



Health Research Board Corporate Strategy 2007 - 2011

Published by:
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ISBN: 978-1-903669-12-9

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1. Message from the Chairperson

It is my pleasure to present the organisation's Corporate Strategy for the period 2007–2011; this has been prepared as required by and within the terms of reference of the HRB's statutory instrument.

The HRB's vision, as articulated in the Corporate Strategy, is to enable a world-class health system in Ireland through excellence in research and to contribute actively to the knowledge economy. In this document we outline how the HRB aims to realise this vision over the next five years, working closely with partners in the health service, the academic sector and the economic development agencies.

The Corporate Strategy has been prepared following rigorous analysis of the many changes taking place in the environment in which the HRB operates and also taking into account the opportunities that now present for health research in Ireland. The Strategy reflects two major changes that have taken place in the past five years: specifically, health research is now at the heart of government policy on science, technology and innovation, and the HRB has a much greater capacity to support health research.

We are aware that certain policy issues around health research require further discussion and consensus. We plan to work with the Department of Health and Children, and in particular with the Health Service Executive, to resolve these issues in the coming months; if necessary, we will amend the Corporate Strategy at a later date to take account of any relevant policy changes.

When preparing a corporate strategy, assumptions have to be made about the level of resources that will be available to enable the achievement of the objectives identified. We believe that the Corporate Strategy we have drafted contains realistic objectives which reflect existing resources; we also believe that the Strategy is flexible enough to exploit any additional government funding that may become available between now and 2011.

The process of preparing the Corporate Strategy began in October 2005 and involved the input of many HRB stakeholders. I would like to thank all those who contributed advice and expertise. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the HRB Management Team and staff to the development of the Strategy and I would like to thank Prospectus Consultants for their guidance and input throughout. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the considerable amount of time and effort that my colleagues on the Board have devoted to the process of developing and fine-tuning the Strategy over the past 12 months.

The Strategy sets an ambitious but realistic course for the HRB and for health research over the next five years. I have no doubt that with this Strategy the HRB will continue to build on its impressive achievements to date. I believe that the results of this Strategy will be seen in a healthier population, a much better health system and an enhanced contribution by health research to the knowledge economy in Ireland.



Desmond Fitzgerald MD FRCPI
Chair

November 2006

2. Executive summary

Vision

The HRB's vision is to: *Enable a world-class health system in Ireland through excellence in research and to contribute actively to the knowledge economy*

Mission

The HRB's mission is to: *Improve people's health through research and information*

Strategic objectives

The HRB will achieve its mission by delivering on the strategic objectives outlined below.

1. Shape the national agenda for research in health and personal social services
2. Support research and health information systems linked to national health priorities, in order to improve people's health and the effectiveness of the health system
3. Build capacity for world-class health research in Ireland
4. Advance the contribution that health research makes to a sustainable knowledge economy
5. Increase awareness and understanding of both the impact and the value of health research and information
6. Establish Ireland as a significant contributor to international policy on health research

3. Introduction

Overview of the Health Research Board (HRB)

The HRB is a statutory body established by the Minister for Health and Children; its mission is to improve people's health through research and information.

The HRB has a leadership role in defining the strategic development of health research. It is the main agency involved in the funding of and capacity building for research aimed at improving the health of the population; it also makes a major contribution to improving health and the effectiveness of the health services through its in-house research and information activities.

Under the terms of its statutory instrument, the HRB is responsible for promoting, assisting, commissioning and conducting medical, epidemiological, health and health services research. In carrying out these activities it may choose to work with other agencies and organisations in Ireland, or with institutes and organisations located abroad.

The HRB is also obliged to undertake other cognate functions as may be determined by the Minister from time to time.

The HRB Board comprises 16 members appointed by the Minister – most on the nomination of key stakeholders. The organisation currently has a staff of 60. Its operating budget in 2006 was €45 million.

Note: For convenience, the term 'health research' is used in the Corporate Strategy to cover each of the various aspects of research and research-related information activities referred to in the statutory instrument.

Policy background

The first national strategy for health research in Ireland entitled *Making Knowledge Work for Health* was published by the Minister for Health and Children in 2001. It set out details of the role to be played by the HRB in the implementation of the government's agreed health research strategy; this role includes:

- Supporting science for health by awarding funding to research projects, programmes, research careers and infrastructure.
- Building research and development for health on behalf of the Department of Health and Children (DoHC) by awarding funding to research and development programmes.
- Building a research culture and the evidence base for decision making in the health services by conducting in-house research and information activities.

