

**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board  
held on Friday, 1st July 2022 at Grattan House, 67-72 Lower Mount Street,  
Dublin 2.**

**Present:** Prof B Hannigan (Chairperson)  
Dr T Cunningham  
Prof S Donnelly (on Zoom)  
Prof T Fahey  
Prof M Harding (on Zoom)  
Dr J Ling  
Prof C Normand (on Zoom) until the end of item 6  
Dr C Saidlear (on Zoom)

**Apologies:** Dr T McWade

**In attendance:** Dr M O’Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer  
Ms C Cronin, Board Secretary and Head of Governance  
Dr T Maguire, Director of Research Strategy and Funding, attended for item 8.  
Ms O Ward, Head of Research and Innovation Infrastructures, attended for item 8 a).  
Dr A Cody, attended for items, Head of Investigator-Led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers, attended for items 8 b), 8 c), and 8 d).  
Dr A. Montessanti, Programme Manager Investigator-led Grants, Research Careers and Enablers, attended for item 8d).  
Dr Deirdre Mongan, Research Officer, Evidence Centre and Mr Brian Galvin, Programme Manager for Drug and Alcohol Research, Evidence Centre attended for item 9 and item 10  
Mr M Morgan, Director of Corporate Operations and Mr D Murphy, Finance Manager, attended for item 11.

---

## **1. Conflict of Interest**

Members of the Board declared conflicts of interest in relation to the following matters to be discussed at the meeting and left the meeting while the matters were being discussed.

- Prof T Fahey - Item 8 b) Investigator-led Projects (ILP) 2022
- Prof M Harding – Item 8 c) HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022
- Dr T Cunningham – Item 8 c) HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022

Prof S Donnelly – Item 8 d) Emerging Investigator Awards for Health (EIA) 2022

## **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27 May 2022 were approved.

## **3. Action points from previous meetings**

The Chairperson reported that all of the action points arising from previous meetings had been completed

## **4. Matters arising**

The Chairperson briefed the Board on recent meeting with agencies involved in delivering on Impact 2030: Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy and staff of the HSE.

## **5. CEO's Report**

### **Department of Health's Research Priorities**

The CEO informed the Board that the Department of Health had recently issued a draft statement of Research Priorities and that the HRB had submitted observations on the draft. The next step was for the Department of Health to circulate the draft document internally. It was agreed that the Department's research priorities would be included as an item for discussion at the Board's strategy day in November.

### **National Office for NRECs**

The CEO informed the Board that Dr Emily Vereker has been appointed as Head of the National Office for NRECs, and that work had commenced to draft an MoU setting out the functions, powers and respective relationships of the HRB, the National Office and the Department of Health

### **'Innovate for Ireland'**

The CEO informed the Board that the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, had announced a new partnership between industry and the Government called 'Innovate for Ireland'. She said that the initial phase of the 'Innovate for Ireland' initiative would seek to attract up to 400 PhD high calibre Irish and international students to undertake research in Ireland relevant to national and global grand challenges and involve all relevant disciplines from Science, Technology and Engineering to Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. PhD students would be eligible for a stipend of €28,000.

She said that the programme would be managed through Science Foundation Ireland, in partnership with the Irish Research Council and the Health Research Board.

### Leadership of significant HRB awards

The CEO informed the Board that a paper setting out the impact on significant/major HRB awards of the departure of a research leader/Principal investigator would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

### Other matters

The CEO also reported on:

- Genomics strategy
- Global Commission on Evidence
- Register of Interests and managing conflicts of interest for members of the Board
- Ethnicity questions on the NDTRS
- Northern Ireland host institution applications
- Joint Transnational Calls
- HRB Media Coverage
- EU Commission project to establish a Coalition on reform of research assessment
- Data security and blended working
- Awards made under delegated authority

### 6. HRB Business Projection 2023

The Board reviewed the draft budget estimate for 2023 and **approved its submission as a letter to the Department of Health.**

### 7. Programme of Work for the Board and Listed Conflicts of Interest

The Board noted the programme of work for the remainder of 2022.

The Board then noted the information listed against each of the items on the programme of work and agreed that **the listing of the conflicts should be amended to**

- (1) reflect conflicts declared at the beginning of this meeting, and
- (2) include a category of conflict in relation to an award scheme where the Board member is a current applicant/co-applicant or a named participant in an application for funding, or a principal investigator, co-principal investigator or named participant in an award made under the scheme.

