

HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022

Irish Cancer Society Call Information

Research Call: Translational Biomedical Research- Areas of Unmet Need in Cancer

Application Deadline: Thursday 3pm 11th November 2021

Call document last updated: 17.09.21

Key dates:

Call Open	Thursday 16th September 2021
Intention to submit Deadline	Thursday 14th October 2021
PPI Information Session	Friday 15th October 2021
Deadline for applications	3pm Thursday, 11th November 2021
Irish Cancer Society external peer review	December 2021-January 2022
Right-to Reply Phase	January 2022
Charity Selection Committee	January/February 2022
HRB Application Deadline	Early March 2022
Joint Funding Committee Meeting	Early June 2022
HRB Board Meeting	June 2022
Applicant Notification	July 2022
Contracts Issued	From August 2022
Research Project Start Date	From September 2022

These dates are for guidance purposes only, as such, they are subject to change.

1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on specific aspects/requirements of the Irish Cancer Society funding call as part of the HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022. All other aspects of the call are covered in the 'Instructions to Applicants' document provided by the HRB (available on the Irish Cancer Society website).

Information in this document that is *additional to or different* from the 'Instructions to Applicants' document provided by the HRB include:

- Theme of the call
- Addressing Strategic Aims
- Eligibility Criteria of Principal Investigator
- Eligibility Criteria of Co-Applicants

- Eligibility Criteria of Collaborators
- Host Institution
- Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in application

It is very important that both this document and the 'Instructions to Applicants' document are read carefully.

- The Irish Cancer Society is a member of the Health Research Charities Ireland- HRCI (formerly Medical Research Charities Group), which was founded in 1998 with the aim of supporting charities in Ireland to increase both the quality and quantity of healthcare research being done in Ireland. The HRCI represents the joint interests of charities specialising in restoring health through medical research, diagnosis and treatment and, where possible, the prevention of disease.
- Since 2006, the work of the HRCI has been supported by the Department of Health through annual funding to the Health Research Board (HRB) for the co-funding of research projects with medical research charities. The HRB is the lead agency in Ireland supporting research linked to health and social care. Together the HRCI and the HRB operate an innovative joint funding scheme that allows members of the HRCI to support research of particular interest to specific patient populations, where they might otherwise not be in a position to finance the full cost of that research.
- HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme aims to fund researchers and research teams to conduct internationally competitive and innovative research in areas of strategic relevance to each individual charity. HRCI-HRB awards are up to a maximum total award value of **€300,000 for projects from 12 up to 36 months.**
- The Irish Cancer Society will run our own call based on our strategic priorities but will be using the standard application guidance and forms provided by the HRB.

****Please note: only one application per Principal Investigator to this scheme will be considered. Therefore researchers can only apply to one charity as PI.** There is an option to be a PI on one application and a co-applicant on another, provided the researcher can justify the time spent on each project should both reach final HRB panel discussions. The same project cannot be submitted to more than one charity in this scheme**

2. Overview of the process

A brief overview of the process is outlined in Figure 1 and below:

1. The Irish Cancer Society manages:
 - a. Applications Open-
 - The Irish Cancer Society defines aspects specific to their call as part of the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme.
 - Applicants are required to email the Irish Cancer Society (grants@irishcancer.ie) by Thursday 14th October notifying of their 'Intention to Submit', and indicating whether they will be attending the PPI information session. Please complete the 'intention to submit' form (available from the Irish Cancer Society website).

- The Irish Cancer Society will provide a Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) information session on Friday 15th October.
- Applicants complete the standard application form and documents provided by the HRB (available from the Irish Cancer Society website).
- b. Submission- Completed application documents are submitted to the Irish Cancer Society (by 3pm Thursday 11th November).
- c. Peer review- Eligible submitted applications are internationally peer reviewed.
- d. Right to respond stage- Applicants have the opportunity to respond to any peer-reviewers' comments.
- e. Shortlisting- A number of applications are shortlisted by the Society to be submitted to the HRB for review by the jointly-appointed HRCI-HRB Panel.

2. The HRB manages:

- a. Review- the shortlisted applications put forward by the Irish Cancer Society will be considered by a jointly-appointed HRCI-HRB Panel.
- b. Selection- Applications will be selected for funding by a jointly-appointed HRCI-HRB Panel.

