# Cancer Research Seed Funding Award 2024

## Guidelines for Applicants

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Overview

The Irish Cancer Society Seed Funding Award offers motivated cancer researchers the opportunity to drive forward a research project which has the potential to be both highly competitive and impactful.

The award is intended to support research activities which, without seed funding, would not have otherwise been possible. Successful proposals awarded seed funding will a) advance **research** capability, b) inform social, economic, and political **policy**, or c) further cancer **service** provision at local and national levels.

Successful applicants will be expected to provide reports to the Irish Cancer Society during and upon completion of their project, highlighting the learnings and impact of this award on their research career development.

### 1.2. Indicative Timelines

| Milestone | Date* |
|---|---|
| Grant Call opens | Thursday 11th July 2024 |
| **Application Deadline** | Thursday 22nd August 2024, 3pm |
| Review | September 2024 |
| Awardees Announced | Late-September 2024 |

*Please note: the above dates are provisional and are subject to change at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

## 1.3. Aims & Objectives

The **aims** of the Cancer Research Seed Funding Award are to:

- Support activities necessary to evolve* an existing research project, or stimulate a new research project, to a point where it can be considered competitive for leveraging large-scale extramural funding.
- Support the career development of the researcher.
- Foster national and international collaborations to promote cancer research innovation in the Republic of Ireland.
- Create meaningful impact for people who are affected by cancer by furthering the cancer research knowledge base, examining current clinical care practices or policies, and contributing to future policy or service provision.

The **objectives** of the Cancer Research Seed Funding Award are to stimulate research development, inform policy, and advance cancer service provision. As such, to demonstrate the sustainability of the proposed research, it is expected that at least one of the following will occur within 12 months of the completion of the seed funding period:

a) **Advance research capability**- a competitive proposal for a sizable research project will be submitted to an external funding organisation.
b) **Inform social, economic, and political policy**- a policy document likely to significantly impact cancer care, services, relevant laws, or strategic government policy will be completed.
c) **Further cancer service provision at local and national levels**- a cancer service evaluation technical report/monograph will be completed with guidance on service improvement and its operationalisation locally and nationally.

*Please Note: This award is intended to support a distinct set of research activities which, without seed funding, would not have otherwise been possible. Applications should not seek funding to simply extend or further finance an existing, previously funded project or doctoral research programme

## 1.4. Funding and Duration

Each lead applicant may only be listed **on one application** for this award. Applicants can apply for funding up to a maximum of **€75,000** for a project of **12 to 24 months** in duration

There are **two** awards available in 2024:

I. One award will provide up to €75,000 seed funding for a **Survivorship** research project, which is open to any cancer type or affected population groups.

II.     One award will provide up to €75,000 seed funding for a **Translational** research project focused on **Children, Adolescent, or Young Adult (CAYA)** groups.

Please ensure that you have clearly outlined which award you wish to be considered for and are applying to the correct funding call stream. If you have a query regarding the stream of funding you should apply for, please get in touch with the research team at grants@irishcancer.ie.

# 2. Eligibility
## 2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.

This award is open to cancer researchers of all backgrounds. This includes academic and clinical researchers (post undergraduate level), medical doctors, and professionals of social sciences, nursing, and allied health working with those affected by cancer. Further eligibility requirements are listed below.

## Lead Applicant:

**Minimum Eligibility Criteria**
Academic or clinical applicants are eligible to apply. There can only be one lead applicant.

Lead applicants must:

– be actively participating in translational, clinical or survivorship cancer research (post undergraduate degree) in the Republic of Ireland
– show a demonstrable commitment to cancer research.

Medical doctors must:

– be a qualified medical doctor, registered with the Irish Medical Council
– be working in an oncology-based discipline* **.

Nurses and Allied Health professionals must**:

– be a qualified nurse or allied health professional registered with CORU or the relevant professional body (e.g. Psychological Society of Ireland, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)

Eligible lead applicants **must not**:

– be PhD students seeking a top up of funding to cover doctoral research project costs or stipend.

