

SRG Annual Report on Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking 2023

1 Introduction

The States' Representatives Group (SRG) has an advisory role in relation to the activities of the IHI.

Among others, per Article 20(10) of Council Regulation 2021/2085¹, the SRG is requested to “*submit, at the end of each calendar year, a report describing the national or regional policies in the scope of the joint undertaking and identifying specific ways of cooperation with the actions funded by the joint undertaking*”.

2 Feedback from the SRG

2.1 National and regional policies

Since the launch of the first calls in June 2022, a considerable effort has been made by the SRG members to promote IHI and the call content in their respective countries. Many promotional activities and approaches were used ranging from dedicated information days, direct promotion to industry groups and the research committees, as well as one-to-one meetings with potential applicants and support activities, website promotion, newsletters, and outreach by social media. The SRG has also provided applicants and potential applicants with guidance and support on the rules of participation in IHI.

The SRG will continue to engage with the industry representative groups to identify further promotional opportunities and events in the various member states. Industry representative groups will be invited to attend the SRG meetings to ensure dialogue and exchange on future IHI calls and brokerage events.

2.2 First IHI calls

Since this time, four calls have been completed and Call 5 is due to close in January 2024.

Overall, the topics and research areas tackled by the first IHI calls are sufficiently broad and aligned with the interest of the research community. The two-stage calls are considered by the SRG to be more open, competitive and appealing to the research community as the industry partners with dedicated resources have been pre-identified. In addition to this, the academic community and smaller industry partners in the two-stage calls are not competing with constituent entities of the IHI private members for funding, and thus this approach has provided them with a level playing field to compete.

In the single-stage calls, there are still considerable challenges. This probably explains a notable low participation rate in IHI to date and a perceived lack of competition. In call 1 and call 3 (single-stage calls) a part of the dedicated budget had to be carried over to future calls, as a result of two topics with no proposal selected for funding. The SRG deems that the main challenges are budget being too large (€20 to €40million

¹ Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe and repealing Regulations (EC) No 219/2007, (EU) No 557/2014, (EU) No 558/2014, (EU) No 559/2014, (EU) No 560/2014, (EU) No 561/2014 and (EU) No 642/2014

at topic level), a limited time from call launch to call deadline (from 3 to 5 months) to identify industry partners with the resources to make a 45% contribution to the project, and considerable challenges in identifying industry partners with sufficient capacity to contribute 45% in-kind support to the projects.

There appears to be a small cohort of entities, primarily from the larger countries in Europe where large industry resides. It is the SRG's opinion that more can be done by the IHI industry founding members to encourage their industry members and constituent entities who reside in those Member States less represented in IHI so far to participate. This in turn will create a more competitive landscape and enhance the scientific excellence in proposals and projects.

3 Conclusions

Considering the cross-sectorial partnership, IHI has the potential to be a game changer in delivering tangible benefits in research for patients and society. IHI is well placed to ensure that Europe remains at the cutting edge of interdisciplinary, sustainable, patient-centric health research however, to optimise success and participation across Member States and associated countries, the partnership will require further adjustments to the call structure and greater promotion.



Martha Cahill, Chairperson

On behalf of the IHI JU States' Representatives Group