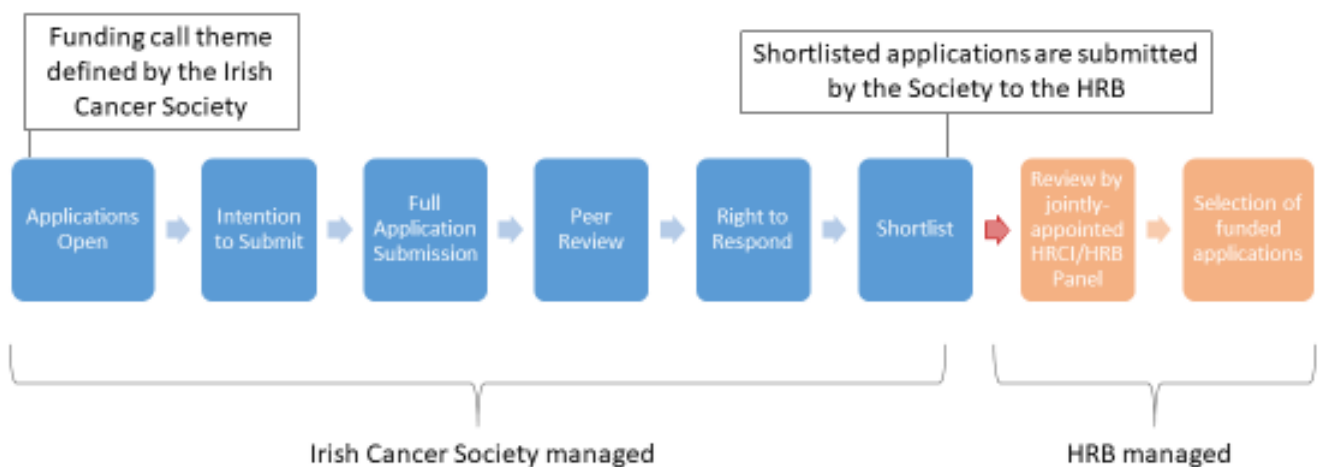


Figure 1- Overview of the process

3. Addressing strategic aims

It is imperative that applicants clearly articulate the relevance of their application in addressing the aims of the **Irish Cancer Society Strategy 2021 – 2025**, as this will be part of the core criteria evaluated as part of the initial selection process.

Information regarding the strategic aims and mission of the Irish Cancer Society can be found below:

Mission: The Irish Cancer Society is a community of patients, survivors, volunteers, supporters, health and social care professionals and researchers. Together, we are working to save lives and improve the lives of people affected by cancer in Ireland.

Vision: By 2025, 3 out of 4 Irish cancer patients will survive their diagnosis and everyone affected by the disease will have access to world-class treatment, care and support. In future, no one in Ireland will die from cancer.

One of the ways in which we will set out to achieve this ambitious vision will be to **increase our investment in world-class cancer research**. We will do this by funding research all along the cancer research continuum, including a focus on translational biomedical cancer research. In particular, we aim to target areas of unmet need and gaps in the current research landscape, to meet the needs of people affected by cancer which would not otherwise be addressed. We aim to support this by leveraging our funding to achieve more for the same, through increased partnership and collaboration.

While all cancers have inherent challenges for those who are affected by them, for this award the key priority will be to fund translational biomedical research projects which focus on cancers with significant challenges and unmet needs; this includes: paediatric cancers, rare cancers, metastatic disease, and poor response or poor outcome cancers. In addition, innovative research that seeks to develop new tools, technology or methodologies to aid in improving cancer outcome is strongly encouraged. This may include for example: immuno-oncology, liquid biopsy, next generation sequencing etc.

For details of the Irish Cancer Society's strategy (2020-2025), please see: [Irish Cancer Society Strategy 2020-2025 | Irish Cancer Society](#)

For details of the Irish Cancer Society Research Roadmap (2020 – 2025), please see the Irish Cancer Society [website](#).

4. Translational Research

For this award, the Irish Cancer Society will only accept translational biomedical research projects.

Translational research can be defined as “bench to bedside” or patient-focused research. The aim of translational research is to translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient benefit.

Discovery research involves gaining knowledge and the understanding of biological or disease-specific mechanisms. Translational research builds upon these discoveries and improves the translational potential of basic biomedical discoveries through testing pre-clinical studies. Discovery research projects will not be eligible for this award.

Please refer to the ‘HRCI-HRB Instructions to Applicants’ document for additional project eligibility criteria.