*Eligible **Oncology-specialist** fields include (but are not limited to):

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Haematology
- Molecular medicine/Pathology
- Psychiatry
- Paediatrics
- Gynaecology
- Palliative Medicine
- Medical oncology
- Geriatric oncology

**Please note: Eligible candidates must spend the vast majority, if not all of their time focusing on cancer care.

## Mentor:

Applicants with fewer than 5 years of post-doctoral research experience are required to nominate an academic mentor. Clinical applicants also require a mentor if they have fewer than 5 years post-doctoral research experience or do not possess a contract at an approved host institution.

The role of the mentor is to provide guidance and support in terms of the academic aspects of the research award, such as grant administration, laboratory, technical or other healthcare expertise (nursing, dietetics, physiotherapy etc.) that may be required by the applicant during the duration of the award.

Mentors should be an established senior researcher with a track record in research, for example, a history of principal investigator roles, history of grant awards, involvement in clinical trials, research supervision, national or international research partnership development, presentation at national or international conferences, etc.

**Minimum Eligibility Criteria:**
At a minimum, mentors must meet the following criteria:

– Must hold a post either permanent or on a contract basis, for the entire duration of the research project, at a host institution in the Republic of Ireland. This must be listed as an approved host institution on the Health Research Board's website.

– Possess a PhD or equivalent* in an academic field appropriate to the proposed project.

– Have a minimum of five senior authorships (first, joint-first, or last) in peer-reviewed academic publications.

\* PhD equivalence is defined as at least three or more senior (first, joint-first, or last) author publications in peer-reviewed academic journals (in addition to minimum authorship requirements above) **OR** 4 years' full-time research experience post-primary degree. In such instances, candidates should contact grants@irishcancer.ie before applying.

## 2.2. Institution Eligibility

The host institution is the organisation which receives and administers grant funding and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of awards. In order to be eligible to apply for funding, a proposed host institution must be based in the Republic of Ireland and must be listed as an approved host institution on the Health Research Board's website.

Applicants conducting research out of non-approved sites (e.g. hospital) must nominate an approved host institution and all finances must be managed by this institution. We recognise that not all hospital-based cancer researchers, i.e. doctors, nurses, or allied health professionals, will be affiliated with a HRB-approved host institution. In such cases, award agreements will be made directly with the nominated mentor's host institution.

Please contact the Society with any queries regarding institutional eligibility (grants@irishcancer.ie).

## 2.3. Eligible Research Areas

This award is intended to support a distinct set of research activities which, without seed funding, would not have otherwise been possible. Eligible applications should propose research activities necessary to evolve an existing research project, or stimulate a new research project, to a point where it can be considered competitive for leveraging large-scale extramural funding. Applications should not seek funding to simply extend or further finance an existing, previously funded project or doctoral research programme.

There are **two** awards available in 2024.

I.   Applicants seeking seed funding for a **Survivorship** research project are eligible to focus on any cancer type or affected population groups.

II.  Seed Funding applications for **Translational** research projects must focus on Children, Adolescent, or Young Adult (**CAYA**) groups.

In addition to these classifications, all proposals must be aligned with the Irish Cancer Society Strategy (2020-2025) and the Society Research Roadmap. Proposed projects may be aligned with any of the following areas:

a. Translational Biomedical

b. Clinical trials

c. Survivorship

d. Strategic Priorities

**<u>Research Theme Details:</u>**

- **Translational Biomedical** research can be defined as 'bench to bedside' or patient-focused biomedical research, the aim of which is to translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient treatment. Research in this area will build upon basic biological discoveries and improves their translational potential through pre-clinical studies. Much of the outputs of translational research naturally merge into trials, the next area of focus. Please note, applications in drug design, SAR (structure–activity relationship) analysis, drug screening or basic biomedical research will not be considered at this time.

- **Clinical trials** are organised investigations in people to examine the benefits of new approaches to treatment and care. For example, looking to see if a new medicine can improve survival for a particular form of cancer. As well as funding these drug-based trials (so called IMP trials), the Irish Cancer Society is also interested in funding non-drug-based trials (non-IMP trials) in areas such as diagnostics, technology, radiotherapy, surgery, psycho-oncology, exercise, nutrition, and combinations of these.

- **Survivorship** covers the period from diagnosis to treatment outcome (including palliative and end-of-life care). Survivorship research seeks to improve the care and outcomes experienced by people living with and beyond cancer. Including: prevention and early detection of recurrent cancer; long term effects of cancer and its treatment; quality and experience of treatment and care; psycho-social effects of cancer and its treatment; self-management; health information and literacy; genetic risk and counselling; physical and practical needs e.g., financial, employment, mobility; etc.

