

Cancer Planners Forum

Report

14-16 May 2025



On 15–16 May 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland, the inaugural Cancer Planners Forum – organised by UICC in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and members of the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP) – brought together over 100 participants, including 44 cancer planners from 40 countries, to explore innovative approaches to cancer control planning.

Over two days, participants engaged in rich discussions on national cancer control planning within the broader context of health systems, with a focus on advancing equitable cancer care in the years ahead.

The programme covered the full spectrum of the cancer planning process – from setting objectives and priorities to costing and financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder engagement. Sessions combined expert presentations, country-led case studies, and interactive roundtable discussions to promote learning and practical exchange.

A key focus was the importance of robust national data collection and ensuring alignment with broader health policies and universal health coverage goals. The event fostered dynamic exchanges and encouraged participants to connect with peers and experts from around the world, sharing ideas, approaches, and lessons learned. To enhance networking opportunities, participants rotated tables during each interactive session.



“Participating in the Cancer Planners Forum was both inspiring and practical. Insights from fellow planners on their successes, challenges, and innovations provided valuable guidance as we begin implementing our new national cancer control plan.”

Mora Mel, Calmette Hospital,
Ministry of Health, Cambodia



The Forum’s primary objectives were:

- to create a space for sharing knowledge, experiences, best practices, and challenges;
- to equip participants with practical tools and strategies to strengthen cancer control plans at national, regional, and state levels;
- to position these plans as long-term investments and to identify viable pathways for financing;
- to foster greater collaboration between cancer control planners, encourage cross-border partnerships, and build supportive peer networks.



Interactive polling and group discussions revealed common priorities across regions: the need for more reliable data, stronger stakeholder engagement, and sustained political and financial commitment. Speakers – international experts and country representatives – emphasised the value of inclusive planning – bringing together clinicians, researchers, community organisations, and people living with cancer to shape and implement effective cancer control strategies.



Insights from the satisfaction survey:

- 97% of the respondents were satisfied with their participation in the Forum and would recommend the Forum to others
- 94% rated the networking opportunities as “excellent” or “very good”
- 97% made new connections and plan to continue the conversations
- 100% found the quality of the content either “excellent” or “very good”, with 92% appreciating a well-balanced format of presentations and table discussions
- 97% reported learning something new that will support their related work.

Welcome Day

“The value of national cancer control plans as strategic tools for governments cannot be underestimated. NCCPs are essential for improving cancer prevention and ensuring that appropriate treatment and supportive care are accessible and equitable, and tailored to the specific needs and resources of each country.”

UICC President Ulrika Årehed Kågström

“The cancer burden is rising and we urgently need new, collaborative solutions grounded in strong research and knowledge exchange. Data and robust cancer registration systems play a vital role in national cancer control planning.”

Elisabete Weiderpass, Director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

“Some of the most well-written national cancer control plans have failed to improve the lives of people affected by cancer. With this Cancer Planners Forum, we mark a new era – one where success is not measured by printed words but by real impact and achievements.”

André Ilbawi, Technical Lead for Cancer Control at the World Health Organization



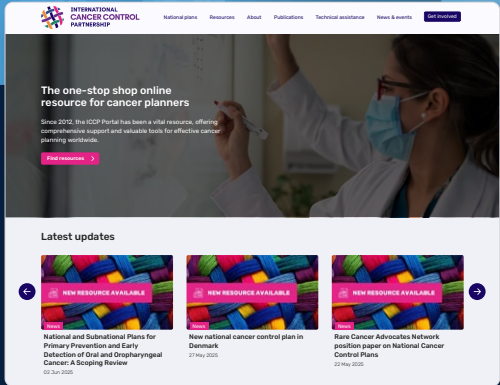
Day 1

The first day of the Forum introduced participants to the core components of cancer control planning. Filip Meheus from WHO presented a compelling investment case for national cancer control plans (NCCPs), offering evidence-based justifications and cost-benefit analyses. He outlined the significant health and socio-economic returns of well-planned cancer control strategies, reinforcing the message that NCCPs represent a wise and necessary investment.

This session was followed by a presentation from UICC’s Zuzanna Tittenbrun and Yannick Romero, who outlined the key elements of a comprehensive NCCP. Their presentation helped to establish a shared understanding among participants, drawing from the recent global review of NCCPs and demonstrating the [updated ICCP portal](#), which now serves as a more accessible and informative platform for planners worldwide.

