



24 May 2023
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European Medicines Agency

Minutes – Eighth DARWIN EU® Advisory Board meeting

Monday 6 February 2023 – 10:00 – 12:00 CET, virtual meeting

Co-chairs: Emer Cooke (EMA) and Karl Broich (HMA)

Item	Agenda	Name	Action	Mins
1.	Adoption of draft agenda and minutes from the last meeting (8 September 2022)	All	For adoption	10'
2.	Review of the mandate	Andrej Segec (EMA)	For consultation	10'
3.	Update on DARWIN EU® - Completion of Phase I - Future data partners - Communications	Andrej Segec (EMA)	For information	20'
4.	Outlook to studies 2023 - HTA/Payers use case - ECDC use case - Shortlist of studies	Niklas Hedberg (TLV) & Juan Jose Abellan (EMA)	For consultation	20'
5.	Process of consulting/information industry on DARWIN EU® studies	Andrej Segec (EMA)	For adoption	10'
6.	Tour de Table	All		
7.	AOB • Information items	All		5'

Topics for future meetings: Benefit analysis, repurposing, role of DARWIN EU® in the international RWE landscape



Role	Attendance
Present	Sara Rafael Almeida (EC), Aurora Di Filippo (AIFA), Claudia Furtado (INFARMED), Hugues Malonne (AFMPS), Jesper Kjaer (DKMA), Niklas Hedberg (TLV), Mario Jendrossek (HDH), Julien Beaute (ECDC), Elizabeth Vroom (UPPMD), Aldo Maggioni (ESC), Almath Spooner (EFPIA, EuropaBio, EUCOPE), Peter Arlett (EMA), Andrej Segec (EMA), Juan Jose Abellan (EMA).
Apologies	Magali Boers (LHD), Mahmoud Zureik (ANSM), Wim Goettsch (ZINL), Johanna Seppanen (THL), Katharina Schneider (BfArM), Markus Kalliola (SITRA), Sari Palojoki (ECDC).
Minutes and admin support	Sophie Groeneveld (EMA).

Karl Broich (HMA) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the eighth DARWIN EU® Advisory Board meeting.

1. Adoption of draft agenda and minutes from the last meeting (8 September 2022)

The draft agenda was adopted without amendments. An additional amendment to the minutes from the last meeting was requested during their adoption. **Post meeting note:** This has now been reflected and the minutes have been published on the [EMA website](#).

The co-chairs informed the board members that Malek Bentayeb, from HDH, has stepped down and will be replaced by Mario Jendrossek from HDH. The board was also informed that the European Commission representative replacement is pending.

2. Review mandate

Andrej Segec (EMA) presented the revision of the DARWIN EU® Advisory Board mandate, which was initially adopted in June 2021 with a view to be reviewed annually. Minor edits are proposed to the mandate; removing project governance throughout, revisions for longevity of the mandate, and the addition of a possible face to face meeting when necessary. **Action:** EMA will circulate the revised mandate (clean and tracked changes version) for review and comments from the Board, with the aim to adopt the mandate at the next Advisory Board meeting.

3. Update on DARWIN EU®

Andrej Segec (EMA) began the DARWIN EU® update by announcing the completion of year one of establishment. This signifies the completion of the onboarding of the first 10 data partners, the initiation and finalisation of the first studies, and the review and acceptance of a number of notable deliverables including study templates and the catalogue of standard data analyses. Following the onboarding of data partners, a [press release](#) was published by EMA, gaining significant media coverage. The update continued with the progress of the four initiated studies. Three studies are nearing completion, of which the protocols and reports will be published in the EU PAS Register¹. The fourth study will be reporting results later in 2023. A short update was provided on the prioritisation and selection of data partners for

¹ <https://www.encepp.eu/encepp/viewResource.htm?id=50801>
<https://www.encepp.eu/encepp/viewResource.htm?id=84554>
<https://www.encepp.eu/encepp/viewResource.htm?id=103382>

phase II. DARWIN EU® intends to onboard a selection of 10 new data partners, who will be selected based on the criteria previously agreed by the Advisory Board. An open call for expression of interest in becoming a data partner in DARWIN EU® is expected to be launched in Q1-Q2 2023.

A Real-World Evidence (RWE) experience report is currently being drafted, which aims to evaluate the opportunities and challenges of RWE provided by EMA to support committee decision making. The report is to be prepared by Q2 2023, with a presentation of the final report to the Advisory Board.

In terms of next steps, EMA is planning a press release on the completion of first DARWIN EU® studies, and include information on the open call for data sources' expression of interest. The publication of the RWE report is planned for Q2 2023. EMA is currently planning and prioritising the studies to be conducted in Phase II, as well as prioritising and selecting the next 10 data partner for onboarding. An update to the Data Protection Impact Assessment is also in the planning for Q1-Q2 2023.

In discussion, proposals were made to share the study results beyond the EU regulatory network, such as the WHO and patient associations. Additionally, patients whose data are used in these studies (based on consent practices in place at local levels with the relevant data sources) will also be interested in the study results and planned communication should include patient groups. EMA also clarified that within the context of complex studies, where products of Marketing Authorisation Holders (MAHs) are involved, the MAH will be consulted at various stages of the study conduct.

