

Dóchas

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 87 (1-22)
27/01/22

Dóchas Board

held via Zoom on
Thursday, 27 January 2022 at 10.00am

M i n u t e s

Present: Finola Finnan (Trócaire) Chairperson
Sarah O'Toole (CBM Ireland) Vice Chairperson
Paul O'Brien (Plan International Ireland) Treasurer
Peter McDevitt (Self Help Africa) Company Secretary
John Moffett (Misean Cara)
Bobby McCormack (Development Perspectives)
Lucia Ennis (Concern Worldwide)
Una Murray (Sightsavers)
Eamon Sharkey (GOAL)
Senan Turnbull (External Board Member)
Martina Fitzgerald (External Board Member)

In attendance: Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)
Anna Farrell (Dóchas Finance & Operations Manager)

Apologies: Grace Milton (External Board Member)

1. Apologies and Agenda

There was one apology, noted above. Three members (Peter, Bobby and Martina) had to leave around 12 noon and one member (Lucia) joined at 12noon.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

All members present confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

3. Minutes of Board Meeting

The Board approved the Minutes of the 86th Board meeting (25/11/21): Sarah O'Toole (Proposed), Una Murray (Seconded).

4. Matters Arising and To-do List

Most of the items on the to-do list, with the exception of the following, have either been completed or will be addressed during this meeting:

- The CEO engaged with the FARC and with Anna on the analysis of structural costs and on what we want in terms of financial reports going forward. The aim is to combine this with the reforecasting process, which ideally will take place after 6 months.
- Most of the items on our CRA Compliance Record Form workplan have been completed but there are a few outstanding items that need to be addressed over the coming months.

- We will look at channels for communicating with members as part of the new strategy but there are no immediate plans to implement new communication tools (e.g. 'Slack').

Decisions:

- The action around progress in relation to the use of 'Slack' as a communication tool will be removed from the to-do list.

5. CEO Report

- The **CEO Report** was circulated in advance, and Jane-Ann outlined the main highlights. It was noted that following conversations with the Chairperson and team, the report has been condensed to cover highlights from the period.

We have not yet received confirmation of our Irish Aid funding for 2022. It was agreed that due to the changeover in CEO and finalisation of the strategic plan, a one-year proposal would be submitted to Irish Aid in December 2021, and this would be followed by two two-year proposals to cover the rest of the strategic plan period. We will work on developing the 2023-2024 proposal later this year, which give us a greater level of security going into 2023.

Jane-Ann raised the issue of the lack of clarity on the budget allocation for ODA expenditure in other government departments with Irish Aid. She will continue to engage with the Director General on this. We will conduct research in the coming months, to identify where the money is spent, and at how much of the spend falls outside DFA. This will inform future policy and advocacy positions.

- A **draft Board calendar for 2022** was circulated in advance. The calendar includes time for us to focus on some key pieces of work that need to be progressed this year (e.g. Risk Register, Constitution, HR & Remuneration) as well as for discussion on a strategy related topic at each Board meeting. Midway through the year we will focus on the annual plan and budget and on progress against our core ambitions. There are a number of policies due for review in 2022, which will need to come before the Board later in the year.
- Jane Ann said that given that we have a small budget (€6k) for the **AGM and Conference** (12 May) it is likely to be a virtual event. We want to bring it on from a Zoom platform, possibly having the speakers in one place, with participants joining virtually. Locally led development will be a key topic for the conference. It would be helpful to have an exploratory discussion on the conference and on possible speakers we can approach. We are conscious that people will want to come together and so we are looking into the possibility of having a social event for members in the Summer.

Action:

- Jane-Ann to populate calendar with details of policies to be reviewed by the Board in 2022.
- Jane-Ann to send a note to the Board on the Conference and link with a few Board members to take this piece forward.

6. Emerging Issues

Report on Ethical Communications and the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages: Dr Eilis Dillon's report was shared with members in December, and includes a number of recommendations on how Dóchas can evolve and update the Code. It was agreed that the report is an opportunity to revive the conversation around best practice and how we can use the Code to enable change. We will discuss the recommendations and next steps at our next board meeting.

