EphMRA Committee Meeting – Minutes & Actions

Date:	**28 April 2015**	
Event:	**Ethics Committee Meeting**	
Time:	2-3pm (UK time)	
Place:	Teleconference	
Participants:	BR	Bernadette Rogers
	CA	Catherine Ayland
	GB	Georgina Butcher – Co-Chair – Meeting Chair
	IB	Ian Barker – Co-Chair
	RDG	Roni DasGupta
	XR	Xander Raijmakers
Apologies from:	CM	Christine Mai
	KGV	Karen Giorgi-Vigo
	PR	Piergiorgio Rossi
	SL	Solvea Lamarina

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION THAT IS EXCHANGED DURING COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS AND WITHIN MINUTES – THANK YOU.

ACTIONS		
1	**Competency Test – Frequency of Revisions** Following review of the potential options for updating the Competency Test (including no update) it was concluded that a small selection of questions (3 to 5) will be changed each year (in September) – to allow fresh questions to be added and updated guidelines to be addressed in the test. The update would go live with the updated Guidelines in January each year.	BR to action from Oct 2015
	It will also be checked whether it is possible to assess the success rate of individual questions to find out which questions may be too hard or too easy	BR to explore with Nelson Croom
2	**Joint EphMRA/BHBIA Competency Test** A follow up TC after the BHBIA TC will be held with the EC Co-chairs to agree next steps and communications to members.EC will be updated after discussions with the BHBIA with regard to the next steps.	BR to agree next steps with co-chairs and update EC following further feedback from the BHBIA
3	**Training before Testing – Need for Training prior to Testing** Following discussion of whether members should be required to complete the training before being able to take the Competency Tests (Code of	BR to explore: − Feasibility

	Conduct and AER), it was concluded that the tests should be accessed via the training but it is not necessary to complete the training before taking the test. However the technical feasibility and associated costs will have to be explored before any action can be finalised.	– Budget implications with Nelson Croom & EphMRA Treasurer
4	**Public Affairs – Next Steps** Following an initial discussion it was suggested that more time should be devoted to this issue and a fuller discussion be held at the next EC meeting which is an extended face to face meeting.	CA to add this item to the 23 June EC Meeting Agenda
5	**June EC Meeting Agenda** Public Affairs – Development of Plan to be discussed A list of potential items to be developed by CA and circulated to the EC for comment and refinement – EC members should review the list, record their issues, suggestions and priorities to the list. Possible issues suggested so far: • Public Affairs – Future Plans • Balance between International and National Issues • PR & Communications – Progress & Plan • Training – Future Plans • Changes to the Ethics Environment	CA to draft list of potential items & circulate to EC for comment
6	**EC Membership – Optimal Size and Structure of the EC** Following discussion of the optimal size and structure it was concluded that the EC should ideally be made up of 8 to 10 members. In terms of structure the following priorities should influence the make-up of the EC, in order of priority: – a 50:50 balance between FMs and AMs – key geographies represented, currently under-represented for Germany and the USA – major organisations represented This information will be used to shape recruitment to the EC	BR to progress recruitment of EC members

Date of next meeting – 23 June 2015 11.30am – 2.00pm – Amsterdam meeting – please put time

MINUTES	
1	**Competency Test** Whilst the Competency Test is updated each year, new questions are not added unless a question becomes redundant due to changes in the Code. The EC was asked to consider whether there is a rationale for updating none, some or all 20 of the questions on a regular basis. There different options were discussed: 1. No changes other than essential updating – most cost-effective option but over time the questions will become familiar and dated, this approach does not all for the inclusion of new topics/guidelines. 2. Change a small selection of questions (3 to 5) each year (in September) – to allow fresh questions to be added and updated guidelines to be addressed in the test. The update would go live with the updated Guidelines in January each year. This refreshes the questions, makes them somewhat less predictable and is still relatively cost effective. 3. Change all the questions each year with the annual update of the Code – a complete rewrite would be by far the most expensive option and it would become difficult to maintain after a few years however it would provide a more demanding and unpredictable test. Option 1 was considered an easy, least cost but ineffective approach, option 3 impractical and it was concluded that option 2 was the most practical and the preferred option. It was suggested that • Every few years an 'audit' of all the questions be conducted to check they are all still relevant and appropriately worded. • Deleted questions should be stored and after a while reinserted - after a few years members will not remember them anymore, this helps to make sure the resource required for maintenance of the questions is efficient. An examination of the ratio/number of correct to incorrect answers by question was assessed to see if this indicated whether some questions were too easy or too hard. The feasibility of this would have to be checked with the programmers Nelson Croom.
2	**Joint Competency Test Update** • BR provided an updated for the EC letting members know that the pilot phase is complete and that there are discussions ongoing with the BHBIA as to next steps. • The pilot phase ended in February and at this point it was decided to take a look at how the system had been working, how many people had actually done the joint test, what sort of companies were doing it and what our thoughts were going forward. • Some of the discussions have focussed upon the fact that the two systems work on two different technical platforms which don't always work in parallel. So we're discussing some of the differences and whether they are important differences or impactful, what's the overall global picture and then possible ways forwards. • There is a general commitment to offer the joint competency test maybe like the adverse events one, there doesn't seem to be any will to go back to two separate tests which would be more workload for members. It is hopeful that there will be a positive outcome to the discussions and moving forward we can probably still have a joint competency test, although it may not be in the same shape as it has been. • At present members applying for the joint test are told that it is not available at present. • The next discussion is scheduled for 3pm 28 April, so more will be known soon. It was requested that the EC be updated as soon as there is any further news. At present we are waiting to hear back from the BHBIA after their meetings on 11 and 12 May before being able to

