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## Minutes of the EDCTP Association Board meeting by teleconference on 7 June 2024, 10:00-11:30 CEST

Participants
<p><b>EDCTP Association Board Members present:</b>            Henning Gädeke (HG) - Board Chair            Alemseged Abdissa (AA) – Board Vice-Chair            Eric D’Ortenzio (EDO) - Board Member            Marta Norton (MN) – Board Member            Samuel Okware (SO) - Board Member</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b>            Glaudina Loots (GL) - Board Vice-Chair            Jan Paehler (JP) – European Commission (EC)</p> <p><b>EDCTP Secretariat (SEC) present:</b>            Abdoulie Barry (AB) – Acting Executive Director &amp; Director of Finance and Administration            Lara Pandya (LP) - Strategic Partnerships (North) and Communications Manager            Isabel Reis (IR) – Executive Governance Officer.</p>

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS AND ACTION POINTS			
#	AGENDA ITEM	DECISIONS AND ACTIONS	ACTION BY
1.1	Minutes of the Board meeting of 9 April 2024	<b>DECISION:</b> The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 April 2024 (meeting document 1).	
3.1	General Assembly draft agenda for 28 June 2024	<b>ACTION:</b> SEC to confirm the exact date of the GA to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2025.	



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4.1	Update on GH EDCTP3 matters	<b>ACTION:</b> SEC to follow-up on the written procedure for the adoption for 2024-Mpox call.	
4.2	Preparation for the GH EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting on 27 June 2024	<b>ACTION:</b> Ahead of the GH EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting on 27 June 2024, SEC to follow-up on the written procedure in relation to topics that require prior approval of the JUC for the Board to cast its vote.	



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#	AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS
<b>1. Notes and matters arising from the previous Board meeting</b>		
1.1	Minutes of the Board meeting of 9 April 2024	<p>HG and AB welcomed all Board members to the Association Board meeting of 2024. A special welcome was extended to AA, the newly elected Board member to his first EDCTP Association Board meeting, and to MN to her second Board meeting, but first time as a full elected member.</p> <p>HG congratulated AA on his election as a Vice-Chair of the Board. AA briefly introduced himself and provided some elements of his background.</p> <p>HG informed that apologies for absence were received from GL and JP.</p> <p>HG requested the participants to declare orally if they had any conflicts of interest that might be considered prejudicial to their independence in relation to the items on the agenda of the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared.</p> <p>HG guided the members through the minutes of the Board meeting of 9 April 2024. There were no requests for modifications.</p> <p><b>DECISION:</b> The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting of 9 April 2024 (meeting document 1).</p>
1.2	Status of actions arising from the Board meeting of 9 April 2024	<p>AB and IR confirmed that the action points from the Board meeting of 9 April 2024 (page 2 of meeting document 1) were all addressed.</p> <p>Furthermore, SEC-IR informed the meeting that she expects Elvis Temfack, from Africa CDC, to attend (either in-person or virtually) the General Assembly on 28 June 2024.</p>
<b>2. EDCTP2 programme</b>		
2.1	Board member induction	<p>LP delivered a Board induction training presentation to Board members (slides 5-19). Her presentation covered the following topics: EDCTP Association governance structure; the GH EDCTP3 JU governance structure; representation and decision-making of the General Assembly; Board Terms of Reference; EDCTP3 JU Committee Rules and Regulations; the role of the Audit Committee; and the EDCTP2 Delegation Agreement.</p>



