



**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board
held on Friday, 17 May 2024 at Grattan House 67-72 Lower Mount Street, Dublin.**

Present:

Dr Tracy Cunningham (Interim Chairperson)

Dr Sarah Barry

Prof Seamas Donnelly

Prof Tom Fahey

Dr Julie Ling

Dr Terry McWade

Dr Cliona Saidlear

Apologies:

Dr Leonora Bishop

In attendance:

Mairead O'Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer.

Lorna Purcell, Board Secretary and Head of Governance.

Teresa Maguire, Director of Research Strategy and Funding, attended for items 8, 11(a), 12(a).

Caitriona Creely, International Cooperation, Evaluation and Targeted Programmes, attended for Item 8.

Vydehi Muppavarapu, Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for item 8.

Martin Morgan, Director of Corporate Operations, attended for items 10(a) and 14.

Dara Murphy, Head of Finance, attended for Items 10(a) & 14.

Oonagh Ward Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for item 11 (a).

Anne Cody, Research Strategy and Funding Directorate, attended for Item 12(a).

Brian Galvin, HRB Evidence Centre, attended for item 13(a).

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1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Leonora Bishop.

2. Appointment of a Chairperson for the meeting

It was agreed that Dr Tracy Cunningham 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

No conflicts were declared.

5. Minutes of the previous meetings

Minutes of the meeting held on April 12, 2024, 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:

- Staff sanction
- Estimates Process 2025
- Change of personnel in the Dept of Health
- Update on the National Irish COVID-19 Biobank
- HSE Reform
- NHIS Data – role in inclusion health
- Gambling addiction and the role of the NDTRS

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- Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025 -2027 and planning for FP10
- New Integrated HR and Payroll System
- Management Team Away Day
- HRB Media Coverage
- Awards made under delegated authority.

8. Evaluation in the HRB

Ms Vydehi Muppavarapu gave a presentation on '**RSF Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Plan 2023- Update**'. She set out how RSF has taken a more streamlined approach to Awards Management and cited ResearchFish (a web based evaluation tool) as an example of a milestone project. She also highlighted the publication of the Bibliometric Analysis Report and the development of Strategic Reviews. The visualisation platform 'power BI' was presented to the Board to demonstrate how data held by the HRB can be used and presented.

9. Programme of Work for the Board 2024

The Board noted the Programme of Work for the Board for 2024.

10. Service Plan Reports

(a) Quarterly Report on Service Plan Delivery

The Board noted the report on the status of the HRB's Service Plan for 2024 as at 31 March 2024, and approved its submission to the Department of Health's Research Policy and Innovation Unit as the progress report on the annual Performance Delivery Agreement.

11. Approval of call announcements

(a) Ireland's participation in the 1MG+ Genome of Europe project

The Board noted the recent confirmation of co-funding from the European Commission to co-fund the Genome of Europe Project and approved HRB support for the Department of Health to manage an application and review process (and contract management, if successful) for the 'Genome of Ireland' collection within the wider project.

12. Approval of Panel recommendations on awards

(a) HRCI and IPPOSI core funding 2024

The Board approved core funding for Health Research Charities Ireland (HRCI) and the Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry (IPPOSI) at a combined cost of €720,000 over four years.

13. HRB Publications – Evidence Reviews

(a) Place-based initiatives to support drug users: An evidence review

The Board approved the publication of the report: 'Integrative review on place-based and other geographically defined responses to drug-related threats in communities.'

14. Corporate Reporting

(a) Contracts valued at in excess of €75,000

The Board approved the award of a four-year contract to Brenda O'Hanlon t/a O'Hanlon Media for the provision of Editing and Proofreading services. The contract for the work is for four years and the maximum value of the contract is €300,000 excluding VAT.

(b) Procurement Report

The Board noted the following:

Between the period 01 January 2024 to 31 March 2024:

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

Between period 01 January 2024 to 31 March 2024:

- a. Supplier expenditure more than €25,000

(c) Report on ET / Management Team training

The Board noted the Executive and Leadership development programme underway in the HRB.

15. Other Governance Matters

(a) Membership of Board Standing Committees

The Board considered the membership of its two standing Committees, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Management Development Committee. The Board noted the current membership and agreed that it would be helpful for this to be brought back for the Board's consideration when the vacancies on the Board have been filled.

(b) External Board Evaluation

Under the Code of Practice of the Governance of State Bodies the Board should ensure that an external Board evaluation is carried out every three years. The Secretary provided a verbal update outlining that it been three years since the last external evaluation of Board effectiveness was carried out, and it would be appropriate for the evaluation to be undertaken later in the year when

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the Board vacancies are filled and the permanent Chair is in place. The Board agreed with this approach.

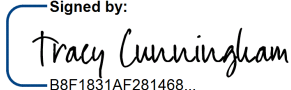
Following on from this there was a general discussion around learnings that could be gleaned from the 'Independent Review of Governance and Culture of RTÉ'. The Secretary agreed to bring a paper to the Board at the next Board meeting in June outlining areas that may be of relevance to the Board.

16. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board is on June 28, 2024.

17. Executive Session of the Board

In relation to item 11(a) on Ireland's participation in the 1MG+ Genome of Europe Project, the Board requested that the draft invitation to submit an application via the Genome of Ireland sub-group of the 1+MG National Mirror Group is circulated to the Board for information.

Signed:  Signed by:
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(Chairperson)