3	confirm anything.
3	**Training before Testing Requirement**
	The EC were asked to consider whether members should be required to complete the training before being able to take the Competency Tests – both Code and AER. At present this is not a requirement but it is under review, the EC are asked to consider:
	– How necessary is this?
	– Would it improve standards?
	– Would it put members off doing the test?
	Three options were discussed:
	1. The tests remain separate from the training and there is no requirement for members to do the training or access the tests via the training before taking the tests.
	2. The tests are accessed via the training but it is not necessary to complete the training before taking the test. This approach reminds members that the training is available to them. The BHBIA requires its members to access their Guidelines Competency Test via their training although it is possible to very quickly skip through or by-pass altogether the training slides to get to the Competency Test.
	3. Training must be completed before access to the test is possible, this would require re-programming to ensure that the training has been visited/used before the test can be taken or insertion of the test within the training so that the two are integrated.
	It was decided that whilst it was preferable – a happy medium - for the training to be carried out before the test it is not essential to force members to do this. Option 1 was considered too simple and option 3 too draconian. There are other ways to become competent enough to take and pass the test e.g. reading the Code. So forcing members to take the training to complete the test may not be necessary. Although it was pointed out that the training because of the emphasis upon interpretation was an additional important step to understanding how to put the Code into practice. It was however pointed out that the technical feasibility and cost implications of option would have to be assessed with Nelson Croom and the EphMRA treasurer respectively.
4	**Public Affairs – Future Plans**
	The EC began to consider how we should take public affairs forward.
	The EC has previously nominated a series of priority organisations (decided by the EC) with whom we liaise on an ad hoc basis when the need arises:
	International
	EFPIA – were invited to join the Disclosure webinar and attend the New Year Forum, they declined both, currently no open communications
	EMA – no current contact, previously some support given on AER
	It was acknowledged that MR is not a high profile or high priority issue for these organisations.
	ESOMAR – there if we need them
	National
	France = ASOCS & SYNTEC - no current contact
	Germany = ADM & FSA – trying to set up a meeting to discuss employer's permission for MR
	USA = CASRO & PMRG – no PMRG contact but have had very positive contact with CASRO in the past, RDG offered to facilitate contact as a PMRG Committee member
	There is no plan to change the priority organisations and this was not discussed.
	• The opinion was voiced that the international organisations are the priority although the national ones are important too.
	• It was stressed that communication is key and that to this end building up relationships and a database of contacts (built up by FMs largely) who might be well placed to facilitate discussion would be helpful.

	• Organising face to face meetings to help them better understand who EphMRA is, who it represents, what is does and the implications of their policies for MR and what we can do for them, could be considered but would have budget implications that would have to be considered for next year's budget. • Following an initial discussion it was suggested that more time should be devoted to this issue and a fuller discussion be held at the next EC meeting which is an extended face to face meeting, this item will be carried forward. There was no public affairs news from EC members.
5	**June EC Meeting – Key Issues for Discussion** Possible issues suggested: • Public Affairs – Future Plans • Balance between International and National Issues • PR & Communications – Progress & Plans, such as Reaction to the Key Point Guides • Training – Future Plans • Changes to the Ethics Environment A list of potential items for the agenda will be circulated by CA, all EC members will add to this list to help develop the agenda for the extended (2.5 hours) face to face meeting.

6	**EC Committee – Optimal Size and Structure**
	In the light of Peter Eichhorn's recent retirement from GfK and consequent stepping down from the EC and Solvea Lamarina's long-term absence from work, it is timely to discuss:
	• Whether the EC needs new members, and if so, how many?
	• What type of new members would be preferred – FMs, AMs, size and type of organization, country knowledge, and geographies represented?
	BR has emailed an invite for applications and had a few responses from AMs but no follow up has been initiated yet. The discussion will help shape the preferred profile of new members.
	The EC has grown organically, there hasn't been a planned size however there has recognised need to have:
	  – a balance between FMs and AMs
	  – major organisations represented
	  – key geographies represented e.g. Germany, USA
	It was concluded that the optimal size of the EC should ideally be 8 to 10 members. In terms of structure the following priorities should influence the make-up of the EC, in order of priority:
	  – a 50:50 balance between FMs and AMs
	  – key geographies represented, currently under-represented for Germany and the USA, Germany is considered to higher priority of the two at present (as RDG provides US expertise) and not too UK-centric
	  – major organisations represented
	This information will be used to shape recruitment to the EC.
	It was suggested that an 'ad' for new EC members be placed within the Ethics Update at the Annual Conference this year, however it wasn't clear if an Ethics Update had been scheduled. BR has confirmed that this is planned but it was not made clear in the programme.