

2nd Board meeting of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact – 21 March 2011

Attendees

Commissioners: Graham Ward (GW)
Mark Foster (MF)
John Githongo (JG)
Diana Good (DG)
Secretariat: Tom McDonald (TM)
Clare Robathan (CR)
Santosh Chana (SC)
For item 10: Ruth Andreyeva (RA)

Details of the meeting - Monday 21 March, 9.15 am – 3.15 pm

Welcome and Introductions

The Chief Commissioner welcomed everyone to the 2nd Board Meeting of ICAI and introduced SC, newest member of the Secretariat. SC gave a brief overview of her background and her interest in taking this job.

Action Secretariat: To circulate an updated telephone list to Commissioners.

Minutes of the 1st Board Meeting

The Commissioners were content with the minutes of the last Board meeting.

Action Log

There was a discussion of further updates since the last meeting.

Matters Arising

There was a discussion of the framework for selection of proposals for inclusion in the ICAI work plan, which the board agreed should emphasise recipients. The Board agreed that, to sharpen the work of the Commission, it would be useful to tap into the pools of knowledge of experts and partners.

The Board discussed official travel for the Commissioners, in particular the need to travel economically and to avoid personal benefit from air miles accrued whilst on official travel.

The Board was content with the revised Travel Claim Form.

Action Secretariat: To circulate an updated Action Log.

Action TM: To update the Work Plan Strategy and send to the Commissioners for agreement.

Action Secretariat: To ask DFID for their policy and/or guidelines on official travel.

Linklaters report

DG gave an overview of the Linklaters report “Accounting to the Girl: Working Towards a Standard for Governance in the International Aid Sector” and was interested to know the views of fellow Commissioners. There was discussion on the questions for Donors and NGOs used in the report.

The Commissioners agreed that it would be useful to tap into the evaluation processes of other donors including the United States (USAid).

Action Secretariat: To arrange a session on the Linklater questions between DG and the contractor.

Action TM: To source and circulate a copy of the executive summary of the critique of USAid

Action Secretariat: To arrange for Richard Alderman, Serious Fraud Office to meet with the Commissioners.

Work Plan

It was confirmed that the work plan would be published in May. The Commissioners agreed that the core component of the work plan should be kept under review.

There was discussion on the flexibility of the work plan. It was agreed that the annual report will look backwards as well as forwards and consider how both core and flex elements of the work plan should change in the light of external events or Departmental actions.

Action Secretariat: To have an item on the agenda at the next meeting on the consultation responses.

Action TM: To add to the work plan paper confirmation that there will be a review of the plan at the time of the ICAI annual report.

Action TM: To produce a paper on the possible options and process if the preferred bidder has a conflict of interest in the work plan.

Action TM: To explain the definition of ‘evaluation’, ‘investigation’ and ‘review’ in the paper.

Annex A

The board discussed some proposed candidate subjects and agreed that topics need to be appropriate, substantive and wide ranging.

ICAI and VFM

The Commissioners discussed the challenge of defining value for money, what was meant by 'impact' and how both could be measured.

Action Secretariat: To carry out desk research into the development sector's views/definitions of value for money. Commissioners will then take a view as to whether further research is needed.

Action Commissioners and Secretariat: To read the reviews by Michael Porter and Pascal Daloz as suggested by JG.

Agenda Item 7: Future ICAI Business

Options for Overseas Visit

The Board discussed options for an overseas visit. The Board agreed that countries such as Sierra Leone or Nigeria should be considered, since they cover a wide range of DFID programmes and are challenging environments in which to operate.

Forthcoming activities

CR went through the forthcoming dates for ICAI activities.

Action CR: To send round the plan of forthcoming dates.

Number of Commissioner days in permanent phase

The Board discussed how many days Commissioners would need to work, which took into account not only attendance at meetings but also reading reports and preparation time.

Action RA: To check with Cabinet Office around guidelines for establishing appropriate number of working days.

Framework Agreement and Protocols

RA took the Commissioners through the Framework Document and the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Memorandum of Understanding document omitted the identities of the two signatories and these will be added.

The Commissioners were content with the two documents, subject to minor amendments.

Action RA: To make amendments and add signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding.

Synthesis Study

It was agreed that, due to lack of time, the item on the synthesis study would be rolled forward to the next board meeting. In the meantime any issues/comments should be emailed to TM.

Action Commissioners: To email TM with comments on synthesis report.

Action Secretariat: To add synthesis report to the agenda for the next board meeting.