



**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board
held on Friday, 16 February 2024 at Grattan House 67-72 Lower Mount Street, Dublin.**

Present: Prof Tom Fahey (Interim Chairperson)
Dr Sarah Barry
Dr Leonora Bishop
Dr Tracy Cunningham
Prof Seamas Donnelly
Dr Julie Ling
Dr Terry McWade
Dr Cliona Saidlear

Apologies: None

In attendance: Dr Mairead O'Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer.
Ms Lorna Purcell, Board Secretary and Head of Governance.
Mr Dara Murphy, Head of Finance, attended for Items 9 (a) & 13 (a).
Dr Teresa Maguire, Director of Research Strategy and Funding, attended for items 10(a), 11 (a) & (b) and 12(a).
Dr Caitriona Creely, International Cooperation, Evaluation and Targeted Programmes, attended for Items 10 (a) & 12 (a).
Dr Catherine Gill, International Cooperation, Evaluation and Targeted Programmes, attended for item 10 (a).
Dr Anne Cody, Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for Item 11 (a).
Ms Oonagh Ward & Mr Gavin Lawler, Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for item 11 (b).
Ms Vydehi Muppavarapu, Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for item 12 (a).

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1. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

2. Appointment of a Chairperson for the meeting

It was agreed that Prof Tom Fahey would chair the meeting.

3. Role of the Chairperson between meetings

The Board was requested to agree whether the Chairperson appointed for this meeting should be:

- (a) authorised to arrange and prepare the agenda for the next Board meeting or,
- (b) conferred with the full role of the Chairperson set out in Section 4.2 of the Governance Handbook until the next meeting of the Board.

The Board decided that the interim Chairperson should carry out all of the responsibilities of the role of the Chairperson as set out in Section 4.2 of the Governance Handbook, until the next meeting of the Board.

4. Conflicts of Interest

Dr Leonora Bishop declared a conflict for item 11(a).

5. Minutes of the previous meetings

Minutes of the meeting held on December 8, 2023, were approved.

6. Matters Arising and action points from previous meetings

Action points from the previous meeting were either addressed or appear as an agenda item.

7. CEO's Report

The CEO reported to the Board on the following matters:

- Budget 2024
- Publication of the Research & Innovation Bill
- Emerging Health Threats Function
- Approach to strategy development
- Citizens' Assembly Report on Drugs Use
- Report on homeless and injector deaths
- NHIS work on mapping of services

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- HRB Position statement on Researchers funded by Tobacco and Alcohol industries – this led to a discussion around potentially broadening this approach to include gambling, and commercial influence on health research in general. The CEO agreed to take this suggestion away and come back to the Board with a suggested approach from the Executive.
- National Office: end of year briefing
- HRB Media Coverage
- Awards made under delegated authority.

The CEO also provided an update on the cancer bequest, and outlined that a complaint against the solicitor managing the estate has been lodged with the Legal Services Regulatory Authority, who acknowledged the complaint and gave a timeframe for response of approximately 8 weeks. The Board will be provided with a further update once the Executive receive this response.

There was a query raised around the CEO's meeting with Philip Nolan and a general outline of what was discussed was provided.

There was a suggestion from a Board member that it may be useful for the Board to receive a presentation in the area of Health Information. It was agreed that this topic should be added to the Programme of Work for the Board.

8. Programme of Work for the Board 2024

The Board noted the Programme of Work for the Board and agreed that Conflicts of Interest would be declared on a meeting-by-meeting basis.

9. (a) Final report on Service Plan 2023

The Board noted the report on status of HRB's Service Plan for 2023 as at 31 December 2023, and approved its submission to the Department of Health's Research Services and Policy Unit as the progress report on the annual Performance Delivery Agreement.

10. Panel recommendations on awards

(a) HRB Evidence Synthesis award to support Clinical Practice Guideline development (ESCG) 2024 - Panel recommendation

The Board approved the recommendation from an International Panel of experts to fund one award under the ESCG 2024 programme, at a cost of up to €2.5 million over four years.

11. Approval to Issue Calls

(a) Core support for Health Research Charities Ireland (HRCI) and Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry (IPPOSI)

Dr Leonora Bishop declared a conflict in relation to the matter and absented herself for the duration of the discussion of this item. The Board approved invitations to Health Research Charities

Ireland (HRCI) and the Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry (IPPOSI) to apply for core funding to support activities that are aligned and complementary to the HRB Strategy, at a combined overall cost of up to €0.72M over four years.

(b) All Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium (AICC) Research and Innovation Grant Scheme

The Board approved a call announcement for the new All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium (AICC) Research and Innovation Grants Scheme, at a cost of up to €1.2M over 36 months.

12. Reviews, Evaluations, Outputs

(a) Bibliometric report of HRB supported research publication output: 2018-2022

The Board noted the report 'A bibliometric analysis of research publication output supported by the Health Research Board 2018-2022' and approved it for publication on the HRB website. The Board also approved the publication of an 'Executive Summary' on the HRB website, which will comprise the main findings.

13. Contracts valued in excess of €75,000

The Board approved the award of a four-year contract to Mazars for the provision of Data protection officer services. The initial contract for this work is for two years, with an option to extend twice by one year. The maximum value of this contract is €216,000 excluding VAT.

14. Other Governance Matters

(a) Review of Decisions reserved for the Board and matters delegated to the Executive

The Board reviewed the Decisions reserved for the Board and matters delegated to the Executive and agreed no changes were required.

(b) Review of the Terms of Reference of the Management Development Committee

The Board reviewed the Terms of Reference of the Management Development Committee. It was suggested that a more comprehensive review of the Terms of Reference of this Committee should be carried out when the new Chair of the Board is appointed. The Committee will continue under the current Terms of Reference until that time.

(c) Training Plan for Board Members

The Board was requested to review and note the training plan for 2024. It was agreed that the training plan would reflect what was captured in the cover note and that it may be most beneficial to carry out training over one or two afternoons on the same day as a Board meeting. The Secretary agreed to progress the plan and inform the Board before finalising training.

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(d) HRB Risk Management Policy and Procedure

The Board was requested to note the updated statement of HRB Risk Appetite.

15. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board is on April 12, 2024.

16. Executive Session of the Board

No items to report.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson)

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Tom Paley
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