



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

HSE Health Protection Conference, Oct '23

Prof. Breda Smyth

Chief Medical Officer

Health Protection Policy measures

CONTEXT: Range of threats to Public Health warrant a multi-faceted policy response



POLICY RESPONSE

1. **Future Public Health reform agenda,** *incl. support for the ongoing HSE P.H. reform programme & post-Brady/WHO review reform agenda*
2. Leveraging significant past & ongoing investment in **Ireland's Public Health system capabilities & capacity**
3. **International Public Health policy cooperation**



Future Public Health Reform

PHREAG

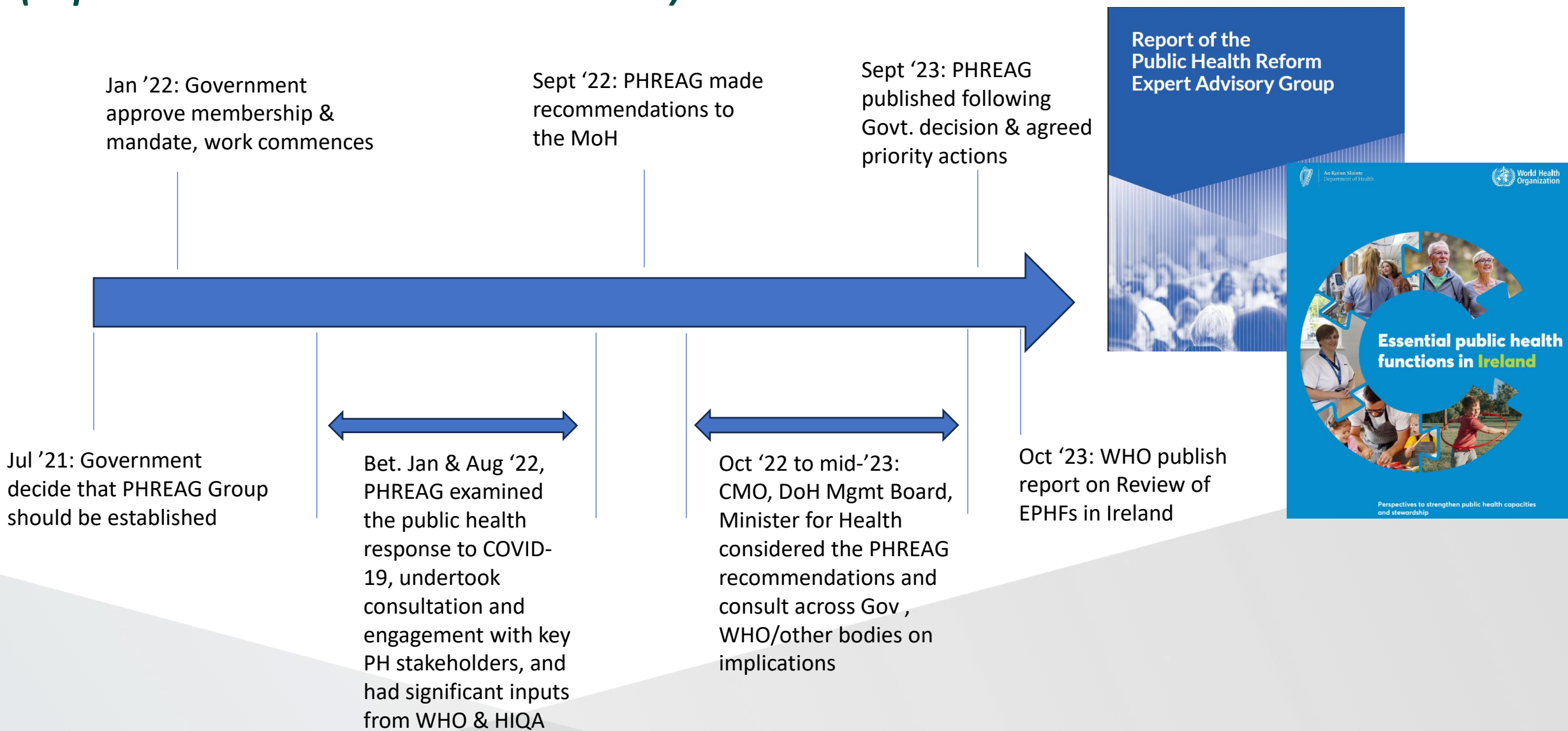
‘Brady Report’