- **'Strategic Priorities'** is a crosscutting theme, which seeks to specifically foster and grow research into areas of high unmet need in cancer. For example, cancers which have not benefited from the huge strides in outcome seen in some malignancies (metastatic disease, rare cancers and cancers with poor response or outcomes); the unmet needs of children, adolescents, and young adults affected by cancer; tackling misinformation and disinformation in cancer; addressing the needs of under-represented groups of people (e.g., Travelling community, ethnic and language minority communities, migrant communities, communities with socio-economic or mental health challenges, or any other socially excluded group).

**Intervention Development Projects:**

If considering an intervention development study, proposals should favour a single development phase rather than attempting to complete the entire development life cycle within a single project. The proposed stage of development must appropriately align with any previous development phases completed prior to this application.

Applicants should not attempt to develop a novel intervention where a similar intervention already exists, unless there is robust justification of need. If considering a complex intervention, please refer to the Medical Research Council's Framework for Developing and Evaluating Complex Interventions or similar for guidance.


**Research Objectives:**

It is expected that within 12 months of the completion of the seed funding period, eligible research proposals will result in at least one of the following:

a) **Advance research capability**- a competitive proposal for a sizable research project will be submitted to an external funding organisation.
b) **Inform social, economic, and political policy**- a policy document likely to significantly impact cancer care, services, relevant laws, or strategic government policy will be completed.
c) **Further cancer service provision at local and national levels**- a cancer service evaluation technical report/monograph will be completed with guidance on service improvement and its operationalisation locally and nationally


If you are unsure if your proposed research programme is eligible, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie.


## 2.4. Public and Patient Involvement

The Irish Cancer Society is dedicated to putting patients, families, 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. PPI can be involved at any stage of a research project, from development and design to interpretation and dissemination.

In line with this commitment, it is expected that all applicants include a detailed PPI plan (and the **associated minimum €1,000 budget allocation**) and sharing of research findings plan within their application. **It is strongly recommended that applicants read Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research' Guidelines prior to beginning work on an application.**

## 2.5. Research Impact

Ensuring that the research funded by the Irish Cancer Society creates an impact has always been a key priority to the Society. In line with our current strategy 2020-2025, from 2021 and beyond, the Irish Cancer Society will place a greater focus on maximising and measuring the impact of the research that the Irish Cancer Society funds through our grant schemes. Research impact refers to the potential real-life implications that the research has beyond the lab or academia.

Applicants are required to complete an Impact Plan as part of the application process. The Research Impact Framework (RIF) is a guide on research impact and how to monitor it for those applying for funding from the Irish Cancer Society, and for grant holders who are successful in securing a grant. It is strongly recommended that the RIF is consulted when completing the impact plan and it is included at the end of this document (**Appendix 3**).

# 3. Application Procedure
## 3.1. Application Overview

This is a one stage application process. Once your application has been submitted, an expert international review panel, comprised of scientific/clinical expert reviewers, will evaluate the application submissions. Reviewer feedback will be made available to all applicants on request.

## 3.2. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted through the Irish Cancer Society online grant management system. To submit an online application, you are required to register at the following address: https://grants.cancer.ie. When registering, please fill out all fields on the registration form.

**Please note**: We recommend that you use a **non-HSE email address** when creating this application to avoid any security issues when receiving correspondence from the grant tracker online system.

When you enter your login details, you will be directed to the portal homepage. From here, you can:

1. Update your basic information (please make sure all fields are completed)
2. Make a new grant application
3. Access previous grant applications
4. Manage any active grants

When you have entered your basic details, you will be able to create a new application from the portal homepage. Alternatively, select '**New Application**' from the '**My Applications**' tab. Next, click '**Apply**' for the Grant Type detailed as '**Cancer Research Seed Funding Award 2024**'.

