The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)

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Objectives, milestones and deliverables

The overall goal of the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is to re-invigorate the European bio-pharmaceutical sector and to make Europe more attractive for private research and development (R&D) investment in this sector. In the long term, IMI is also expected to provide faster access to better medicines for European citizens.

The biopharmaceutical industry is a key sector for European competitiveness. Production has nearly tripled since 1990 and employment in this sector increased by some 20%.

The sector currently faces a number of challenges, including fragmentation of knowledge, difficulties in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, and lower levels of private and public investment than other parts of the world, particularly the US and Japan. Furthermore, the development of a new drug is a long, complex and resource-intensive process. Various estimates have placed the costs between €300 million and €650 million, and the current trend is for the cost to increase further, as the drug development process becomes increasingly complex. The challenge is to identify promising drug candidates with greater certainty as early as possible, i.e. before they have consumed too many resources.

Thus, Europe needs to improve the way in which it harnesses the scientific know-how and expertise that exists across the EU in the pharmaceutical sector. Given the scale and complexity of the research challenges, a public-private partnership at European level is required to mobilise the necessary pooling and co-ordination of research efforts.

IMI will provide an operational framework for R&D, to combine the benefits of European integration with fast adaptation to industrial goals and policies and flexible participation. For the first time, competitors in the pharmaceutical sector will work together. The participation of academia and clinical centres, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), patient organisations and public authorities (including regulators) is a key element and will lead to a faster uptake of results.

IMI is co-financed by the European Community and the pharmaceutical industry. The Community contribution of € 1 billion will be matched by EFPIA (the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations) and its member companies.

IMI aims to provide new methodologies and tools for accelerating the development of safer and more effective medicines for patients, by overcoming pre-competitive research bottlenecks in the drug development process. The main focus of the research will be on developing and validating new techniques and methods to enhance the prediction of "Safety" and "Efficacy" of new medicines. This will be underpinned by better "Knowledge Management" that will provide the necessary data pooling and data processing and, through bridging gaps in "Education and Training", to ensure a more skilled workforce in Europe for this sector.

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JTIs

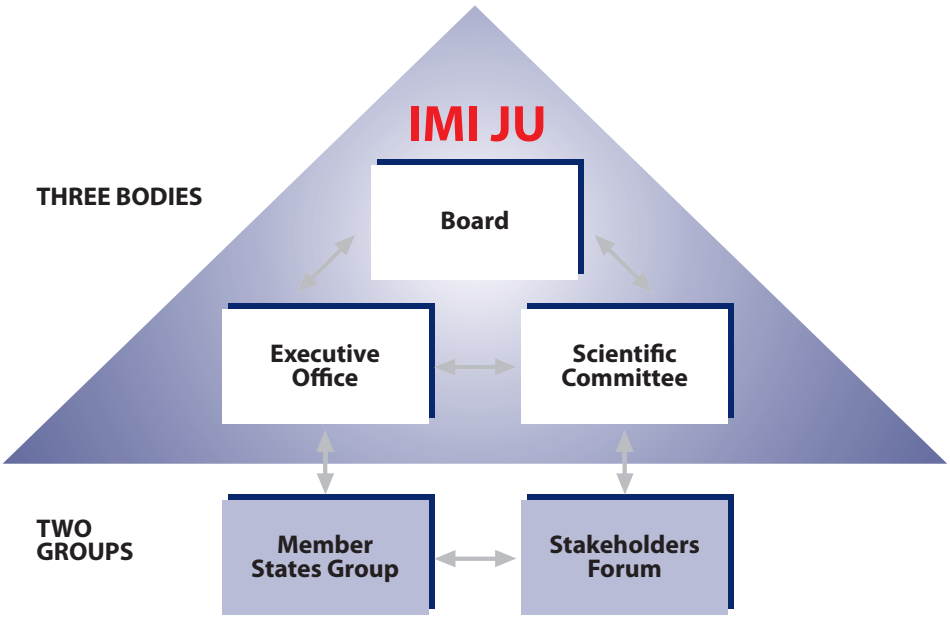
Membership and Structure

The Commission's proposal for the IMI Joint Undertaking, which is the organisation which would be set up to implement the Joint Technology Initiative (JTI), envisages that the Joint Undertaking will manage the implementation of the JTI research programme, including project evaluation and conclusion of grant agreements.

The executive bodies of the IMI Joint Undertaking are the Board, the Scientific Committee and the Executive Office. The JTI also includes a Member States Group and a Stakeholders' Forum, which represents all stakeholders (researchers from academia, SMEs, industry, clinicians, regulators, patients, etc.)

The Board of the IMI Joint Undertaking is composed of the two founding members (i.e. the Commission and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries Associations (EFPIA)), in addition to any organisations which become members of IMI. The Board has overall responsibility for the operations and decides on the annual implementation of the research activities following consultation of the Scientific Committee. The Board is also responsible for communication and co-ordination between IMI and the Member States. The Executive Office, with its independent staff, is responsible for the day-to-day management.
A Stakeholder Forum is held annually to exchange views on the ongoing or planned research activities.

The research activities supported by the IMI Joint Undertaking are conducted through collaborative projects undertaken by public and private organisations, selected through open calls for proposals. Any organisation is eligible to participate in projects, provided the research is done in Member States or in countries associated to the Seventh Framework Programme. Participating academic institutions and SMEs receive financial support, whereas participating EFPIA member companies will bear the full costs for their participation in projects.



Full title:
Joint Technology Initiative on Innovative Medicines

Founding members:
- European Community (represented by the Commission)
- European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)

Budget (2008- 2017) is	**€ 2 billion**
European Community:	€ 1 billion
Private sector:	at least equal to the Community contribution

Further information:
- www.ec.europa.eu/research/health/imi/index_en.html
- www.imi-europe.org

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Joint Technology Initiatives are a new way of realising public-private partnerships in research at European level. They provide a framework to mobilise and coordinate research efforts across Europe in order to define and implement common research agendas in key areas where research and development can contribute to Europe's growth and competitiveness objectives as well as to the wellbeing of its citizens.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/jtis