People's Vaccine Alliance Ireland: Jane-Ann said that Dóchas is not a member of the alliance but a number of our members are very engaged with the campaign. We will host a virtual briefing with representatives from the Alliance (2 Feb, 2-3pm) which will look at vaccine equity globally and calls to action of the EU and Ireland and will include a Q&A session at the end. At our March

meeting we will discuss whether as Dóchas, we want to act and advocate on this issue at a political level.

Actions:

- Jane-Ann to prepare a short paper outlining next steps in relation to the Code for discussion at March meeting.

7. Presentation of Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026

The Strategy, which has been a key focus for the team over the last number of months, was circulated in advance. Jane-Ann presented the document, focusing on the process to date and on key highlights. We are seeking Board approval on the strategy today and now that this work has finished, the team has shifted its focus to the development of our annual workplan for 2022.

Members were generally pleased with the content of the strategy and congratulated Jane-Ann and the team on the clarity of the document. The process was very open and inclusive and the strategy is reflective of the conversations that took place with members.

During a general discussion comments were made regarding the inclusion of the SDGs; prioritisation of goals; accessibility of the document; opportunities to partner with relevant institutions and organisations; financial and non-financial support and the overarching 5-year framework that will support the strategy.

In terms of the process, Jane-Ann said that we should consider 2022 as a year of transition. The team is currently developing a results framework to support the strategy; however, some baseline data will be absent for the first year. A five-year financial budget may be difficult given the uncertainty surrounding other sources of funding available at present. However, Siobhan Cassidy (FARC) is supporting the team with the development of a multi-annual budget.

Decisions:

- The strategy was agreed.

Actions:

- All members to send additional comments to Jane-Ann.
- Jane-Ann to send strategy to editor.
- The strategy will be launched at the AGM (12 May).

8. Board Sub-Committee on Finance, Audit and Risk

The minutes of the last meeting (13/01/22) together with Risk Register and draft budget for 2022 were circulated to members in advance.

8.1. Report from Committee (including Risk Register)

- The draft budget for 2022 and preparations for our 2021 audit was the focus of the last meeting. The Auditor will begin the document review on 31 January.
- We tried unsuccessfully to identify an independent expert/broker to review our insurance products. The FARC is comfortable that our brokers are looking after our insurance needs appropriately.

8.2. Budget 2022

A narrative and budget for 2022 together with a calculation of expected reserves as at 31/12/22 was circulated in advance. Peter explained that our main sources of unrestricted income in 2022 are expected to be Irish Aid (€340k – awaiting confirmation) and membership fees (€185k), with the latter increasing by €29.5k as we restore the normal fee structure in 2022. Restricted income (€142k) relates to the Worldview project. The total grant is likely to be €151k, €142k of which is restricted and €9k unrestricted. Expenditure

is broken down into Staff Costs (€452k), Operational Costs (€97k) and Programme costs (€207k). The budget complies with our reserves policy which sets the target level of reserves at 6-months of budgeted, committed and recurring expenditure (€262k). Based on budget figures we will have unrestricted reserves of €262k at year end and no free reserves.

The 2022 budget process highlighted the need for Dóchas to find additional sources of income, to maintain our year on year spending and to reduce our dependency on Irish Aid. It was noted that we are in a very healthy position holding 6-months of budgeted, committed and recurring expenditure. It was suggested that we look at reducing our reserves requirement to 3 or 4 months.

It was suggested that a funding strategy which aligns with the period of the strategy would be welcome. This will form part of the multi-annual budget process.

Actions:

- Jane-Ann will engage with Board members with regards to diversified sources of funding.

8.3 Review of Risk Register

The Risk Register was taken as read and was accepted without change.

9. Board Nominee Process and Succession Planning

A note on the Board nomination process for 2022 was circulated in advance. Three-member Directors (Finola, Sarah and Paul) are due to step down at the AGM and two (Finola and Paul) are not eligible for re-election.

It was acknowledged that the loss of two, and possibly three, very active members will have an impact on the Board. It was noted that the role of Chairperson can be filled by any member of the Board.

Decision:

- We will conduct a skills survey to identify any gaps that might exist.

Actions:

- Jane-Ann to prepare message for all members re: the process, and share with Finola and Senan before circulating.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Board Dates for 2022

The **next Board meeting** will take place on Thursday, 24 March 2022 at 10am.

Subsequent meetings will take place on: 23 June, 22 September and 24 November. The AGM will take place on 12 May.

Chairperson:.....

Date:.....