# 4. Application Form

There are 9 sections outlined on the left-hand side of the page:

a) Application Outline
b) Lead Applicant Details
c) Mentor and Co-Applicant Details
d) Scientific Research Details
e) Plain English Summary & PPI Plan
f) Research Impact & Sustainability
g) Organisational Support
h) Supporting Documentation
i) Budget
j) Validation Summary

Saving your progress regularly is strongly recommended by clicking 'Save' as you go through the application form. Alternatively, the information will be saved when you click 'Save and Close'. By clicking 'Previous' you will be brought to the previous section and by clicking 'Next' you will be brought to the next section.

Mandatory sections are marked with a red circle icon. You will not be able to submit the application if these sections are incomplete.

**Further details on each section of the application form**

## a) Application Outline

In this section, you will be asked to provide basic information about your application. Input and save the information as required under the following headings:

- Proposed title
- Proposed start date (must begin by Q1 2025)
- Funding Period/Grant Duration (must be 12-24 months)
- Lead applicant(s) details
- Proposed host institution
- Research Classification and Themes

## b) Lead Applicant Details

In this section you will be asked to provide greater detail on the suitability of the applicant, including CV and a career development plan.

- **Applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Please upload your CV - completed using the template provided (the template is downloadable in this section on the online system or on the website). More information on each section is given in the template. Please only fill in relevant details, certain sections can be left blank if not applicable to the applicant's career stage. To upload your CV, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be in pdf

format, using the Irish Cancer Society Senior (>2 years postdoctoral experience) or Junior CV template.

- **Career Development Plan:** Please describe the applicant's short- and longer-term career goals and how the seed funding will contribute to these goals (**400 words max**). Please consider the following:
  - Applicant's career plans and ambitions.
  - How this award would be transformative to the applicant's career and establish them as a leader in research (please be as specific as possible).
  - What skills will be obtained by the applicant and how this will contribute to their career plans.
  - The next steps following the completion of the proposed research programme (i.e., longer-term career goals), including any funding body/bodies to which a future proposal(s) might be submitted.

## c) Mentor & Co-Applicant Details

To add a mentor* or co-applicant(s)*, you must search for them by email. If the mentor/co-applicant has already created an account, they will appear on the list. To add them, click 'Select', and the mentor/co-applicant will subsequently receive a notification via email. If the mentor/co-applicant does not appear on the list, they may not have an account. You can click 'Add a New Contact' and enter their name and email address. Once added, the mentor/co-applicant will receive a notification via email.

**Applicants with fewer than 5 years of post-doctoral research** experience or that do not possess a contract at an approved host institution are **required to nominate a mentor**. The following information should be provided in this section:

- Please detail why you have chosen your mentor and how they will support you over the period of the award (**300 words max**).
- **Mentor CV:** In this section you are required to upload the CV of your nominated mentor, completed using the Senior CV template, downloadable from this section. To upload the CV, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'.
- **Mentor Letter of Support:** In this section you are required to upload the letter of support from your nominated mentor, completed using the Letter of Support template. This template is available to download from this section of the online application, or from the call website. To upload the letter of support, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be in pdf format and should be no more than one A4 page in length.

*Please Note: A mentor or co-applicant(s) will be directed to confirm their participation through the online system. They will also be **required to approve the application prior to its final submission** to the Irish Cancer Society.

## d) Scientific Research Details

Please provide an overview of the proposed research programme to be covered by the seed funding award, including the basis for research, hypothesis and/or aims, and methods (**1,000 words max**). A description of how seed funding would facilitate the proposed research programme is also required (**300 words max**). You will also be asked to provide a Gantt Chart. More information on each of these sections is provided below. A separate textbox will be provided for references.

- **Basis for Research:** Please describe previously published research which forms the basis of your research proposal. Include details of any initial research carried out by the applicant and their research team that underpins the proposed research which will be facilitated by this seed funding.

- **Hypothesis and/or Aims:** Please outline the hypothesis, research questions, and/or aims of your research proposal. Please ensure that the aims are realistic and achievable in the funding period.

- **Research Methods:** Please describe and justify the methods, procedures, and experimental design you will use to conduct your research.

- For <u>quantitative</u> research, please provide statistical analysis plan for each section of your research proposal, including power calculations, sample sizes, details of control groups, etc. Additionally, discuss the recruitment plan, including feasibility of obtaining/accessing sufficient/required sample sizes of relevant participant groups.

