



**Breakthrough Cancer Research**

**All-Ireland – Cancer Network (AllCaN) Programme Grant**

Programme Guidelines and Application Instructions

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **About Breakthrough Cancer Research**

Breakthrough Cancer Research (Breakthrough) is an Irish medical cancer research charity, which aims to inspire and enable financial support for exceptional research into cancer in Ireland leading to more effective treatments for patients in Ireland and Internationally. Breakthrough are committed to investing in research in the poorest prognosis cancers.

The mission of Breakthrough Cancer Research is 100% survival for 100% cancers. Breakthrough’s research strategy is to **increase research impact and capacity** and **research excellence** in poor prognosis cancers. We believe that improved survival from the poorest prognosis cancers can be achieved through increased research investment.

Established in 2012, our focus is on:

• funding world-class cancer research into the poorest prognosis cancers

• facilitating collaboration between scientists and clinicians across Ireland and Internationally

• translating lab discoveries into new effective treatments for cancer patients today, tomorrow and into the future

* enabling the education and training of future leaders in cancer research

Breakthrough funds cancer research that responds to current clinical challenges and offers a clear and demonstrable path to positive clinical outcomes. Research programmes funded by Breakthrough must focus on translating lab discoveries into new treatment opportunities.

Breakthrough are publishing its Research Strategy 2022-2027. We plan to significantly impact the survival rates of the poorest prognosis cancers - In twenty years, our aim is to double the Irish survival rates for people with poor prognosis cancers – making our survival rates among the best in the world. Key changes are that Breakthrough will to **narrow its focus to increase its’ impact** on the lowest survival cancers. We will continue our career development, collaborative and strategic funding programmes. Additionally, central to our research strategy 2022-2027 is the development of new research funding programmes aimed at maximising expertise and resource-building on the island of-Ireland through facilitating multidisciplinary team working towards improved patient outcomes.

# **KEY DATES**

#

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme Launch** | 27th April 2022 |
| **Informal Inquiries** | 27th April – 2nd June 2022 |
| **Deadline for Expression of Interest**  | 3rd June 2022, 12:00 Local time |
| **Notification of successful teams for full applications** | 30th June 2022, 12:00 Local time |
| **Deadline for submission of full proposals** | 12th September 2022, 13:00 Local time |
| **Interviews of successful teams & Formal Offer** | September/October 2022 |
| **Programme commences** | January 2023 |

# **THE ALL-IRELAND – CANCER NETWORK (AllCaN) PROGRAMME GRANT**

The All-Ireland – Cancer Network (AllCaN) Programme Grant is a new Breakthrough Cancer Research funding programme. This Programme Grant will **fund networks** of the **best scientists/researchers** at institutions across the Island of Ireland, to develop **new and innovative** approaches to improving cancer outcomes. Researchers will collaborate **across disciplines**, institutions, and as appropriate **across the four pillars** of prevention, detection, treatment and survivorship. The successful researchers will work together on a common goal, pooling their knowledge and resources to work together to eliminate barriers and to hasten the progression needed to improve patient outcomes.

# **AllCaN OESOPHAGEAL CANCER PROGRAMME GRANT 2023-2026**

Oesophageal cancer will be the focus of the inaugural AllCaN Programme grant (2023-2027). Oesophageal cancer impacts approximately 450 people annually in Ireland, and claims more than 400 lives every year. Incidence is increasing. While oesophageal cancer survival has improved over the last two decades, 5 year survival remains at 20%.

During 2017 to 2021, Breakthrough invested more than €1,000,000 in oesophageal cancer Research. To understand the Oesophageal Cancer Research expertise nationally, as well as the barriers and facilitators to making a real impact on survival from this cancer, Breakthrough organised the 2021 All-Ireland Oesophageal Cancer Symposium, with the theme of “Doubling Oesophageal Cancer Survival by 2040; Building a Roadmap” (April 27th 2021).

This cancer research network programme, the AllCaN Programme, was conceived as an outcome of this symposium, to overcome some of the barriers identified and to facilitate implementation of a roadmap proposed to double Oesophageal Cancer survival and half mortality. This programme will be up to a maximum value of €1,000,000 and will be awarded in Autumn 2022 to commence early 2023 over 3 or 4 years. As a charity, no overheads will be included.

