

Minutes  
**Research Subgroup of Expert Advisory Group**  
**17 April 2020, 4pm (by telecall)**

Present: Colm Bergin (Co-Chair), Cliona O'Farrelly (Co-Chair), Mark Ferguson, Mairéad O'Driscoll, Ana Terres, Siobhán O'Sullivan, Orla Feely, Ivan Perry, Sarah Gibney,  
Apologies: Teresa Maguire.

ITEM	Discussion	ACTIONS
1.	Draft Minutes from 3, 7, 10, 14 April 2020 reviewed and signed off.	
2.	<b>Conflict of Interest Declarations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CF asked members to declare any COI</li> <li>- IP as a new member will submit a COI</li> </ul>	IP and SK to complete COI form  COI to remain an active agenda item on all meetings
3.	<b>Membership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ivan Perry UCC and Stephen Kinsella UL and Sarah Gibney DoH were welcomed to the group.</li> </ul>	
4.	<b>Communications</b> CB outlined that planning is underway for a consolidated communications pieces within the Senior Officials Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- D/Taoiseach are interested in what is happening in the R&amp;D space and including developments in the communications strategy and the national narrative surrounding recovery</li> <li>- The group agreed that there is a need to develop a short description of the work of the REAG that appeals to the general public and aligns with the thematic communications areas that D/Taoiseach and the Government information Services are focussing on</li> <li>- S'OS advised that timing would be important: the group should pursue engagement in strategic communications efforts within the Department of Health and GIS when papers have been brought to NPHET on the strategic approach, trials co-ordination, and the WHO solidarity trial.</li> </ul>	
5.	<b>Clinical Trials</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MOD provided an overview and background to the paper on coordination of clinical trials including assessment/recommendations on national priority trials</li> <li>- The paper was submitted to the EAG on Wednesday 15 April and it was approved</li> <li>- S'OS, queried the version circulated to EAG and whether the role of the REAG set out in the review process was up-to-date in the document and EAG briefing</li> <li>- MO'D confirmed that large multi-country trials are high priority and a process is in place in the HRB to operationalise with other agencies when required.</li> <li>- Members confirmed that the group will not comment and input on individual trials/projects.</li> </ul> <b>WHO SOLIDARITY Trial:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On-going telecalls between small group (DoH/HRB,</li> </ul>	CB to confirm that the up-to-date role of REAG in the review process is reflected in the document and EAG are aware, going forward.

	<p>CRCI and HPRA) and WHO R&amp;D team to progress all trial logistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SOS and CB met with Gilead 17 April to progress discussions re: access to remdesivir.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Serology/Immunology</b></p> <p>IP raised a question on the status of anti-body testing and the group discussed the centrality of serology in the development of an exit strategy and for opening up the economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CB provided an update and overview: testing continues to be public health focussed and supporting HSE operations; there is a need to expand serology testing including laboratory-based testing.</li> <li>- SO'S noted that the HPSC are planning a population-based study using the WHO protocol.</li> </ul> <p>The group discussed the recent request for an overview of testing policy in Ireland from NPHEt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SK noted that these policies will be important for global trade flows: goods, people, and services.</li> </ul> <p>The group discussed whether Ireland was behind in terms of testing compared with for example Iceland, or Korea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SOS confirmed that Ireland was not behind other countries, citing that Ireland is unique and the first in the EU to conduct a Health Technology Assessment to inform this approach, and this will serve as a baseline HTA for the rest of Europe.</li> </ul>	<p>The matter of a National Testing Strategy to remain an active agenda item</p> <p>CB to ask for a status update on serology testing policy from NPHEt week commencing 20 April</p> <p>SOS to circulate HTA to the group and not for wider circulation (under embargo until 22 April)</p>
7.	<p><b>Capturing NPHEt priorities for research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SOS updated the group on activities to collate priorities from NPHEt, NPHEt sub-groups, and SOG</li> <li>- OF, MF, and MO'D have circulated papers to the subgroup to review on the issue of coordination of COVID-19 research nationally (including a request for additional funding)</li> <li>- The group discussed the three papers circulated by MF, OF, and MO'D</li> <li>- The group agreed that a single high-level priority and strategy paper should be brought to the next meeting for consideration</li> <li>- Members noted that the single paper should be cross-cutting and ambitious and covering short, medium, and long term priorities</li> <li>- Members noted that the paper should capture cross-cutting priorities and the infrastructure required to deliver on them.</li> <li>- Members queried the funding estimate and justification required in the paper</li> <li>- SK agreed to input on the funding and justification, with due consideration of EU funding norms and investment in R&amp;D.</li> </ul>	<p>S'OS to combine and share single paper</p> <p>SK to input funding note</p> <p>MO'D to input on infrastructure requirements: data linkage and biobanks, and registries.</p>
8.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>SO'S reiterated that the HTA is under embargo until 22 April. If permission is granted to share with the group, it will not be for wider circulation.</p>	

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 21 April at 4pm (Telecall)