



Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

I. DESCRIPTION OF CONSORTIUM

A. Membership

The Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium consists of representatives of the Department of Health and Children of Ireland, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety of Northern Ireland, and the National Cancer Institute of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

B. Origin

The Consortium was established as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the three governments, signed in Belfast in October 1999. This MOU was a result of detailed consultation between the three governments which recognised the fact that cancer was a major public health and health-care problem causing premature morbidity and mortality in all three jurisdictions and recognising that preventive and therapeutic strategies could most effectively be implemented utilizing an international and collaborative forum. The potential for such collaboration, particularly between the two Departments of Health on the island of Ireland, was enhanced by developments in the broader framework of relations, which were being devised under the terms of the Belfast Agreement.

C. Duration

Under the terms of the MOU, the Consortium will, in the first instance, exist for five years from the signing of the MOU.

II. MISSION

The Consortium's mission is to continue to intensify co-operation between the Department of Health and Children of Ireland; the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety of Northern Ireland; and the National Cancer Institute of the United States, in relation to cancer, that will lead to improved scientific programmes in their respective jurisdictions, including the areas of:

- Education and training
- Treatment and research
- Information dissemination
- Epidemiology
- Cancer prevention
- Surveillance
- Early detection
- Quality control
- Interactions aimed at enhanced public health and patient care

III. SCOPE OF CONSORTIUM

- A. Identify infrastructure improvements necessary for the island of Ireland to further cancer research and clinical cancer investigations
- B. Formalise and facilitate interactions between cancer research communities in the United States and the island of Ireland
- C. Develop joint programmes that will enhance the environment for clinical cancer research leading to improved patient care
- D. Develop educational exchange programmes for cancer personnel

IV. GOVERNANCE

- A. The activities comprehended within the MOU will be managed by the Consortium Board of Directors, which will initially consist of the Chief Medical Officer of Ireland, the Chief Medical Officer of Northern Ireland, and the Director of the National Cancer Institute who each may designate alternate members to represent them. The Chair will alternate annually between the Chief Medical Officers of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the management of the Board's activities will be the responsibility of the Chair for that period.
- B. While the Board will generally utilize the consensus method to obtain decision, there may be instances when a vote of the majority is required. Each Board member has one vote.
- C. There will be, at least, two meetings of the Board per year and communication between meetings will be transacted by means of conference calls between Board members at a frequency to be decided by the Board.
- D. The Board will submit an annual report to the participating departments.

V. ACTIVITIES

- A. The creation of the Consortium was to ensure the implementation and funding of programmes, projects and training that facilitate the objectives outlined in the MOU. In the first instance, the Consortium will identify and develop potential for co-operation in the following areas:
 - 1. The enhancement and co-ordination of cancer registries in Northern Ireland and Ireland
 - 2. The enhancement of informatics and other infrastructure improvements to support the conduct and co-ordination of clinical trials throughout the island of Ireland

3. Development of education/training and scholar exchange programmes
- B. This implementation plan outlines the two methods that will be used to establish, review and approve all Consortium-sponsored initiatives.
 1. **Working Groups:** The Board, at its discretion, will establish ad hoc working groups in areas designated under the MOU. The Chair, duration, responsibilities and membership of these groups will be agreed upon by the Board. Generally, the responsibility of these groups will be to stay abreast of needs and activities within their designated areas and to make recommendations to the Board on activities that will enhance the Consortium's objectives in that area. Proposals submitted by a working group should fully outline the proposed initiative, funding required (including staffing, supplies, travel, space and/or other resources required) and their recommendation for funding sources and/or cost sharing by Consortium parties.
 2. **Request for Applications:** The Board will be responsible for identifying targeted Consortium initiatives, where an open and competitive review and award process is desired. For each initiative, the Board will identify the scope of the project, funding available, size and scope of awards and the specific procedures associated with advertising the opportunity, application process and scientific/administrative review of the proposals. The Board may also decide to handle proposals made by the working group, in a competitive manner.

VI. PROJECT FUNDING GUIDELINES

- A. Proposals must fall within the areas of activity identified in the MOU.
- B. Projects must be consistent with policies and strategic cancer plans of the health departments of the partners.
- C. Projects must demonstrate the benefits to cancer research in all three jurisdictions or, serving as a pilot project in one jurisdiction, demonstrate potential for wider applicability.
- D. Generally, each partner will directly fund its share of each

project, keeping accountability for the use of funds within existing monitoring agencies at the funding source.

VII. BOARD APPROVAL PROCESS

- A. All proposals, irrespective of origin, will be submitted to the Board through its administrative unit.
- B. Members of the Board, after initial consideration, based on the guidelines outlined above and/or in the light of available resources or other relevant information, may decide to accept or reject any proposal. Alternatively, the Board may refer the proposal for further review and recommendation to an independent assessor, or refer it to the appropriate Department for action.
- C. Those who have submitted proposals will be notified of the Board's decision via a document bearing the Chair's signature, which will be prepared by the administrative unit.
- D. Successful applicants will be expected to report progress on their funded projects by way of written submission to the Board, at least on an annual basis or as otherwise requested by the Board.

VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND CONTACTS

(Note: Tasks/level of effort must be within NCI-funded level for this contract. Therefore, specific tasks should be coordinated through NCI.)

- A. The Board has a centralised record-keeping and administrative unit whose role it is to:
 - 1. Maintain centralised correspondence files
 - 2. Co-ordinate Board meetings and conference calls
 - 3. Write, distribute, and file Board conference call and meeting minutes
 - 4. Maintain and distribute budget spreadsheets
 - 5. Prepare correspondence as requested by Board
 - 6. Prepare and distribute annual report
 - 7. Manage project applications process

B. The Board operates a Help Desk/Information Clearinghouse to:

1. Collate pertinent educational opportunities for cancer investigators and students in Ireland, Northern Ireland and at NCI
2. Prepare relevant brochures to disseminate knowledge of programmes
3. Develop and maintain a Web site for Consortium Board to include education opportunities, and updates on information technology development, all-Ireland clinical trials group, cancer registries, Board activity, and proposal funding opportunities
4. Triage requests to appropriate authorities
5. Answer procedural questions
6. Track satisfaction of students and mentors in Scholar Exchange programme
7. Maintain demographic records of scholars in Scholar Exchange programme
8. Provide broker function between candidates and potential training programmes
9. Maintain activity log of all inquiries and status of requests
10. Report monthly to Board