

# ASTRA

## International Advisory Board

### Terms of Reference

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#### 1. Overview

ASTRA is a 3-year programme (start date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018), funded by the UK's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Through research studies and capacity building, ASTRA aims to address the problems caused by Smokeless Tobacco in South Asia.

This document sets out the roles, responsibilities and structure of ASTRA's International Advisory Board (IAB). It also helps to explain to IAB members what might be expected of them.

#### 2. IAB Membership

The IAB will have an independent Chair and four other members. The Chair and Members are chosen such that the minimum requirement of 75% independence is met, as defined in the NIHR guidelines.

##### 2.1 Chair

The independent Chair is Dr. Mark Parascandola, who is a Program Director at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA.

##### 2.2. Other members

###### 2.2.1 Current members

- Dr. Dharendra Sinha, Chair of the School of Preventive Oncology, Patna and member of the WHO FCTC Global Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco, hosted by the National Institute for Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR).
- Professor Sohel Choudhury, Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Research at the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute, Bangladesh.
- Professor Jasjit Ahluwalia, Professor of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Professor of Medicine at Brown University, USA.
- Dr. Nigar Nargis, Scientific Director, Economic and Health Policy Research, American Cancer Society, USA. (Joined January 2019).

###### 2.2.2 Former members

- Professor Tim Doran, Professor of Health Policy at the Department of Health Sciences, University of York. (Stepped down in January 2019, following NIHR advice to increase gender diversity in the IAB, and consortium advice that all IAB members should be independent of University of York).

The above members are renowned experts in fields relevant to the ASTRA programme. They have been selected to join the IAB because they have the appropriate skills, expertise and enthusiasm to support ASTRA.

A member of NIHR will be invited to all IAB meetings as an observer and to offer advice where needed. The NIHR representative will not be a member of the IAB.

### **2.3 Other participants**

ASTRA's Director/ Chief Investigator, (Professor Kamran Siddiqi), Co-Director, (Professor Ravi Mehrotra) and Project Manager (Dr Anne Readshaw) will attend each IAB meeting.

Other ASTRA team members will also be invited to attend as appropriate to the agenda. All participants' attendance will be noted in the minutes.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 ASTRA Governance**

The overall management structure of ASTRA is displayed in Figure 1.

Study Management Teams (SMT) or Work Groups are responsible for the day-to-day running and organisation of each study or work area and completion of the relevant deliverables and milestones.

The Management Team (MT) is made up of all ASTRA collaborators and is the executive decision making body, responsible for delivery of ASTRA's overall objectives and for dissemination, risk management and Intellectual Property management.

Stakeholder and Community Advisory Panels inform the research and are involved with dissemination of the programme's results, and sustainability.

The Co-ordination and Finance Oversight Committee (CFOC) monitors aspects of finance and performance and helps to resolve any disputes.

Affiliate Members may be individuals or organisations, whose aims and objectives are aligned with those of ASTRA. They are invited to MT meetings and their input is welcomed. However, they do not receive any funding from ASTRA. It is hoped that they will become future collaborators with ASTRA, when funding is applied for to transition from an NIHR-Group to a Unit.

### **3.2 Roles of the IAB**

The IAB is independent and external to the management of ASTRA. It will act as an advisory body to the Management Team (and CFOC), to support and where possible strengthen the work of the programme.

The roles of the International Advisory Board (IAB) are to provide independent strategic oversight of the ASTRA programme, to help with risk management, to monitor governance and to provide accountability for the ASTRA Group.

### **3.3 Responsibilities of the IAB**

At each meeting, the IAB will:

- Receive, review and comment on a progress update from the Chief Investigator (and/or others).
- Monitor and advise on the strategy being undertaken in the programme.
- Monitor and advise on governance.
- Ensure views from key stakeholders are considered in the programme's design and on-going implementation.
- Provide independent oversight of the risk management plan.
- Provide advice on publications and other outputs.
- Support the programme in its activities aimed at generating impact.
- Advise on current and future policy developments relating to the work of ASTRA.
- Advise on future research priorities and identify opportunities for new areas of research or funding that might support the aims of the programme.

#### **4. Meeting Frequency and Structure**

- The IAB will meet twice during the first year and annually thereafter (or as needed). Meetings will be conducted by VoIP or teleconference, where necessary.
- Meetings will not be open to the public.
- A provisional agenda will be drawn up by the Chair, in consultation with the Chief Investigator and Project Manager and circulated three weeks in advance of the meeting.
- The final agenda and any papers will be circulated at least one week in advance of each meeting.
- Where possible, decisions will be taken collectively, taking full account of the views of all members.
- The IAB is quorate when at least 3 of the 5 members (including the Chair) are present.
- Should voting be necessary, each IAB member has one vote; the Chair has the casting vote (if required by the situation).

#### **5. Documentation**

- The Project Manager will provide administrative support for the IAB meetings, including taking the minutes.
- The minutes of each meeting will be signed off by the Chair, then circulated to IAB members and other participants within four weeks of each meeting.
- The Terms of Reference for the IAB will be made publicly available, on the ASTRA website.
- The agenda and minutes of each IAB meeting (excluding any confidential content) will be made publicly available on the ASTRA website.

#### **6. Expenses**

The role of an IAB member is unpaid, but ASTRA will reimburse IAB members for all reasonable costs that they incur in fulfilling their roles on the board (such as travel and subsistence costs), where these cannot be recovered from their own organisation.

Figure 1

Overview of ASTRA Governance