# **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

This cancer research funding programme will be led by **three principal investigators**, a **Team leader** and **two co-leaders**, who are recognised as being **international experts** in their field, in academic institutions across the **island of Ireland.** They will use the core programme funding from Breakthrough to build a research programme and a network. A central tenet of this core funding is that it will be used to **leverage** funding from pharma, academic institutes, other charities and funding bodies. Another key element of this award will be maximizing innovation while minimizing bureaucracy. Breakthrough believe that this programme will advance scientific research in the interests of both today’s cancer patients and those who may develop cancer in the future

## **AllCaN PROGRAMME MISSION STATEMENT**

The Breakthrough AllCaN Programme Funding represents a new, focused effort to implement advances in Oesophageal Cancer research as rapidly as possible through the creation of a collaborative, translational cancer research network.

The most talented and promising researchers across Irish institutions will be assembled into an All-Ireland Research Network forming an optimal configuration of expertise needed to solve key problems in Oesophageal Cancer research and positively impact patients in the near future. This network will span multiple disciplines and utilise their expertise to address research questions in a coordinated way. The network will have mechanisms for sharing of resources and platforms (knowledge, talent, tools, technologies, etc.) across the team including existing platforms and resources as well as those to be developed, incorporating new methods and technologies into the research groups, and training and networking across the network. Mechanisms to foster collaborations within and among the network will be employed, an approach that promotes the sharing of information and a goal-oriented focus on measurable milestones of progress.

**In particular, the applicants must:**

**1.** Focus on addressing factors that have the potential to positively impact outcomes; decreasing incidence, improving detection and improving treatment. These may include improving prevention in high risk cohorts; (e.g. Tackling reflux disease (GORD) purposefully), prevention - support public health policy and incentives to encourage lifestyle changes such as tackling obesity and reducing smoking, Consolidation of a National Barrett’s programme, with a focus on standards, expert pathology, safe and audited delivery of the endotherapy (RFA/EMR) service, improving treatment efficacy, or identifying new treatment etc)

**2.** Present a plan for how the Network can create a National scientific group/plan with an Oesophageal Cancer focus – with attention on genomics, immunology and novel targets/drugs

**3.** Build an All-Ireland program (i.e., includes Team Principals from AT LEAST three different institutes), which brings together interdisciplinary research groups to answer questions that will significantly advance the field of Oesophageal Cancer research

**4.** Be integrated and cohesive, based on excellence and innovation, and be highly networked across the country and to include existing platforms and resources, as well as those to be developed;

**5.** Include mechanisms for sharing resources and platforms (knowledge, talent, tools, technologies, etc.) and developing or incorporating new methods and technologies;

**6.** Present innovative approaches and integrate advances from other fields or technologies;

**7.** Include training opportunities for the future generation of scientists and foster an entrepreneurial culture within the community;

**8.** Demonstrate engagement with industry including; areas of collaboration, sharing of resources and expertise, and provision of co-funding.

## **AllCaN MEMBER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**AllCaN Team Leader**: Leader is responsible for the intellectual direction of the proposed research and assumes administrative and financial responsibility for funds which will be paid to their institution.

**AllCaN Team Co-Leader**: Co-leader should be designated to assist in directing the scientific and technical work of the Team. A Co-leader will serve as an alternate contact person for the funders.

**AllCaN Team Principal Investigators.** Senior investigators, other than the Leader, Co-leader, who will lead a component(s)/subproject(s). The team must be All-Ireland in nature including Principals Investigators from AT LEAST three different institutes.

**Early career non-tenured investigators.** Early career non-tenured investigators (i.e. independent investigators who have completed their PhD no more than 10 years prior to the start of the research funding term), postdoctoral fellows, clinical research fellows, or any other researchers-in-training who are working under the direction of a scientific mentor (i.e., a Leader, Co-leader, or PI) may be included as members of the AllCaN Team.

**Collaborators.** A Collaborator is an individual who is not involved in the day-to-day execution of the research but whose role is to provide a specific service or expertise (e.g., access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.).

**Public Patient Involvement (PPI) Representatives.** Include individuals with personal experience of a health issue and/or informal caregivers. PPI Representatives are defined as individuals who are able to actively collaborate in the governance, priority setting, and conduct of research as well as in summarizing, distributing, sharing, and applying its resulting knowledge. PPI Representatives will enable the AllCaN scientists to see their research through the eyes of the target audience and integrate these perspectives into the direction of the AllCaN research.

## **ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY**

### **AllCaN Team Composition**

For your application to be eligible:

1. The Leader must be:

An independent researcher at an academic institution on the Island of Ireland. The Team leader must be an international expert with at least 10 senior author publications in oesophageal cancer research in the last 5 years, and have be awarded at least 3 independent grants in oesophageal cancer research in the last 10 years.

