



ON TRACK NETWORK
BETTER HEALTH FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES

The ON TRACK Network

Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Version 1.0

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The ON TRACK Network Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The ON TRACK Network is a National Maternal and Perinatal Clinical Trials Network (CTN) aiming to improve the health of mothers and babies in New Zealand.

This document summarises the background, organisational structure, mission, vision, strategic platform, core values, objectives, strategies and performance indicators of the ON TRACK Network for the period 2016-2020.

Our Background

Multicentre clinical trials in maternal and perinatal medicine are central to the translation of scientific research into clinical practice. They allow important, clinically relevant research questions to be answered effectively and in a timely way leading to improved maternal and neonatal outcomes and life-long health for mothers and babies.

New Zealand researchers in maternal and perinatal healthcare have an excellent reputation in leading and contributing to internationally recognised multicentre clinical trials that have changed clinical practice [1-5]. New Zealand clinical trials in maternity care and neonatology have generally been funded in response to investigator-initiated research proposals. They have relied on the traditional approach of coordinating trial-specific personnel and resources along with a temporary consortium of research sites for each new study [6].

It has become increasingly recognised that the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of clinical research could be enhanced through the formation of well organised and coordinated networks. With the growing emphasis on evidenced-based clinical practice and pressures on healthcare expenditure creating a push for a more efficient use of increasingly scarce resources, it is appropriate to rethink existing approaches and forge more effective and sustainable collaborations [7-14].

Investigator-initiated Clinical Trials Networks (CTNs) are the most common way of organising such collaborations and in many ways, are seen as the most effective [15]. Investigator-initiated networks enhance the completion of high-quality clinical trials, promote a culture of research in the clinical environment, improve translation into practice and significantly strengthen funding opportunities. The on-going success of mature networks, such as the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Clinical Trials Group (ANZICS CTG) and the Interdisciplinary Maternal Perinatal Collaborative Trials (IMPACT) Network within the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand (PSANZ), further demonstrate the value of long-term investment in investigator-initiated CTNs, sustainable infrastructure and personnel development [16-17].

In the New Zealand context, developing a more structured and cohesive maternal and perinatal network has the potential to not only achieve the benefits outlined above, but also enable smaller regional units to become more actively involved in research. This would permit efficient use of limited resources, enhance timely completion of studies and allow faster dissemination and application of results.

Developing a CTN of this calibre requires consideration and planning. In 2013 a feasibility study was established to consider whether it would be possible to achieve such a network in New Zealand and how best this could be done. The feasibility study was funded by grants from the

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) Mercia Barnes Trust and Gravida (the National Centre for Research in Growth and Development). The study was led by an advisory group, representative of all disciplines in maternal and perinatal health and geographical regions of New Zealand. The study engaged with all maternal and perinatal medicine-related centres within New Zealand by a series of surveys distributed to research active practitioners and clinicians working in midwifery, obstetrics, neonatology and neonatal nursing. The surveys endeavoured to identify past and current research involvement; interests and potential capabilities of individuals and units; and the barriers and enhancers to the development of a successful CTN. Review of, and consultation with successfully established networks was also undertaken.

The data obtained provided valuable understandings about the maternal and perinatal research landscape and the infrastructure required to establish a CTN across New Zealand. Evidenced in the data were barriers to undertaking clinical trials research that have remained entrenched for decades, namely the perennial trinity; lack of time, lack of resources, and lack of institutional support. However, it was apparent that many clinicians were interested in pursuing ways to improve research participation, collaboration and translation into practice across New Zealand.

At the conclusion of the feasibility study, following an advisory group workshop in February 2014, it was agreed that more effectively supporting maternal, perinatal and neonatal researchers via a CTN remained a compelling possibility. It was decided that if a network was to be established it should be investigator-initiated and led with an emphasis on multicentre clinical trials and should be under the umbrella of the Perinatal Society of New Zealand (PSNZ), linking to Australia via PSANZ which hosts the IMPACT Network.

The Advisory Group recommended that the New Zealand network be coordinated by an Executive Committee representative of all regions and disciplines in maternal and perinatal health. It also recommended that the network be supported by a clinical trials coordinating centre and that the University of Auckland was best positioned currently to provide this.

Whilst the feasibility study provided a strong foundation on which to proceed, it was acknowledged that securing funding and engaging the research-interested community to establish a coordinated investigator-driven network would take time and effort. In late 2015, a five-year grant from the University of Auckland's Strategic Research Initiatives Fund (SRIF) was awarded for the development of a National Maternal and Perinatal Clinical Trials Network and Central Co-ordinating Clinical Trials Centre.

Organisational Structure

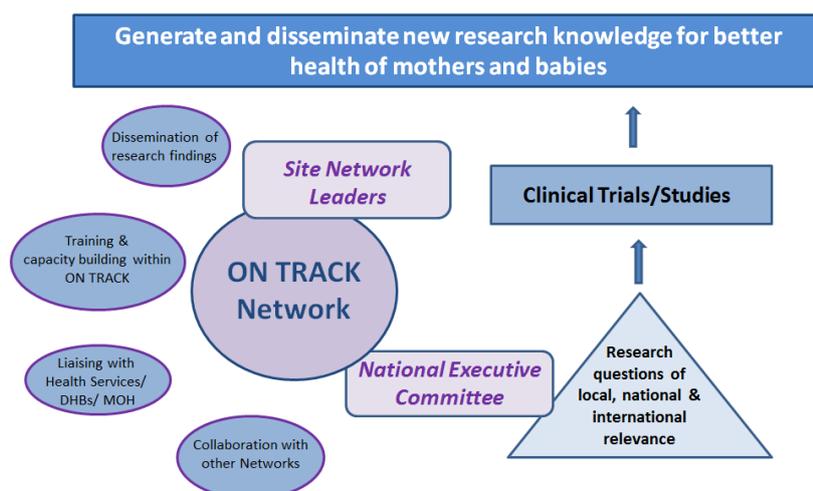
Overview of the ON TRACK Network

The ON TRACK Network is overseen by a National Executive Committee, comprised of members representative of discipline and geography around New Zealand.

The Network is an inclusive endeavour with membership reflecting this. Each District Health Board (DHB) has been invited to be a member of the network, however, individual involvement is also invited and encouraged from all practitioners working in the fields of obstetrics, neonatology, midwifery, neonatal nursing and allied health, as well as educators, consumers and researchers.

A Site Network Leader (assisted by a Site Network Coordinator) provides representation at each DHB and serves as an interface between the national network and local research activity at each site.

Structure and Function of the ON TRACK Network



ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee

In early 2016, a call for expressions of interest was made to research active practitioners via clinical leaders from each DHB across the country for membership on the National Executive Committee. Appointments were made in June 2016 with membership representative of discipline and geography and including consumer representation (members as per Appendix A).

The National Executive Committee meets on a monthly basis and is responsible for directing and implementing the activity of the ON TRACK Network. The role of the ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee is as follows:

- To develop a strategic plan for the network including a vision, mission statement, core values, research goals, organisational structure and sustainability.

- To build clinical research training capacity within the ON TRACK Network.
- To liaise with Health Services, DHBs, Ministry of Health (MOH) and other stakeholders.
- To facilitate the generation of new research priorities and questions.
- To support and advocate the importance of maternal and perinatal health clinical research.
- To facilitate the dissemination of research findings.
- To facilitate collaborations with other clinical trial networks.

Individual National Executive Committee members have the following responsibilities:

- To understand the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the project.
- To take a genuine interest in the project's outcomes and overall success.
- To act on opportunities to communicate positively about the network and projects at their locality.
- To provide feedback to the ON TRACK Network SRI Steering Group and the Operations Management Committee of the Central Coordinating Clinical Trials Research Hub.
- To actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of documents.

The National Executive Committee currently reports to the ON TRACK Network Strategic Research Initiative Steering Group (SRISG). Full National Executive Committee Terms of Reference are as Appendix B.

ON TRACK Network Site Network Leaders (SNL)

A call for expressions of interest was made in early 2016 to clinical leaders of each discipline (midwifery, obstetrics, neonatology and neonatal nursing) in every DHB for a Site Network Leader. Each unit was invited to nominate a senior practitioner with an interest and/or experience in research to act as a local champion for the Network and clinical trials research in general.

Representative of geography and discipline in New Zealand, the Site Network Leaders provide the interface between the national network and local research activity (current Site Network Leaders as Appendix C).

The main roles of the Site Network Leaders are as follows:

- To be the champion and advocate for the ON TRACK Network at each respective DHB/Hospital.
- To provide liaison between the ON TRACK Network and local clinical services about relevant research needs.
- To provide feedback from the local DHB to the ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee about priority research questions, issues and recommendations on further development of the network.
- To introduce and facilitate clinical trials within the ON TRACK Network at the DHB/hospital.
- To provide education updates to staff at the DHB/hospital about new research findings from clinical trials.
- To facilitate transfer of research findings into local clinical practices.

Full Site Network Leader position description as per Appendix D.



ON TRACK Site Network Co-ordinators

Each DHB has been given the opportunity to appoint a Site Network Co-ordinator to assist the Site Network Leader and aid co-ordination of ON TRACK Network activities within each unit (current Site Network Coordinators as per Appendix E).

The ON TRACK Network provides a small amount of salary support for this position at each DHB. The main roles of the Site Network Co-ordinators are:

- To regularly present information about the ON TRACK Network trials at local clinical forums.
- To champion local participation in ON TRACK Network activities.
- To support local clinical staff working in ON TRACK Network trials.
- To where possible, provide mentorship/guidance to junior research staff.
- To distribute ON TRACK Network newsletters/information within the DHB/hospital.
- To liaise with other ON TRACK DHB/hospital Site Network Coordinators.
- To liaise with Clinical Trial Coordinators of ON TRACK Network trials.

Full Site Network Co-ordinator Position Description as per Appendix F.

ON TRACK Network Members

Each District Health Board has been invited to be a member of the network, however, all practitioners working in the disciplines of midwifery, obstetrics, neonatology, neonatal nursing, allied health as well as researchers, consumers and educators are invited and strongly encouraged to be engaged in the activity of the network as individuals as well as through their local workplace. Membership to the network is currently free of charge.

ON TRACK Network Administrator

The ON TRACK Network administrator is responsible for the day-to-day running of the network and reports to the Chairperson of the ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee.

Funding

Funding for the ON TRACK Network was secured from the University of Auckland's Strategic Research Initiatives Fund. This grant enables the establishment of the ON TRACK Network and supports the development of a Clinical Trials Coordinating Centre. Whilst responsibilities for reporting to the funder continue (until 2020), the overarching project is overseen by the ON TRACK Strategic Research Initiative Steering Group (SRISG)- current members as Appendix G. As the ON TRACK Network becomes established and self-sustaining, the SRISG will transfer governance to the ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee.

The SRISG also provides oversight to the development of the Clinical Trials Co-ordinating Centre, the Central Co-ordinating Research Hub (CCRH). The CCRH is a parallel project to the ON TRACK Network. It is based at the Liggins Institute, University of Auckland and provides methodological, data management and bio-statistical expertise to support maternal and perinatal health clinical trials from within New Zealand and internationally.



The ON TRACK Network Mission

The ON TRACK Network mission is to engage with and energise research in the maternal and perinatal health community to optimise health for pregnant women and their babies in New Zealand. The ON TRACK Network will *champion* the identification of priority research questions, *capacity-build* to allow the integration of high-quality, sustainable clinical trials into routine clinical practice and *facilitate* the dissemination and implementation of research findings into clinical practice in all regions across New Zealand.

The ON TRACK Network Vision

Our vision is to see a self-improving maternal and perinatal healthcare system effective in New Zealand, where all maternity centres and disciplines perceive clinical trials research to be a core component of service provision and who engage in high quality multicentre clinical trials research accordingly, to achieve greater equity, outcomes, and quality of life for women and babies nationwide.

The ON TRACK Network Strategic Platform

Keeping ON TRACK with the three pillars underpinning the Network

Pillar One:

Identify priority research questions in maternal and perinatal health across New Zealand.

Pillar Two:

Facilitate the establishment and effective integration of multicentre clinical trials in maternal and perinatal health at all sites in New Zealand that provide maternity and neonatal care.

Pillar Three:

Facilitate the dissemination and timely implementation of research findings into the clinical environment to raise the profile of evidence-based practice, increase the knowledge-base of local practitioners and enhance the quality of care received by women and babies nationwide.



The ON TRACK Network Core Values

Excellence & Innovation “*Whaia te iti kahurangi*”

We endeavour to foster a culture of excellence within the ON TRACK Network. We are committed to upholding high standards for network functioning, facilitating and promoting high-quality clinical trials and using creative and innovative methods to achieve our objectives.

Collaboration & Cooperation “*Naku te rourou, nau te rourou*”

We are a transdisciplinary national network that seeks to strengthen a collaborative research community within New Zealand maternal and perinatal healthcare. We seek to invest in this community; connecting and engaging members and empowering them toward achieving their personal and shared research goals. We recognise the influence of a collective in affecting change and seek to maximise our resources and work together to improve the health of mothers and babies in New Zealand.

Respect “*Awhi mai, awhi atu*”

The ON TRACK Network acknowledges and values the uniqueness of all people and celebrates diversity. We treat all members of the ON TRACK community with respect and welcome the unique knowledge, expertise, lived experience, values and beliefs each person brings to research and the network.

New Zealand focussed “*Aronga Aotearoa*”

We are a New Zealand centred network, underpinned by the Treaty of Waitangi principles of Partnership, Protection and Participation. The ON TRACK Network will seek to promote equity and customise activity to the New Zealand context so all mothers and babies enjoy the same standard of health and healthcare in New Zealand.

Inclusivity and Support “*He waka eke noa*”

The ON TRACK Network recognises and values the diversity between regions in New Zealand and endeavours to achieve equity in research opportunities through an inclusive and individualised partnership with all New Zealand DHBs; seeking to identify and support the interests and requirements of each site within the network.

Sustainability and future investment “*Hutia te rito te harakeke*”

The ON TRACK Network will invest in maternal and perinatal health research by establishing sound infrastructure and providing quality training and research opportunities for ON TRACK Network members. We are committed to making decisions that foster the ongoing existence of the ON TRACK Network to see knowledge and research endeavours advanced in the future.

Accountability “*I runga te tika, te pono*”

The ON TRACK Network is committed to upholding our responsibility to the mothers and babies, governing bodies, clinicians, researchers, consumers and the community we serve, to function in a way that promotes ethical behaviour and prioritises the wellbeing of all. We will operate safely, with integrity and using open and honest communication.

'Building on the Platform'

ON TRACK Network Objectives and Strategies

Objective One:

To identify priority research questions in maternal and perinatal health across New Zealand.

The ON TRACK Network will seek to identify the gaps in existing knowledge in maternal and perinatal health and consider ways of addressing those of high priority.

Strategies

- Provide clinicians & research personnel with opportunities to engage with maternal & perinatal health research & encourage the consideration of areas requiring further investigation.
- Equip Site Network Leaders at every unit to encourage & facilitate the exchange of research questions, ideas & feedback from regional members of the ON TRACK Network (clinicians, researchers & consumers) to the ON TRACK National Executive Committee.
- Facilitate research priority-setting meetings/forums to enable discussion & collective identification of further priority research questions.
- Engage & liaise with consumers & those with lived experience in maternal & perinatal health to identify high priority research questions & areas requiring further exploration.
- Host events/workshops to invite consumers, clinicians & researchers to progress research questions into protocols attractive to funders for multicentre investigator-driven research projects in maternal & perinatal health.
- Compile a record of research questions identified by the ON TRACK Network for dissemination & use by ON TRACK Network members, funders & other relevant parties.

Objective Two:

To facilitate the design, conduct and effective integration of multicentre clinical trials in maternal and perinatal healthcare at all New Zealand sites.

Together with the Central Coordinating Research Hub, the ON TRACK Network will support research active/interested members to establish and integrate new clinical trials addressing the priority research questions identified.

In collaboration with all New Zealand DHBs and other bodies, the ON TRACK Network will explore avenues for providing resources and support to enable patients and clinicians alike to participate in sustainable, high-quality maternal and perinatal clinical trials research.

Strategies:

- Profile planned & on-going clinical trials in ON TRACK Network communication to increase awareness of clinical trials research & enthuse & augment New Zealand's active maternal & perinatal research culture.
- Utilise Network communication to encourage all sites to consider participation in trials currently in progress.
- Gain further understanding of the principles of site engagement & how the network can enable it.
- Encourage effective interfaces with local governance & ethics groups to see multicentre trials integrated into multiple sites effectively.
- Maintain a database of maternal & perinatal clinical trials & assume a liaison role, functioning to connect trial coordinators with sites interested in recruiting to ongoing clinical trials.
- Support sites commencing new clinical trials by providing them with the information, advice & resources required to implement studies effectively, efficiently and sustainably.
- Provide all sites with support & encouragement to continue active & sustained involvement in their ongoing research endeavours.
- Support & champion the ideas of those interested in pursuing more intensive involvement in clinical trials research, including those interested in postgraduate study in specific trials associated with the ON TRACK Network from the concept development phase.
- Facilitate consultation with consumers & potential participants to ensure clinical trial development, implementation & recruitment occurs in an appropriate & effective way, working in partnership with, & meeting the needs of those who we aim to benefit, at all stages of the research process.
- Equip potential & current maternal & perinatal health researchers/clinicians with information, advice and guidance at all stages of clinical trial research; from identifying research gaps to concept development, feasibility studies and funding applications.
- Mobilise the resources within the ON TRACK Network; infrastructure, contacts, information & expertise, to assist those commencing ON TRACK promoted research trials, to ensure these resources are maximised & recruitment occurs as efficiently & effectively as possible across all regions in New Zealand.
- Liaise as appropriate with other international clinical trials alliances & networks to see outputs maximised & clinical trials networks sustained & thriving internationally.
- Seek to identify barriers to participation in research & work to address & minimise/remove these where possible.
- Encourage the undertaking of research investigating the most effective methods of running high quality, multicentre randomised control trials in New Zealand.

Objective Three:

Facilitate the dissemination and timely implementation of research findings into the clinical environment to raise the profile of evidence-based practice, increase the knowledge-base of local practitioners and enhance the quality of care received by women and babies nationwide.

The ON TRACK Network will seek to facilitate the timely dissemination, translation and implementation of research results into the clinical environment, to promote change in practice and policy, for optimal outcomes in maternal and perinatal health.

Strategies:

- Promote clinical trials research as a core component of healthcare systems & work to create a dynamic & vibrant research culture amongst all maternal & perinatal practitioners & providers.
- Profile the results of recently published clinical trials in ON TRACK Network newsletters & encourage the consideration of clinical applications, to increase the knowledge-base of local practitioners & foster the translation of research findings into practice nationwide.
- Provide mentorship and support to Site Network Leaders to encourage local practice change when supported by new evidence.
- Provide leadership & support for the implementation of new research findings into clinical practice guidelines and then policies.
- Communicate research results & updates to consumers & members of the wider community via newsletters, website content & other media to ensure all members of the ON TRACK community are empowered to advocate for evidence based practice & equipped with knowledge for informed decision-making.

Objective Four:

To become self-sustaining within the next five years.

The ON TRACK Network is supported by a five year grant. During this time we must seek further funding opportunities to ensure the Network can be maintained.

Strategies:

- Engage with key stakeholders (DHBs, government, professional colleges, consumer groups, philanthropic charities & funding bodies) to explore opportunities to fund the ON TRACK Network.
- Document the number & focus of all maternal & perinatal health clinical trials on-going in New Zealand & their funding structures & impacts.
- Document all relevant multicentre trials & potentially eligible hospitals to ensure efficiencies in recruitment.
- Encourage, support & mentor emerging researchers.
- Support the enrolment of postgraduate students into research degrees in maternal & perinatal health research.

Performance Indicators

Objective	Mid 2018	2020
<p><u>Objective One</u></p> <p>Identify priority research questions in maternal and perinatal health.</p>	<p>At least 60% of DHBs engaged in the ON TRACK Network with a Site Network Leader appointed & actively encouraging consideration of priority research questions.</p>	<p>At least 90% of DHBs engaged in the ON TRACK Network with a Site Network Leader appointed & actively encouraging consideration of priority research questions.</p>
	<p>Facilitate at least one research priority setting meeting every two years.</p>	<p>Facilitate at least one research priority setting meeting every two years.</p>
	<p>Establish effective forum for consumers to feedback identified gaps in knowledge.</p>	<p>Maintain effective forum for consumers to feedback identified gaps in knowledge.</p>
	<p>Complete annual review of research gaps identified & document plans for progressing those most promising. Disseminate to ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee, SNLs, funders & other relevant parties. Ensure documented identification of at least two new priority research questions annually.</p>	<p>Complete annual review of research gaps identified & document plans for progressing those most promising. Disseminate to ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee, SNLs, funders & other relevant parties. Ensure documented identification of at least two new priority research questions annually.</p>
<p><u>Objective Two</u></p> <p>Facilitate the design, conduct & integration of multicentre clinical trials nationwide.</p>	<p>Plan & facilitate at least one trial development workshop every two years. Document & review attendance.</p>	<p>Plan & facilitate at least one trial development workshop every two years. Document & review attendance.</p>
	<p>Promote and ensure consumer representation occurs at every trial development workshop with consumer input in 80% of concepts prior to funding submissions.</p>	<p>Promote and ensure consumer representation occurs at every trial development workshop with consumer input in 100% of concepts prior to funding submissions.</p>
	<p>Assist at least two trial proposals to be progressed into funding applications/study protocols every two years.</p>	<p>Assist at least three trial proposals to be progressed into funding applications/study protocols every two years.</p>
	<p>Compile & maintain record of clinical trials planned, in progress & completed; ensure record and associated contact details are</p>	<p>Maintain record of clinical trials planned, in progress & completed; ensure record and associated contact details are easily</p>

	easily accessible to all sites to promote wider uptake & participation.	accessible to all sites to promote wider uptake & participation.
	Support the integration of a clinical trial into at least two new sites every two years.	Support the integration of a clinical trial into at least two new sites every two years.
	Equip at least one post graduate student to be involved with an ON TRACK Network affiliated clinical trial each year.	Equip at least one post graduate student to be involved with an ON TRACK Network affiliated clinical trial each year.
<p><u>Objective Three</u></p> <p>Facilitate the dissemination and timely implementation of research findings into the clinical environment.</p>	Develop an ON TRACK Network website nested within website of the Perinatal Society of New Zealand.	Maintain the ON TRACK Network website nested within the Perinatal Society of New Zealand website.
	Compile and maintain an ON TRACK Network contact list/database & disseminate regular network communication to these members.	Maintain the ON TRACK Network contact list/database & disseminate regular network communication to these members.
	Develop a template for an ON TRACK Network newsletter and disseminate monthly editions to at least 70% of NZ DHBs, ON TRACK Network contact list members & stakeholders including, colleges, other CTNs, funders.	Maintain development and monthly dissemination of the ON TRACK Network newsletter to at least 90% of NZ DHBs, ON TRACK Network contact list members & stakeholders including, colleges, other CTNs, funders.
	Ensure a recently published clinical trial is profiled in 75% of ON TRACK network newsletters.	Ensure a recently published clinical trial is profiled in 90% of ON TRACK network newsletters.
	Establish interest and feasibility of creating an ON TRACK Network consumer contact list with associated consumer communication.	If high level of interest & feasibility ascertained, compile consumer contact list & synthesise relevant communication.
	Hold quarterly teleconference meetings with Site Network Leaders/Site Network Co-ordinators to support them in their role as research liaisons and champions.	Hold quarterly teleconference meetings with Site Network Leaders/Site Network Co-ordinators to support them in their role as research liaisons and champions.
<u>Objective Four</u>	Investigate avenues for future funding of the ON TRACK Network with stakeholders (DHBs, MoH,	Secure sustainable funding for the ongoing functioning of the network.

Become self-sustaining within the next five years.	Colleges, philanthropic charities, Hospitals).	
	Communicate financial opportunities for funding and grants in maternal and perinatal health research to ON TRACK Network members.	Communicate financial opportunities for funding and grants in maternal and perinatal health research to ON TRACK Network members.
	Consider co-hosting meetings with other clinical trial networks e.g. IMPACT to strengthen links & enhance collaboration.	Consider co-hosting meetings with other clinical trial networks e.g. IMPACT to strengthen links & enhance collaboration.
	Develop and implement a strategy for engagement with key stakeholders, including the MoH, professional colleges and funding bodies.	Maintain engagement with key stakeholders, including the MoH, professional colleges and funding bodies.
	Ensure at least one new post graduate student is enrolled in a research degree annually related to one of the ON TRACK Network promoted clinical trials.	Ensure at least one new post graduate student is enrolled in a research degree annually related to one of the ON TRACK Network promoted clinical trials.
	Maintain record of new trials developed and integrated between 2016-mid 2018, as well as uptake of existing clinical trials by DHBs during this period.	Maintain record of new trials developed and integrated between mid 2018- 2020, as well as uptake of existing clinical trials by DHBs during this period.
	Complete annual review (using database records above) of network efficacy by analysing the 'feedback loop'; rates of trials developed and integrated under the guidance of the ON TRACK Network.	Complete annual review (using database records above) of network efficacy by analysing the 'feedback loop'; rates of trials developed and integrated under the guidance of the ON TRACK Network.

The ON TRACK Network Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the ON TRACK Network National Executive Committee on an annual basis.

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