transplantation research. It received $13.8M from CIHR and its partners as a 5-year grant to support the formation, operations, and research activities that brought together the three distinct communities of solid organ transplant, hematopoietic stem cell transplant, and donation research into a single national network through seven funded investigator-driven research projects. During that 5-year period from 2013 to 2018, the CDTRP leveraged $37M, engaged more than 200 researchers at 30+ sites across Canada, and delivered numerous impactful projects, activities, and partnerships, yielding 190 publications and tangible benefits for the donation and transplant community and transplant patients.

In 2017, the federal Minister of Health identified improving the organ and tissue donation and transplantation system in Canada as a priority. Recognizing a need for additional emphasis on our donation-related research, the CNTRP became the Canadian Donation and Transplantation Research Program (CDTRP). In October 2018, CIHR renewed its commitment to CDTRP with a three-year, $3.3 million operational grant for a research support framework with four platforms, five interrelated research themes (Figure 1) and research infrastructure (Figure 2). In 2023, its tenth year, the CDTRP incorporated as a not-for-profit organization to continue the network's mission to drive advances in Canadian donation and transplantation research and to mobilize knowledge so that every wish to donate is fulfilled and transplantation is transformed from a treatment into a sustainable cure.

Today, CDTRP activities are supported by a combination of grants, partnerships, sponsorships, and cost-sharing of research supports provided to CDTRP member investigators. CDTRP's transition to a not-for-profit organization and adoption of a new operating model necessitated a five-year strategic plan to guide priorities, resource allocation, and partnerships. This planning process needed to reflect the complexity of the Canadian donation and transplantation research landscape, the network's transdisciplinary expertise, and the dynamic national and international context in which CDTRP operates.

> **Together we will turn transplantation into a cure.**

FIVE RESEARCH THEMES

Established 2018–present

Improve a Culture of Donation

Strengthens systems, policies, and societal practices to foster a culture that values organ, tissue, and cell donation across the donation pathway.

133 Members
59 Projects

Inform Universal Practices for Donation

Advances donation science to maximize transplant benefits from living and deceased donors.

68 Members
48 Projects

Engineer and Allocate Better Grafts

Improves graft modification and recipient preparation to enhance short- and long-term transplant outcomes.

89 Members
73 Projects

Tailor an Optimal Immune System for Each Patient

Optimizes immunotherapy strategies to address medication inadequacy and reduce toxic side effects.

83 Members
89 Projects

Restore Long-Term Health

Enhances long-term function and quality of life following transplantation.

136 Members
127 Projects

CIHR Annoucement, April 2013

Annual Scientific Meeting, Mont-Tremblant, 2017

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Established 2018–present

FUNDING & GRANT DEVELOPMENT

$3.7M invested through the CDTRP Research Innovation Grant Competition supporting **124** pilot projects.

320 grant applications supported to CIHR and other funding agencies valued at **$270,881,501.**

$1,939,295 committed in in-kind/cash support across **114** funded projects collectively valued at **$106,540,570.**

RESEARCH & SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

90 basic science projects supported

13 clinical trials overseen by out Data and Safety Monitoring Board

INFRASTRUCTURE & PLATFORM INVESTMENT

$587,700 invested in developing the PFD Platform, including cash support for PFD compensation.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE & OUTPUTS

113 events supported

107 publications produced

68 projects advanced

TARGETED SUPPORT & CAPACITY BUILDING

$230,000 in Ethics, Economics, Legal, and Social Science support into **23** letters of support, **7** of which were successful grant applications.

45 successful projects were offered management resources.

91 projects were offered support with Patient, Family, Donor engagement.

