



**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board  
held on Friday, 27 June 2025 held at the HRB Offices, Grattan House, Dublin 2.**

**Present:** Dr Tracy Cunningham (Chairperson)  
Dr Sarah Barry  
Dr Leonora Bishop  
Prof Peter Doran  
Prof Tom Fahey  
Dr Julie Ling  
Prof Mark Lawler (online via Zoom)  
Dr Terry McWade  
Dr Martina Ní Chúlain (online via Zoom)

**Apologies:** Dr Cliona Saidlear

**In attendance:** Dr Mairead O’Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer.  
Ms Lorna Purcell, Board Secretary and Head of Governance.  
Ms Mellisa Tierney, Governance and Compliance Officer.  
Mr Martin Morgan, Director of Corporate Operations, attended for items 6, 7 & 12.  
Dr Teresa Maguire, Director of RSF, attended for items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11.  
Dr Sarah Craig, Director of HIE, attended for items 6 & 7.  
Mr Dara Murphy, Head of Finance, attended for items 7 & 12.  
Ms Oonagh Ward, Head of Research and Innovation Infrastructures, RSF & Dr Fiona Manning, Programme Manager Clinical Trials and Interventions, RSF, attended for items 8.1 & 11.2.  
Dr Annalisa Montesanti, Programme Manager Health Research Careers, RSF, attended for item 8.2.  
Dr Caitriona Creely, Head of International Cooperation, Evaluation and Targeted Programmes, RSF, attended for items 10 & 11.1.  
Dr Amanda Daly, Programme Manager, RSF, attended for item 11.1.

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## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr Cliona Saidlear.

## **2. Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## **3. Minutes of the previous meetings**

The minutes of the meetings held on May 9 and May 27, 2025, were approved.

## **4. Matters Arising and action points from previous meetings**

Action points from previous meetings were either addressed or appeared as an agenda item. A request to add an update on the discontinuation of GEMs to the Board PoW was noted.

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

The CEO reported to the Board on the following matters:

- Discontinuation of GEMS
- National Probable Suicides Management System (NPSMS) advisory committee inaugural meeting
- NASS report on disability service use and need (2024) published
- Systematic review of reprocessing single-use medical devices
- Correspondence in relation to HRB Evidence Brief on clinical governance in nursing homes
- Research Ireland Forum
- US-Ireland R&D Partnership
- Fulbright HRB HealthImpact Scholarships
- European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) Focal Points Audit
- Webinar on substance use and childhood adversity
- National Office Annual Report 2024
- NREC Membership
- HRCDC Update
- European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda for 2025–2027
- ResearchFish – evaluating outcomes from HRB funding
- HRB Media Coverage
- Awards made under delegated authority

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## **6. Strategy Development**

The CEO presented the draft Strategy Paper for public consultation. The Board was broadly satisfied with the Paper. Members raised some queries around the communications plan for the draft consultation. It was agreed that it needs to be a genuine consultation, that those responding should be given adequate time to respond, and that consideration should be given to publishing any responses received by the HRB.

## **7. Submission to Estimates**

The Board reviewed the submission to the Department of Health as part of the 2026 estimates process and provided some suggestions for inclusion for the final submission to the Dept of Health.

## **8. Approval of Call Principles**

### **1. Towards an effective and competitive national Clinical Trials Ecosystem in Ireland**

There was an acknowledgement of the work carried out by the Clinical Trials Subgroup (consisting of members of the HRB Management Team and three Board Members) and how useful the work of this Subgroup has been in progressing matters in this area. The Board discussed the paper presented, which described at a high level the critical components necessary if Ireland is to have an effective and competitive clinical trials ecosystem. It also set out where the HRB should play a lead role and proposed a prioritised and phased programme of investments. The Board agreed that the HRB and the Subgroup will work in the coming months to develop detailed principles papers for priority components.

### **2. Post-doctoral Capacity Building**

The Board considered the principles of a dual-track call to build postdoctoral level capacity for academic and practitioner-researcher paths. The Board was broadly supportive of the principles however requested that certain elements are considered and incorporated into the Call documents, for example potentially changing the title of the scheme, and consideration of further scope for protected time for researchers. The Board considered ring-fencing a portion of the funding to ensure it is directed to non-medical postdoctoral applicants. In the event that this area is not successfully resourced, the Board discussed the possibility of implementing schemes to prepare suitable candidates for the following year.

## **9. Approval to Issue Calls**

### **1. HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme 2026**

The Board approved a new call of the HRCI-HRB Joint Funding Scheme (2026), at a total cost of approximately €3.1 million (HRB contribution of €1.75 million including €1.35 million direct costs and 30% overhead contribution, and health research charities contribution of €1.35 million direct costs).

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## **10. Approval of Panel Recommendations on awards**

### **1. Approval of awards under Cycle II of the Applied Partnership Awards (APA) 2024**

The Board approved the recommendations of an International Panel to fund 16 Applied Partnership Awards (under Cycle II) at an approximate cost of €3.06M over two years, of which six awards will be funded through funding from Sharing the Vision.

### **2. Capacity Building for Evidence Synthesis (CBES) 2025 - Panel recommendation**

The Board approved the recommendation from an International Panel of experts to fund one award under the CBES 2025 programme at a cost of €6M over 5 years (including a contribution of €1.25M from HSC R&D Division).

## **11. Other Research Funding Matters**

### **1. Status report of EU investments: June 2025**

The Board noted the mid-year status report on the HRB's investment in EU research initiatives as of June 2025.

### **2. ERA4Health Investigator Initiated Clinical Studies - Pilot Call 2025**

The Board agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Team to approve funding recommendations under the ERA4Health Investigator Initiated Clinical Studies (IICS) Pilot Call 2025 (EffecTrial), up to a level of €2.5M.

## **12. Corporate Reporting**

### **1. Annual Report 2024 (Part 1)**

The Board approved the draft HRB Annual Report 2024 (Part 1) for publication.

### **2. Contracts valued at in excess of €75k**

The Board reviewed the award of a three-year sales order (contract) to [REDACTED] for the licensing, maintenance, support and cloud hosting of the HRB's Financial Management System. The service will cost €67,920 per annum for three years - €203,760 ex VAT. The Board expressed concern around the cost increase and felt that further steps needed to be taken to reassure them that this is the correct course of action before entering into the contract.

### **3. HRB Procurement Activity Report**

The Board noted the following:

Between the period 01 April 2025 to 31 May 2025:

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- 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

Between period 01 January 2025 to 31 May 2025

- Supplier expenditure more than €25,000.

#### 4. HRB 2025 Management Accounts as at 31 May 2025

The Board noted the revised 2025 forecast as at 31 May 2025 and the updated Correction Factor.

### 13. Programme of Work for the Board

The Board noted the Programme of Work for the Board.

### 14. Other Governance Matters

#### 1. Minutes of the meeting of the HRB Audit & Risk Committee held on Friday, 28 February 2025

The Board approved the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Friday, 28 February 2025.

#### 2. HRB Risk Register

The Board noted the HRB Risk Register which shows the risks considered to be of most significance to the HRB as of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The Board requested that a Status Report is brought back regarding the changes in US funding and a determination around whether this should be added to the Risk Register or not.

#### 3. Board Review of AI Policy

The Board approved the AI Policy.

### Executive Session of the Board

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by:  (Chairperson)  
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