

Summary of DRIVE-AB Conference, 2-3 June 2016

On Thursday 2 June, 2016, the IMI DRIVE-AB, a public-private consortium (www.drive-ab.eu) developing new economic models to stimulate antibiotic innovation and ensure global access to and sustainable use of antibiotics, held the “Stimulating innovation, sustainable use and global access to antibiotics” conference in Amsterdam.

Global leaders agree on the need to maintain a steady supply of new antibiotics for all as a critical part of the strategy to address antibiotic resistance and that new reward models are necessary to achieve this goal. While basic frameworks have been proposed, the DRIVE-AB consortium seeks a level of granularity that other initiatives have not, moving beyond discussions to concrete plans for policy implementation.

DRIVE-AB shared its preliminary proposals at the event, which attracted more than 180 high-level decision-makers and policy experts, economists, regulatory and public health experts and representatives of pharmaceutical companies and research institutions from around the world. The conference featured keynote speakers and panellists from the World Health Organization, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to name a few. The participation of a diverse group of stakeholders at the conference illustrates the level of global interest in the outcomes of DRIVE-AB, and will help the consortium secure the buy-in of stakeholders who can help to implement new incentive policies.

Discussions identified: key gaps in global action and policy, mechanisms for ensuring sustainable use, and new economic models to stimulate antibiotic innovation while ensuring access and sustainable use. Some key points arising from these discussions include:

- Hospital stewardship programmes and antibiotic regulation are either lacking or insufficient in many parts of the world.
- Efforts to address antibiotic resistance should be coordinated globally.
- Reward models for antibiotics should align with sustainable use policies and delink the volume of sales from return on investment.
- New reward models should be piloted in appropriate settings as soon as possible, with support from pharmaceutical companies.
- Innovation and sustainable use are only part of the equation for addressing antibiotic resistance. Infection prevention and control, vaccine use and a One Health approach are necessary as well.
- There is a need for coordinated global public investment, which should direct antibiotic research and development to meet public health needs that are defined by a global body.

The conference was followed on 3 June by an invitation-only workshop designed to explore the feasibility of DRIVE-AB’s five preliminary reward models. The consortium is now re-evaluating these models in the context of the feedback received.

The consortium is pleased to have brought important stakeholders together to explore solutions to antibiotic innovation, and the robust discussions will help DRIVE-AB to deliver recommendations in 2017 that have a high probability of success. A full conference summary outlining the key messages and outcomes of the meeting in more detail will be published in the coming months.

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