Annual Scientific Meeting, Kelowna, 2022

Annual Scientific Meeting, Calgary, 2024

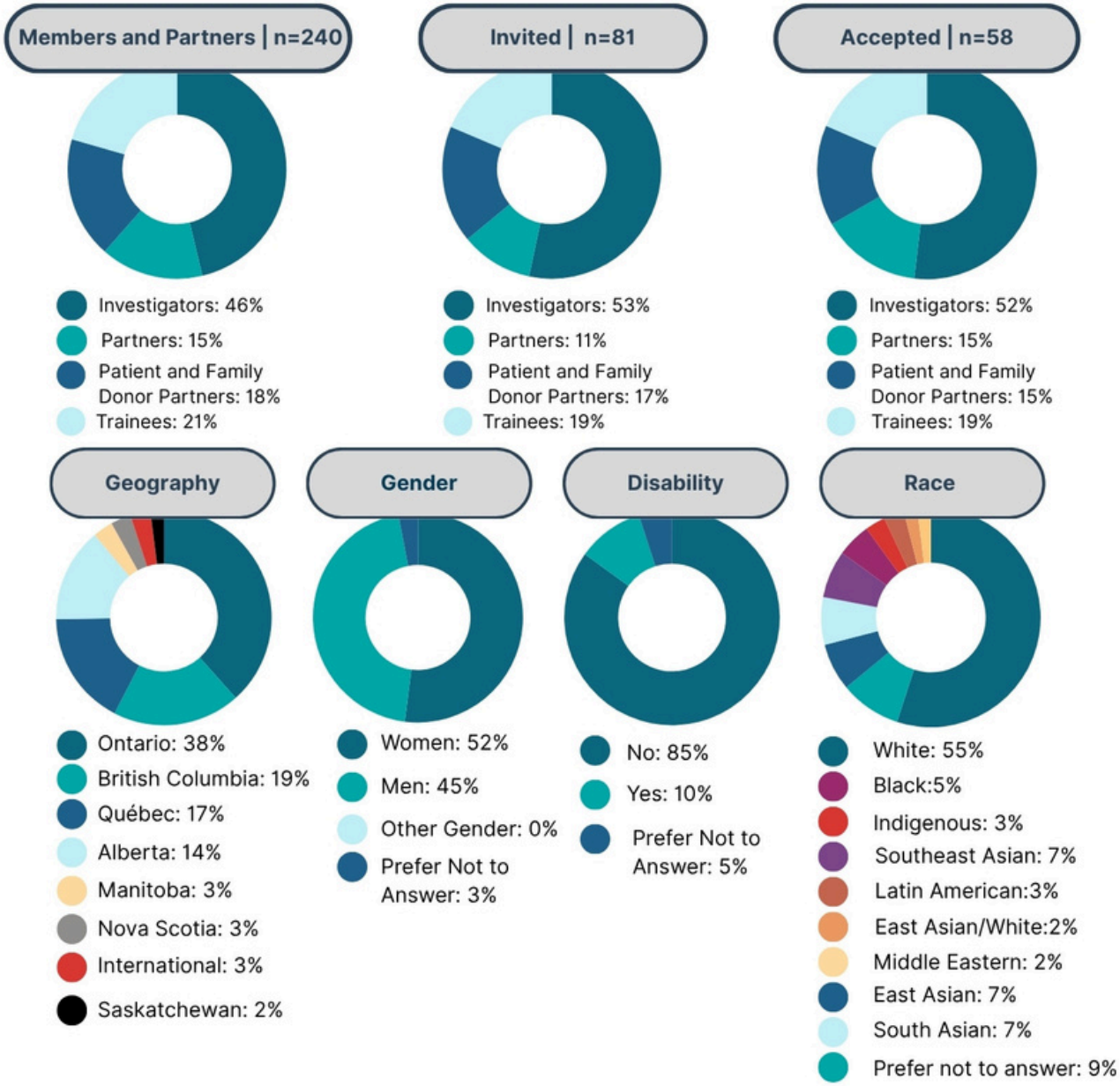
HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

The CDTRP 2026–2030 Strategic Plan was developed through a structured, multi-phase process designed to reflect the priorities and needs of Canada's donation and transplantation research communities. The process was guided by the CDTRP Board of Directors and Executive Committee and supported by the CDTRP Management Team.

The initial phase focused on defining strategic goals and identifying a comprehensive set of supporting objectives. Between June and September 2024, the steering committee conducted a SWOT analysis to assess CDTRP's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the evolving national research landscape. This was followed by an open membership session at the 2024 CDTRP Scientific Meeting in Calgary, Alberta. Input from these activities was synthesized into four draft strategic goals.

In February 2025, the plan manager prepared a preliminary list of objectives aligned with each goal. A 90-minute virtual working session with leadership expanded and refined these objectives. Notes from structured group discussions were consolidated and revised into 42 objective statements. These objectives were then evaluated using a RAND-modified Delphi methodology. Eighty-one individuals were invited to participate, and 58 accepted the invitation (71.6%), with response rates of 93% in Round 1 and 90% in Round 2. Objectives were assessed for importance, consensus, and stability, allowing identification of shared priorities while preserving diverse perspectives across investigator, trainee, patient, family, donor, and partner roles.

Following prioritization, CDTRP Platform and Working Group leads were engaged to translate the refined objectives into realistic, accountable action plans aligned with existing capacity, infrastructure, and resources. This ensured that the final plan reflects both community-driven priorities and operational feasibility. Findings were synthesized and reviewed by leadership to ensure alignment with CDTRP's mission, operating context, and role as a national research platform. The final plan reflects both investigator-driven priorities and areas of broad community consensus, organized around four strategic goals to guide action from 2026 to 2030.



