

**Breakthrough Cancer Research Health Economics and Policy Call 2024**

**Call for tender: Health Economic Analysis of Electrochemotherapy for the treatment of Skin Cancers in the Irish Healthcare System.**

**Call for Submission of Applications**

**KEY DATES**

**Launch** 31st July 2024

Informal Inquiries 10th September 2024

**Deadline for** Full application **23rd September 2024 14:00 (Irish Time)**

Peer Review Sept/Oct 2024

**Interviews/final selection October 2024**

**Terms of Reference**

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of this document, it is provided for information purposes only and as a guide to expected developments. It is not intended, and should not be relied upon, as any form of warranty, representation, undertaking, contractual, or other commitment binding in law upon Breakthrough Cancer Research (Breakthrough). Breakthrough Terms and Conditions of Research Grants shall govern the administration of Breakthrough grants and awards to the exclusion of this and any other oral, written, or recorded statement.

All responses to this Call for Submission of Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the applicant except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the application or as may be required under law.

**1. Introduction**

**1.1 About Breakthrough Cancer Research**

Breakthrough Cancer Research is an Irish medical research charity focused on cancer. We work to significantly impact the number of children and adults who can survive this disease. We invest in world-class research in Ireland and beyond to impact the quality of life (QoL) for people with cancer and save lives. We are particularly focused on improving outcomes for those cancers, which are poorly served by current treatment options.

In 2022 we launched ‘Making More Survivors’ - [Our Research Strategy 2022 - 2027](https://breakthroughcancerresearch.ie/our-research-strategy/) which sets out how, through research, we plan to significantly impact the survival rates of the poorest prognosis cancers over the next five years. We passionately believe in the power of research to transform cancer care and the patient experience, having already delivered new treatments with our find smart, fund fast approach.

Our focus on the poorest prognosis cancers means we need to urgently have impact to remove the disparity in cancer survival rates between the so-called ‘good’ cancers and ‘bad’ cancers. This strategy reflects our ambitious vision to strive for 100% survival for 100% of cancers through cutting edge patient-focused translational research at every point of the cancer journey. New diagnostics and better treatments are urgently needed. Building capacity and embedding research into the health system will increase the number of people who survive a cancer diagnosis and improve their quality of life during treatment and beyond.

Our core focus over the next five years of the strategy is to:

• Target greater research investment into the poorest prognosis cancers, which are poorly served by current treatments

• Accelerate the translation of lab discoveries into new effective treatments for people with cancer

• Facilitate greater collaboration between scientists and clinicians across Ireland and internationally

• Build expertise and capacity to move from bench to bedside and from cancer patients back to the laboratory

• Focus on keeping the patient at the centre of all of our activities

This programme will further drive translation of patient-focused cancer research into national policy and into the clinic in Ireland.

**2. Breakthrough Health Economics and Policy Grant 2024 Programme Details**

**2.1. Background**

Electrochemotherapy (ECT) is a locally ablative tumour treatment. The principle of ECT is based on the local application of electrical pulses to increase cell permeability allowing normally poor or impermeable chemotherapeutic drugs to enter the tumour cells, without affecting healthy tissue surrounding the lesion. Recently, ECT in combination with calcium is being investigated for the treatment of tumours.

ECT has been approved for many cutaneous tumours and skin metastases. The first prospective randomised control trial comparing ECT against surgical excision, the standard of care shows excellent efficacy of the treatment in the control of primary Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and it demonstrates a durable response of this treatment on over 90% of lesions treated after 5 years of follow up. Electrochemotherapy is a standardized procedure for the treatment of superficial metastases of melanoma resistant to other treatments.

Skin cancer is the most common cancers in Ireland with approximately 13,000 cases diagnosed annually. Figures from the National Cancer Registry of Ireland predict that this number could double by 2045. Both non-melanoma and melanoma skin cancers affect all socioeconomic classes, ethnic groups and age categories. Given the increasing incidence, and number of recurrent lesions, there is an ever-increasing burden on healthcare systems. Survivorship post-treatment is very important. Survivorship includes both physical and psychosocial side effects following treatment, which can be disabling and often permanent. However, ECT has been shown to have superior scar outcomes and overall equivalence to surgical excision. High patient satisfaction was observed for those treated with ECT without any additional cancer worry.

The European Standard Operating Procedures of Electrochemotherapy were established in 2006 for the treatment of cutaneous and subcutaneous tumors, and were updated in 2018. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), in the United Kingdom, has recognized electrochemotherapy as an integral part of the multidisciplinary treatment of patients with skin metastases of nonskin origin and melanoma (NICE Interventional Procedure Guidance 446). Currently, ECT is not available to all eligible patients nationally in Ireland.

Even though the use of electrochemotherapy in the treatment of skin melanoma and basal cell carcinoma has been accepted in clinical practice, evidence on its cost-effectiveness in this indication is sparse. This represents a gap in the evidence. Therefore, there is a need to investigate whether the use of electrochemotherapy in this patient population is cost-effective for the Irish health care system, and whether the overall cost of the procedure is acceptable.

**2.2. Aim and Scope**

Health Technology Assessments (HTA) are important to inform treatment decision making and support health policy and reimbursement decisions nationally and internationally.