### 8. Approval of Panel Recommendations on Awards

#### a) Irish Research Nurses and Midwives Network 2022

Ms Ward outlined the history of the proposed award, and the application and international panel review process. The Board **approved the recommendation of the panel to provide funding for the Irish Research Nurses and Midwives Network (IRNM)** at a cost of up to €300,000 over three years

and agreed with the recommendation that funding from Year 2 be subject to a specific condition being met at the end of year 1.

### **b) Investigator-led Projects (ILP) 2022**

Dr Cody introduced the scheme. The Board approved the International Panel's recommendation to **fund 29 Investigator-led Project awards** at an anticipated cost of €10 million over four years. The Board then **approved a reserve list of four projects**, and **delegated authority to the Executive Team to action reserves as they deem appropriate** subject to available funding in this and subsequent years.

### **c) HRCI/HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2022**

Dr Cody provided a brief background to the scheme. The Board **approved the recommendations of the international review Panel, to make 15 HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme awards**, at an expected cost of approximately €3 million over three years, of which the HRB contribution is €1.8 million.

The Board then **approved 5 projects as reserves**, and **delegated authority to the Executive team to action reserves as they deemed appropriate** subject to available funding in this and subsequent years.

### **d) Emerging Investigator Awards for Health (EIA) 2022**

The Board **approved the international review panel recommendations to fund nine Emerging Investigator Awards for Health 2022**, at a cost of approximately €6.8 million. The Board then **approved the top two ranked applications as reserves** and **delegated authority to the Executive Team to action reserves as they deem appropriate** subject to available funding in this and subsequent years.

## **9. Evidence Reviews**

### **HRB drug and alcohol evidence reviews: An integrative evidence review of service user participation in the design and delivery of drug treatment, recovery and harm reduction services**

The Board reviewed the process to prepare this evidence review, including the peer review comments and authors' responses, and agreed that it should go forward for publication.

## **10. Other HRB publications**

### **European Web Survey on Drugs 2021: Irish Results**

The Board reviewed the process to prepare this report, including the peer review comments and authors' responses and agreed that it should go forward for publication.

## 11. Corporate reporting

### a) HRB Annual Report 2021 (Part 1)

The Board reviewed and **approved the draft HRB Annual Report 2021 (Part 1) for publication**

### b) System of Internal Control (SIC) 2021 – Management Assurance Statement

The Board noted the System of Internal Control (SIC) 2021 – Management Assurance Statement completed by the HRB's Executive Team which documented the outcome of the annual review of internal controls for 2021.

### c) HRB Annual Report 2021 (Part 2) - Corporate Governance and Financial Statements 2021

On the recommendation of the Audit & Risk Committee **the Board approved the HRB's**

- **Governance Statement and Board Members' Report 2021**
- **Statement on Internal Control 2021**
- **draft Financial Statements 2021, subject to any adjustments that arise from the audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.**

It was noted that the HRB Annual Report (Part 2) would be published on receipt of the audit report from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

### d) Management Accounts

Mr Dara Murphy presented the HRB management accounts for the five months ended 31 May 2022 and the updated forecast of outturn for the full year.

### e) Procurement Reports

The Board noted the following:

Between the period 01 April 2022 to 31 May 2022

- Purchase Orders raised with a value more than €20,000
- Contracts awarded between €25,000 and €75,000 (ex VAT)
- Contracts approved by the Board more than €75,000 (ex VAT)
- Authorised exceptions to the competitive procurement guidelines

The Board also noted a table listing supplier expenditure exceeding €25,000 during the five months to 31 May 2022

## 12. Other governance matters

### a) Report from the Audit & Risk Committee

Prof Harding reported on the meeting of the HRB Audit Committee held on 17 June 2022 and minutes of the meeting of the Committee which had been circulated to the Board were noted.

### b) Terms of reference of the Audit & Risk Committee

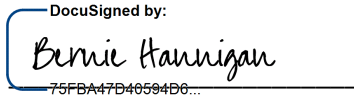
The Board reviewed the terms of reference of the Audit & Risk Committee and agreed that no changes were required.

## 13. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Friday 23 September 2022.

## 14. Executive Session of the Board

No decisions were taken during the executive session of the Board.

Signed:  75FBA47D40594D0...

Prof Bernie Hannigan (Chairperson)

## Actions Arising from the Board Meeting of 1 July 2022

| No. | Action  |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Department of Health's research priorities to be included as an item for discussion at the Board's strategy day in November   |
| 2   | A paper setting out the impact on significant/major HRB awards of the departure of a research leader/Principal investigator to be presented to the next meeting of the Board. |
| 3   | Draft budget estimate for 2023 to be submitted as a letter to the Department of Health  |
| 4   | Listing of the conflicts of interest shown against Board Programme of Work to be amended  |