

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

Present: Colm Bergin (Co-Chair), Cliona O’Farrelly (Co-Chair), Mark Ferguson, Mairéad O’Driscoll, Ana Terres, Ivan Perry, Stephen Kinsella, Ivan Perry, Orla Feely, Sarah Gibney,

Apologies: Teresa Maguire, Siobhán O’Sullivan.

ITEM	Discussion	ACTIONS
1.	Draft Minutes from 21 April 2020 reviewed and approved	
2.	Conflict of Interest Declarations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HRB grant awardees 	COI to remain an active agenda item on all meetings
3.	Clinical trials paper review and feedback from medicines criticality assessment sub-group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CB provided an update - Members noted importance of updated process flow diagram to reflect the fact that REAG does not have a decision making role; - MO’D noted that persons have been identified to make this operational next week. - MO’D confirmed that in the absence of funding for trials, a business case will have to be prepared to seek additional funding. - CB reiterated that the paper is a framework against which funding may be allocated - Members suggested that monitoring and mapping of trials is important to avoid duplication. - Members noted that a central, coordinated approach to COVID-19 studies is important and the framework paper provides this structure for trials. 	<p>CB to reply to comments raised</p> <p>HRB will send process and communications planned for making the process live</p>
4.	Research prioritisation paper <p>Members noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that the document should be short, and in line with the role of the REAG. Funding should go through existing structures of approval. - it should include things that the research system needs, for future pandemic preparedness, things we need more broadly for science and technology and how these can be addressed through existing structures e.g. 	<p>Review and share a next draft for next meeting.</p> <p>Members to consider separately biospecimen document.</p> <p>Group to review and comment papers circulated</p>

	<p>Horizon 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - noted the absence of a centre-based model for social science. - should note that priority is to re-open the economy and the role of testing, disease aetiology, socio-economic impact. Existing funding mechanisms can be used. A prioritisation process is required. - Consideration of the business case approach to articulating the proposal may be helpful for Government consideration beyond NPHET. - NPHET endorsement is important process for prioritisation of health spending in a cross-governmental way. - It is important to convey the success of the integrated response of the research community to the COVID-19 response. - Needs to convey the opportunity for efficiency gains with current resources, and the benefits of linking research and policy, health services, and agencies. - the focus is on the social and economic and recovery in the next 3 to 12 months with a focus on testing and the disease phenotype. - need to articulate how the crisis has had a positive impact on economic and social life e.g. regional development and remote working, and where there is a contribution to address global challenges such as climate change. It is important to separate the immediacy from the long-term issues. - should articulate what we are doing differently in Ireland. - welcomed priority document circulated by SO'S and noted this as an input to SFI and HRB going forward as well as for the REAG document. - the group reflects representatives with multiple roles, and it is beneficial in this context to have funders and service users working together. - The paper needs to stress that an appropriate research response would require significant public health investment 	<p>by SO'S.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Draft National COVID-19 Biorepository and Data Analytics Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CO'F proposed that the group review the paper over the weekend and discuss at the next meeting. - CB reported on a meeting with the Chief 	<p>Review paper (all) and expand further on points raised in the discussion</p>

	<p>Academic Officers, noting that they are supportive of an institutional approach to a national structure and matched funding options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members queried where this fits with the data linkage proposal and the location of the biobank – hospital or university? - Members noted a focus on using existing resources. - Members proposed a strategy to collect and map specimens, and link with data. - Members discussed capacity for sample storage within the health service and the CRFs. 	
6.	<p>Testing strategy update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members enquired about an update on the strategy development. 	<p>CB to explore if scientific and lab community are represented on the testing strategy group</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MO'D will circulate list of successful awards - MW provided update on areas funded under SFI as the first part of the rolling call and outlined the plan for the next phase of funding. - Communication to be on next agenda. 	