

Minutes
Research Subgroup of Expert Advisory Group
25 March 2020, 12.30pm (by telecall)

Present: Colm Bergin (Co-Chair), Cliona O’Farrelly (Co-Chair), Siobhán O’Sullivan, Teresa Maguire, Mark Ferguson, Mairead O’Driscoll

ITEM	Discussion	ACTIONS
1	SOS noted that discussions were underway regarding the potential establishment of an oversight and coordination mechanism for COVID-19 research by the Senior Officials Group/Department of the Taoiseach.	SOS to update the group on developments
2	<p>Membership of the subgroup was discussed. There was a shared view that the group should remain lean but convene all appropriate expertise and inputs necessary to advance actions through targeted work-streams.</p> <p>CB noted that a letter had been sent to the Chair of the EAG by the VP Research of the Universities seeking representation on the subgroup.</p>	Update to be provided by CB at next meeting
3	<p>CB had circulated suggested Terms of Reference for the subgroup in advance. These were agreed without edit and are listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To align the prioritised topics to be addressed with the research communities expertise and knowledge ensuring timely and informed outcomes to address cross-sectoral need (these priorities should be embedded within the broader WHO R&D Roadmap for COVID-19) 2) To provide strategic advice on how to accelerate COVID-19-related research in order that Ireland can meaningfully contribute to global research efforts and ensure that findings are relevant and beneficial to the public and patients in Ireland 3) To consider and promote coordination mechanisms across national and international stakeholders to ensure a coherence to national investments and VFM 4) To consider cross-cutting actions and investment required to facilitate data and sample sharing for both the current COVID-19 response and for future research 5) To identify solutions to overcome barriers to accelerating COVID-19 research 6) To explore and provide advice on collaborative opportunities to advance COVID-19 research, including opportunities at North-South, European and International levels. 	CB to present to the EAG (and NPHE) for formal sign off
4	<p>Prioritisation and workstreams</p> <p>There was a discussion on the focus and status of the pending research calls by SFI and HRB (and partners). There was agreement that it is important for these rapid response calls to be announced as soon as possible - many research proposals seeking to inform the immediate COVID-19 response are time critical, it is important that Ireland does not lag further behind the global R&D effort and indeed, connects with many of the developments in train internationally.</p> <p>Importantly, these calls are designed to be adaptive to emerging priorities internationally and to discussions by the Research</p>	All to discuss best way to interface with

	<p>Subgroup/NPHET or other oversight and coordination mechanisms. Funders are open to further calls being developed and announced as required.</p> <p>The Subgroup will interface with EAG and NPHET to capture their current and emerging priorities and feed them into this subgroup.</p> <p>The group had an initial discussion on areas which may become work-streams- Clinical Trials, Serology testing, Biobanks/Registries/Sample and data sharing.</p>	<p>calls when open</p> <p>All to discuss further at next meeting and to think of appropriate members to convene in work-stream areas</p>
5	<p>TM gave an update on work underway to deliver a dedicated National Research Ethics Committee to provide an expedited review mechanism for all COVID-19-related research.</p> <p>Importantly, the NREC process involves structured coordination with others involved in health research regulation (HPRA and Health Research Consent Declaration Committee) in order to facilitate a single expedited decision. This is aligned with the recommendation set out in the WHO R&D Roadmap to establish expedited and coordinated mechanisms and aligns with NPHET Ethical Framework for decision making which will be published this week.</p>	<p>Further updates to follow</p>
6	<p>CB noted the importance of a clear communication to all research stakeholders about the establishment, purpose and ToR of this subgroup.</p>	<p>CB to discuss further with TM and SOS re: timing and approach</p>

Date of Next Meeting:

The call is scheduled for Friday, 27th March 2020 at 16:00.