A country case study by Kebba Bojang from The Gambia provided a detailed account of how his country approached the formulation of its NCCP. He described the process from planning to development, offering insights into the challenges faced and solutions found.

The importance of stakeholder engagement was further explored by Lisa Stevens from IAEA, who highlighted the need for inclusive governance frameworks. She presented strategies for mobilising diverse stakeholders – including government agencies, civil society, and technical experts – through participatory processes that enhance both the development and implementation phases of an NCCP.



A comprehensive resource hub for cancer control planning

UICC is pleased to announce the launch of the [newly updated website](#) for the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP) portal. The online platform is designed to support cancer planners and policymakers worldwide by providing a one-stop shop for resources and tools.

Visit the revamped iccp-portal.org

This theme continued through a series of country-led case studies. Mora Mel shared Cambodia’s experience in working with international partners to develop its NCCP, which was officially launched on 5 May 2025. Dorothy Keefe from Cancer Australia discussed the extensive public consultation that shaped Australia’s innovative approach to cancer planning, noting that their NCCP exists as an [interactive website](#) rather than a traditional document. Noraryana Binti Hassan from Malaysia described how civil society and individuals affected by cancer were meaningfully engaged in shaping Malaysia’s plan.

A moderated roundtable discussion followed, focusing on operational structures underpinning NCCPs, including the roles of national coordinating bodies and technical working groups. Participants reflected on how partner organisations contribute to the design and implementation of cancer plans, and shared valuable experiences about engaging civil society and individuals with lived experience in planning processes.

The afternoon sessions addressed the critical topic of setting clear, measurable objectives within national cancer plans. Katy Winckworth-Prejsnar from National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) in the US, an ICCP partner, presented on how to define effective goals that reflect the unique needs of a population. She stressed the importance of grounding objectives in data and aligning them with broader health system priorities.



Country case studies offered practical examples. Loubna Abousselham from Morocco presented goals and objectives from Morocco's NCCP covering the period 2020–2029. Triya Dinihari from Indonesia discussed the priority-setting process that led to the development of six core strategies within Indonesia's plan, ranging from prevention and early detection to research, partnerships, and accountability.

Building on this discussion, Magdalena Stepien from the European Commission Joint Research Centre presented the key pillars of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, which focuses on prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and improving the quality of life for cancer patients and survivors. Her presentation was followed by insights from two EU country representatives. Pieter de Coninck described how the Netherlands' cancer strategy, developed through a bottom-up, society-driven approach, aligns with the goals of the EU plan. Alicia Fernández Montero from Spain shared how the Spanish Cancer Strategy is structured around the same four foundational pillars as the European Plan.

The day concluded with a moderated roundtable discussion, during which participants were invited to share one goal and one related objective from their own NCCPs. They explained why these had been prioritised and described how they were measuring, or planned to measure, progress. This session offered a valuable opportunity for mutual learning and reflection on the practicalities of goal-setting in diverse national contexts.

During the reception that followed UICC launched Cancer Systems and Control for Health Professionals.



A new resource that examines the complex interplay between social determinants of health, health economics, and cancer control strategies. Designed as a valuable tool for cancer planners, policymakers, and health professionals, it equips readers with the knowledge to drive meaningful, systemic change in cancer control efforts.

Day 2

The second day of the Forum began with a discussion on how to cost a national cancer control plan, an essential component for ensuring successful implementation and sustainability. André Ilbawi from WHO led the session, highlighting when and why costing occurs during the NCCP development process, and emphasising its significance in turning strategic plans into actionable programmes. He underlined the importance of aligning costing with a country's broader health financing mechanisms.

Rory Watts from Forecast Health followed with a live demonstration of the [WHO costing tool](#) guiding participants through its application in different national contexts. His presentation illustrated how the tool can support cancer planners in estimating costs accurately and linking them to programmatic priorities, thereby strengthening the financial foundations of cancer control efforts.

The Forum then turned to the topic of NCCP implementation. Kalina Duncan from the US National Cancer Institute an ICCP Partner organisation, explored key factors influencing the successful rollout of cancer control plans. She highlighted diverse models of implementation from various countries, drawing attention to the importance of tailoring strategies to local contexts and resources.

Country perspectives brought these lessons to life. Xolisile Dlamini from Eswatini presented the country's approach to implementing its NCCP, underscoring the importance of integrating cancer services within existing health programmes to maximise impact and efficiency. Suraj Perera from Sri Lanka discussed the role of political and administrative leadership in sustaining implementation and shared how regular monitoring at both district and national levels ensures accountability and responsiveness.



Following these presentations, a moderated roundtable discussion invited participants to reflect on implementation strategies from their own countries. Discussions focused on the enabling factors that support the implementation of priority actions within NCCPs, as well as lessons learned around mobilising resources to support these efforts. Participants shared insights on coordination, workforce readiness, and health system integration.

The following session focused on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), a cornerstone of effective and adaptive cancer control planning. Three countries shared their approaches, each emphasising different facets of monitoring and evaluation.

Joan-Paula Bor-Malenya from Kenya introduced a systems-based approach rooted in accountability and continuous learning. She presented [Kenya's MEAL \(Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning\) framework](#), developed alongside the National Cancer Control Strategy 2023–2027. She outlined how the framework includes clear indicators, practical tools, and standardised reporting formats, all aligned with strategic goals and outcomes of the NCCP. This structured approach supports ongoing performance tracking, while fostering a culture of learning and improvement.

From Nigeria, Emmanuel Uchechukwu Nwokwu shared how the review of the previous cancer plan (2018–2022) shaped the development of the current strategy (2023–2027). He noted that the new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework includes detailed performance indicators for each priority area, with defined annual targets. This ensures that the strategy remains dynamic and responsive over its five-year duration.

Dawn Wilson from New Zealand offered a view of a highly data-driven monitoring system. She described the role of cancer registration and data flows in tracking the plan's performance and highlighted the country's commitment to publishing regular, transparent reports on the state of cancer care and prevention. She also emphasised the value of collaboration and co-creation with Indigenous communities, which has been integral to the plan's success and inclusivity.

A subsequent roundtable discussion provided a platform for participants to exchange experiences related to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Many shared how their countries use M&E to inform ongoing NCCP implementation. Challenges around data availability, particularly in low-resource settings, were also discussed, as participants explored ways to strengthen cancer registration and find innovative solutions to data gaps.

The final segment of the Forum addressed legislative frameworks and policy coherence – two often-overlooked yet foundational elements of successful national cancer control planning. Hayley Jones from the McCabe Centre for Law and Cancer delivered a compelling presentation on the relevance of legal frameworks to NCCPs. She provided a wide array of examples demonstrating how the law can be used to establish institutions, mandate budget allocations, require data collection, and enforce regulations around cancer risk factors. She also explored how legal tools can help set social norms, protect individual rights, and enable multisectoral coordination in the broader context of noncommunicable disease control.

Country experiences further illuminated this topic. Cesaltina Lorenzoni from Mozambique shared how her country is working to eliminate cervical cancer through a national strategy aligned with the WHO's global initiative on cervical cancer elimination. She detailed the steps Mozambique has taken to achieve this goal. Hesham El-Ghazaly from Egypt focused on national efforts to address breast cancer, outlining how Egypt's NCCP is closely aligned with both the Global Breast Cancer Initiative Implementation Framework and the country's universal health coverage (UHC) policy. He explained how breast cancer services are integrated into Egypt's UHC benefit package, thereby ensuring that care is accessible, affordable, and high quality for all segments of the population.

This final session brought the Forum full circle – linking planning and implementation with governance, legal frameworks, and equity. It emphasised that comprehensive cancer control is not just about medical interventions, but also about systems, structures, and inclusive policies that enable enduring impact.

A dedicated Cancer Planners Room has been established on the UICC Connect platform to help cancer planners and forum participants stay connected, share relevant resources, and discuss common challenges and solutions.

In his closing speech, Cary Adams, CEO of UICC, encouraged participants to continue the groundwork laid down at the event:



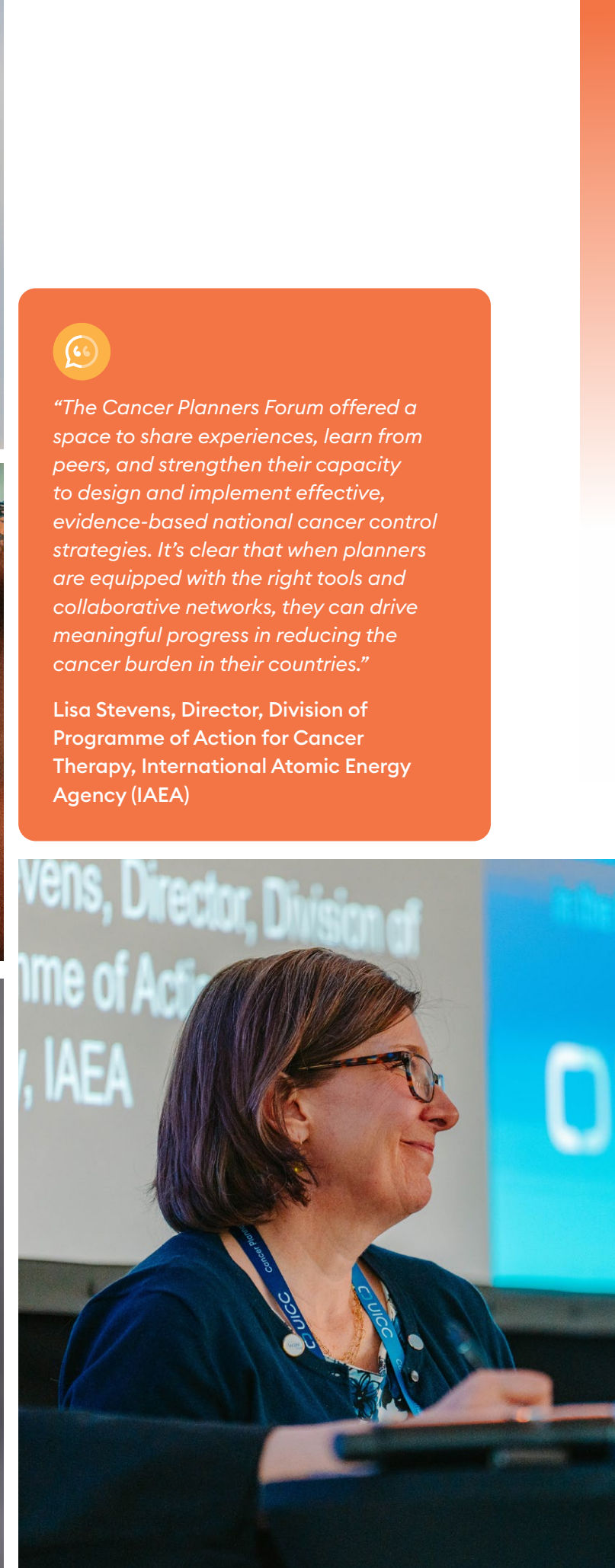
“Go back to your countries and co-planners and share what moved and inspired you here. We hope to meet again – to witness the progress and hear the impact on the ground. So much of the incredible work we’ve seen is built through this community, and I hope you leave knowing you are not alone. You have friends, you have a voice – and together, we have the power to shift both national priorities and the global agenda as we look ahead to the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs and beyond.”



“UICC has taken the bold step to establish this new forum for cancer planners who, until this point, have not had a global forum for peer-to-peer exchange. It was clear from participants that this forum is long overdue and provided tremendous value to every cancer planner who attended. The forum will accelerate cancer planning and improve its quality and funding in more than 50 countries.”

Felicia Flowitt, Director of Oncology Policy (Pan-Tumour), AstraZeneca





"Even coming from a country with a well-established cancer control system, the Cancer Planners Forum offered fresh perspectives and meaningful dialogue. It was a reminder that no matter how advanced our programmes may be, there is always something to learn—from innovative approaches in other contexts to the resilience and creativity of planners working with fewer resources."

Alicia Fernández Montero,
Ministry of Health, Spain



"Participating in the Cancer Planners Forum was an incredibly valuable experience from the perspective of an ICCP partner. Having ICCP partners serve as roundtable moderators provided a unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the real-world challenges and innovative solutions cancer planners are implementing across diverse settings."

Katy Winckworth-Prejsnar,
Director, Global Program,
National Comprehensive
Cancer Network




"The Cancer Planners Forum offered a space to share experiences, learn from peers, and strengthen their capacity to design and implement effective, evidence-based national cancer control strategies. It's clear that when planners are equipped with the right tools and collaborative networks, they can drive meaningful progress in reducing the cancer burden in their countries."

Lisa Stevens, Director, Division of
Programme of Action for Cancer
Therapy, International Atomic Energy
Agency (IAEA)




Forum at a glance

 **106** participants from **49** countries
including **44** cancer planners from **40** countries

 3 dynamic days of engaging sessions, table discussions and networking receptions

 31 speakers

 Supported by 17 partners and sponsors

 14 tables during 4 round table discussions moderated by ICCP Partners

 ICCP portal relaunched

 Book launch: “Cancer Systems and Control for Health professionals”

Partners and sponsors

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