- Commissioning research on behalf of the DoHC and other agencies.
- Developing guidelines for the health services on the commissioning of research.
- Developing expertise in research ethics and good research practice.
- Building all-island research capacity.

In 2005, the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children committed an additional €50 million for the period 2005-9 to support the HRB's *Investment Programme in Research for Health and Wealth*. This additional funding is earmarked for research investments which will both improve the health of the population and build national research capacity.

The Government's *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation* (published June 2006) recognises the important role that the HRB plays in improving the health of the population, increasing the effectiveness of the health services and contributing to the government's objective of creating a knowledge-based economy and society in Ireland.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has national responsibility for co-ordinating research; it chairs the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Science, Technology and Innovation which in turn reports to a Cabinet Sub-committee. The HRB supports the DoHC in its role as a member of the Inter-Departmental Committee. This role is set to be expanded following recommendations made in the report of the Advisory Council on Science, Technology and Innovation, *Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step Change in Health Research in Ireland*. The Council recommends that the IDC establish a sub-group on health research, to be chaired by an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children.

The HRB is an active member of the Standing Committee on Research Funding Bodies which coordinates the operational policies of the various research funding bodies. It also supports the role of the Chief Scientist in bringing greater coherence and consistency to research policy.

HRB – recent achievements

HRB support for research and information has led to important advances in our understanding of the health of the Irish population and in the clinical care of patients.

Understanding the health of the Irish population provides an evidence base which can be used to guide the development of clinical care and health service policy; it can also be used to educate health professionals. This in turn contributes to the development of improved health services and a healthier population.

The HRB has made a significant contribution to the enhancement of the health research environment in Ireland; its support has also been instrumental in the development of a number of new health-promoting technologies.



Specific examples of recent HRB-funded achievements and in-house HRB activities include:

Understanding the health of the Irish population

- Establishing a clear link across the generations between educational status and health status in Irish people; this was established in a cross-generational study (Professor Cecily Kelleher, UCD).
- Identification of the major causes of heart disease in Ireland; this highlights the risk associated with lower socio-economic status (Professor Ivan Perry, UCC).

Providing an evidence base for policy development

- Discovery of a growing epidemic of Type 2 diabetes in obese Irish children thus demonstrating the need for policy measures to address the problem of obesity. The findings led to the establishment of a children's clinic for diabetes at St James's Hospital (Professor John Nolan).
- Decision to fortify bread products in Ireland with folic acid. This was based on the researched link between folic acid deficiency in expectant mothers and neural tube defects in their children, and the high risk of such deficiency in the Irish population (HRB, National Institutes of Health and Trinity College Dublin).
- Investment package of €900 million over five years to expand services for people with intellectual disabilities; this was based on information provided by the HRB's National Intellectual Disability Database.

Enabling better health outcomes

- Discovery of a naturally-occurring antibiotic which is effective against drug-resistant infections and therefore has enormous potential for the treatment of MRSA. A patent has been filed (Professor Bernard Mahon, NUI Maynooth).

- First successful clinical validation trial of a new early-detection biomarker for colon cancer shows great promise for the development of screening programmes for colorectal cancer (Professor Colm O'Morain, TCD).
- Benefits of the methadone substitution programme in reducing mortality from drug addiction demonstrated by the HRB's drug misuse information systems.

Developing new health technologies

- Development of the first electronic patient record system for patients suffering from epilepsy (Dr Norman Delanty, Beaumont Hospital)
- Discovery of an important immune system protein that modifies the body's response to infection; this discovery has led to the creation of a campus company (Opsona Therapeutics) which will develop novel therapies for autoimmune and inflammatory diseases (Professor Luke O'Neill, TCD).

Improving the research environment

- Funding of a major clinical research centre in Dublin; the centre will be funded as a joint partnership between the HRB and the Wellcome Trust and is designed to strengthen clinical research capacity.
- Irish universities are adopting a more structured approach to PhD training, reflecting the structured and inter-disciplinary approach taken in the HRB's PhD programmes.
- EU Sixth Framework Programme funding secured to scope nursing and midwifery research priorities in Europe, with a view to identifying the potential for coordination.

Objectives and scope of this Corporate Strategy

The HRB is required by statutory instrument to prepare a corporate strategy every five years.

