

## Minutes of VMD Management Board meeting held on 2 December 2022

### Members

Julia Drown (Chair)  
David Catlow  
Philippa Hardwick  
Timothy Riley

### Present

Abigail Seager – VMD  
Gavin Hall - VMD  
Mike Griffiths – VMD  
Muiz Agbaje – VMD  
John Millward – VMD  
Nicola Charlton – Boardroom Apprentice  
Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

### 1. Announcements and apologies for absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Nicola Charlton to the meeting who was attending under the Boardroom Apprentice programme.
- 1.2 David Kennedy had sent apologies but asked to be invited to the next meeting held in person at the VMD planned for June.

### 2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

- 2.1 None.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022

**VMDMB 22/34**

- 4.1 The minutes were agreed.

### 4. Matters Arising/Actions

**VMDMB 22/35**

- 4.1 In response to a previous request to provide more information about VMD's environmental efficiencies, VMD noted that Defra is finalising its environmental targets and reports on carbon usage figures for staff will be made available. International travel is likely to increase as VMD seeks to collaborate with other regulators. Information on its environmental impact will be included in the annual report and it was agreed to close this action.
- 4.2 Results of the stakeholder mapping exercise and a plan of engagement will be brought to the next Board meeting in March.

#### **ACTION**

### 5. Global Opportunities – Global Markets

- 5.1 The interim Deputy CEO and Director of Authorisations, Gavin Hall, gave an update on VMD's global activities and the opportunities it is pursuing. The release from EU regulations has given the VMD more flexibility to develop its own regulatory framework and it is looking to encourage business by increasing periods of protection for authorised products and taking a more flexible approach to assessing novel therapies. At the same time it gives companies the option to submit applications in UK in parallel with European applications. It continues to pursue agreements with other jurisdictions and holds regular meetings with the QUINTS group of countries (Canada, New Zealand, Australia and USA) where topics of mutual interest are discussed such as communities of practice and co-assessments. Joint application review processes have started with Canada and New Zealand and it is reassuring that their scientific experts are reaching the same conclusions as ours. VMD is working with Swiss authorities on a MOU which will give UK a legal framework for acquiring EU assessment reports. GMP arrangements are being made with other regulatory authorities and VMD representatives are attending VICH meetings as

observers. VMD is looking to form partnerships across Africa and the middle east and the ultimate aim is to achieve global submissions.

- 5.2 In response to a question about costs, Mr Hall explained that VMD receives no government funding for its international work but there will be economic benefits of working with other regulators on common objectives, developing free trade agreements and having MOUs in place. Co-assessments will reduce the amount of time required to assess applications while ensuring that GB assessment standards will not be compromised. Products will continue to be authorised on a national basis only for the time being. Members thanked VMD for an interesting insight into its global work and ambitions.

## **6. CEO's Report**

**VMDMB 22/36**

- 6.1 The CEO's report was presented and reviewed. It was noted that VMD is facing a number of challenges but still meeting its performance targets. Of particular concern is the end of the grace period with EU regulations applying in Northern Ireland in full from January and the subsequent effect on the availability of veterinary medicines. VMD has engaged thoroughly with NOAH on the issues involved and stressed to Defra and the EU commission the importance of finding solutions, and as a minimum extending the EU grace period to enable talks to continue. In regard to staffing issues, two of the unions recognised by Defra are planning strike action and VMD is awaiting notice of their intentions. Members noted that VMD is continuing to function well but the pressures on it are unsustainable.
- 6.2 David Catlow offered to assist the cross-team blood bank interest group which has been set up to consider concerns over a lack of availability of feline blood products.
- 6.3 VMD noted that the upcoming contract with BJSS to provide some IT services may be expanded to cover the whole IT programme.

## **7. Delivery against the Business Plan 2022/23**

**VMDMB 22/37**

- 7.1 Members congratulated VMD on its progress against the annual Business Plan.

## **8. Finance report**

**VMDMB 22/38**

- 8.1 The finance report was reviewed and it was noted that the full year budget currently shows an underspend.

## **9. Management Board work plan**

**VMDMB 22/39**

- 9.1 The stakeholder engagement plan would be focus topic for the March meeting. It was also agreed to review the Enforcement strategy.

### **ACTION**

## **10. Any other business**

- 10.1 Members were shown the VMD's new Connect website which is in development. This will link to guidance on Gov.uk but will also provide its own content and not be as restricted in how it can provide information and advice to the public.

**Veterinary Medicines Directorate  
December 2022**