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Major new scientific partnership between UK and France signed to tackle greatest challenges in cancer

A major new international €10m (£8.6m) scientific partnership between the UK and France has been announced today, which will drive world-class, global cancer research.

Cancer Research UK and France's Institut National Du Cancer (INCa) have today (Tuesday 26th) announced a partnership to help fund world-class researchers to take on cancer's toughest challenges through the global Cancer Grand Challenges initiative.

Cancer Grand Challenges was founded in 2020 by two of the largest funders of cancer research in the world – Cancer Research UK and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the US*. The ambition is to build a scientifically elite, interdisciplinary community who can fill in some of our biggest knowledge gaps in cancer and drive the progress we urgently need.

INCa's participation in Cancer Grand Challenges will further expand the international reach of the initiative, bringing on board France's foremost cancer research institute to take on cancer's biggest challenges and deliver transformational research. INCa, one of Cancer Research UK's key partners, is the first to pledge funds to support multiple teams in a single round of Cancer Grand Challenges, alongside the initiative's original founding partners.

INCa's €10m (£8.6m) investment will help to fund the next round of Cancer Grand Challenges teams. There are currently [12 shortlisted teams](#) each competing for the chance to secure up to £20m for their global research projects in the latest round of challenges. Winning teams will be announced to the world in March 2024.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death around the world, claiming almost 10 million lives a year**, accounting for 1 in 5 deaths worldwide***. While research into cancer has made enormous strides forward, with around half of patients now surviving the disease for more than 10 years, there are fundamental challenges that stand in the way of vital progress.

Cancer Grand Challenges brings together diverse international organisations, collaborators and research leaders who share its mission. These include the Scientific Foundation of the Spanish Association Against Cancer, the Dutch Cancer Society, and The Mark Foundation for Cancer Research. To date, more than £210m has been invested in the Cancer Grand Challenges initiative, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting innovative, cross-disciplinary efforts to advance cancer research.

Director of Cancer Grand Challenges at Cancer Research UK, David Scott, said:

“With funding partners from the UK, USA, Spain, the Netherlands and now France, Cancer Grand Challenges is growing, ever steadily into a global leader in scientific collaboration and vital cancer research.

“INCa’s participation in Cancer Grand Challenges brings an exciting new opportunity for us to accelerate scientific discoveries and innovation on a scale which could not be achieved by the actions of one individual country or research institution alone.

“Through the support of INCa and Cancer Research UK’s other global partners, our international teams will be given the freedom to think differently, act creatively and take on some of the toughest challenges in cancer.”

Professor Norbert Ifrah, CEO and Thierry Breton, Director General of the French National Cancer Institute, said:

“Cancers with a poor prognosis are a major public health challenge which we need to address with the kind of breakthrough science that Cancer Grand Challenges supports through the mobilisation of world-class investigators and teams.

“We’ve seen science reach new frontiers through comparable initiatives in the world of physics, and cancer research is now on the verge of experiencing a similar evolution.

“INCa is fully committed to international scientific collaborations in cancer research, as part of our 10-year cancer control strategy. This major partnership between INCa and Cancer Research UK strengthens the Institute’s global actions in the fight against cancer.

Separately, in May this year, we also joined the G7 Cancer initiative**** alongside 6 of the most advanced international organisations who are fighting the disease.”

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For media enquiries please contact Ellie Bennett in the Cancer Research UK press office on 020 3469 5370 or, out of hours, 020 3469 8301.

French National Cancer Institute

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Notes to editor:

*The National Cancer Institute leads the NIH’s efforts to dramatically reduce the prevalence of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. The National Cancer Institute’s contributions to Cancer Grand Challenges are fully funded by the U.S. government.

**Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Burden of Disease study. 2019 data. Available from <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/>.

***International Agency for Research on Cancer. Cancer Today. 2020 data. Available from <https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/cancers/39-All-cancers-fact-sheet.pdf>.

****G7 Cancer officially launched on May 9. Bringing together the organisations at the forefront of the fight against cancer, this group aims to strengthen cooperation between partners to accelerate the fight against the disease, and in particular to address the most complex challenges. At the first meeting, which was held at May 9, the organisations' representatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding to set the cooperation framework.

The G7 partner organisations are: Cancer Australia; Canadian Institute of Health Research; National Cancer Institute, France; German Cancer Research Center; National Cancer Center, Japan; Cancer Research UK; US Department of Health and Human Services, National Cancer Institute

About Cancer Grand Challenges

Co-founded in 2020 by two of the largest funders of cancer research in the world: Cancer Research UK and the National Cancer Institute, Cancer Grand Challenges supports a global community of interdisciplinary, world-class research teams to come together, think differently and take on some of cancer's toughest challenges. These are the obstacles that continue to impede progress, and no one scientist, institution, or country will be able to solve them alone. With awards of up to £20M, Cancer Grand Challenges teams are empowered to rise above the traditional boundaries of geography and discipline to make the progress against cancer we urgently need.

About Cancer Research UK

- Cancer Research UK is the world's leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research, influence and information.
- Cancer Research UK's pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last 40 years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years. Cancer Research UK wants to accelerate progress and see 3 in 4 people surviving their cancer by 2034.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into the prevention and treatment of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK is working towards a world where people can live longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About French National Cancer Institute

The French National Cancer Institute (INCa) was established under the French Public Health Act of August 9, 2004, as the State health and science agency specialised in cancer control. It includes State representatives, charities, health insurance funds, hospital federations and research organizations and operates under the dual auspices of the French Ministry of Health and Solidarities and the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. It provides an integrated approach encompassing all cancer-control aspects (health, scientific, social and economic) and intervention areas (prevention, screening, care, research) to benefit patients and their relatives. To catalyse progress, INCa acts as an interface with patients, their friends and families, the healthcare system users, the general public, healthcare professionals, researchers, experts and decision-makers. The

Institute ensures the implementation of the ten-year cancer control strategy 2021-2030 <http://www.e-cancer.fr/> [twitter](#)