Distribution of roles among panellists with the overall CDTRP network membership. Panel demographic composition was gender-balanced, geographically diverse, and stable across rounds.

GOAL 1: INCREASE CAPACITY WITHIN THE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION RESEARCH COMMUNITIES

We will build capacity across the CDTRP, including the full range of basic, translational, clinical, and social sciences. By engaging with the CDTRP, researchers, trainees, and PFD partners will gain the tools, skills, and support they need to lead high-quality, inclusive, and innovative research.

- **Objective 1:** Build capacity for knowledge mobilization and science communication to amplify research impact.
- **Objective 2:** Foster meaningful participation in research by strengthening professional development and building the knowledge and skills of all contributors through tailored education and centralized resources.
- **Objective 3:** Enhance engagement with underrepresented communities to improve equity in research and health outcomes.

Spotlight Action	Enhance engagement with underrepresented communities to improve equity in research and health outcomes.

With collaborations in place through the CDTRP Indigenous Health Equity Platform and building on established partnerships with CDTRP members and community organizations focusing on African, Caribbean, and Black populations and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, we will take a community- and patient-oriented approach to identify and address the research challenges that matter most.

Additional Success Measures

- Growth in the number of trainees, early-career investigators, and PFD partners actively involved in CDTRP-supported projects.
- A majority of CDTRP-led projects incorporate formal knowledge mobilization plans and equity-informed methods.
- Meaningful engagement with underrepresented communities, measured by the number of ongoing, community-led or co-led research partnerships that extend beyond one-off consultations.

Defining Success	By 2030, the CDTRP will have measurably strengthened Canada's capacity to conduct high-quality, equitable donation and transplantation research, reflected in who participates in research, how research is conducted, and who benefits from it.

GOAL 2: ADVANCE PATIENT, FAMILY, AND DONOR-CENTERED RESEARCH TO DRIVE INNOVATION AND IMPACT

We will advance donation and transplantation research and innovation that benefits patients, families, donors, health care systems, and partners. In investigator-driven, patient/family/donor-driven, and health system-driven strategic research, our approach to engaging those with lived experience will ensure that research is relevant and that its desired benefits can be realized. We believe basic science can also be conducted in patient-oriented ways and we will advance the methods and infrastructure to support researchers to do so.

- **Objective 4:** Expand the use of patient-reported outcome and experience measures to better evaluate the patient-centered impact across research projects.
- **Objective 5:** Strengthen sustainable partnerships with patient, family, and donor partners to co-lead research across the continuum from basic science to clinical implementation.
- **Objective 6:** Drive innovation that bridges fundamental biology with improved clinical outcomes, patient and family experiences, and long-term well-being.

Spotlight Action Strengthen translational readiness across CDTRP-supported research.

We will strengthen translational readiness by identifying fundamental discoveries from CDTRP members that have the greatest potential for clinical application and providing targeted support.

Additional Success Measures

- At least half of patient-oriented projects demonstrate meaningful PFD involvement beyond consultation, including co-development of research questions, outcomes, and/or knowledge mobilization strategies.
- Evidence that basic science and translational projects incorporate patient-relevant outcomes, priorities, or pathways.
- Increased use of patient-reported outcome and experience measures across clinical and implementation-focused studies.

Defining Success In 2030, the majority of CDTRP-supported and -led projects will be patient-oriented, and we will grow the proportion of basic science and translational projects that are patient-oriented.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION ACROSS THE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION RESEARCH COMMUNITIES

We will strengthen relationships within the donation and transplantation research communities, foster collaboration, and ensure that diverse voices are engaged in key discussions to enhance research efficiency, maximize output, and increase the impact and translation of research findings.

- **Objective 7:** Outline priority clinical outcomes for national focus and engage decision makers so that research funding and efforts are targeted toward outcomes that will have the greatest health system and patient impact.
- **Objective 8:** Build more connections across the donation and transplantation communities to accelerate innovation and improve research outcomes by fostering research-driven discussions and knowledge exchange.

Spotlight Action	Enhance collaboration between donation and transplantation trialists to improve research consent practices

We will be pushing the leading edge of donation science by tackling one of the most challenging barriers to research in the field: the research consent process in donor intervention randomized clinical trials. A national consensus workshop will develop new models of consent that are required to run these trials, which are essential to provide high quality evidence on interventions that could help transplant recipients live longer, healthier lives.