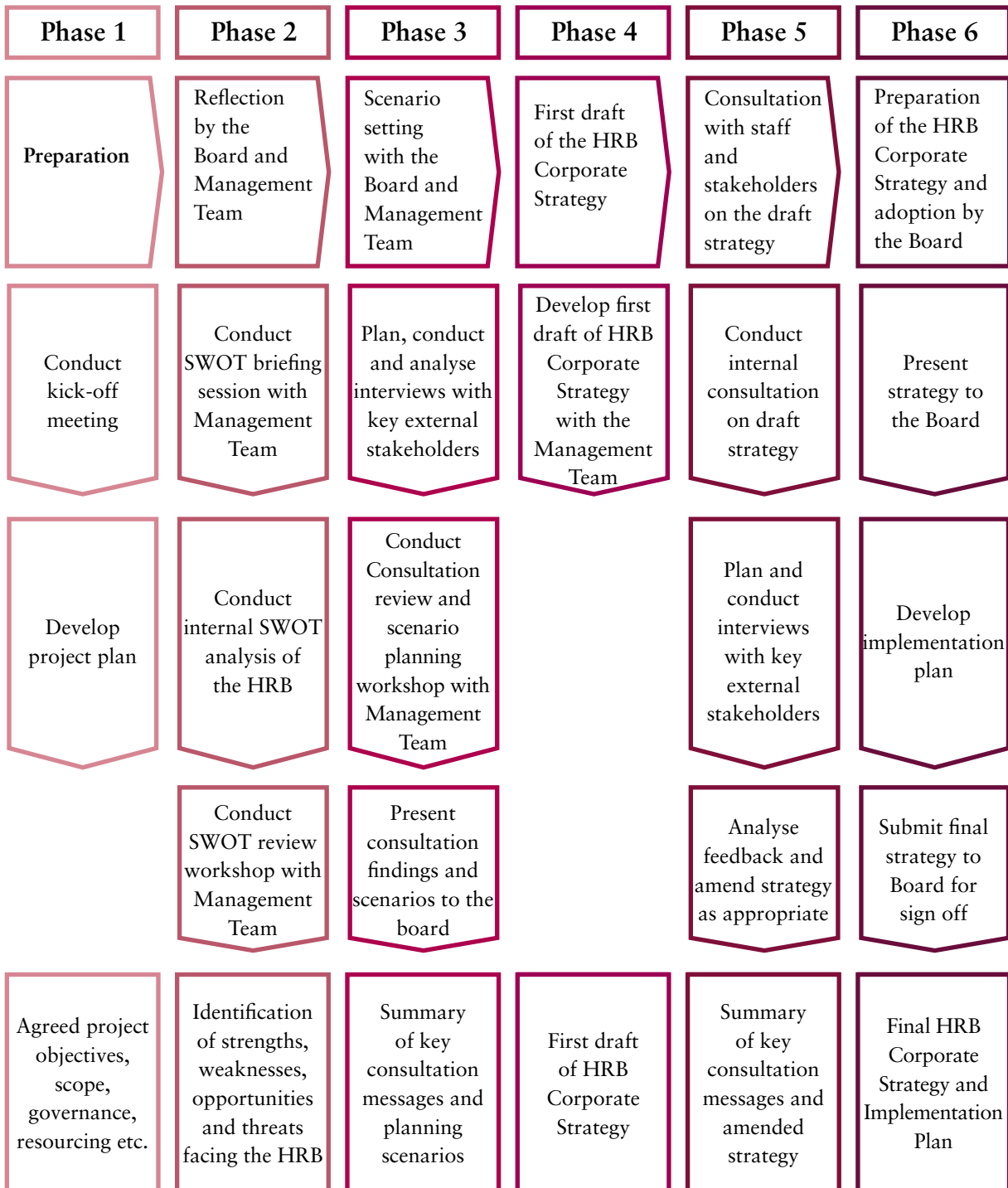
Prospectus Consultants were commissioned to assist the HRB with the development of the 2007–2011 Corporate Strategy.

The Strategy outlines the HRB's ambitions and plans for the next five years. Specifically, it:

- builds on thinking to date within the HRB and its external environment in relation to the future direction and role of the organisation
- states the HRB's mission
- states the HRB's values
- outlines six strategic objectives for the HRB over the next five years
- details an action plan for the coming years which is designed to enable the HRB to deliver on its strategic objectives
- identifies the factors which will facilitate the successful implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

Methodology

The diagram below provides an overview of the Prospectus methodology which guided the development of the HRB Corporate Strategy.





The development of the Corporate Strategy was driven by the HRB Management Team; it was supported by Prospectus Consultants and overseen by the Strategy Sub-Committee, which was established by the Board. (Details of the team members involved are provided in Appendix 1).

The preparation of the Strategy was influenced by an organisational review of the HRB undertaken in 2005.

The review was carried out to assess the extent to which the HRB was achieving the objectives of the previous Corporate Strategy and also to identify what quality improvements needed to be addressed in the new Corporate Strategy.