Expert Advisory Group Members

Name	Title/Role
Chair: Prof Hugh Brady	President, Imperial College London
Dr Helen Bevan	Chief Transformation Officer, NHS Horizons
Prof Hannah McGee	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences
Prof Jaap T. Van Dissel	Director of the RIVM Centre for Infectious Disease Control, Netherlands
Prof Johan Giesecke	Professor Emeritus at the Karolinska Institute Medical University in Stockholm. Vice Chair of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Infectious Hazards (WHO)
Prof Peter Piot	Handa Professor of Global Health, former Director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine & EU Chief Scientific Advisor on Epidemics
Prof Yvonne Doyle	Medical Director for Public Health (NHS), NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I)
Dr Tracey Cooper	Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Wales and former head of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)
Dr Alexandra Freeman	Executive Director, Winton Centre for Risk & Evidence Communication, University of Cambridge
Prof Cecily Kelleher	College Principal, UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick	Full Professor of Epidemiology & Biomedical Statistics, and Head of Subject for Public Health at University College Dublin
Dr Sinéad Hanafin	Visiting Research Fellow, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin
Dr Tadhg Crowley	General Practitioner and Associate Clinical Professor, University College Dublin

Work of the Public Health Reform Expert Advisory Group

(in parallel with the WHO EPHF review)



Specific PHREAG Report Recommendations & subsequent Government decision/actions



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strengthen public health within the HSE,** including through the continued implementation of agreed reforms of public health.
- **New body, with a focus on preparedness for future pandemics and other health threats.**
- **A new public health strategy**
- **Updated and strengthened public health legislation.**
- **Collective approach across Government** to improving public health outcomes and preparing for future public health emergencies.
- **Enhanced, applied and responsive public health research** to inform preparedness

CURRENT ACTIONS

Ongoing support & funding for the Public Health domain and reform programme in the HSE

Minister appointing Expert & team to undertake options appraisal and recommend optimal institutional arrangements (report back in '24).

Public Health Strategy, phase 1: Consultative workshop bet. DoH, HSE and WHO on 13th Nov to define the envisaged outcomes, scope and approach to developing a PH Strategy for Ireland





Leveraging significant past & ongoing investment in Ireland's Public Health system capabilities & capacity

Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic



2020

“Pandemic Workforce”

(now P.H. MDTs)

- ~doubled the PH workforce



P.H. Consultants & Structures

- PH expertise across all 4 x domains as we move to Phase 3



HPSC & Enhanced Surveillance

- Investment in roles that underpin mosaic of surveillance capabilities



Core vaccination, T&T/CMP teams

- Retention of core capability / teams to enable responsive model for future threats