4. Outlook to studies 2023

4.1. HTA/Payers use case

Niklas Hedberg (TLV) presented the feedback from the HTA/Payers workshop which took place on 6 October 2022. Over 20 participants representing HTA and Payers organisation across Europe joined the workshop. The objective was to raise awareness of the possibilities of RWE generation via DARWIN EU®; better understand the HTA/Payers research questions of interest suitable for RWE analyses; and to identify simple and complex use cases from HTA/Payers perspective that could lead to studies conducted by DARWIN EU®. As part of the workshop's outcome, several topics were put forward to be addressed by RWE studies, including studies assessing effectiveness of medicines in the real world, studies investigating natural history of disease, and methodological studies. Two studies have now been agreed to progress, subject to their feasibility assessment: 1. Natural history of multiple myeloma which will be an off the shelf study to characterise multiple myeloma patients, including treatments/treatment sequence received and survival, 2. characterisation of non-small cell lung cancer patients treated with immunotherapy (pembrolizumab, nivolumab and atezolizumab) as first line.

A comment was raised by Elizabeth Vroom (UPPMD), the patient associations' representative, on the relevance of Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) for HTA/Payers' assessment and decision-making, as she indicated that PROs are currently not supported within the OMOP Common Data Model (CDM). Niklas Hedberg informed the board that EUnetHTA is currently collaborating with EMA on PROs with a number of discussions and workshops in the planning. Additionally, Peter Arlett (EMA) assured the board that PROs are also included and will be addressed through the BDSG workplan 2022-2025.

For transparency purposes, it is the intention to publish details of the Data Use Agreement and the processes with data partners on the DARWIN EU® website. This will also serve as a reference for HTA/Payers and other stakeholders who wish to get involved.

4.2. Shortlist of studies

Andrej Segec (EMA) presented the outlook of studies to be performed in 2023 with a list of shortlisted studies, pending their feasibility. In phase II of DARWIN EU®, EMA foresees to be conducting 16 studies in total, with flexibility in the number of routine repeated, off-the-shelf, and complex studies, in line with the actual research requested.

The shortlist of studies remains confidential due to the various stages in which these are progressing. Andrej clarified that the type of studies (off-the-self or complex) remains indicative at this stage, depending on the complexity of the proposed analyses. The ECDC representative, Julien Beaute, indicated interest in reviewing and providing input (where possible) on studies other than the already selected use case for ECDC (e.g. other vaccine or infectious diseases related studies). Many studies are indeed relevant for ECDC and will be performed in the context of the Vaccine Monitoring Platform collaboration.

5. Process of consulting / informing industry on DARWIN EU® studies

The board was reminded of the two-way approach which was presented at the 8 September 2022 meeting by EMA. Andrej Segec thanked the industry representatives for their input and feedback on the proposed approach for consulting and informing industry on DARWIN EU® studies. For the majority, EMA has agreed with the comments from industry associations, including using the complexity criterion as a mechanism for determining whether or not to consult. EMA acknowledges more clarity is needed on certain aspects of the study conduct and timelines for consultation, as well as the process for dealing with comments on the protocol and study report. Such clarities will be presented in a dedicated FAQ document.

Further proposals from industry, such as iterative interactions, sharing of feasibility assessment, early engagement at study concept, etc. cannot be implemented, due to lack of time and the corresponding workload. It is foreseen that comments on the study report are to be made on the assessment report of the procedure through which it arose.

The (complex) study on severe asthma has gone through industry consultation during the protocol stage, which has allowed EMA to test the consultation processes. The study is non product specific but is inspired and refers to definitions used in recent clinical trials for severe asthma. The process began with a teleconference with the relevant MAH to explain the objective of the consultation and comments from the MAH were received within the deadline, which was appreciated given the tight timelines. This was a good test of the first step of the process, and admittedly required substantial workload from both sides. As the next step, EMA intends to consult the MAH on the study report once available.

Industry also indicated interest in being consulted on non-complex studies such as Off-the-Shelf and Routine Repeated studies. As such types of studies use standard analytics, EMA intends to consult on the catalogue of standard data analytics, as a blueprint for such analyses. This will be achieved via a workshop for consultation due to take place in March/April 2023 (TBC).

Álmath Spooner, the industry representative to the Advisory Board, expressed thanks for working through industry comments and further proposals. Industry is committed to making these processes work.

The process will be revisited after Phase II experience is gained.

6. Tour de table

Niklas Hedberg (TLV) congratulated the DARWIN EU® team on the tremendous amount of work and progress that has been made with DARWIN EU®. With such progress, it will also be important to understand the processes in order to know when and how to get engaged.

Emer Cooke (EMA) expressed gratitude to the whole team who have enabled the progress on studies and onboarding of data partners.

7. AOB

While several proposed topics for future meetings were noted, the Co-Chairs asked for an update on the progress of phase II studies at the next Advisory Board meeting (date TBC). Emer Cooke (EMA) and Karl Broich (HMA) thanked the members for their participation and closed the meeting.

Next meeting: May 2023