Key inputs to the development of the strategic objectives included:

- the HRB statutory instrument
- input from HRB management and staff
- input and feedback from a range of external stakeholders in the healthcare sector, academia and the economic and social development agencies
- submissions from the HRB's 'Today's health research is tomorrow's health care' conference which was held in June 2006, together with the consensus statement from that conference
- the findings of an environmental analysis exercise
- relevant strategies and reports, including:
 - o *Making Knowledge Work for Health* (Department of Health and Children, 2001)
 - o *National Health Information Strategy* (Department of Health and Children 2004)
 - o *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation* (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2006) and
 - o *Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step Change in Health Research in Ireland* (Advisory Council on Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006).

4. Context of this Corporate Strategy

Introduction

The work of the HRB is linked to a huge range of stakeholders in the health service, the academic world, the social and economic development agencies and, to a lesser extent, the healthcare industry. In order to meet the needs of such diverse groups, a wide variety of factors must be considered. Outlined below are some of the key factors that have influenced the development of this Corporate Strategy.

Key environmental factors

In preparing the Corporate Strategy for the period 2007–2011, the HRB has taken cognisance of the profound changes taking place in the two main sectors in which it operates – the health service and the academic world. The HRB believes that a close alignment of these two sectors is vital for conducting health research of the highest quality and ensuring that the results of research are applied to improve the health of the population, the care of patients and the effectiveness of the health services.

Health service reorganisation

A profound reorganisation of structures and responsibilities has taken place in the health service in recent years. The Health Service Executive (HSE) has replaced the health boards; the DoHC has redefined its responsibilities and the Health Information and Quality Authority (the Authority) has been established.

The DoHC has overall responsibility for the development of health policy, including policy on health research and information; the key policy document governing health research is *Making Knowledge Work for Health* (Department of Health and Children, 2001).

Under the Health Act 2004, the HSE has responsibility to promote the conduct of research in the health system; one of the HSE's stated corporate objectives is to '*develop our research capability, putting evidence into practice, thus leading to better health outcomes*'. The HSE is currently developing a research strategy and is examining how best to provide leadership, resources and a governance framework for research within the health service. It has established a high-level group to progress various issues in medical education and research and it has invited responses from interested parties, including the HRB. The group expects to complete its work in early 2007.

The establishment of the Authority, which has a statutory responsibility to provide a governance framework for health information, places the HRB in a new position in relation to its responsibility for maintaining national health information systems. The Authority has confirmed that it will be responsible for the overall governance and development of a national health information system, but



it will not be involved in the management of health information databases. The HRB will continue to manage and develop information systems, an area for which it is already responsible, but it will do so within a health information governance framework yet to be determined by the Authority. The HRB envisages a partnership with the Authority to improve the quality of health information systems in Ireland and promote the use of information systems to improve health outcomes and ensure the delivery of more targeted, effective services.

The HRB and the interim Authority have agreed to develop a partnership agreement in relation to the two organisations' respective roles in health information.

Shortfall in research capacity in the health service

As outlined in the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*, a major challenge over the next five years will be to encourage the development of sufficient research capacity and competence within the health service to address major health problems and improve the effectiveness of the health services.

The recent environmental analysis exercise carried out by the HRB identified a particular opportunity for Ireland to develop an international reputation for excellence in clinical research. This will be achievable if the health service succeeds in creating an environment in which the knowledge generated in a laboratory setting can be tested for its effectiveness in a clinical setting, and if research carried out in laboratories is in turn informed by clinical expertise. In this way, the

health service could work with academic partners to enhance the health of the population, improve the care of patients and increase the effectiveness of the health services.

A major challenge in the coming years will be to ensure that we have access to sufficient numbers of people with the necessary expertise and commitment to clinical research. The *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation* outlines key actions to help enhance research capacity over the next five years; these actions have been incorporated into the HRB Corporate Strategy.

Enhanced academic research capacity for health

The recognition by government that investment in research (principally through the universities) is key to developing Ireland as a knowledge economy and society has transformed the capacity of our academic institutions to undertake research and to produce the next generation of researchers and health professionals. Health research has emerged as a major strength of our university system, thanks to the investment made over many years by the HRB and more recently by Science Foundation Ireland and the Higher Education Authority's Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI).

Compared with the situation that prevailed five years ago, greatly enhanced resources are now available in the university sector to tackle the major research challenges of protecting health and treating disease and supporting world-class education and training for health professionals. This capacity will be further enhanced by the investments to be made over the next seven years under the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*. These investments will expand the postgraduate and postdoctoral capacity of the universities; they will extend and deepen the academic research base, and they will help to build strong health sector-academic partnerships.