- For <u>qualitative</u> research, please describe the planned approach. You may choose to discuss sample size and rationale, data collection methodologies (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and transcription procedures), analytic framework(s), and sources of bias (if appropriate). Additionally, please discuss the methodology and feasibility of recruiting the planned sample size.

- **Seed Funding Significance:** Please describe how this injection of seed funding will facilitate a research programme which would not have been possible without this award.

- **Gantt Chart:** You must upload a Gantt chart for the proposed research, which includes PPI activities. The chart must be uploaded in PDF format. Gantt charts should be restricted to a single page, where possible.

- **Research Images:** You may optionally upload up to five <u>relevant </u>research images. All uploads must be in PDF format. Please ensure that figures/ graphs are legible when uploading. Illegible figures may be difficult for the peer review panel to assess and could detract from your application.

## e) Plain English Summary & PPI Plan

In this section, please provide an accessible summary of the proposed study and your plan for co-developing and integrating clearly identifiable patient involvement. An expert PPI Panel will review this section. As such, please use plain, accessible language and if technical terms are used, they must be explained.

Patient involvement and partnership is a fundamental aspect of the application. It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research**' Guidelines prior to beginning work on this section.

- **Project Summary:** Please provide a detailed and structured plain-English abstract; detailing the following (**300 words max**):

    o Briefly outline the background of your research proposal, i.e., how and why your proposal came about and the context in which your proposal will take place.

    o Describe the specific problem, issue, or question that you are asking in your research proposal and describe how you are addressing it (including the variables being measured and why you have chosen these specific variables).

    o If relevant, outline who will participate in your research, how you intend to recruit them into your study, and what they will be expected to do if they take part.

    o Detail how the proposed research is relevant and important to people affected by cancer.

- **Involvement Plan:** Along with career development and cancer research experience, it is important that the successful applicant also uses the award to build relevant PPI networks in Ireland. By building these networks it is expected that the applicant will incorporate PPI in their current and future research, for example including PPI partners as part of future grant applications**.** In this section, please detail your plans to build on existing or establish new PPI networks in Ireland that are relevant to your research, and how you plan to include PPI in your research going forward (**300 words max**).

- **Sharing Research Findings:** As the largest voluntary funder of cancer research in Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society relies on the generous donations from the public in order to fund cancer research. A key priority is, therefore, to ensure that the public (including people affected by cancer) are kept up to date on research that is funded by the Society. In line with this, it is a requirement that all applicants produce a dissemination plan to include communication of their research to all relevant audiences, in particular the public and people affected by cancer. Please describe your plan for sharing your findings. This may include printed or electronic articles, presentations, public engagement events, social media content, etc. (**200 words max**).

## f) Research Impact & Sustainability

### I. Impact Plan
Please consult the **Research Impact Framework (RIF) (Appendix 3**) when completing this section.

Creating impact from the research that we fund has always been of great importance to the Irish Cancer Society. The purpose of including an impact plan at the application stage is to focus all projects on working towards achieving impact from the outset in line with the Irish Cancer Society's Strategic Objectives 2020-2025.

**In this section, you will be asked to provide an impact plan, detailing how the input of the seed funding will ultimately result in meaningful impact** for people who are affected by cancer. Therefore, it is the impact of the research beyond academia, i.e. the real-life benefit of the research and how this may improve the lives of people who are affected by cancer.

It is important that you are realistic; there is no need to overstate the impact of your research. Impact can be direct and indirect, and it may happen slowly over time. The Irish Cancer Society is aware of this and understands every project is different.

For the Irish Cancer Society, research impact is defined as **'research being used to bring about a positive change to the lives of people affected by cancer'**.

Therefore, thinking about the tangible impact of your research will provide you with a strong foundation when a grant gets underway. As such, plans should be as comprehensive and considered as possible.

An impact plan can be designed using the **sequence of steps outlined in the figure below:**

**1** Inputs → **2** Activities → **3** Outputs → ... → **4** Outcomes → **5** Goal

**What you need**

Resources required to do your research e.g. funding, staff, equipment.

**What you do**

Activities involved in doing your research, using the inputs e.g. data collection, analysis etc.

**3a. What you deliver**

What you produce from your research activities e.g. publications, training programmes.

