

RESEARCH FUNDING Impact Framework Summary

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) International Research Funding Impact Framework, its purpose, structure, and how we assess and demonstrate impact across its global research funding activities. The Framework aligns with the 2025–2030 WCRF International Strategic Priorities for Science and Policy and is designed to show how our funded research contributes to preventing cancer and saving lives on a global scale.

Why is the Research Funding Impact Framework needed?

WCRF International has a responsibility to the public and donors to ensure that donated funds are used effectively in alignment with our mission and vision. Research funding plays a pivotal role in fulfilling our mission by supporting research from leading global institutions into the effects of diet, nutrition, body composition, and physical activity on cancer prevention and cancer survival.

The Research Funding Impact Framework is a tailored system to track, evaluate, and communicate the real-world influence of WCRF International's research portfolio. It ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement by:

- Demonstrating how funded research contributes to our mission
- Capturing scientific, clinical, policy, and societal outcomes
- Highlighting long-term impact such as innovation, capacity building, and global influence

Strategic alignment

The Framework is fully aligned with WCRF International's vision and mission:

Vision: To live in a world where no one dies of a preventable cancer.

The Framework is structured around three strategic pillars:

Discover: Generating innovative evidence

Translate: Transforming evidence into policy and practice

Influence and engage: Expanding impact through collaboration, communication, and public engagement

OUR OVERARCHING GOAL:

"To reduce the burden of preventable cancers worldwide through impact-led, outcome-focused, cutting-edge science and policy".



Discover

- Focus grant funding on research addressing key gaps to increase understanding of the role of diet, nutrition, physical activity and body composition as risk factors for cancer and survival and well being after a diagnosis of cancer.
- Consider other emerging risk factors within the cancer prevention landscape.
- Synthesise and interpret the most up to date evidence on the role of diet, nutrition, physical activity and body composition as risk factors for cancer, focusing on topics likely to generate new knowledge.
- Fund the best researchers globally to drive new knowledge about risk factors for cancer and after diagnosis, and understand how these affect different populations.
- Collaborate with key organisations to increase and promote prevention research, and maximise the impact of our research funding.



Translate

- Work with CUP Global expert Panel to develop new recommendations and guidance on the role of diet, nutrition, physical activity and body composition as risk factors for cancer.
- Enhance cancer recommendations with understanding of the role of broader social and environmental factors to strengthen translation into practice.
- Use evidence from CUP Global to update the Third Expert Report.
- Use the findings from CUP Global to develop focused recommendations for future research.
- Further strengthen links with policy work to maximise impact of research we fund through grant programmes, CUP Global and other science activities.