The commitment to strengthen the academic research system (if it is matched by a reciprocal commitment to develop the research capacity of the health service i.e. create a 'PRTLTI for health research') will provide unprecedented opportunities to make knowledge work for health over the next five years.

Knowledge economy

One of the government's major economic objectives is to attract to or develop in Ireland state-of-the-art research and development facilities that will foster innovation in medical diagnostics, devices and therapeutics. The inclusion of health research in the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, coupled with the government's commitment to fund the priority initiatives outlined in this Strategy, provide evidence of the key economic contribution that health research can make to Ireland's future prosperity.

A key priority highlighted in the HRB Corporate Strategy is to develop a small number of world-class research facilities in translational and clinical research that will build on the investment made by the universities in health research and will also take into account the priorities of the health service. These facilities will improve the care of patients; will support world-class training for health professionals and will provide a platform for partnerships with the healthcare industry to bring new diagnostics, devices and therapeutics to market.

In its Report - *Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step change in Health Research* - the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation recommends how the level and quality of

health-related research and innovation should be increased. The recommendations are designed to enhance the health of the Irish population and to retain in Ireland the benefits of the effective commercialisation of the intellectual property created.

The Council's vision is to make Ireland the destination of choice whenever an advanced technology health project is being conceived, tested or implemented. The Council recommends that the DoHC should take responsibility for policy and strategy in this area; it recommends that the HRB, SFI, HSE and the higher education sector should take responsibility for implementation and that the activities of the relevant bodies be coordinated through an extension of the inter-agency structural arrangements already established to implement the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*. (All of these recommendations were taken into account when preparing the HRB Corporate Strategy.)

National and international policy development

Health research and information contribute to social and environmental development; they also inform the work of a range of government agencies such as the National Advisory Committee on Drugs, the National Disability Authority, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food Safety Authority, Combat Poverty and Irish Aid, with whom the HRB works closely. (The HRB has concluded a memorandum of understanding with Irish Aid to encourage research in Ireland that is specifically linked to development objectives.) The HRB contributes to the policy of these agencies and is in turn influenced by their sectoral strategies. This interagency cooperation is likely to increase in future.

The opportunities for and expectations of the HRB to contribute to the development of health research policy and practice on the island of Ireland at European level and internationally have grown enormously in the past five years. The HRB and the Research and Development Office in Belfast have established close links and are working together to strengthen health research capacity on the island of Ireland. The HRB is also a national focal point for the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction. Research and information about the drug situation in Ireland is compiled and submitted on an annual basis to the EMCDDA as the central source of comprehensive information on drugs and drug addiction in Europe.

Under the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Science, Technology and Innovation, €6 billion has been committed for health research and it will be important to maximise Irish-based researchers' involvement in the Programme. It is expected that all-island, European and global engagement in research cooperation will increase over the next few years and will pose particular opportunities and challenges for the HRB.

Public and patient involvement

The involvement of patients and clients in all aspects of health service activity is a trend that has gathered pace in recent years. Patient and client involvement has a major contribution to make to health research and information at many levels including:

- influencing research and information priorities
- shaping the way in which research is carried out or information systems are designed

- communicating the findings of research/information systems to a wider audience
- maintaining the trust of the public in health research and information.

The HRB is committed to continuing to work closely with patient and client groups to ensure that the interest of patients and clients is at the heart of its research and information activities.

