

# Standards in biobanking – driving quality in research

NSAI & HRB Biobanking workshop on I.S EN ISO 20387  
*25<sup>th</sup> October 2022*

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**HR<sup>B</sup>** Health  
Research  
Board

**Research.  
Evidence.  
Action.**

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# The Health Research Board.....on 1 slide

- **State agency under Department of Health**
  - Budget ~€45m, funding portfolio ~€200m+, staff of ~95
- **Providing evidence for policy**
  - Public Health Alcohol Bill, Food Pyramid, Fluoridation
- **National Information systems for service planning**
  - Drugs, disability, mental health
- **Funding health research**
  - Clinical, Population Health, Health Services Research
  - Infrastructure, capacity building, strategic investments
- **Statutory remit recently expanded to:**
  - National Research Ethics Committee ((Covid) CTIMPs, MedDev, (CovBB))
  - Health Research Consent Declaration Committee



# HRB Strategy 2021-2025

**Strategic objective 4.** Build a strong and supportive environment for health research in Ireland.

Includes focus on:

- Capacity-building
- Clinical Trials Infrastructure
- National Research Ethics Committee
- International Engagement
- Biobanking and genomics

# HRB Strategy 2021-2025

**Action 4.3.** Take a leading role to convene stakeholders to progress the design, development and implementation of national shared, high-cost research infrastructures, including in the areas of biobanking and genomic research

**Implementation action 4.3.1** Convene a forum of national stakeholders to codevelop a road map and costed implementation plan for biobanking in Ireland that supports both health and broader Government research objectives.

**Implementation action 4.3.3** Engage in discussions with national and international partners, as appropriate, to discuss how existing or planned research infrastructures are funded, governed, and operated.

# Quality in HRB-funded Biobanking

- Response-mode funding
- Excellence is key driver
- Biobanking-related costs are eligible, including for clinical trials
- Step-wise approach to driving quality of biobanking: use of particular standards currently not mandatory

Example from Investigator-Led Projects Guidance 2022 “..... Please describe how you will ensure good practice for biobanking components in this project, with particular regard to quality of sample collection, processing, annotation and storage. Please reference relevant guidelines/standards you will use.....”

# National TC 276 committee

- HRB joined TC 276, monitoring development of ISO 20387
- Financial support for national expert in Working Group 2 to represent Ireland's interests during standard development
- Thank you to members of the Irish TC 276 who supported the standard development, in particular Linda, Suzanne and Emma

# Recent Developments

- €2m investment to establish the National Covid-19 biobank (NICB), at the request of the Department of Health
- Significant milestone: the first government investment in biobanking
- The Government's "Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 Plan for Living with COVID-19" coordinated research and innovation, both nationally and internationally, highlights the need for 'infrastructure to support biorepository studies'
- Accreditation to ISO 20387 as a target: the approach and resourcing for same should be included within the application

# BBMRI - ERIC

## ■ Network of biobanks


Mission to increase efficacy and excellence of European bio-medical research by facilitating access to quality-defined human health/disease-relevant biological resources through:

- the inclusion of associated data in an efficient and ethically and legally compliant manner;
- through harmonisation of procedures, implementation of common standards and fostering of high-level collaboration; and
- capacity-building in countries with less developed biobanking communities (service updated and enhanced as of 2022)


➤ BBMRI looking to expand membership



# BBMRI-ERIC membership

-  HRB was participant in preparatory phase of BBMRI
- Government decision required for each country to join the legal structure
- Business case to join BBMRI-ERIC, dependent on having national biobanking infrastructure including a national biobanking node

# Looking forward

- Quality in biobanking critical to ensure research  relevant to human health
- Standards ensure the quality for an intended purpose is recognised nationally and internationally
- Incrementally move towards mandatory accreditation for any biobanking activity to be funded
- International expert review in 2023 will assess progress of NICB, and learning for Ireland in establishing a national, multi-institution biobank infrastructure
- BBMRI membership considered anew in light of government investment in national biobank

# Today's workshop

- Experts sharing knowledge and experience in relation to biobanking
- Focus on accreditation and opportunities offered by accreditation to the new ISO standard
- Learning along the path to accreditation
- Audience can reflect on potential for ISO 20387 accreditation, and on what they could do now to improve their biobanking practice