2023

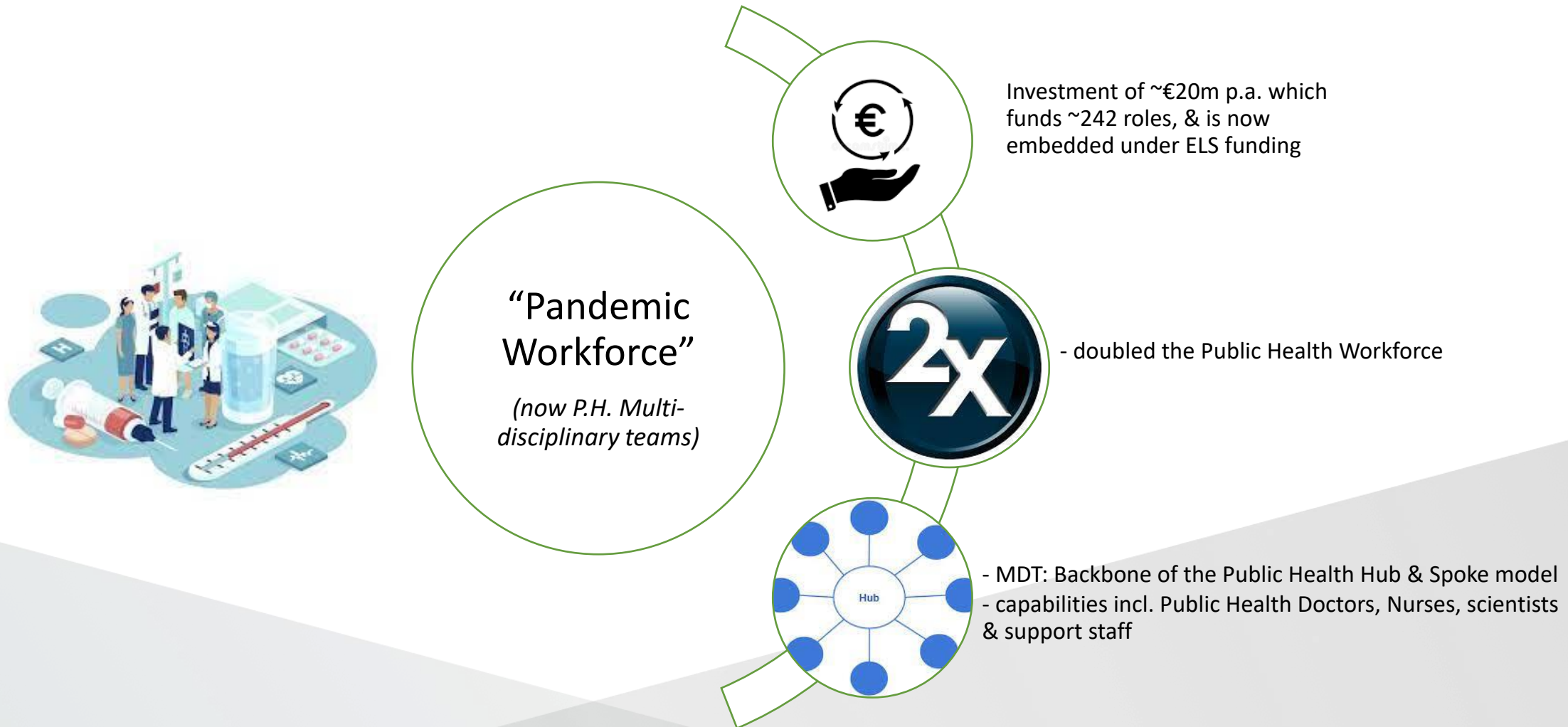
Other P.H. change capacity

- Support structures to underpin reform projects (e.g. OCIMS project)





Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic



Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic



“Public Health Consultants”



- DoH/HSE/IMO Apr' 21 agreement on multi-annual investment (~€10m p.a. net) to implement reformed & strengthened model for PH Service Delivery

Progress

- >50% roles filled
- Phase 2 & 3 approved by DoH/DPER for recruitment
- HSE NDPH confident that all remaining positions being appointed by YE & all 'in role' by Q1 '24



- investment in expertise, leadership & structures
- **4 domains of Public Health**
- **transformational value**



Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic



“HPSC &
Enhanced
Surveillance”



~€10m annual funding of new HPSC roles, to deliver critical expertise/capabilities
- Additional non-pay funding (>€6m in '23) for key HPSC infrastructure and projects