1. Co-Leader must be;

An independent researcher at an eligible institution. We encourage the Co-leader to be from an independent Institution, and preferably from a different regional jurisdiction than the Leader. The co-team leader must be an international expert with at least 10 senior author publications in oesophageal cancer research in the last 5 years, and have be awarded at least 2 independent grants in oesophageal cancer research in the last 10 years.

**3.** At least four team members (i.e., Principal Investigators, other than the Leader and Co-leader) should be included. These must be independent researchers, with at least 4 senior author publications in the last 5 years. Key personnel (Leader, Co-leader, and Principals) must be from at least two different provinces (teams must be multi-institutional).

**4.** Collaborators (up to 10) can be included who bring additional expertise or resources (e.g. policy makers, bio-statistics, industry, clinical trial etc)

**5.** At least one member must be a early career non-tenured investigator (within 3 years of being awarded their PhD.

**6.** At least one member should be a PPI Representative (oesophageal cancer patient/survivor and/or family member).

Networks may include international or private sector (for-profit organizations) team members. However, funding is restricted to work performed within All-Ireland eligible institutions.

# **APPLICATION DEADLINES**

Expressions of Intent (EOI) submissions must be received by **June 3rd 2022 at 12:00 (noon) Local Time. EOIs will be peer reviewed and those selected to submit a full proposal will be notified by June 30th 2022.** Full proposals for the Breakthrough AllCaN Programme Research Funding projects must be submitted by August 29th, 2022 at **12:00 (noon) Local Time.**

# **EVALUATION**

All AllCaN Programme grant applications will be **peer reviewed.** The full proposals will be reviewed for eligibility, relevance, overall excellence and potential patient impact as determined by the review criteria, by a committee comprised of the Breakthrough Scientific Advisory Committee and international peer review. Short listed teams will be invited for the face to face meetings with the review committee in September/October 2022. The AllCaN programme will commence in January 2023, and will run for a period of 3 or 4 years. Annual reports will be requested along with a mid-term review with the selection committee.

The following criteria will be considered when evaluating the AllCaN Team and applications:

**1.** Program Specific Requirements

a. Focus on addressing some of the major challenges identified as contributing to the poor outcomes of oesophageal cancer patients including;

* increasing oesophageal cancer incidence/prevention,
* gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD),
* late diagnosis,
* tumour heterogeneity,
* poor treatment response,
* orphan drugs and need for new treatments

b. Present a plan for how the findings can be translated into applications and clinical utility;

c. Build an All-Ireland program which brings together interdisciplinary research groups to answer questions that will significantly advance patient-focused oesophageal research and patient outcomes.

d. Embed PPI meaningfully within the team

e. Be integrated and cohesive, based on excellence and innovation, and be highly networked across the country and to include existing platforms and resources, as well as those to be developed;

f. Demonstrate engagement with industry including: areas of collaboration, sharing of resources and expertise, and provision of co-funding;

g. Include mechanisms for sharing resources and platforms (knowledge, talent, tools, technologies, etc.) and for developing or incorporating new methods and technologies;

h. Demonstrate leveraged funding, based on this core funding, for the programme of research;

i. Minimising funding for administration.

**2.** Scientific merit of the proposed research project and potential for the AllCaN Programme’s findings to be translated into applications and clinical utility;

**3.** Significance of the proposed research, i.e., whether it addresses a critical area that will be translated into improved patient outcomes;

**4.** Novelty of the hypothesis or methodology; present innovative approaches and integrate advances in other fields or technologies;

**5.** Opportunities to train the future generation of scientists and

**6.** Opportunity to foster an entrepreneurial culture within the network;

**7.** The Team Leader’s vision, leadership qualities and experience in managing research teams, willingness to collaborate, demonstrated ability to bring together and lead an interdisciplinary team of experts to a successful conclusion, and expertise in the field.

**8.** The Team Co-leader and Principals’ willingness to collaborate, research credentials, and unique contributions to the AllCaN research programme;

**9.** A clear commitment by the AllCaN Team that they will adhere to the data and resource sharing policies of the funders;

**10.** Likelihood that the research project will achieve its stated goals given the budget requested, institutional environments, and other resources available.

**11.** Whether the studies are designed to capitalize upon the unique populations and environments, specialized expertise, new concepts and perspectives, innovative methodologies, and/or emerging technologies that were available due to the multi-institutional collaboration; and

**12.** Whether adequate institutional and/or financial support exists to sustain the research project.

# **PROJECT TERMS**

## **Changes to application**

Applicants are not allowed to change the title nor the Dream Team Leader proposed in the EOI. While it is anticipated that the overall goals of the application will remain the same between EOI and Full proposal, projects will have an opportunity to incorporate input from the review committee.