Research ethics

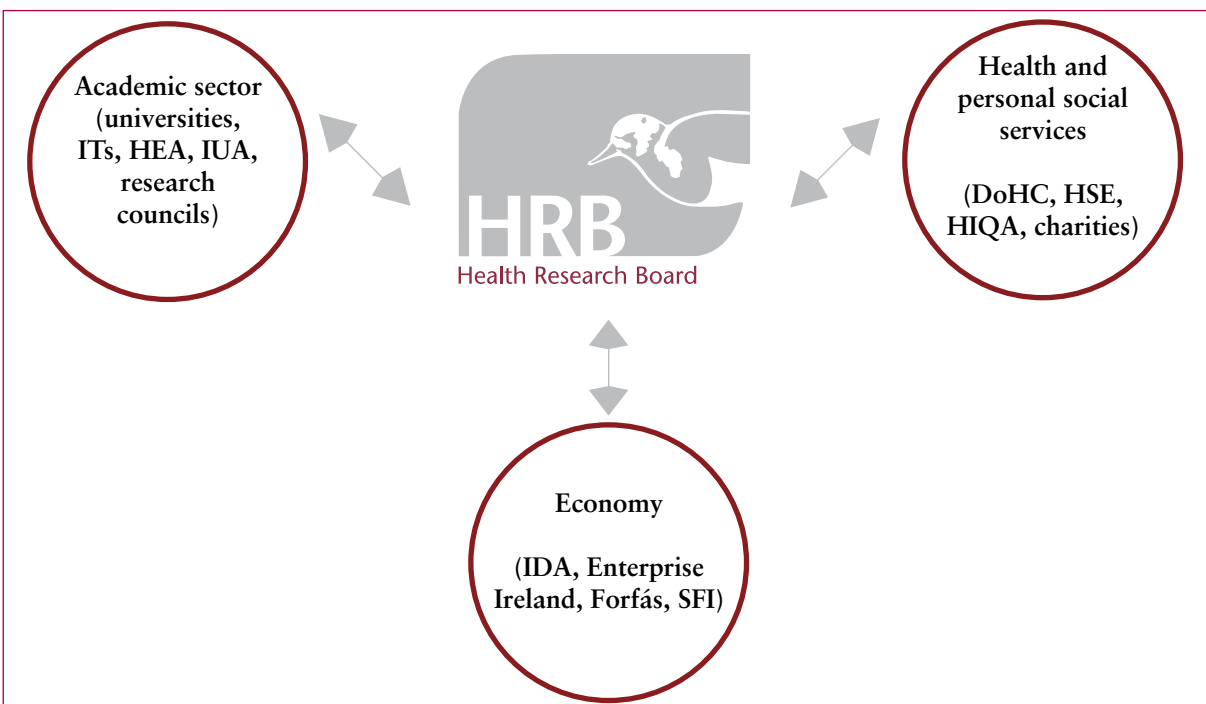
The ethical issues arising from health research and information are complex; these issues need to be handled with skill and sensitivity if the confidence of the general public is to be maintained in the value of health research and information. The HRB has contributed to the process of clarifying ethical issues arising from genetic research and also arising from the transposition into Irish law of the EU directive on multi-centre clinical trials; we are currently working on advice in relation to health information systems and data privacy.

While recognising the role of the Irish Council for Bioethics, the HRB will continue to play a leading role in developing an ethical framework for health research.

HRB – making the links

The HRB provides a unique link between the health service (including patient groups), the academic sector, and the economic development agencies. This positioning is part of the added value that the HRB brings as an organisation to the task of improving health, enhancing Ireland’s reputation for high quality research and building a knowledge economy.

The diagram below illustrates the HRB’s linking role in graphic form.



One example of the linking role played by the HRB in 2005 was the establishment of a national research imaging facility for health research. The HRB invested in this facility because it recognised the importance of using imaging technology to understand how the body reacts to disease. Due to the patient-focused nature of the imaging research to be carried out, it was essential to locate the facility on the site of a general hospital.

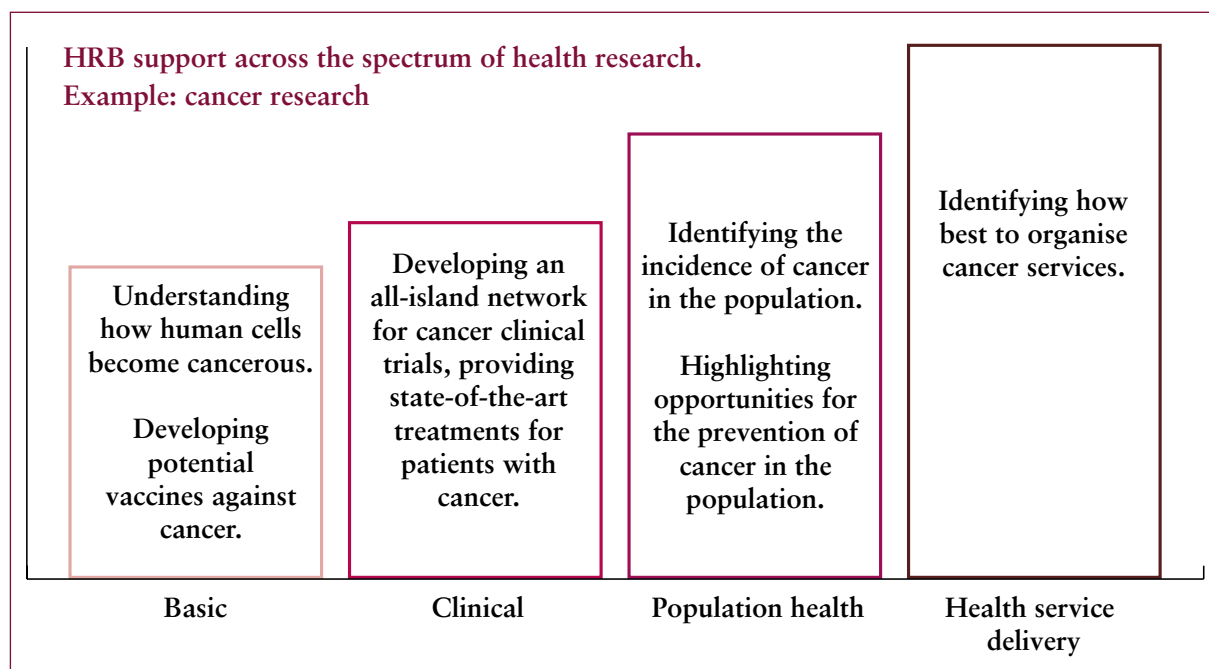
All those who applied to run the project were subjected to rigorous international peer review. The successful applicants were academic and hospital-based researchers who proposed to bring scientists and clinicians together to use imaging technology to develop more effective therapies for patients.