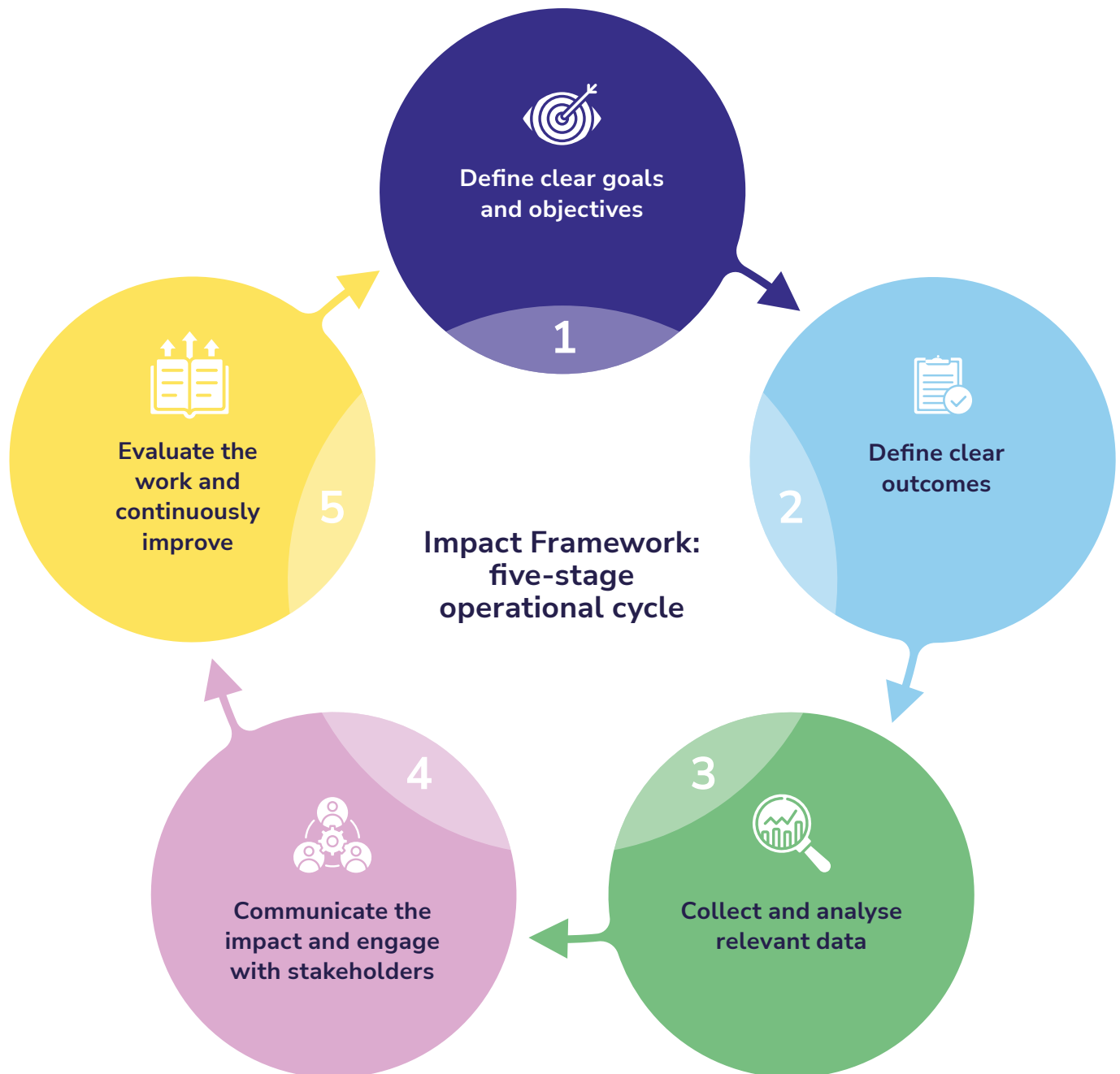
Influence and engage

- Convert scientific outputs into real-world action for patients and populations.
- Take advantage of expertise and strong reputation to contribute to major public health initiatives (eg World Code Against Cancer).
- Further develop capacity building activities for supporting researchers at different stages of their careers to work in the prevention space (eg ECRs, international researchers incl from LMICs, students, established researchers) to effectively fill research gaps and improve methodologies.
- Advocate for globally representative research on the role of diet, nutrition, physical activity and body composition as risk factors for cancer and survival and well being after a diagnosis of cancer.
- Communicate evidence-based cancer prevention and care, proactively tackle science misinformation, and increase public trust in science.

Impact Framework: five-stage operational cycle

The Framework operates as a continuous cycle across five stages:

- 1 Define vision and goals
- 2 Set measurable outcomes
- 3 Collect, monitor and analyse data
- 4 Communicate impact
- 5 Evaluate and improve



This cyclical structure ensures adaptability and long-term relevance.