Additional Success Measures

- At least 70% of CDTRP-led projects involve investigators from two or more institutions, provinces, or disciplines.
- A nationally endorsed set of priority clinical and system-level outcomes is referenced in new CDTRP-supported grant applications and collaborative initiatives.
- An increase in cross-platform and cross-disciplinary initiatives, measured by the number of joint workshops, working groups, or coordinated research activities.
- Evidence of translation and uptake, such as collaborative outputs that inform trial design, policy discussions, or implementation planning (e.g., consensus statements, guidance documents, or cited frameworks).

Defining Success	In 2030, CDTRP will be a strengthened national convenor for collaborative, investigator-driven, and priority-driven donation and transplantation research, with demonstrable alignment around shared priorities and increased multi-institutional research activity.

GOAL 4: OPTIMIZE CDTRP NETWORK OPERATIONS AND OUTREACH

We will enhance CDTRP's impact by refining its operations and outreach. This will enable CDTRP to maximize its impact, ensure long-term sustainability, align efforts with partners, and deliver greater value to the community. We will build on longstanding partnerships with organizations, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Blood Services, Canadian Institute for Health Information, Canadian Society of Transplantation, Kidney Foundation of Canada, Liver Canada, Organ Donation and Transplant Research Foundation of British Columbia, research institutions and donation and transplant programs, noting the context of a new pan-Canadian organ and tissue donation and transplantation governance structure. Internationally, we will strengthen our partnerships with groups such as the International Society for Organ Donation Professionals, the American Society of Transplantation, and The Transplantation Society, reinforcing CDTRP's role within an interconnected international research ecosystem.

- **Objective 9:** Ensure long-term sustainability by maintaining a competitive grant success rate and demonstrating the value and impact of CDTRP-supported research.
- **Objective 10:** Expand national and international partnerships to amplify CDTRP reach and align efforts across the donation and transplantation ecosystem.
- **Objective 11:** Implement a long-term communications strategy that includes media, public relations, and digital engagement to support research awareness and uptake.

Spotlight Action

Celebrate the success rate of CDTRP-led and CDTRP-supported grants through an annual report and tailored public communications.

Did you know?

In recent years, the success rate of grants supported by CDTRP has ranged between 40-50%? As part of our 2026-2030 action plan, we will share these funding successes more actively.

Additional Success Measures

- CDTRP-supported grants maintain a success rate consistently above national funding averages, tracked annually.
- Annual reporting demonstrates the value of the network, including total research dollars leveraged through CDTRP support and number of projects supported across platforms and institutions.
- CDTRP has a strong reputation for high quality projects, supporting its members, being a reliable partner, and investing in meaningful work.
- Growth in the number of active national and international partners, with repeat engagement across multiple years or initiatives.

Defining Success

In 2030, all CDTRP members, partners, and the public should have a clear view of the benefits our network provides.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan outlines high-level actions aligned with each strategic objective. These actions will be reviewed, refined, and expanded annually through CDTRP's operating planning and budgeting processes to ensure responsiveness to emerging priorities and resources.

Goal 1	Increase capacity within the donation and transplantation research community	Platform or Working Group
Objective 1	Build capacity for knowledge mobilization and science communication to amplify research impact.	
Action 1.1	Develop a program of research focused on advancing the science and practice of knowledge mobilization in donation and transplantation.	Education and Career Development Platform
Action 1.2	Evaluate, publish, and sustain the Cross-Talk science communication framework.	Research Services Platform
Objective 2	Foster meaningful participation in research by strengthening professional development and building the knowledge and skills of all contributors through tailored education and centralized resources.	
Action 2.1	Improve availability and impact of educational resources by centralizing content for PFDs, trainees, and researchers in one unified space.	Education and Career Development Platform
Action 2.2	Co-develop and implement capacity-building tools to advance researcher skills for PFD engagement.	PFD Platform
Action 2.3	Develop knowledge and skills in equity, diversity, and intersectionality.	Education and Career Development Platform
Action 2.4	Develop knowledge and skills in commercialization.	Education and Career Development Platform
Action 2.5	Develop knowledge and skills in Randomized Controlled Trials.	Randomized Clinical Trials Working Group
Objective 3	Enhance engagement with underrepresented communities to improve equity in research and health outcomes.	
Action 3.1	Strengthen CDTRP's organizational capacity to meaningfully engage and partner with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities in the co-development of research, policy, and knowledge mobilization initiatives.	Indigenous Platform

Action 3.2	Develop and implement approaches to community engagement with African, Caribbean, and Black communities in donation and transplant research.	PFD Platform
Action 3.3	Engage with Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) communities to understand and address key research priorities.	Research Services Platform