Once the facility was established, the IDA worked with the successful applicants to broker added value with the potential suppliers of the imaging equipment.

The HRB has a strong track record of working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary bodies to achieve its objectives; it plans to build on this competency over the lifetime of the Corporate Strategy.

The HRB creates unique links between the health service, the academic sector and the economic development agencies by supporting activities across the spectrum of health research. These activities range from studies aimed at understanding the factors that can prevent disease and promote health in the population to methods of evaluating and designing improved health services; from undertaking clinical studies in patients to carrying out basic research aimed at understanding disease processes in cells and animals.

The wide scope and breadth of this activity is reflected in the HRB's approach to researching complex health problems such as cancer (see diagram below).





The HRB's broad approach to understanding health and disease – ranging from understanding what happens at the molecular level in the human body in response to disease to understanding the impact of life style changes on the health of the population – is a unique and valuable feature of the organisation's role. It is also a feature that the HRB wishes to develop in the future as a model for dealing with a wide spectrum of health problems.

The HRB sees a strong link between the research that it supports externally and the research and information activities that it conducts in-house. Understanding how to solve the problems that undermine human health increasingly requires both high quality information systems, such as those developed by the HRB and the type of the analysis that can only take place in a laboratory or in a clinical setting.

Assumptions

Based on an analysis of the environmental context in which it operates, the HRB made the following key assumptions when preparing this Corporate Strategy. It was assumed that:

- The economy will continue to grow between 2007 and 2011 at rates which are sufficiently high enough to support buoyant public finances, and that this in turn will facilitate the level of investment in health research envisaged in the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*.
- The HSE and the HIQA will develop structures to support research and develop information governance in the health service that will facilitate the HRB's mission.
- Health research will increasingly be recognised as important for the achievement of a knowledge-based economy and society in Ireland.
- Patients will seek greater involvement in setting the agenda for health research, and that the ethical issues arising from health research will become more complex.

5. HRB – vision, mission, strategic objectives and values

Vision

The HRB's vision is to: *Enable a world-class health system in Ireland through excellence in research and to contribute actively to the knowledge economy*

Mission

The HRB's mission is to: *Improve people's health through research and information*

Strategic objectives

The HRB will achieve its mission by delivering on the strategic objectives outlined below.

1. Shape the national agenda for research in health and personal social services
2. Support research and health information systems linked to national health priorities in order to improve people's health and the effectiveness of the health system
3. Build capacity for world-class health research in Ireland
4. Advance the contribution that health research makes to a sustainable knowledge economy
5. Increase awareness and understanding of the impact and value of health research and information
6. Establish Ireland as a significant contributor to international policy on health research

Values

The values that underpin all HRB activities are:

- Independence and integrity
- Openness and transparency
- Excellence and professionalism
- Responsiveness to clients' needs
- Progress through partnership
- Commitment to competition and peer review
- Value for money

6. Implementation

Implementation process

The HRB has developed an implementation plan to drive the delivery of the strategic objectives and high-level actions of the Corporate Strategy.

The plan lists the agreed actions, identifies who has lead responsibility within the organisation for delivery, and sets a timeframe for completion.

The plan will be monitored by the Executive Team to ensure delivery of the key strategic objectives are on time and within budget.

The Board will review progress with implementation against key deliverables on a six-monthly basis.

Enablers

The implementation of the Corporate Strategy has implications for the future funding of the HRB; some of these implications may be addressed as part of the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation* implementation process.