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		<p>SO asked if it would be appropriate to update the EDCTP Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) 2020 perhaps through a mid-term review. LP explained that the SRA was updated annually until 2020, the year in which the last EDCTP2 programme was prepared. LP said that the SRA had not been updated since 2020 because no calls were launched under the EDCTP2 programme since then. LP explained that the SRA has now been overtaken by the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for EDCTP3. LP said that she expects the SRIA to be updated annually. AB echoed that the last EDCTP2 work plan was in 2020 and no further work plans were expected to be prepared in the foreseeable future. The EDCTP SRA 2020 and the results of the interim evaluations have been factored into the SRIA.</p>
2.2	General updates from the Secretariat	<p>AB delivered a presentation on the latest updates from the Secretariat (slides 21-29).</p> <p>AA asked how equity and balance in access to funding are ensured, and whether there is a system to reach out to those countries which are not accessing any grants. AB responded that the EDCTP Association ran open competitive calls. Furthermore, under the EDCTP2 programme, the SEC had organised French language and Portuguese language grant writing workshops which had proven to be very successful, particularly for Lusophone countries, but were discontinued after the last calls were launched. However, the organisation of such workshops could be included as part of the Africa Office grant from 2025 onwards.</p> <p>LP outlined some of the approaches used to try to expand the number of African countries participating in EDCTP grants, such as an <a href="#">EDCTP-Africa CDC workshop</a> in 2019 on regional and gender disparities in EDCTP2 funding, during which a number of recommendations emerged and actions were taken. In response to this, a PSIA call was also launched by the UK on capacity development for women in science, which offered PhD fellowships in the EDCTP Regional Networks of Excellence. The renewal of the Regional Networks of Excellence funding encouraged the inclusion of additional countries that were not yet participating in the Regional Networks of Excellence. LP further explained that the EDCTP Association is reaching out to more African countries to encourage them to become members in the Association so that they can be eligible for funding under EDCTP3.</p> <p>HG recalled that the disparities in accessing grants both in Africa and Europe was one of the issues raised by the Stakeholders Group at the Global Health EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting in November 2023. It had also been discussed during the negotiations for Horizon Europe. HG said that it would be difficult to have a geographical restriction within the funding of EDCTP3 since this is not foreseen in the Horizon Europe rules of participation. HG noted that, further to the discussions at the</p>



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		<p>Governing Board, steps have already been taken to spread the information as wide as possible. HG said this would help some countries to have a good infrastructure for accessing key information and getting help with proposals. HG proposed that the Africa Office could play a role in leading similar grant writing workshops as was organised under EDCTP2.</p> <p>AB informed the Board that organising grant writing workshop would be one of the topics that the EDCTP Association intends to include in the next Africa Office Grant proposal to the Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking. AB said that some of the Francophone countries, such as Mali and Burkina Faso, had made considerable progress in attracting EDCTP funding following such workshops. EDO emphasised that the objective remains to have more countries in West and Central Africa submitting applications to grants and mentioned that France (through ANRS) has been putting in a considerable amount of effort to strengthening and broadening its collaboration with more African countries and linking them to the EDCTP.</p>
2.3	Update on ongoing Pillar Assessment	<p>AB reported that the second draft of the Pillar Assessment was received by the EDCTP Association on 17 May 2024. AB said that the Secretariat commented on it the same day and sent it to the EC for comments.</p>
2.4	Whistleblowing/ Fraud update	<p>AB reported to the Board that a fraud notification regarding EDCTP funded OPTIMAL project was received from the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI), Makerere University, in Uganda, in a letter dated 16 April 2024 from Tom Kakaire, Head of Strategy and Development at Infectious Diseases Institute (the letter from Tom Kakaire is included as annex 1 in the meeting documents). AB gave the summary below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The fraud was detected by IDI's internal auditors.</li><li>• The amount misappropriated is UGX 11,136,000 (EUR 2,807.91).</li><li>• The OPTIMAL project is required to submit an independent audit report (audit certificate).</li></ul> <p>AB also explained that EDCTP carries out four site visits every year. In addition, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Accountants conducts operational audits (internal audits) on behalf of the EDCTP Association. PwC is provided with specific guidance by the SEC and travels to the sites to physically perform these operational audits.</p> <p>Referring to meeting document 3 and annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4, AB updated on the actions taken or planned by EDCTP, and asked if members were in agreement with the approach, or would prefer any further actions at this point in time. The Board agreed with the Secretariat's proposed way forward.</p>



