



**Minutes of the Board meeting of the Health Research Board  
held on Friday, 9 May 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 (online via Zoom)  
Dr Terry McWade  
Dr Cliona Saidlear

**Apologies:** Dr Martina Ní Chúlain  
Prof Mark Lawler

**In attendance:** Dr Mairead O’Driscoll, Chief Executive Officer.  
Ms Lorna Purcell, Board Secretary and Head of Governance.  
Mr Martin Morgan, Director of Corporate Operations, attended for items 6, 8, 12 & 13.  
Dr Teresa Maguire, Director of RSF, attended for items 6, 8, 9, 10.  
Dr Caitriona Creely attended for item 7.  
Dr Fiona Manning attended for item 9.  
Dr Anne Cody & Dr Aoife Cahill, RSF, attended for item 10.  
Mr Dara Murphy, Head of Finance, attended for items 12 & 13.  
Dr Jean Long, HRB Evidence Centre, attended for item 11.  
Ms Gillian Markey, Communications Manager, attended for item 13.  
  
Ms Eileen Cole, Board Excellence, attended for item 8.

HRB Board meeting minutes 9 May 2025

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dr Martina Ní Chúlain and Prof Mark Lawler.

## **2. Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

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

The minutes of the meetings held on April 4, 2025 were approved.

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

Action points from the previous meetings were either addressed or appeared as an agenda item.

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

The CEO reported to the Board on the following matters:

- Estimates process 2026
- Drug use in Ireland: Findings from the 2022–2023 Healthy Ireland survey
- NHIS publications
- IMPACT 2030 Implementation Forum meeting
- HRB visit to the Wellcome Trust
- Research Security update
- Science Europe – FP10
- National Framework for climate-related R&I – update
- Conference and Events Scheme 2025: Random Selection of Successful Applications
- HRB National Conference 2025 - Advancing evidence-informed policy for health and social care
- HRB Media Coverage
- Awards made under delegated authority

The CEO outlined that Digital Science, who manage GEMS (Grant Electronic Management System), have contacted the HRB outlining that they will cease supporting the System in December 2026. A large ICT project will need to be undertaken in order to start the process of replacing the system. The Board requested that they be kept informed of the ICT project.

HRB Board meeting minutes 9 May 2025

## **6. Strategy Development**

The CEO provided an overview of the strategy development to date. She presented the Strategy timeline, the key messages arising from the key stakeholder consultation, suggested areas for HRB funding, draft HRB values, draft strategic pillars and cross cutting principles, draft enablers of organisational excellence, the proposed plan for developing metrics / KPIs, and suggested next steps to be taken in advance of the additional Board meeting taking place on May 27. The Board provided their observations and positive feedback on the work to date.

## **7. Developments in the US – Implications for the HRB**

The Board noted the paper which summarised known or potential impacts of recent developments in the US on the HRB awards portfolio. It was agreed that the topic will become a standing item on the Board agenda. It was also agreed that this area should be kept in mind at the Strategy development Board meeting on May 27.

## **8. Board Effectiveness (Presentation)**

Ms Eileen Cole from Board Excellence presented the results of the external Board Effectiveness survey, as required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. She highlighted that it was a very strong result for the organisation and also that the Board and Executive Team were very engaged in the process. The Secretary, in conjunction with the Chair and the CEO will review and implement the suggested recommendations, as appropriate.

## **9. Approval of Call Principles**

### **1. Building on HRB's investment in clinical trials infrastructures to advance investigator-led trials**

The Board was asked to consider high-level principles for building on the HRB's existing investments in Clinical Trials Infrastructures to advance Investigator led clinical trials in Ireland. It was agreed to form a small subgroup consisting of some members of the Board, to work with the team, in order to develop the next phase of HRB investment in clinical trials infrastructures further.

## **10. Approval to Issue Calls**

### **1. Investigator-Led Projects 2026**

The Board approved a call for the Investigator-Led Project (ILP) funding scheme. Funding in the region of €12 million will support a minimum of 27 projects over four years.

## **11. HRB Publications – Evidence reviews - Governance**

The Board approved the revised external peer review of HRB research publications: policy and procedure subject to one addition.

HRB Board meeting minutes 9 May 2025

## 12. Quarterly Report on Service Plan

The Board noted the report on status of HRB's Service Plan for 2025 as at 31 March 2025.

## 13. Corporate Reporting

### 1. Contracts valued at in excess of €75,000

The Board approved the award of an initial two-year contract to [REDACTED] for the provision of Open Research Publishing. This contract has the option to extend twice by a period of one year at each extension. The maximum value of this contract is €550,000 excluding VAT.

### 2. Procurement Activity Reports

The Board noted the following:

- I. Between the period 01 January 2025 to 31 March 2025
  - 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
- II. Between period 01 January 2025 to 31 March 2025
  - a. Supplier expenditure more than €25,000

### 3. Corporate Operations – Communications Update (Presentation)

Gillian Markey, Communications Manager in the HRB, provided the Board with an update on the work of the Communications Team. She outlined the themed approach currently being taken by the team, with the pilot themed approach 'Advancing Evidence informed policy for health & social care' and some of the output from the team, for example the production of Events, Webinars, podcasts and videos in line with that theme. The Board provided positive feedback on the work presented and expressed an interest in more frequent updates from the Communications Team.

## 14. Programme of Work for the Board

The Board reviewed the Programme of Work and requested that the Clinical Trials Infrastructures are added to the PoW on a quarterly basis. They also requested that Collaborative Research Networks should be added as an annual item to the PoW, and that AI would be added to appear b- annually. The Secretary also committed to reviewing structure of the PoW to see if there is a better way of presenting items.

HRB Board meeting minutes 9 May 2025

## 15. Other Governance Matters

### 1. Development Committee minutes (February)

The Board noted the minutes from the Development Committee held on February 21.

### 2. Development Committee Report (May - verbal)

The Chair of the Development Committee provided a verbal update on the Development Committee meeting that took place just before the Board meeting, where the Committee were provided with updates on CEO Recruitment, Management Development and the status of the programme year to date, and the Pulse Survey.

### 3. AI Policy

The Board approved the AI Policy subject to a minor amendment.

## Executive Session of the Board

Signed by:  
  
Signed: B8F4834AF281468... (Chairperson)