Having access to sufficient numbers of staff with the appropriate skills and career profiles will be fundamental to the successful implementation of the Corporate Strategy. The HRB plans to invest in the development of its existing staff members, and it also plans to recruit staff within the approved employment ceiling who will undertake the additional responsibilities envisaged for the organisation in the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*; the organisation will be appropriately aligned to enable the achievement of this Strategy.

The development of ICT systems to support the HRB's research and information functions will be vital to the success of the Corporate Strategy; the HRB's investment in ICT will be aligned to achieve the objectives of this Strategy.

Effective communications should underpin all aspects of the Corporate Strategy. The HRB will actively use communications techniques to raise awareness and sustain public confidence in relation to health research and health information systems.

Action plan

This section outlines the actions that must be taken by the HRB to implement the objectives of the Corporate Strategy. The action plan outlines a number of actions under each strategic objective.

Strategic objective 1: *Shape the national agenda for research in health and personal social services*

Actions

- Actively contribute to the development and implementation of national strategies in relation to health research – in particular *Making Knowledge Work For Health; Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation; Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step Change in health research in Ireland*; Health Service Executive and Health Information and Quality Authority research strategies (when produced)
- Promote the alignment of health service and academic research strategies
- Develop a consensus on priorities for health research in consultation with health service, academic, patient, healthcare economy partners
- Develop a national health research register
- Actively contribute to the implementation of the National Health Information Strategy
- Influence, through research and information, health and personal social services policy
- Promote a best practice research culture in the health and personal social services

Strategic objective 2: *Support research and health information systems linked to national health priorities in order to improve people's health and also to improve the effectiveness of the health system*

Actions

- Develop research capacity in health and personal social services
- Issue targeted calls for research to address national health priorities
- Develop health information systems linked to agreed national priorities in order to provide objective, reliable, timely and comparable information
- Work with strategic partners to promote the application of health and health services research and information for the benefit of the public, patients, health and personal social services
- Encourage Ireland's commitment to the developing world by supporting research to address poverty-related diseases at a global level
- Conduct excellent research in HRB specialist areas of expertise and in collaboration with academic partners

Strategic objective 3: *Build capacity for world-class health research in Ireland*

Actions

- Develop programmes for excellence in health research
- Develop infrastructure to support clinical research
- Support career development in the academic health research sector
- Facilitate the development of technology platforms to support world-class health research
- Invest in innovative (open-call) research of benefit to human health and improved health services
- Promote access for researchers to the HRB's information systems for research and educational purposes

Strategic objective 4: *Advance the contribution that health research makes to a sustainable knowledge economy*

Actions

- Take the lead in delivering on the health research commitments identified in the *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation*
- Promote the development of appropriate research governance and organisational structures within health organisations in order to facilitate the commercialisation of world-class health research in Ireland
- Promote the importance and value of the health research sector as part of the national economy
- Expand PhD programmes in health research in order to increase both the number of PhD students and the number of programmes, and also improve the quality and diversity of such programmes

Strategic objective 5: *Increase awareness and understanding of the impact and value of health research and information*

Actions

- Promote the benefits and value of health research and information to the general public, healthcare policy makers and practitioners
- Evaluate the impact (benefits and value) of HRB-funded research
- Evaluate the impact of HRB information systems and in-house research
- Position the HRB nationally and internationally as the voice of health research in Ireland
- Increase the capacity of the HRB-funded research community to communicate the benefits and value of health research

Strategic objective 6: *Establish Ireland as a significant contributor to international policy on health research*

Actions

- Identify key international research initiatives where the HRB can contribute in a strategic capacity and raise the profile of Irish health research
- Identify and promote opportunities for researchers in Ireland to become involved in leading/shaping/participating in international research initiatives
- Contribute to the development of international health indicators for each of the HRB specialist areas
- Play a strategic role in the promotion of Ireland as a leading centre for research and innovation

Appendix

Membership of the Board's Corporate Strategy Sub-Committee

The members of the Corporate Strategy Sub-Committee were:

- Professor Desmond Fitzgerald, Chair
- Professor William Hall
- Mr David Doran
- Professor Hannah Magee
- Dr Kevin Kelleher
- Professor Timothy O'Brien

The following members of the Management Team participated in meetings of the Board Sub-Committee:

- Dr Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr Hamish Sinclair, Head of Alcohol and Drug Research Unit
- Dr Mairead O'Driscoll, Head of Policy, Evaluation and External Relations Unit
- Dr Teresa Maguire, Head of Research Management Unit
- Ms Carol Cronin, Head of Corporate Services Unit