Measuring impact

WCRF International measures impact through defined indicators aligned with strategic objectives. These indicators are mapped to measurable outcomes that demonstrate real-world impact:

- 1 Inclusivity and reach of our work:** ensures research is conducted by and benefits diverse and underrepresented populations
- 2 Innovation and excellence in funded science:** drives cutting-edge science and advances in cancer prevention and survivorship
- 3 Translation of our research into policy and clinical practice, and to inform our Global Cancer Update Programme (CUP Global):** demonstrates the evidence for social impact
- 4 Empowering new generations of researchers:** supports development of global leaders in cancer prevention and survivorship and strengthens capacity in LMICs
- 5 Increasing public awareness, visibility, value, and contribution to society:** increases public knowledge and donor engagement
- 6 Continuity of our work:** our funding at the core of transformative ideas – expands WCRF International influence across global networks

Data collection and analysis

We collect data from the awarded grant applications, progress, final reports, research publications, interviews, other outputs and administered impact questionnaires.

We use a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative data and qualitative analysis including descriptive statistics, most significant change technique, impact mapping and visualisation tools.

Communication of impact

We have developed a process for communicating findings and continuously refine it to amplify impact and support stakeholder engagement, with the expertise of our Communications and Engagement team.

Monitoring and evaluating processes

Regular evaluation of our framework enables us to identify gaps, target strategic improvements, and inform future funding priorities.

Table 1: Alignment of strategy, impact indicators, outcomes and overall achieved impact

Impact indicator	Impact outcome	Description of outcomes	Science and research strategy objectives
Inclusivity and reach of our work – ensures research is conducted by and benefits diverse and underrepresented populations	Socio-demographics and inclusivity	Representation by gender, sex, country, seniority, and inclusion of LMICs and underrepresented populations	Stimulate and support research in cancer prevention and survivorship (Discover)
Innovation and excellence in funded science – drives cutting-edge science and advances in cancer prevention	Innovation and research performance	Funding secured, patents, novel methodologies, publications, citations, and technological integration	Ensure innovation is at the core of all our scientific activities (Discover)
Translation of our research into policy, clinical practice, and CUP Global – demonstrates the evidence for social impact	Knowledge translation and social impact	Policy citations, regulatory or legislative changes, clinical guideline adoption, implementation in care pathways, and integration into CUP Global	Bridge the gap between evidence and policy/practice (Translate)
Empowering new generations of researchers – supports development of global leaders in cancer prevention and survivorship and strengthens capacity in LMICs	Capacity building and equity	Early-career researchers support, training, mentorship programmes, funding	Encourage scientists and build capacity (Discover/Influence and Engage)
Increasing public awareness, visibility, value, and contribution to the public – increases public knowledge and donor engagement	Dissemination and public engagement	Social media coverage, press releases, blogs, case studies, public events, outreach, education, stakeholder involvement and engagement in research	Disseminate and promote science globally (Influence and Engage)
Continuity of our work – expands WCRF International influence across global networks	Partnerships and collaboration	Joint initiatives, sustained partnerships, networks, continuation of funding	Strengthen networks and global research communities (Influence and Engage)

Summary

The WCRF International Research Funding Impact Framework is central to demonstrating how we drive progress from discovery to policy change, improving global health outcomes, and staying aligned with our mission, vision, and research strategy. By continuously measuring and communicating impact, we ensure that every funded project contributes meaningfully towards a world with fewer preventable cancers and improved outcomes for those affected.

Over the years, WCRF International has established itself as a leading authority in driving cancer prevention and survivorship research on diet, body composition, physical activity, and alcohol achieving significant global impact across research, policy, innovation, and capacity building.

For specific examples, see our Impact Highlights: wcrf.org/research-impact



World Cancer Research Fund International

Upper Ground Floor, 140 Pentonville Road, London N1 9FW

Tel: +44 (0)20 7343 4200

Email: international@wcrf.org

 facebook.com/WoCRF

 bsky.app/profile/wcrf.org

 linkedin.com/company/wcrf

wcrf.org

World Cancer Research Fund International manages the grant programme on behalf of World Cancer Research Fund in the UK, Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds in the Netherlands and American Institute for Cancer Research in the US.

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