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<b>3. Preparation for the upcoming General Assembly</b>		
3.1	General Assembly draft agenda for 28 June 2024	<p>IR guided Board members through the draft GA agenda for 28 June 2024, providing some background and guidance. For GA meeting agenda item 4.6 (<i>Preparations for the Twelfth EDCTP Forum in 2025</i>), IR said that SEC is expected to confirm at the GA meeting of 28 June 2024 the exact date of the GA meeting to be held in June 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SEC to confirm the exact date of the GA meeting to be held in June 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda.</p> <p>HG highlighted that, unlike previous GA meetings, the GA of 28 June in Brussels would involve a higher number of participants from the Global Health EDCTP3 JU and the European Commission, which he said he was happy about as it would likely increase interactions amongst all participants. HG said that he expects that the absence of visa restrictions for the Twelfth EDCTP Forum in Rwanda, to result in high attendance.</p>
<b>4. Global Health EDCTP3 programme</b>		
4.1	Update on GH EDCTP3 matters	<p>EDO asked if there are any further details regarding the number of project proposals received for the 2024-Mpox call and the status of the applications. LP confirmed that there were 17 applications received by the deadline of 29 May, which are currently undergoing eligibility checks. HG indicated that more information is to be shared by Global Health EDCTP3 on the adoption of the 2024-Mpox call. On 19 June 2024, the JU is expected to launch the written procedure for the adoption of the decision approving the projects for funding from the Mobilisation of Emergency funding for Mpox outbreak research response (HORIZON-JU-GH-EDCTP3-2024-Mpox) call for proposals. Once this is done, the SEC would be required to urgently start the procedure for collecting the approvals from the Board members.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SEC to follow-up on the written procedure for the adoption for 2024-Mpox call.</p> <p>SO recalled that on the last day of the call for proposals, there was a failure of the internet cable in Uganda, which caused a massive critical disruption on the internet line, making it difficult or impossible to submit proposals online on that day. SO asked if in future, it would be possible to allow an alternative way for submission of proposals (perhaps through the submission of hard copies via DHL). On this, HG advised SO to raise this issue at the Global Health EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting on 27 June 2024 to discuss possible alternatives to address such special needs in future.</p>



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		<p>HG informed that he and EC-JP have received a draft of the Declaration of the G7 Research Ministers in which EDCTP is explicitly mentioned. He advised that together with EC-JP, they had proposed an edit in the reference to already existing initiatives, to include <i>"EU AU innovation agenda, the partnership for research innovation in the Mediterranean area, the clinical trials partnership of African and European countries GH EDCTP3"</i>. HG encouraged EDO to support this revised wording with reference to EDCTP in the declaration of the G7 Research Ministers if the opportunity arises.</p>
4.2	Preparation for the GH EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting on 27 June 2024	<p>HG mentioned some practical aspects regarding the Global Health EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting to be held on 27 June 2024, noting the agenda and the meeting documents for decision and for information.</p> <p>LP summarised the decision-making procedures in relation to Global Health EDCTP3 Governing Board matters, explaining that in accordance with the EDCTP3 JUC rules and regulations, the Association Board requires prior approval from the JUC to cast its vote on certain topics. As such, it was noted that there were a few agenda items at the upcoming Governing Board meeting that would require the pre-approval of the JUC. In this case, the SEC would first request the Association Board members to confirm their intended vote, after which the SEC would communicate this to the JUC for approval ahead of the Governing Board meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Ahead of the GH EDCTP3 Governing Board meeting on 27 June 2024, SEC to follow-up on the written procedure in relation to topics that require prior approval of the JUC for the Board to cast its vote.</p> <p>HG recalled that while the Association Board must deliver its vote as one voice during the Governing Board meeting, the Association Board members are welcome to participate in the discussion and provide their personal input. Furthermore, HG provided some guidance regarding the Governing Board Terms of Reference and composition.</p>
<b>5.0 Any Other Business</b>		
5.1	Any other business	There were no other matters raised.
<b>6.0 Wrap-up and closing remarks</b>		
6.1	Closure of the meeting	HG thanked all members for their participation and insightful discussions and closed the meeting.