Goal 2	**Advance patient, family, and donor-centered research to drive innovation and impact**	**Platform or Working Group**
Objective 4	Expand the use of patient-reported outcome and experience measures to better evaluate the patient-centered impact across research projects.	
Action 4.1	Develop a national research project on Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMS).	Research Services Platform
Objective 5	Strengthen sustainable partnerships with patient, family, and donor partners to co-lead research across the continuum from basic science to clinical implementation.	
Action 5.1	Develop a strategy to strengthen PFD engagement in basic science research.	PFD Platform
Action 5.2	Build on existing skills and infrastructure for supporting effective PFD co-leadership in research.	PFD Platform
Objective 6	Drive innovation that bridges fundamental biology with improved clinical outcomes, patient and family experiences, and long-term well-being.	
Action 6.1	Establish mechanisms to integrate basic science researchers into transdisciplinary initiatives.	Research Services Platform
Action 6.2	Strengthen translational learning through the CDTRP Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB).	Research Services Platform
Action 6.3	Strengthen translational readiness across CDTRP-supported research	Research Services Platform

Goal 3	Enhance collaboration and connection across the donation and transplantation research community	Platform or Working Group
Objective 7	Outline priority clinical outcomes to focus on nationally and engage decision-makers so that research funding and efforts are targeted toward outcomes with the greatest health-system and patient impact.	
Action 7.1	Advance a national prioritization framework for quality, research, and innovation in donation and transplantation.	Pan-network Management
Objective 8	Build more connections across the donation and transplantation communities to accelerate innovation and improve research outcomes by fostering research-driven discussions and knowledge exchange.	
Action 8.1	Create a framework to develop and support communities of practice on priority research topics.	Research Services Platform
Action 8.2	Enhance collaboration between donation and transplantation trialists to improve research consent practices.	Randomized Clinical Trials Working Group
Action 8.3	Leverage annual scientific and PFD forums to strengthen knowledge exchange between the donation and transplantation research communities	Education and Career Development and PFD Platforms

Goal 4	Optimize network operations and outreach	Platform or Working Group
Objective 9	Ensure long-term sustainability by maintaining a competitive grant success rate and demonstrating the value and impact of CDTRP-supported research.	
Action 9.1	Increase member grant success by strengthening research services and refining supports to help researchers develop competitive, high-quality funding applications.	Research Services Platform
Action 9.2	Strengthen network-led grant development, focusing on cross-cutting priorities and advancing elements of the strategic plan.	Pan-network Management
Action 9.3	Design and operationalize a CDTRP framework to evaluate the processes, contributions, and outcomes of PFD engagement at the research project level.	PFD Platform

Objective 10	Expand national and international partnerships to amplify CDTRP reach and align efforts across the donation and transplantation ecosystem.	
Action 10.1	Build partnerships to strengthen research funding competitions.	Pan-network Management
Action 10.2	Build partnerships to strengthen strategic initiatives.	Pan-network Management
Action 10.3	Build partnerships to strengthen research training.	Education and Career Development Platform
Objective 11	Implement a long-term communications strategy that includes media, public relations, and digital engagement to support research awareness and uptake.	
Action 11.1	Build a communications strategy and goals to strengthen visibility and engagement through coordinated messaging and outreach.	Pan-network Management

GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Delivery of the CDTRP 2026–2030 Strategic Plan will be overseen by the Board of Directors. In line with the development of the not-for-profit structure, the Board will be expanding its membership to incorporate diverse expertise. It will continue to develop the structures and policies needed to support financial sustainability and stability, effective programs, and integration in the national research and innovation ecosystem. The CDTRP Board centers the principles of collegial governance, minimal hierarchy, consensus-building and respect, and aspires to decolonial governance models.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be coordinated through CDTRP's platform structure, with advisory, leadership, and staff roles aligned and grouped by platform to ensure clear responsibilities and operational coherence. Each platform will be responsible for advancing its relevant strategic objectives through defined action plans, with cross-platform coordination as needed. Annual operating plans and budgets, aligned to the five-year strategic framework, will enable ongoing adaptation, performance monitoring by the Board, and responsiveness to emerging priorities, while ensuring activities remain strategic, efficient, and financially sustainable. CDTRP will report annually to the community on progress against these objectives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to the development of our strategic plan. As a network built by and for our community, we relied on input from patients, families, donors, researchers, and partners to shape this plan. The strategic planning process was managed by Katie Bain, with support from Dr. Patricia Gongal, Dr. Lori West, and Dr. Sonny Dhanani. This document was designed by Amanda Chwelos. The full list of contributors is as follows:

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