



HRB-TMRN Core Outcome Set (COS) FUNDING 2025

Guidance Notes

Opening Date:	21st October 2024
Closing Date:	27th January 2025 at 1pm
Notification of Outcome:	24th February 2025
Latest Start Date:	24th March 2025

Applications must be completed and submitted to the HRB-TMRN by email, hrb-tmrn@universityofgalway.ie, with the subject line "COS Funding Application". Applicants are recommended to read the below guidance notes in full before completing the application form. Queries relating to this scheme can be directed to the HRB-TMRN Programme Manager at the above email address.

Background

Since September 2014, the HRB-TMRN has been working to strengthen the methodology and reporting of trials in health and social care in Ireland so that they become more relevant, accessible and influential for patients and other service users, practitioners, policy makers and the public. This is being achieved through a programme of work relating to the methodology of trials and focused on (i) Support (ii) Training and Education (iii) Research and Innovation and (iv) Public Engagement.

Where randomisation is possible, randomised trials are regarded as the most effective means of evaluating the effects of health care interventions. They have the potential to provide reliable and robust estimates of the effects of healthcare interventions to help people make well-informed decisions about care options.

A core outcome set (COS) is the minimum, standard set of outcomes that should be measured and reported within and across trials in specific areas of health or health care¹. Routine use of COS when planning and developing clinical trials can increase data synthesis across trials, reduce reporting biases and help reduce research waste. COSs also ensure the patient voice is included as a stakeholder when considering what should be measured in a trial¹.

The COMET Initiative brings together people interested in the development and application of agreed standardised sets of outcomes, known as 'core outcome sets' (COS) <https://www.comet-initiative.org/>. This website also features a searchable database which showcases any CO available, or in progress. A short animation on what a COS is, can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/g1MZi2mzK1U>. COSMIN is an online tool (<https://www.cosmin.nl/>) which can help select the most suitable outcome measurement instruments.

Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of this scheme is to support core outcome set development nationally while also building working relationships within the MRC-NIHR-Trials Methodology Research Partnership.

The objectives of this scheme are to:

- Provide seed funding to develop core outcome sets nationally (including develop methodology and tools for outcome measurement);

¹ Williamson PR, Altman DG, Bagley H, et al. The COMET Handbook: version 1.0. *Trials* 2017; 18(3): 280.

- Further develop trials methodology research collaborations between Irish and UK colleagues within the MRC-NIHR-TMRP;

Scope of the current call

The scope of the current call is:

- To facilitate seed funding to explore the need for a COS within any health-related area.
Or
- Assist in the development of an ongoing COS for which no funding is available.
Or
- Assist in the development of methodology and tools for selecting the most suitable outcome measurement instrument.

[Note: Applicants seeking funding to answer a methodological research question related to COS should apply via the HRB-TMRN / TMRP Working Group Project Seed Funding Stream and apply via the Outcomes Working Group].

This scheme will not fund:

- Research not directly relevant to core outcome sets.
- Work already in receipt of funding other than in exceptional circumstances and for additional objectives to work already funded.

Number of awards

One award is available of up to €10,000 each in 2025, overhead is also available at 25% of direct project costs. Award duration is for up to 12 months and strict timelines will apply. The proposed work **must** start in March 2025, with the latest finishing date of March 2026.

Who should apply?

Trial investigator teams with an interest in improving reported trial outcomes are invited to apply. There are no eligibility restrictions for the lead applicant (e.g. previous grant holder) and early-stage career researchers are welcome to apply.

The award must be held and managed within one of the following HRB-TMRN institutions;

- **University of Galway**
- **University College Cork**
- **Trinity College Dublin**

- **University College Dublin**
- **University of Limerick**

Irish lead applicants not based within these institutions may apply provided there is financial management support agreed with one of the HRB-TMRN institutions listed above through a nominated collaborator. Please contact the HRB-TMRN Programme Manager for further information.

Eligibility criteria

- Lead applicants must be employed at a recognised HRB host institution in Ireland.
- Applicants must provide evidence of mentoring arrangements (where appropriate) to provide academic and clinical/practice-based support.
- Research funding awarded must be managed in a separate reportable account.
- Applications must include a named collaborator from the Medical Research Council (MRC) National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Trials Methodology Research Partnership Outcomes Working Group. A request for a collaborator can be made by forwarding an abstract (300 words) of proposed COS work to the HRB-Trials Methodology Research Network at hrb-tmrn@universityofgalway.ie prior to 13th January 2025.

Budget

Budget is for eligible spending in Republic of Ireland only. Subcontracting of activities to organisations outside of Ireland is not permitted.

Allowable costs include:

Salary (salary, PRSI, pension contribution)

Applicants should use the IUA website for the most up-to-date recommended salary scales for academic researchers (<http://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/>). Please note employee pension contribution of 5% has already been incorporated into the IUA gross salary figure. Please state the pay scale used and the level and point on the scale. This should be justified accordingly.

The HRB-TMRN does not provide funding for the salary or benefits of academic staff within research institutions who are already in receipt of salary or benefits. The HRB-TMRN does not provide salary or buy out time for collaborators.

Employer's contributions to PRSI and/or national insurance at the appropriate rates (e.g. PRSI is calculated at 11.05% of gross salary in RoI).

Pension provision up to a maximum of 20% of gross salary will be paid to the host institution to enable compliance with the Employment Control Framework (an additional 5% employee contribution are part of the salary). The level of employer contribution should be in accordance with the model adopted by the host institution.

Running costs

- For all costs required to carry out the activities.
- Access to necessary special facilities or services which are not available in the host academic institutions.
- Funding for small items of equipment can be included in this section.
- Standalone computers will **not** be funded.
- All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.

Dissemination and knowledge exchange costs

This covers costs associated with the Dissemination and Knowledge Exchange Plan – i.e. Seminar/conference attendance (provide details of name and location, where possible) and any other means of communicating outcomes or engaging with stakeholders.

Overhead contribution

In accordance with the HRB Policy on Overhead Usage, the HRB-TMRN will contribute to the indirect costs of the research through an overhead payment of 25% of Total Direct Modified Costs for both lab/clinical and desk-based research. The following items are included in the overhead contribution: recruitment costs, office space, software, bioinformatics access.

Required start date

Please note this award is required to start during March 2025, to allow for the 12-month duration. Due to constraints with the overall Network award, a no cost extension will not be possible. Please consider this aspect when applying for this award. A later start date maybe possible, but the overall duration of the award will be reduced in this instance.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of complete applications is:

27th January 2025 at 1pm.

Queries relating to this funding scheme can be sent at hrb-tmrn@universityofgalway.ie

All application forms must be submitted as a PDF by email, along with relevant documentation to hrb-tmrn@universityofgalway.ie by the deadline with '**COS Funding Application**' in the subject line.

Peer Review Process

Applications will be subject to external peer review. Successful applicants will be notified by Friday 10th March 2025.