## **Flow of Funds**

A rsearch agreement will be executed between Breakthrough Cancer Research and the AllCaN Team Leader’s Institution. The AllCaN Team Leader’s Institution will serve as the administrator of the research funds and hold responsibility for the distribution of the funds, management of the budget, and provision of progress reports. It is expected that the institution of the AllCaN Team Leader will enter into subcontracts with the institutions of the Dream Team Co-leaders, Principals, Investigators, and Collaborators, and assurances that these contractual agreements have been executed will be required prior to funding.

Breakthrough Cancer Research will initiate payment of funding to the AllCaN Team Leader’s Institution once contracts have been agreed. The AllCaN Team Leader must agree to commence the AllCaN Team research programme described in the proposal on or about the time the first research funding payment is received by the AllCaN Team Leader’s Institution. If the AllCaN Team Leader is unable to commence the Dream Team research project at that time the funders should be immediately notified. The AllCAN Team Leader and the Institution acknowledge and accept that subsequent funding is contingent upon the timely submission of progress and financial reports that are reviewed and found to be satisfactory by Breakthrough.

## **Budget**

The AllCaN Team may apply for support of up to €1 million over a three or four-year term. A detailed budget for the overall AllCaN Team research programme is required, along with separate budgets for expenses related to the research components conducted by each of the AllCaN Team Leaders and Principals. Budget expenses must be justified. Applicants are also encouraged to explore potential partnering and collaboration opportunities.

The research funds may be used for direct research expenses attributable to the proposed research. Travel expenses related to meetings of the AllCaN Team can be included. Salaries of researchers currently funded by their respective organizations or institutions, are not allowable expenses. Those employed specifically to work on the AllCaN Team Research Programme should be paid according to the appropriate salary scales of the institution in which they are employed. Expenses for PPI should be included. Should funding levels not be available or decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, the funders reserve the right to reduce, defer, or suspend financial contributions.

# **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The template for the Expression of Interest (EOI) is included in Appendix 1. Deadline for receipt of complete EOIs is 3rd June 2022, 12:00 Local time. The successful team(s) will be notified and invited to submit a full application by 30th June 2022, 12:00 Local time. Only those applicants having successfully passed the EOI stage may submit a full application (application template to follow). 29th August 2022, 12:00 Local time

# **Appendix 1: E****xpression Of Interest (EOI) AllCaN Research Programme**

**Requirements and check list.** Please **return** this check list with your EOI as part of a Pdf document. This document should be no longer than 25 pages in total.

**Deadline**: 3rd June 2022, 12:00 Local time. **Email to**: research@breakcancer.ie

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Section** | **Limits** | **Attached** |
| 1. **Team structure**
 |  |  |  |
| **Team Leader** | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| Grant history (total number and grant funding awarded) |
| Publication output: Total number peer-reviewed publications; list 5 most relevant peer reviewed publications (Vancouver style) |
| Area of Expertise |
| **Team Co-Leader** | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| Grant history (total number and grant funding awarded) |
| Publication output: Total number peer-reviewed publications; list 5 most relevant peer reviewed publications (Vancouver style) |
| Area of Expertise |
| **Team Co-Leader** | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| Grant history (total number and grant funding awarded) |
| Publication output: Total number peer-reviewed publications; list 5 most relevant peer reviewed publications (Vancouver style) |
| Area of Expertise |
| **Principal Investigators** (at least 4) | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| Grant history (total number and grant funding awarded) |
| Publication output: Total number peer-reviewed publications; list 5 most relevant peer reviewed publications (Vancouver style) |
| Area of Expertise |
| **Early career non-tenured investigator (if known)** | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Contact details (address, email, phone) |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| **PPI Representative** | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| **Collaborators** (up to 10) | Name, Contact details (address, email, phone) |  |  |
| Current Position |
| ORCID Number |
| Area of Expertise |
|  |
| **Document** | **Section** | **Limits** | **Attached** |
| * 1. **Proposal**
 | Title  | 30 words |  |
|  | Keywords | 15 words  |  |
|  | Duration of award (months; max 60) |  |  |
|  | Scientific Abstract | 300 words |  |
|  | Lay abstract | 300 words |  |
|  | Alignment with Breakthrough’s priorities | 250 words |  |
|  | Objectives | 1 page |  |
|  | Preliminary data | 1 page |  |
|  | Work packages (brief descriptions of methodology, milestones, novelty, partners) | 2 pages |  |
|  | Potential impact on patient outcome | 1 page |  |
|  |
| **Appendix 1** | EOI Requirement and Check list | 1 page |  |

**Applicant signature**

Signed Date