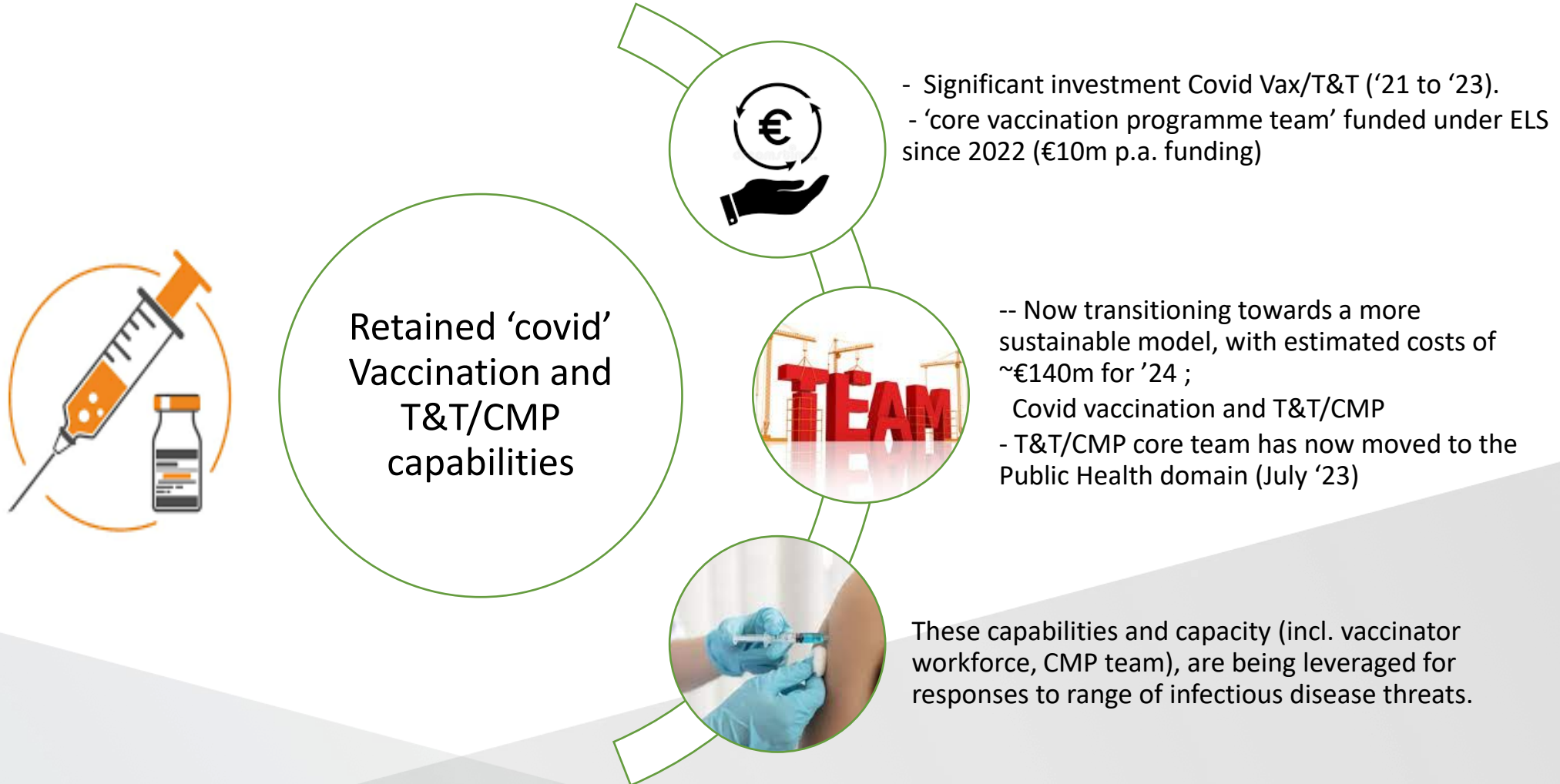


This enables a substantial investment in a mosaic of integrated, sustainable surveillance systems and modelling capabilities



Delivery of these capabilities is critical, so we get the insights required to support planning, evaluation and response to threats to Public Health

Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic





Leveraging investment in capability & capacity during the pandemic





International Public Health policy cooperation

(a) Europe

(b) International

(c) Bilateral



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International Public Health policy cooperation

Europe



Strengthening European Public Health cooperation

5 x key components of the European Health Union

Public Health preparedness stream:

- **“Serious Cross Border Threat Regulations”**
 - *overarching framework for EU coordination of response*
- **Strengthening the mandate of the ECDC**
 - *new legal powers & resources to improve surveillance*
- **Strengthening the mandate of the EMA**
 - *new legal powers & resources to address Medicines availability & shortages*
- **EU Pharma Strategy**
 - *suite of legal measures on licensing & distribution of Meds in EU*
- **Development of HERA (See the next few slides →)**





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HERA Aim:

“ready to act in the face
of a cross-border crisis”



HERA's 3 x priority threats

- Pathogens with pandemic potential
- Anti-microbial resistance
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats



Current Flagship Activities, incl IE participation:

- Joint Procurement (Mpox/Pandemic flu vaccines).
- EU FAB network Reserved production capacity (incl. Pfizer IE)
- Investment in R&D + capabilities (incl. clinical trials/Horizon Europe/EU4 Health HPSC etc..)
- EU VSB developing next Gen. Covid Vaccine Strategy
- €1.2bn expenditure on Stockpiling in last 2yrs (more ahead)



HERA's measures to counter these threats:

- Identification of critical medical countermeasures
- Monitoring supply chain & availability of MCMs
- Research and development activities
- Stockpiling
- Production facilities which can be mobilised in a crisis.



Ireland supportive of the WHO Health Protection priorities

•International Health Regulations

- *Aim: strengthening the existing global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience*
- *Status: Over 300 amendments from WHO state parties, & being revised based on lessons learned from Covid,*

•Development of a new Pandemics Agreement

- *Purpose: negotiate a convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response,*
- *Core aim: protecting public health and to helping to save lives in the event of future pandemics*

Negotiation processes set to continue until at least the World Health Assembly in May 2024.





Bilateral cooperation

Ireland continues to actively engage with several international partners on a bilateral basis incl.:

- Northern Ireland / UK

- *Regular meetings with **all 4 x CMOs in the UK**, incl. discussions on current topics (incl emerging variants and related PH measures & also joint-planning – such as Avian Influenza exercise etc..)*
- *Reconvening of **North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC)** would facilitate further cross-border cooperation in relation to the strengthening of public health. Significant strides have been made by the Council in recent years to address issues such as alcohol, tobacco, cancer services, research, suicide prevention, and food safety etc.*

- Other recent bilateral engagements incl.

- ***Canadian CMO & Public Health agency, Australian CMO counterparts***



Future 'Together we stand'

