

All Ireland Cancer Consortium (AICC) Research & Innovation Grants Scheme 2026

'Survivorship-Living Well With & Beyond Cancer'

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



All-Ireland Cancer Consortium (AICC) 2026

Frequently Asked Questions



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1 General

a) How do I apply for the AICC 2026 Grant Call?

All applications must be made using the HRB online Grant Electronic Management System (GEMS) via <https://grants.hrb.ie>.

Applicants are strongly advised to carefully read the **Guidance Notes** prior to starting an application. In order to commence an application, the Lead Applicant (LA) must satisfy the conditions outlined on the eligibility check list, that they will be asked to complete. (Please refer to Appendix I of the Guidance Notes).

2 Lead Applicant/Eligibility

a) Can a Lead Applicant submit more than one application for this call?

Applicants may apply to one, or both tiers depending on their specific proposal.

- **Tier 1** is for pilot projects or mapping activities with funding available up to €100,000 exclusive of overheads, over a maximum duration of 24 months.
- **Tier 2** is for specific projects or training initiatives with funding available up to €330,000 exclusive of overheads, over a maximum duration of 36 months.

Applicants may apply to one or both tiers, however, can only submit **a maximum of two applications** to the scheme as a Lead Applicant. They must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the Guidance Notes for the call scheme including having a cross-border co-Applicant on each application.

b) What are the requirements for eligibility as a Lead Applicant?

The Lead Applicant **must**:

- Hold a post (permanent or a contracted that covers the duration of the award) in a HRB recognised Host Institution within the island of Ireland as an independent investigator. For clinicians, an adjunct position in a HRB recognised Host Institution is acceptable.

OR

- Be an individual who will be recognised by a HRB recognised Host Institution within the island of Ireland upon receipt of an award as an independent investigator who will have a dedicated office and research space for the duration of award, for which they will be fully responsible. The Lead Applicant does not necessarily need to be employed by the Host Institution at the time of the application submission.

They **must** show evidence of achievement as an independent researcher in their chosen research field by:

- a) Demonstrating a record of research output, with at least **three** publications of original research in peer reviewed journals. Where appropriate, they should also provide evidence of other outputs (e.g., published book chapters, reports to government, research data and datasets, research materials, databases, audio/video products, national and/or international reports, patents, models and protocols, software production, evidence of influence on health policy and practice, outreach and/or knowledge translation activities, media coverage or other relevant activities) and/or any other relevant outputs that have resulted in a significant impact in their field.
- b) Demonstrating record of independence by showing that they have secured at least **one** peer-reviewed research grant for a research project/s, as either the Lead Applicant or a Co-Applicant. Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries **will not** be considered in this regard.
- c) Show evidence that they possess the capability and authority to manage and supervise the research team.

3 Applicant Team

a) Who should the Applicant Team consist of?

Applications should be submitted by a Lead Applicant on behalf of an Applicant Team consisting of researchers, knowledge users and Public/Patient Involvement (PPI) contributors. The AICC 2026 scheme focuses on cancer survivorship hence inclusion of people with lived experience of cancer is crucial in both development of the application and execution of the project to ensure the proposed research is as impactful as possible.

The Applicant Team should consist of Co-Applicants and Collaborators as outlined below:

- Co-Applicants (maximum of 8):

All applications must include a **cross-border Co-Applicant**.

Co-Applicants can be Researchers, Knowledge Users and PPI Contributors. They should have a well-defined, critical and substantial role in the conduct and steering of the proposed research.

- Collaborators (Maximum of 10):

The purpose of the call is to enhance cross-border collaboration in cancer research, however the inclusion of international collaborators, as appropriate, is strongly encouraged.

b) Can members of the Applicant Team be from outside Ireland?

Yes, it is expected that all applications at minimum have a **cross-border Co-Applicant** e.g. Lead Applicants from Northern Ireland require a Co-Applicant from Ireland and vice versa.

Furthermore, the inclusion of international collaborators, as appropriate, although not mandatory, is strongly encouraged.

c) Can the grant budget be used for travel costs by the Applicant Team?

Yes, where justified travel costs may be included in the application budget under running costs.

d) Is a Collaborator Agreement Form needed?

A signed **Collaborator Agreement Form** must be submitted for each named Collaborator.

e) Can a Collaborator receive payment for their role in the project?

Collaborators are eligible to receive funding from the award for justified running/travel costs only, when properly detailed in the application. The HRB does not pay the salary of collaborators.

4 Scope

a) I'm not sure if my application fits with the scope of the call.