**3b. Impact-Enabling Activities**

*How you drive outputs to outcomes.*

**What you change**

The meaningful change your research causes for those affected by cancer e.g. increased survival, quality of life, etc.

**What impact you have**

Working toward a unified goal.

Achieved through bringing about a series of changes to outcome.

**3c. Evidence of progress – from outputs to outcomes**

This is how you know the research is making a difference e.g. the development of a trial to further examine the research or the submission of a grant application to continue the research.

The recommended approach is to develop the impact plan by working backwards, from goal to inputs. As such, the impact plan should consist of:

> **5.** Goal
>
> **4.** Outcomes
>
> **3*a*.** Outputs
>
> **3*b*.** Impact-enabling activities
>
> **3*c*.** Evidence of progress
>
> **2.** Activities
>
> **1.** Inputs

**Please note:** Both the PPI and Scientific Review Panels will review this section. It should be written in a manner that is accessible to both reviewer groups.

Further details on each section of the impact plan follows:

| Section | Description & Information |
| --- | --- |
| *5.* Goal | This is the goal of the Irish Cancer Society. It is pre-determined by the <u>Strategy 2020-2025</u> and cannot be changed. This goal is that '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.' |
| | This is the goal that all research funded by the Irish Cancer Society should be working towards. Please note, you will not be required to add anything additional to this category of the impact section. |
| *4.* Outcome | To reach the above goal, a number of core changes or 'outcomes' must first be accomplished. These outcomes, identified through stakeholder consultation, will drive us toward our goal. |
| | You must select at least one outcome from the below list: |
| | — Treatments and diagnostics increase survival. |
| | — Treatments and diagnostics increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer. |

— Increased numbers of patients accessing clinical trials and early access programmes.

— Screening increases survival.

— Improved care and support increase survival.

— Improved care and support increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer.

— People affected by cancer feel more empowered in their cancer journey.

You may choose 'other' if you feel strongly that none of the other outcomes covers the potential outcome of your research. If 'other' is selected, then more detail will be required on the proposed outcome.

By targeting a strategic outcome, every funded study funded is contributing to the Society's goal.

| | |
|---|---|
| *3a*. Outputs | Planned outputs for the project e.g. publications, newsletters, a website policy document, patents, information leaflets, reports, and training programmes etc. (**150 words max**). |
| | These are just examples and are not a comprehensive list. The appropriate outputs will vary for each type of project and what outcome has been selected. |
| *b*. Impact-enabling activities | An output is unlikely to achieve a desired outcome on its own. Impact-enabling activities bridge the gap between **outputs** and **outcomes.** |
| | Please detail what activities need to occur for the outputs to impact the identified outcome. When will these activities take place? Information can be provided in narrative or bullet point format (**300 words max**). |
| *c*. Evidence of progress | Please detail how you will measure the effectiveness of impact-enabling activities i.e. how do you know your activity made a difference? What evidence can be used to show this? Indicators may be qualitative (descriptive or non-numerical) or quantitative (numerical) (**300 words max**). |

*2.* Activities    Please outline the activities that will take place as part of the research project. As a lot of this has been provided in detail as part of the methodology section of your application, a high-level summary of what will be done over the course of the funding period is sufficient. Bullet points may be used (**150 words max**).

*1.* Inputs    Please detail the resources needed for the project. As a lot of this has been provided in detail as part of your application, a high-level summary is sufficient. Bullet points may be used (**150 words max**).

**II. Sustainability**

In line with the objectives of the Cancer Research Seed Funding Award, the proposed project should stimulate research development, inform policy, or advance cancer service provision. As such, to demonstrate the sustainability of the research, it is expected that at least one of the following will occur within 12 months of the completion of the seed funding period:

a) **Advance research capability**- a competitive proposal for a sizable research project will be submitted to an external funding organisation.

b) **Inform social, economic, and political policy**- a policy document likely to significantly impact cancer care, services, relevant laws, or strategic government policy will be completed.

c) **Further cancer service provision at local and national levels**- a cancer service evaluation technical report/monograph will be completed with guidance on service improvement and its operationalisation locally and nationally.