5. Theme of the call: Translational Biomedical Research – Areas of Unmet Need in Cancer

The theme of this call is Translational Biomedical Research, which will encompass a focus on areas of unmet need in cancer, as called out in our Irish Cancer Society Strategy and Roadmap. This includes:

- (i.) Prioritising those cancers in which there are significant challenges in terms of outcome i.e. metastatic cancers, rare cancers, poor response or poor outcome cancers;
- (ii.) Translational biomedical research focused on addressing the unmet needs of children, adolescents and young adults affected by cancer;
- (iii.) Novel and innovative approaches centred on improving early detection or the development of new treatment modalities. For example, research projects across key emerging areas in translational biomedical research such as immuno-oncology, next generation sequencing and liquid biopsies.

i. Metastatic, Rare Cancers and Poor Response or Poor Outcome Cancers

Advances in prevention, detection and treatment have revolutionised cancer medicine and survival. Outcome has significantly improved in Ireland in the last 30 years with 6 in 10 cancer patients now surviving at least 5 years after their diagnosis. However, the pace of progress has not been the same for every cancer. Globally and nationally survival has not dramatically increased in some cancer groups such as **metastatic disease, rare cancers and cancers with poor response or outcomes**. These cancers continue to have unmet needs in terms of lack of effective treatment options and/or lack of research capacity within the area, both of which contributes to inferior survival and outcome.

A key priority for the Irish Cancer Society is to ensure that all patients in our community benefit from world class cancer research and expertise, and that the gap in survival between different cancer groups is closed.

In line with this commitment the Irish Cancer Society as part of the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding scheme 2022, is inviting applications to support translational biomedical research in metastatic cancers, rare cancers and cancers with poor response or outcomes. Your proposal should address key questions in these areas, and must be translational biomedical research in nature i.e. directly focussed on improving outcomes for cancer patients.

Please also ensure that your application falls within the scope of the call as outlined in Section 1.2 of the 'Instructions to Applicants' document.

ii. Unmet needs of children, adolescents and young adults affected by cancer

Similarly, there are unmet needs associated with **cancers affecting children and young adults (aged 0 – 24 years)**. These cancers continue to have unmet needs in terms of lack of effective treatment options and/or lack of research capacity within the area, both of which contributes to inferior survival and outcome.

In line with this commitment the Irish Cancer Society as part of the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding scheme 2022, is inviting applications to support translational biomedical research in the area of childhood and youth cancer (aged 0 – 24 years). Your proposal should address key questions in this area, and must be translational biomedical research in nature i.e. directly focussed on improving outcomes for children or young adults affected by cancer.

Please also ensure that your application falls within the scope of the call as outlined in Section 1.2 of the 'Instructions to Applicants' document.

iii. Development of novel and innovative translational research tools to improve cancer outcome

To achieve the Irish Cancer Society's vision, improving treatments in cancer care have the potential to save thousands of lives in the years ahead. In recent decades, chemotherapy and radiation treatments have become more targeted, while new drugs have radically improved outcomes for some cancers. Immunotherapy, empowering the patient's own immune system to find and kill cancer cells, also offers greater hope for the future.

In support of this, the Irish Cancer Society will accept applications focused on the **development of novel and innovative translational research tools, with the aim of improving cancer outcomes**. Examples include (but are not limited to) projects focused on immuno-oncology, next gen sequencing and liquid biopsies. Your proposal should address unmet needs in cancer, and must be translational biomedical research in nature i.e. directly focussed on improving outcomes for cancer patients.

Please also ensure that your application falls within the scope of the call as outlined in Section 1.2 of the 'Instructions to Applicants' document. As per this document, your application cannot be solely 'technology development'.

6. Eligibility Criteria of Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator (PI) **will serve as the primary point of contact during the review process and during the award**. The PI will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and **has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract governing the award**.

6.1. The Principal Investigator must:

- Hold a post that covers the duration of the award in a **HRB approved research institution** in the Republic of Ireland as an independent investigator, or
- Be a contract researcher recognised by said Research Institution as an independent investigator who will have a dedicated office and research space for the duration of award, for which he/she will be fully responsible, or
- Be an individual who will be recognised by said Research Institution upon receipt of the HRCI-HRB award as a contract researcher as defined above. The Principal Investigator does not necessarily need to be employed by said Research Institution at the time of the application submission

The Principal Investigator must demonstrate that they have the skills, knowledge and supports necessary to direct the proposed research and to be actively engaged in carrying the research through to completion. Generally, this means that the PI will:

- i. Show appropriate evidence of expertise matched to the nature and context of the project;
- ii. Show evidence of achievement as an independent researcher in their chosen field by:
 - a. Demonstrating a record of research output, with at least three publications of original research in peer reviewed journals. Where appropriate, they should also provide evidence of other outputs such as published book chapters, reports to government and/or any other relevant outputs that have resulted in a significant impact in their field.
 - b. Demonstrating a record of independence by showing that they have secured at least one peer-reviewed research grant for a research project(s), as either the lead applicant or a co-applicant. Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries will not be considered in this regard.
- iii. Show evidence that they possess the capability and authority to mentor, manage and supervise less experienced researchers and to manage relationships with co-applicants, collaborators and the host institution.

Where an applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review. The HRCI-HRB will contact the Principal Investigator in the event that this situation arises.

****Please note: only one application per Principal Investigator to this scheme will be considered. Therefore researchers can only apply to one charity as PI. There is an option to be a PI on one application and a co-applicant on another, provided the researcher can justify the time spent on each project should both reach final HRB panel discussions. The same project cannot be submitted to more than one charity in this scheme****

7. Eligibility Criteria of Co-Applicants

The eligibility criteria for co-applicants is outlined in Section 2.2 of 'Instructions to Applicants'.

For the Irish Cancer Society call if a co-applicant is receiving funding then they must be based in the Republic of Ireland.

8. Eligibility Criteria of Collaborators

The eligibility criteria for collaborators is outlined in Section 2.3 of 'Instructions to Applicants'.

For the Irish Cancer Society call if a co-applicant is receiving funding then they must be based in the Republic of Ireland.

9. Host Institution

Information on the Host Institute can be found in Section 2.6 of the 'Instructions to Applicants'.

For the Irish Cancer Society call, the Host Institution must be located in the Republic of Ireland.

10. PPI in the application

The Irish Cancer Society is dedicated to putting patients, families, carers, survivors, supporters, and the public at the very heart of what we do. Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in the research process ensures that research is meaningful and of benefit to those affected by cancer.

In line with this commitment, it is **mandatory** that all applicants include PPI in their application to the Irish Cancer Society.

PPI can be involved at any stage of a research project, from development and design to interpretation and dissemination. It is expected that applicants will integrate PPI into all aspects of their projects, as early as possible. Public and Patient Involvement at application stage is strongly encouraged. PPI members can be included in the application as co-applicants or as collaborators, depending on their role; a separate CV template is available for PPI members.

To assist with the PPI element of your application, please email grants@irishcancer.ie and we can provide two case studies as strong examples of PPI in applications. To further support the PPI aspect of applications we will be holding a PPI webinar/Q&A session on the 15th October, open to those applicants who email grants@irishcancer.ie with their 'intention to submit'. Please indicate in your intention to submit email whether you will be attending. The Irish Cancer Society will provide specific help and advice on PPI to applicants when requested, where we have capacity.

See Section 2.5 of the 'Instructions to Applicants' document for more information on the PPI aspects of the application.

If you require further information or guidance on including PPI in the application please contact grants@irishcancer.ie

11. Submission

All applicants must email grants@irishcancer.ie with the completed 'Intention to Submit', form by Thursday 14th October 2021. This is to ensure that the peer reviewers identified by the Irish Cancer Society will be best suited to review your application.

All full applications must be submitted by email to grants@irishcancer.ie by 3pm Thursday 11th November 2021.

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that applications are completed in full and all the necessary documentation is received by the Irish Cancer Society on, or before the closing dates indicated. Once you have submitted your application, you cannot edit or re-submit it.

12. Checklist for submission

For all applications (Thursday 14th October):

Intention to Submit form	
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For all applications (3pm Thursday 11th November):

Part B1 Application form	
Part B2 Gantt chart	
Part B3 Figures supporting project description (1 document)	
Part D1 Signature pages for principal investigator	
Part D2 Signature pages for Host Institution	

Where applicable:

Part C1 Collaboration Agreement Form	
Part C2 Infrastructure Agreement Form	
Part C3 Signed Warrant for international Host Institutions only (N/A for Irish Cancer Society applications)	
Part C4 Letters of support	
Part D1 Signature pages for co-applicants	

13. Contact Details

All enquiries & correspondence relating to this scheme should be addressed to:

Dr Niamh McCabe, Translational Research Coordinator, Irish Cancer Society

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie