IMPLEMENTING THE NEXT ITERATION

OF THE

NIH PATH TO EXCELLENCE

AND INNOVATION (PEI) INITIATIVE

STRATEGIC PLAN

SUBMITTED BY
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION

CONTRACTING COMPETIVENESS ADVANCES THE NIH MISSION

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is devoted to exploring every possible avenue to helping people live their longest, healthiest lives. Consequently, the NIH benefits from a larger contractor pool that promotes competitive pricing and cost savings for future procurements.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a well-documented tradition of contributing to the nation's public health. Hence, HBCU competitiveness in contracting remains an emerging priority for the NIH Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM). As more institutions express interest in participating in the paradigm shift from an exclusive focus on grants, the NIH Small Business Program Office (SBPO) has responded by developing a comprehensive ecosystem to engage HBCUs in procurement activities.

The strategic plan provides a high-level road map for leveraging the successes of the **Path to Excellence and Innovation (PEI) Initiative's** Pilot and 2.0 Cohort. Activities and outputs identified in this Strategic Plan will ensure sustainability for HBCUs in fulfilling their critical role in collaborations with NIH to advance national priorities in health and biomedical research.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NIH is the largest biomedical research organization in the world. In FY 2024, NIH's 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs) obligated approximately $7.9 billion via contract awards to support the NIH mission. However, less than 1% of NIH's contract awards are obligated to HBCUs.

Research and a Gap Analysis conducted prior to the launch of the PEI Initiative's pilot program revealed that, although HBCUs possessed the technical capabilities necessary to execute contract requirements, barriers existed that kept HBCUs from pursuing acquisition opportunities with NIH. Those barriers included:

- Lack of Federal contracting knowledge and experience.
- Lack of understanding of different funding streams – grants vs. traditional government contracts.
- Lack of infrastructure to effectively compete for and administer contracts.
- The perception that obtaining a Federal contract is too daunting or that no technical assistance is available.

In 2017, under the direction of the NIH Head of Contracting Activity and the Director, OALM moved to eliminate those obstacles by creating the **PEI Initiative** as a comprehensive vehicle to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs to compete for, win, and manage contracts. An 8(a) contract was awarded to formalize the PEI Initiative's Pilot program, ensure regulatory compliance, and adherence to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directives.

The contractor's expertise in Federal acquisitions enabled the SBPO to not only implement the PEI Initiative's Pilot program, but also to expand fostering partnerships with four times as many participating institutions. The next step is to focus on sustainability.

Sustainability will be achieved through more extensive, individualized acquisition technical assistance, and tailored to the participating HBCUs' specific circumstances. The expanded program will continue to foster partnerships between HBCUs and businesses. The goal of the next iteration of the PEI Initiative will be to empower HBCUs to secure 2% of NIH contracts.

Performance metrics have been identified for five goals. Initially, performance will be monitored to create a baseline. That way, when targeted metrics are established they will be relevant, realistic, and achievable.

OVERVIEW

VISION

A future where HBCUs and the Federal government become indispensable partners, and the PEI Initiative is synonymous with successfully achieving the NIH acquisition dollars.

MISSION

- Sustain the relationships with HBCUs that the NIH established during the Pilot Program and PEI 2.0 Cohort.
- Expand the PEI Initiative by inviting HBCUs who have existing relationships with the NIH through other programs to apply for inclusion in the PEI Initiative.
- Provide technical assistance to participants through the PEI HBCU Accelerator (formally the PEI Technical Assistance Center).
- Increase the awareness of the PEI Initiative to the NIH IC Directors, acquisition officials, and ultimately the Department Health and Human Services acquisition community.
- Seek contract awards.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There is a tremendous opportunity for the NIH to work more collaboratively with HBCUs and small businesses. Currently, only six HBCUs have contracts with the NIH valued at roughly $5.2 million. Additionally, there is a small business task order contract with 15 small businesses and 16 HBCU subcontractors. That's less than 1% of the agency's annual overall contract awards dollars.

Due to the lack of infrastructure at the HBCUs, HBCUs have received less than 1% of the NIH funding. Thus, the NIH has not experienced the full benefit of what HBCUs can offer to continue the advancement of public health.

THE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT ITERATION

At the conclusion of the PEI 2.0 Cohort, several accomplishments were achieved that will be leveraged as the foundation for the next iteration:

- **PEI Advisory Committee**:
  - o Members provide guidance to the NIH SBPO on how to maximize contract opportunities, offer strategic insights and advice on the growth of contract opportunities for NIH PEI Initiative across the 27 NIH ICs.
  - o Members were appointed by the NIH IC Directors or their Executive Officers. The members historically have awarded grants and contracts to HBCUs.

o Members provide input, skills, and knowledge towards forecasted opportunities located in their ICs for HBCUs.

- **HBCU IDIQ Contract**:
  o A small business set aside, Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract was awarded to 15 small businesses and 16 HBCU subcontractors in an effort to increase opportunities with the NIH.
  o The IDIQ awards will provide services to the NIH 27 ICs.
  o Through this procurement, the NIH intends to increase the number of contractors and resources available to the NIH programs for mission-critical activities.
  o This IDIQ contract has four task areas:
    ▪ Biomedical Research and Development
    ▪ Business and Professional Support Services
    ▪ Public Health Outreach/Communications and Research
    ▪ Laboratory Services/Products

- **PEI Working Groups**:

  The **NIH PEI** will focus on engaging and strategic infrastructure development among higher education institutions who specialize in designated areas of research. Each working group will consist of multiple entities, such as universities, hospitals, private companies, and the NIH ICs. Their purpose is to collaborate toward a shared goal. Toward that end, all Working Groups will have a consistent organizational structure, clearly defined leadership roles, and decision-making processes. In addition, the Working Groups will have efficient data management, strong stakeholder engagement, communication skills, and well-defined performance metrics for evaluation. The topic areas for the Working Groups are:
  o **Maternal Health**
  o **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
  o **Mental Health**
  o **Nutrition**

- **PEI Database Enhancements**:
  o Planning for a Helpdesk ticketing process to manage inquiries from stakeholders.
    ▪ The Accelerator Helpdesk will serve as the primary point of contact for HBCUs, small and large businesses, and NIH IDIQ contract holders seeking technical assistance related to NIH contract management, compliance guidance, and other related inquiries. The Helpdesk will be responsible for providing support through a ticketing system.

- The Helpdesk will operate using a ticketing system designed and implemented within the NIH PEI database. This system will be the backbone for organizing, prioritizing, and resolving all inquiries and support requests from HBCUs, businesses, and NIH IDIQ contract holders.

o Specialized Training Modules designed for HBCUs and small businesses will be integrated directly into the PEI database.
  - These modules will focus on core competencies such as responding to NIH solicitations, contracts management, proposal development, compliance, and building research partnerships.
  - By embedding these resources into the PEI database, participants will have on-demand access to structured learning pathways, templates, and best practices, enabling institutions and businesses to strengthen their competitiveness and readiness to meet NIH biomedical research requirements.
  - The database will also track user engagement and completion, allowing NIH to identify areas where additional technical assistance may be needed.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1

Sustain existing relationships with HBCUs established during the Pilot Initiative and PEI 2.0 Cohort

Current Challenge

The lack of HBCU internal infrastructure support resulted in less than half of the PEI 2.0 Cohort members actively remaining and participating until the closeout in 2024.

Next Steps

Initiative #1:

Invite participants from the Pilot Program and 2.0 Cohort to apply for acceptance in the next iteration of the PEI Initiative.

Initiative #2:

Cultivate HBCU senior management's commitment and action to obtain contract awards from the Federal government.

Initiative #3:

Establish consistent communication between HBCUs and the SBPO to promote stronger collaborations in the areas of technical assistance, training, outreach, and forecasting of opportunities in the acquisition community.

Performance Metrics

- Number of HBCUs from the Pilot Program and 2.0 Cohort that apply for acceptance into the next iteration of the PEI Initiative.
- Number of HBCUs participating in President's Roundtable events.
- Number of HBCUs submitting required reports, participating in webinars, or communicating with the HBCU Accelerator team.

GOAL 2
Expand the PEI Initiative to HBCUs with existing NIH relationships

Current Challenge

The point of contact at the underrepresented institutions might be unfamiliar with the PEI Initiative.

Initiative #1:

Identify HBCUs with existing relationships through other NIH funding sources, such as grants.

Initiative #2:

Invite the identified institutions to respond to the application for acceptance into the next iteration of the PEI Initiative.

PERFORMANCE METRICS
- Number of invited HBCUs that respond and submit applications.

GOAL 3

Provide technical assistance to participants through the PEI HBCU Accelerator

Current Challenge

Webinars have provided fundamental training, but one-on-one technical assistance has proven to be more effective.

Initiative #1:

Assess each HBCU's level of acquisition readiness and place them into tiers.

Initiative #2:

Based on the review of the HBCU application to determine what level of acquisition support is needed, designate and assign subject matter experts (SMEs) to each HBCU in the PEI Initiative.

Initiative #3:

Document improved acquisition readiness with an acquisition readiness form that will be utilized during the assessment of the HBCU capabilities. During the course of the program, the Accelerator Team will have a form to document improvement from the original acquisition readiness form.

PERFORMANCE METRICS
- Number of contract opportunities pursued
- Number of contracts awarded

GOAL 4
Increase IC Directors' awareness of the PEI Initiative

Current Challenge
There is varying awareness among IC Directors about the PEI Initiative, the HBCU IDIQ contract, or how participants can contribute to fulfilling their entity's mission.

Initiative #1:
Educate and inform PEI Advisory Committee members on PEI Initiative activities.

Initiative #2:
Provide Advisory Committee members with a PEI Initiative presentation and talking points that can be shared within their ICs.

Initiative #3:
Educate and inform PEI Advisory Committee members about the capabilities of PEI HBCUs and Business Partners

Initiative #4:
Encourage Advisory Committee members to consider PEI HBCUs and Business Partners for their ICs' contract opportunities.

Initiative #5:
Produce and promote the PEI Podcast to increase internal awareness of PEI HBCUs' and Business Partners' contracting capabilities and accomplishments.

Initiative #6:
Promote the PEI Database via the PEI Advisory Committee to advertise the portal features for market research.

PERFORMANCE METRICS
- Number of Advisory Committee members attending meetings
- Number of PEI presentations given by Advisory Committee members
- Number of opportunities shared with PEI HBCUs and Business Partners
- Number of podcasts produced, aired, and viewership analytics

GOAL 5

Increase the number of contracts or subcontracts awarded to HBCUs

Current Challenge
Currently only six HBCUs have been awarded contracts from the NIH. Their collective value is roughly $5.2 million, which is less than 1% of all contract obligations.

Initiative #1:
Create working groups that will focus on engaging HBCUs that specialize in specific areas of research.

Initiative #2:
Promote the HBCU IDIQ contract.

Initiative #3:
Provide a Help Desk system and Training Module to make the PEI Database more user friendly.

Initiative #4:
Encourage Advisory Committee members to promote the PEI Initiative HBCUs and Business Partners in their ICs for contract opportunities.

PERFORMANCE METRICS
- Number of HBCUs awarded contracts or subcontracts
- Dollar amount of HBCU contract or subcontract awards
- Number of tickets submitted and resolved through the Help Desk system

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Reach the Goals

To accelerate the achievement of each goal, it will be important for the Business Partners (BPs) and the HBCUs to adopt a standardized approach within their own organizations. As part of the PEI Initiative, the NIH SBPO has engaged a four-phased approach to improve the organization's internal business processes and assist the BPs and HBCUs to do the same.

This approach is based on demonstrated methods in business transformation competencies and process improvement tools, applied across commercial and government organizations. As described below, the framework gives a defined structure that will help ensure all involved in the PEI Initiative will be able to reach the desired goals.

Four Phased Framework

I. ASSESS

Assess the current capabilities of the organization to determine opportunities for improvement and establish a baseline against which to measure progress. Identify challenges and gaps that will become opportunities for improvement and create a "roadmap" for increased efficiency that will be used by the BPs and HBCUs to improve their current operations and thereby increase their contract win-rate.

Key Activities
- Place participants in tiers based on their level of acquisition readiness
- Identify opportunities for progress
- Implement strategies that address gaps in infrastructure support

Key Outputs
- Quantifiable baseline
- Defined opportunities for improvement
- Implementation Roadmap

II. DESIGN

Design the future, more efficient operating model, and define the necessary infrastructure to support it, including governance and operating procedures.

Key Activities
- Staff the HBCU Accelerator with SMEs
- Designate and assign an SME to each HBCU based on their designated tier
- Identify key performance indicators (KPIs)

Key Outputs
- Implementation project plan
- Implementation structure
- Tailored technical assistance

III. IMPLEMENT

During this phase, the HBCU Accelerator SMEs will be used to achieve more efficient and effective engagement with participating HBCUs and their Business Partners. This is accomplished by implementing the countermeasures identified in the previous phase. Execution of the technical assistance will ensure established best practices that will result in contract awards. The HBCU Accelerator SMEs will engage as needed based on the countermeasures put in place during the previous phase.

Key Activities
- Onboard SMEs based on the number of HBCUs and Business Partners accepted into the next iteration.
- Establish HBCU Accelerator Standard Operating Procedures
- Provide coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance

Key Outputs
- Reduced missed opportunities for HBCUs and Business Partners
- Increase quality
- Increased contract awards

IV. SUSTAIN

The success of the PEI Initiative hinges on the ongoing ability for the organizations to implement improved processes, document those, and continuously improve upon them. The name of the Initiative itself denotes the concept of seeking new and better ways of achieving the goals of the organization. The Sustain Phase puts in place metrics, policies, and procedures and governance to ensure the organizations to not slip back into unproductive practices.

Key Activities
- Ensure continuous improvements to the acquisition cycle are established. Equip the PEI Database to collect additional metrics
- Implement the use of standard operating procedures (SOPs)

Key Outputs
- Consistent participation
- Adherence to the PEI SOP
- Contract awards

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

During the discovery process, the NIH Small Business Program Office determined there was much variation in the way the office, its BPs, and the HBCUs were executing their processes to obtain contracts. To mitigate any potential negative consequences, the SBPO created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that document all PEI processes to reduce variation and increase measurable outcomes.

The SOP provides a step-by-step guide for the BPs involved in the PEI Initiative, which will undoubtedly increase each HBCU's ability to pursue contracts.

The Process for Launching the Next Iteration of the PEI Initiative
It is the SBPO's mission to empower HBCUs to obtain contracts. The PEI Initiative describes how business partners and the HBCUs can work together to obtain contracts through adhering to the program's guidelines and standards.

The SBPO will use an application that was approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate and select the HBCUs and Business Partners that will participate in the PEI Initiative. The application and selection process are estimated to take approximately two months. Applications for acceptance into the next iteration will be by invitation only.

The HBCU Accelerator will provide orientation and curriculum training to each HBCU and Business Partner.

The HBCU Accelerator will work with the Business Partners and HBCUs to create teaming relationships that will assist the HBCUs in securing contracts.

The HBCU Accelerator will then work with the BPs and the HBCUs to become strong teaming partners and to help them increase their understanding of the procurement process to win contracts.

What gets measured, gets done, and so the HBCU Accelerator will assist the businesses and HBCUs in establishing metrics as well as governance measures to ensure that the BP/HBCU teams respond and win government contracts.

As part of the governance approach, the HBCU Accelerator will work with the teaming partners to evaluate their win percentage and look for opportunities to improve.

PEI Acquisition-Ready HBCU Process

The NIH Small Business Program Office realizes there are some institutions that are not quite ready to pursue government contracts and some that are. To increase potential for success, the PEI Initiative will recruit participation from HBCUs that are deemed acquisition ready.

To be eligible for participation, HBCUs must have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Biomedical Research and Development
- Information Technology
- Business & Professional Support Services
- Public Health Outreach, Communications and Research
- Laboratory services/products
- Construction Services

Additionally, past performance as either a prime or a subcontractor on a Federal contract within the past five years must be demonstrated.

During the selection process, interested HBCUs must submit a capability statement, complete an application, as well as provide evidence that the institution's senior administration is committed to pursuing Federal contracts.

Accepted HBCUs will participate in orientation and PEI curriculum training to understand the steps required to obtain contracts and the infrastructure needed to sustain a contracting program.

The PEI Initiative is built around winning through partnering; therefore, each HBCU will be required to select a business partner. A database created specifically for this program will contain information on eligible businesses approved to collaborate with and mentor the selected HBCUs. The HBCUs also have the option of bringing a Business Partner to the PEI Initiative.

The HBCU and the BP they select will be trained in best practices for business development strategies, including the presentation of capability briefings to procurement officers at NIH institutes and centers. Together they will participate in contracting workshops and will meet at least monthly to execute a strategy for identifying and responding to solicitations.

To maintain governance and measure progress, the SBPO will capture data from the HBCU/BP teams through monthly and quarterly reports, which will be submitted via the PEI database. Information gleaned from those reports will be used by the HBCU Accelerator to determine strengths and weaknesses and seek out opportunities for improvement.

The PEI HBCU Accelerator
In addition to the collaboration between the HBCUs and their respective BPs, the SBPO will rely on the NIH PEI HBCU Accelerator. This is a comprehensive ecosystem providing professional guidance with all aspects of the acquisition life cycle that will assist HBCUs in competing for and managing acquisition opportunities with the NIH.

The PEI HBCU Accelerator contains an innovative team of experienced government acquisition SMEs who will provide services and share best practices thus enabling HBCUs to see first-hand and emulate what it takes to pursue and administer contracts. The PEI HBCU Accelerator will leverage the training curriculum and materials developed during the PEI Pilot program and 2.0 Cohort and provide the tools and metrics needed to support the sustainable growth of new and existing contracting opportunities for HBCUs.

PEI Business Partner HBCU Process

Businesses with past performance in Federal contracting are an important component to the success of the PEI Initiative. They bring a vast breadth of experience in the acquisition life cycle. The PEI Initiative will use a mentor-protégé training model to bring the businesses and the HBCUs together to become a winning team.

Like the HBCUs, companies interested in participating in the program must apply and agree to the program requirements.

To be eligible for participation, businesses must have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Biomedical Research and Development
- Information Technology
- Business & Professional Support Services
- Public Health Outreach, Communications and Research
- Laboratory services/products
- Construction Services

To ensure the best chance of obtaining contracts, the BP must understand the procurement ins and outs, as well as the NIH SBPO, does. Consequently, they will be required to demonstrate five or more years past performance as a prime or a subcontractor with the Federal Government or have other relevant contracting experience.

The businesses are expected to research the HBCUs in advance and identify potential partner during the application process. They will also be required to identify actual contract opportunities at the time the application is submitted.

Once selected to team with an HBCU, the BP will lead in the creation of a joint capability statement and will establish a win strategy with the HBCU. Teams must meet at least monthly, which is reported to the SBPO. This is to maintain progress toward a contract award.

The HBCU/BP team then identifies opportunities that fit their win strategy from the PEI database. The Team will form a response, prepare a proposal, and submit it to the procuring organization and record the activity in the PEI database.

When the team receives the notification of a win/no win, they must submit that status into the PEI database. The team will also request a post-award debriefing, regardless of the win/no-win status, and submit the information to the PEI database.

Each PEI participant will conduct a year-end evaluation of the program, to include strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and benefits received from the program. This information will be used by the PEI HBCU Accelerator to improve the PEI Initiative and increase percent wins.

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan provides the structure for the next iteration of the PEI Initiative to sustain relationships with HBCUs that the NIH established during the Pilot Program and PEI 2.0 Cohort, expand the PEI Initiative by encouraging HBCUs who have existing relationships with NIH through other programs to consider responding to the PEI Initiative application invitation, provide technical assistance to participants through the PEI HBCU Accelerator, increase IC Directors' awareness of the PEI Initiative, and ultimately seek contract awards.

Successful Consortium Methods

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A consortium typically consists of multiple entities (universities, hospitals, private companies, government agencies) collaborating toward a shared goal. A strong structure ensures efficient coordination.

- **LEAD ORGANIZATION / COORDINATING BODY**
  - Often a university, research institute, or hospital that administers funding and operations.
  - Acts as the central hub for decision-making and communication.
  - Our lead organization would be the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and, on a larger scale, the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), a research funding agency that supports transformative biomedical and health breakthroughs

- **STEERING COMMITTEE / EXECUTIVE BOARD**
  - Composed of representatives from key partner institutions.
  - Provides strategic direction and oversees financial and operational decisions.
  - Discuss with NIH any links to include NIH PEI Advisory Board members

- **SCIENTIFIC OR RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD**
  - Experts who guide the scientific or clinical research focus.
  - Ensures research aligns with industry trends, funding priorities, and ethical standards.
  - Determine if a group within NIH PEI Advisory Board could be peer reviewers

- **WORKING GROUPS / PROJECT TEAMS**
  - Focus on specific aspects such as data collection, clinical trials, policy recommendations, or technology development.
  - Often interdisciplinary, including researchers, clinicians, data scientists, and policy experts.
  - This group also includes The Accelerator Team, selected small businesses and universities

- **ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL STAFF**
  - Handles grants, contracts, budgeting, legal compliance, and logistics.
  - Supports data storage, reporting, sharing and day-to-day management.
  - The administrative and operational work is handled by The Accelerator Team

2. GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING

Clear governance structures define leadership roles, decision-making processes, and accountability.

- **CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT / MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**
  - Defines roles, responsibilities, funding distribution, and intellectual property (IP) rights.
  - Establishes rules for data sharing, publication, and conflict resolution.
- **ETHICS & COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK**
  - Ensures adherence to regulatory standards (e.g., IRB approval, HIPAA, GDPR).
  - Defines policies for handling patient data, clinical trials, and bioethical considerations.
  - Ethics framework development will be a part of the Working Group team duties
- **DECISION-MAKING MODEL**
  - Can be **centralized** (lead organization makes final decisions) or **distributed** (decisions made by committees). While universities would have an equal voice in decision-making, there would also be a separate governing institution outside of the university system responsible for final decisions.
  - Often includes voting structures or consensus-based models.

3. FUNDING & SUSTAINABILITY

A strong financial model is key to long-term success.

- **FUNDING SOURCES**
  - **Government Grants** (e.g., NIH), federal government contracts, Other Transaction Authorities (OTAs), and Cooperative Agreement awards
  - **Industry Partnerships** (pharmaceutical, biotech, medical device companies)
  - **Nonprofits & Foundations** (e.g., Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust)
  - **Revenue Streams** (licensing IP, providing consulting or training)
- **BUDGET MANAGEMENT**
  - Transparent financial reporting and compliance.
  - Contingency planning to ensure sustainability after initial funding expires.
  - The Accelerator Team will provide technical assistance for infrastructure, accounting and management of federal government contract/funding to ensure operational efficiency.

4. RESEARCH & DATA MANAGEMENT

Efficient data management ensures collaboration and compliance.

- **DATA SHARING & INTEROPERABILITY**
  - Secure platforms for sharing clinical and research data.
  - Compliance with standards like FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).
- **Data Storage**
  - Determine a secure location to store the data
  - Potential storage includes Cloud Space, NIH SharePoint, or The Accelerator Team's servers as Microsoft365 is government approved.
- **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) MANAGEMENT**
  - In conjunction with the NIH Office of the General Counsel, define ownership of research outputs.
  - Encourages innovation while ensuring fair benefit-sharing.

- **PUBLICATIONS & KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION**
  - Policies for authorship and open-access publishing.
  - Encourages dissemination via conferences, white papers, and workshops.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Collaboration thrives on strong relationships and clear communication.

- **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**
  - Regular meetings, workshops, and updates across member institutions.
  - Digital platforms for collaboration (Slack, Asana, Trello, Tableau).
- **EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT**
  - Partnerships with policymakers, industry, and patient advocacy groups.
  - Public outreach through newsletters, social media, and educational programs.
  - The Accelerator Team will manage communications for NIH to distribute and will serve as the intermediary between partners within the working group and NIH.

6. PERFORMANCE METRICS & EVALUATION

Success is measured through KPIs as determined by the Accelerator Team.

- **SCIENTIFIC & CLINICAL IMPACT**
    - Number of publications or patents.
    - Success of clinical trials or patient outcomes.
- **COLLABORATION METRICS**
    - Number of partner institutions and joint research projects.
    - Level of interdisciplinary engagement.
- **FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY**
    - Budget adherence and funding growth.
    - Operational effectiveness in managing projects and milestones.