**In this section, you will be asked to select <u>at least one</u> appropriate sustainability area below which relates to the planned output of your proposed research study:**

<u>Advance Research Capability:</u>

- Please describe and justify the next planned research development stage following completion of the seed funding period (**300 words max**).
- Please identify the research programme(s) and research funding body/bodies to which a future proposal(s) will be submitted should your current application be successful (**200 words max**).
- Please detail the eligibility criteria (including applicant eligibility) for the research programme(s) to which a future proposal(s) will be submitted. How will the Seed Funding Award contribute to your eligibility for the selected future proposal(s) (**200 words max**)?

Inform Social, Economic, and Political Policy:
- Please provide a thorough justification as to why this seed funding is relevant, identify the policy/service and relevant public and private bodies which will be impacted should your current application be successful (**350 words max**).
- Describe the steps for actioning/operationalising your policy document to the relevant public and private bodies to enact change (**350 words max**).
- The Irish Cancer Society recommends the involvement of knowledge users in the policy sustainability plans to ensure early and appropriate buy-in.

Further Cancer Service Provision at Local and National Levels:
- Please provide a thorough justification as to why this seed funding is relevant, identify the service(s) and relevant service providers (including any state bodies) which will be impacted should your current application be successful (**350 words max**).
- Describe the steps for operationalising your evaluation to deliver actionable change to cancer services in Ireland (**350 words max**).
- The Irish Cancer Society recommends the involvement of knowledge users in the cancer services sustainability plans to ensure early and appropriate buy-in.

## g) Organisational Support

The declaration of support template is downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website. To upload your letters of support, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society Declaration of Support template

I. **Host Institution Support:** Please upload a letter of support from the Head of Department at your HRB-approved host institution. The Head of Department should indicate that they support your application and that they will ensure your/your mentor's ability to take time away from, or adjust, your current work duties to accommodate the work required for this research project. On awarding of the funding, a contract will be made between the Irish Cancer Society and the institution at which you, the awardee, or your mentor works. The declaration of support should indicate that the Head of Department will facilitate this process.

II. **Employer Support:** All hospital-based applicants who are not affiliated with a HRB host institution are also required to upload a declaration of support from their manager demonstrating the organisation's support for the applicant to fulfil the requirements of the award. The letter should explicitly state that the applicant would be provided the necessary time and resources to accomplish the goals of the award, which includes covering any required backfill or other staffing considerations**.**

## h) Supporting Documentation

Please upload any supporting documentation relevant to your application. For example, if the proposed research* relates to a previously established body of work, please provide relevant documentation here.

*Please note: This award is intended to support a <u>distinct</u> set of research activities which, without seed funding, would not have otherwise been possible. Applications should not seek funding to simply extend or further finance an existing, previously funded project or doctoral research programme.

If supporting documentation is not applicable, please enter N/A, and proceed to the next section.

## i) Budget

All applications should include a detailed budget, with detailed breakdowns of costs and justification for all costs. The Irish Cancer Society does not cover indirect costs or overheads. **Please consult the Irish Cancer Society Budget Spending and Expenses Guidelines when developing your grant budget (Appendix 2**).

Approval of all budget items is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society. Any budgeted costs that do not adhere to spending guidelines risk rejection. We therefore strongly recommend you get support from the research office in your chosen host institution when preparing this budget.

**Please note-** while salary costs will be considered for the Cancer Research Seed Funding Award 2024, the nature of this award is to facilitate research activities that would not have ordinarily been carried out without seed funding. Therefore, the award is not intended to solely cover a researcher salary in its entirety.

Direct costs can be requested for the following budget categories:

| Budget Item | Details |
| --- | --- |
| **Salary** | Salary costs should be calculated using the most up-to-date HSE or IUA salary scales, as appropriate, and include employer PRSI and pension contributions. Applicable annual increments (e.g. 2.5%) per annum should be included. |
| | A breakdown of each salary cost is required, detailing and justifying a) the point, level, and scale used, b) the employer PRSI contribution, c) the employer pension contribution, d) any annual increments, and e) the FTE (full time equivalent) of each post. |
| | Scales: |
| | HSE: https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/benefitsservices/pay |
| | IUA: https://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/ |
| **Equipment** | The Irish Cancer Society will allow researchers to purchase small equipment items up to a maximum value of €3,000. Strong justification |

