

Minutes of VMD Management Board meeting held on 3 July 2020

Members

Julia Drown (Chair)
David Catlow
David Corner

Present

Peter Borriello – VMD
Paul Green - VMD
Abigail Seager - VMD
Mike Griffiths – VMD
Linda Simmons – VMD
Suzanne Eckford - VMD
Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

1. Apologies for absence and announcements

1.1 There were no apologies. The meeting was held by video conference.

2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

2.1 None

3. Minutes of the last meeting

VMDMB 20/13

3.1 The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

VMDMB 20/14

4.1 There were no matters arising.

5. Review of Annual Report and Accounts (as tabled at ARAC)

5.1 It was agreed to accept the audit committee's recommendation that the Chief Executive sign the Annual Report and accounts for 2019-20 subject to its Chair confirming acceptance of the final audit completion report.

6. International Strategy

VMDMB 20/15

6.1 Suzanne Eckford, VMD's head of international development and training, gave an overview of the recently completed international strategy which sets out the vision, aims and objectives for VMD's international activity and explains how it can engage and partner with countries around the globe. It was developed to bring together a number of different work streams across the organisation within a coherent framework. Additional internal activity is now underway to embed the strategic approach as 'business as usual', including review of internal governance, roles and responsibilities, capability and capacity, financial models, monitoring and evaluation of delivery. VMD has already started providing services in the areas of developing medicines regulation capability in other countries and building partnerships for joint international assessments. The members welcomed the strategy but felt that it lacked a clear budget and needed milestones and targets. Suzanne explained that it would be updated with an action plan once the ongoing workstreams were completed, and

once scoping of the stakeholder landscape had been undertaken to allow evidenced based prediction of demand and potential income streams. It is intended that the work will be externally funded which will require transparency and it will be necessary to avoid overcommitment of people and resources. Although some of the training VMD offers can be done remotely, some face to face visits will also likely be needed, particularly for capacity building. Encouraging and enabling research is an important part of the strategy, although, as a regulator, the VMD cannot be involved in product development and instead intends to focus on post authorisation research. Members welcomed the core commitment of the strategy to improve medicines capability around the world.

7. R&D Strategy

VMDMB 20/16 & VMDMB 20/17

7.1 Members reviewed the VMD's R&D strategy, which sets out how it commissions research to help ensure effective authorisation and control and deal with specific policy issues and evidence gaps. It has become more difficult to fulfil this remit due to decreasing budgets and VMD looks to form cost-effective partnerships where possible with a number of different bodies and has established good working relationships with the APHA and several universities. It was suggested that trust funds could be a useful source of potential funding. After the transition period has ended there may be more finances available to look at important areas such as antimicrobial resistance, antiparasitics and the environment. It was explained that where funds are used to commission research agreements are made to assign intellectual property appropriately.

8. CEO's Report (and annexes)

VMDMB 20/24 & VMDMB 20/25

8.1 The CEO's report was presented and reviewed.

9. Delivery against the Business Plan 2020/21

VMDMB 20/18

9.1 Delivery against the Business Plan was reviewed. Sickness rates in the light of those working from home were discussed.

10. Transition and Trade activities

VMDMB 20/19 & VMDMB 20/20

10.1 VMD will relaunch the successful Information Hub in July in order to provide information about the progress of activities undertaken, including trade agreements, leading up to the end of the transition period. VMD is feeding into trade negotiations with several countries and working closely with DAERA on resolving a number of issues with the NI Protocol. VMD's replacement IT systems are now in private beta testing with stakeholders and meetings have been arranged with DG Sante and the EMA to discuss maintaining access to EU data systems. Progress continues to be made towards obtaining legislative powers and the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill is due to go to the House of Lords in July.

10.2 VMD agreed to keep members informed about the most important issues in regular updates.

ACTION

11. Finance Report

VMDMB 20/21

11.1 VMD reported that 2019-20 had been a challenging year with many new income and expenditure streams and good collaborative working across the organisation had been

demonstrated to achieve the budget. The effect of Covid-19 on the year to date finances was not yet clear and it was agreed to send the members Q1 data when available.

ACTION

12. Management Board annual assessment – summary of returns **VMDMB 20/22**

12.1 The annual performance assessment had provided satisfactory results.

13. Members' Declarations of Interests

13.1 These would be reviewed at the next meeting.

14. Management Board Work Plan **VMDMB 20/23**

14.1 was agreed to consider the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the use and availability of medicines as a focus topic at the next meeting.

15. Any other business

15.1 It was noted that David Corner and Julia Drown's terms of office are likely to be extended to ensure a regular and sensibly timed turnover of Non-Executives on the Board.

15.2 Members would be sending a question on residues testing to the Executive.

16. Future meetings

16.1 The next meeting will be held on 24 September 2020.

**Veterinary Medicines Directorate
July 2020**