The AICC scheme is intended as a dedicated funding stream to enhance, extend, and strengthen cancer research and innovation capabilities across the island of Ireland. The 2026 scheme is focused specifically to support research activities on survivorship, living well with and beyond cancer.

Applications involving collaborative scientific research including mapping activities, pilots, projects and/or education and training initiatives (focused on survivorship), aligned to the HRB's strategic remit will be supported.

The AICC Scheme is intended as a strategic and focused investment and must demonstrate added-value above and beyond any research activities, collaboration or networking that is currently taking place.

Further guidance and details of the research areas covered can be found in the AICC 2026 **Guidance Notes**.

If after reading this, you are still unsure please contact the HRB for further guidance:

Dr Aisling Rehill-Gilbert

Email: arehill@hrb.ie

Project Officer

Mr Gavin Lawler

Email: glawler@hrb.ie

Programme Manager

Research and Innovation Infrastructures

5 Funding and duration

a) What is the duration of the award?

The AICC 2026 grant scheme is opened to two tiers.

Tier 1 provides funding for mapping activities or pilot projects up to a maximum duration of two years (24 months).

Tier 2 provides funding for specific projects or education/training initiatives (focused on survivorship) up to a maximum duration of three years (36 months).

b) How much can I apply for?

Tier 1 is designed to allow for smaller scale applications which involve pilot projects or mapping activities conducted over a maximum duration of two years, to apply for funding, exclusive of overheads, up to a maximum of €100,000.

Mapping activities may include cross-border needs assessments to improve cross-border cancer collaboration and activities. Audits/surveys or questionnaires alone are not eligible unless part of a larger mapping activity project.

Tier 2 is for specific, targeted projects or education initiatives which may be conducted over a maximum duration of three years, to apply for funding grants, exclusive of overheads, up to a maximum of €330,000.

The AICC 2026 grant will provide support for research-related costs including salary for research staff, running costs, FAIR data management costs, equipment, dissemination costs and overhead contributions. The HRB will calculate overheads during contracting.

Note: The AICC 2026 Award will not fund the salary and related costs of tenured academic staff within research institutions (including buy-out from teaching time etc.).

6 Supporting Documents

What documents should be uploaded with my application form?

You must upload the following documents:

Mandatory documents:

- Objectives and Deliverables Gantt Chart

If applicable:

- Letter of Support for Lead Applicant or Co-Applicants in contract positions seeking their own salary
- Collaboration Agreement Form(s) – required for all collaborators
- Infrastructure Agreement Form(s) – required for biobanking and access to Clinical Research Facilities
- Project Description Support file – A maximum of 5 figures which can be a combination of images, graphs, tables, scales, instruments, or surveys (maximum file size 2MB)

7 Assessment Process

Applications will be initially checked for eligibility by HRB staff members.

Following the initial eligibility check, each eligible application submitted to this scheme will undergo a two-phase review process.

Phase 1: For each application, the HRB aims to receive written feedback from at least three international peer reviewers and two public reviewers. Applicant teams of shortlisted applications will be provided with a time-limited opportunity to respond to peer and public review comments.

Phase 2: Shortlisted Applications will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the Guidance Notes by an International Panel convened by the HRB in September 2026.

Recommendations will be brought to the HRB Board and Applicants will receive outcome letters and feedback following this.

a) Will the two tiers be assessed together or in isolation?

Applications in both tiers will be assessed independently at the same time. The funding available to support both tiers has been set at €1.5 million (€500,000 to support Tier 1 and €1 million for Tier 2, however this is quality dependent and recommendations for funding across both tiers will be decided by international panel review and scoring). Applicants are expected to score highly across all assessment criteria as outlined in the Guidance Notes.

8 Submission

a) What is the GEMS submission process?

Prior to final submission to the HRB, all applications must first be reviewed and approved within GEMS by the signatory approver at the research office (or equivalent) at the Host Institute (HI). It is critical therefore that Lead Applicant leave sufficient time in the process for the Research Office (or equivalent) in their nominated HI to review, seek clarifications and approve applications prior to the final submission date and time. This may involve being aware of and complying with any internal HI deadlines for review and approval, distinct from the HRB deadline.

b) What is the closing date for submission of applications?

Applications must be submitted to the HRB using HRB GEMS by **27 May 2026 at 13:00**.

c) How will I know that my application has been successfully submitted?

Once the HI endorses your application it will be sent automatically to the HRB to be considered for funding. A grant application number will be assigned to the application, and you will receive a confirmation email.

d) I have submitted my application but have just realised I have amendments to make; can I amend the application?

No, once you have submitted your application, you cannot edit or un-submit it.