| | |
|---|---|
| | must be provided for each equipment item, and a rationale must be given as to why this item is not already available to the researcher at their host institution. Only equipment items that are specific to the research project will be allowed. All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.<br><br>Requests for large pieces of equipment will not be funded. The purchase of computer equipment will not be considered for this grant. |
| **Travel & Dissemination costs** | Costs associated with research dissemination may be budgeted e.g., poster printing, open-access publication costs, engagement events, conference attendance, etc. Include any dissemination-related travel and accommodation costs here. |
| **Running costs** | Running costs are costs associated with conducting the principal research activities e.g. materials and consumables, survey costs, travel for participants, transcription costs, etc. |
| **Training & Education costs** | Education and training for the researcher may be budgeted. This may include attending courses, workshops, professional development training, etc. Include any training-related travel and accommodation costs here. |
| **PPI costs** | A minimum provision of €1,000 must be budgeted for involvement activities.<br><br>Research participation costs (e.g. participant travel) should not be included here, as these form part of the running costs of the research project.<br><br>Please see Appendix 1- Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines, when developing a PPI budget. |

**Please Note:** justification of the costs proposed for each budget item is required. Please upload supporting images of estimated costs e.g. travel and accommodation costs.

## j) Validation Summary
The validation summary page will notify you of any incomplete sections. You will not be able to submit the application until all required fields are complete.

# 5. Submission of the Application

The application is ready for submission once the form has been validated on the validation summary page. This will also highlight any mentors/co-applicants who have yet to confirm their participation. Once the application has been validated, it may be submitted by the <u>lead applicant</u>.

The application will not be received by the Society until all signatories have approved it. All signatories must approve the application before the application deadline. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that signatories are given sufficient time to approve the application before the deadline.

**Applications must be received by the Society prior to the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

Application Checklist:

- ✓ Completed application form
- ✓ Applicant CV
- ✓ Mentor CV
- ✓ Declarations of Support (Mentor, Host Institution, Employer)
- ✓ Supporting documentation (if applicable)
- ✓ Gantt Chart

# 6. Application Assessment

The Irish Cancer Society bases its funding decisions on the recommendations of an external review panel. However, the Society withholds the right to reject any funding application at its own discretion.

Incomplete, ineligible, or late applications will be rejected by the Society and will not proceed to external review.

## 6.1. Conflicts of Interest

The Society endeavours to ensure that external reviewers are free of any conflicts of interest that might unduly bias the decision-making process.

## 6.2. Assessment Procedure

Applications will be reviewed by both a panel of international academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) **AND** a panel of experts by experience (PPI panel). Each reviewer will provide scores and feedback on each application, shortlisting the top applicants for consideration. Please note, the PPI reviewers will have access to the whole application but will not be asked to provide feedback on any of the scientific review sections, and *vice versa*. Both PPI and scientific reviewers will assess the 'Research Impact & Sustainability' section.

Sections of the application will be assessed in the following way:

| | PPI Panel | Scientific Panel |
|---|---|---|
| Application | • Plain English Summary & PPI Plan<br>• Gantt Chart<br>• Research Impact & Sustainability | • Lead Applicant Details<br>• Mentor and Co-Applicant Details<br>• Scientific Research Details<br>• Gantt Chart<br>• Research Impact & Sustainability<br>• Organisational Support<br>• Supporting Documentation<br>• Budget |

The Scientific Panel will not be formally assessing any of the PPI panel's sections, and *vice versa*. As such, it is vital that the sections reviewed by the PPI panel are written in **plain accessible English**. Failure to do this may result in the PPI representatives being unable to accurately score and provide feedback on these sections of your application.

The review panel will also be asked to provide feedback on the budget, which the Society will take into consideration. The approval of all grant budget items is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

## 6.3. Assessment Outcome

The deadline for applications is **3pm, Thursday 22nd August 2024**. Applications submitted prior to this deadline will be reviewed and notified of the outcome by email.

Review scores and comments will be collated, and all applications will be discussed at a review panel meeting. The review panel will select which applications should be funded. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email. Reviewer feedback will be available to all applicants.

# 7. Contact

If you require assistance with the online grant management system or have any questions about the grant call, including questions regarding initiative eligibility, please contact the Irish Cancer Society Research Department:

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie

FAO: Dr Sarah Tighe