The aim of the first Breakthrough Health Economics and Policy Call 2024 is to call for applicants to submit proposals to perform a Health Technology Assessment of ECT for skin cancer treatment in the Irish Healthcare System.

The Breakthrough Health Economics and Policy Call 2024 forms part of our Research strategy [Our Research Strategy - Breakthrough Cancer Research](https://breakthroughcancerresearch.ie/our-research-strategy) to ‘Make More Survivors’ of cancer through research and to facilitate the translation of cutting-edge cancer innovations, essential to improve early diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship (recovery and patient experience) into clinical practice and national policy.

**2.3. How to apply?**

All applications must be sent via email to**research@breakthroughcancerresearch.ie****,** before the closing date of **23rd September 2024 at 14:00 (Irish Time).**

Applicants must complete the application form and provide the supporting documents for the application. All the call related forms can be accessed on the [Breakthrough website Funding information section](https://breakthroughcancerresearch.ie/funding-information/). ***NOTE: INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ASSESSED.***

**2.4. Who can apply?**

This programme is open to independent researchers with proven expertise in Health Economics and in conducting Economic evaluations, including Health Technology Assessments.

Applicants are not required to hold a permanent position to apply but do need to have a contract with the host institute for the duration of the grant application. A **letter of support** from the host institution confirming support and employment status will be required from applicants without a permanent position.

Funding for this grant programme will be provided to take place at any University in the Republic of Ireland currently engaged in health economic evaluations.

**2.5. Research team**

The research team will comprise of a Principal investigator who will have overall responsibility for the management of the grant application. It is encouraged to include co-applicants and collaborators, including Public Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) partners to a maximum of **three co-applicants** and **five collaborators**.

**Note:** Individuals should choose to participate as either a lead applicant or co- applicant or collaborator for this particular grant programme.

**2.6. Funding**

There will be one award up to a maximum value of **€50,000** for the maximum **duration of 12 months**. All awards are made directly to the applicant’s host Institution.

**2.6.1. Fees and salaries**

The budget requested should **not** **include postgraduate fees**. Salary remuneration across the lifetime of the grant will be considered.

**2.6.2. Materials and consumables**

Costs of all materials and consumables must be uniquely and unambiguously identified with the proposed research programme and justified. No personal equipment eg. Laptops or laboratory equipment can be purchased as part of this award.

**2.6.3. Travel**

Only travel costs for journeys directly related to the progress of the research programme may be requested as a direct cost on the research grant. The applicant should outline the details of travel expenses directly related to, for example, conferences, scientific collaboration on the research programme, or learning special research techniques. Where possible, please supply the conference name and location. In the case of working visits, the rates sought for subsistence and other allowances may be no more than those which the research body’s permanent staff may claim.

**2.6.4. Publication costs**

Costs for publication of peer-reviewed research findings may be requested as part of the Breakthrough Health Economics for Policy Call 2024. All requests must be justified.

**2.6.5. Overhead costs**

Consistent with all other grant awards, Breakthrough will not pay overheads or indirect costs associated with this grant award.

**2.6.6. Other funding sources**

Breakthrough will not fund research proposals which have already been funded by another funding body. Please provide details of all other financial support available for this or other similar projects, and if you have submitted this application or a similar application to another funding body, please provide details on the project title, funding body and the amount of the award.

**2.7. Duration**

The Breakthrough Health Economics and Policy Call 2024 award is for a maximum **duration of 12 months**.

**2.8. Research Body Requirements**

For the duration of the award, the space and infrastructure required to enable the research programme to be undertaken should be made available by the host institution where the Applicant will be registered.

**2.9. Ethical approval**

The successful team will be responsible for securing ethics approval from the relevant ethics committees.

**2.10. Submission**

A lead applicant/the Principal Investigator will apply. Co-applicants and collaborators are encouraged but to a maximum of three co-applicants and five collaborators. The lead applicant will submit the application on behalf of the research team to **research@breakthroughcancer.ie****.** Completed applications must be submitted by **23rd September 2024 14:00 (Irish Time). Applications cannot be submitted after this deadline**.

**2.11. Proposal Review Process and Evaluation Criteria**

* Applications **will not** be assessed if they are **incomplete** or received after the advertised closing date.
* Completed applications will be assessed by a panel of reviewers, including public patient involvement (PPI) reviewers. The panel will consist of a number of reviewers with experience of similar review processes.
* Shortlisted candidates may be interviewed.

**Breakthrough reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.**

**3.0 Award Management**

**3.1 Reporting Requirements**

Breakthrough has stringent requirements for the reporting on awards that it makes Individuals who hold the primary responsibility for reporting and who fail to comply with reporting requirements, run the risk of having their grant payments suspended and their eligibility to apply for funding in forthcoming Breakthrough calls affected. Reporting is inclusive of annual reporting, sharing of research outputs and the completion of a researcher snapshot. There will be a final reporting requirement for this grant programme.

**3.2. Acknowledgement of Funding**

All researchers awarded funding from Breakthrough must follow the Guidelines for Acknowledgement of Funding.

**3.3. Further information**

Informal inquiries should be made to **research@breakthroughcancer.ie****.**

**4.0. Declaration**

It should be noted that submission of an application represents agreement from the applicant to the Breakthrough Terms and Conditions of Research Grants. The applicant must understand that acceptance of the terms and conditions will be required before funding is provided.