

# Accountable Now

## Board of Trustees Meeting

24 October 2018

### Minutes

#### Present

Elie Gasagara, World Vision International (*Member*)  
Brendan Gormley, (Chair) (*Non-Member*)  
Caroline Harper, Sightsavers (Vice-Chair) (*Member*)  
Perry Maddox, Restless Development (*Member*)  
Rosa Inés Ospina, Rendir Cuentas (*Non-Member*)  
Bettie van Straaten, (Treasurer) (*Non-Member*)  
Jose Maria Faura, Educo (*Member*)  
Alex Sardar, CIVICUS (*Member*)  
Colm O’Cuanachain, Amnesty International (*Member*)

#### In attendance from the Secretariat

Rocío Moreno, Executive Director  
Ezgi Akarsu, Programme Manager (*Minute taker*)

#### Apologies

Betty Ho (spoke to Rocio in advance on the phone)  
Janet Mawiyoo (personal reasons)

#### Welcome and agree on agenda (ACC 18/18)

- Most action points from the last Board meeting have either been completed or are currently being processed.
- Finding a new Company Secretary has not been resolved but the Secretariat is taking care of complying with Companies House and Charity Commission requirements.
- The last [meeting minutes](#) were approved.
- Trustees reported on current issues in their various contexts. The continued discussions around safeguarding in the sector, the recent safeguarding summit organised by DFID, as well as ongoing issues of shrinking civic space were key points of commonality.



### Executive Director's Report (ACC 18/19/1 & 18/19/2)

The Executive Director provided an update on developments since the last Board meeting in May.

- Accountable Now's [Annual Workshop](#) was held in Berlin on 10-12 October. This year's workshop focused on Dynamic Accountability to advance the SDGs. We had 20 participants, 17 of these were from member organisations. The two and a half day workshop was a nice balance between theoretical discussions on what Dynamic Accountability entails and the practical aspects of how to implement it and tools that could be useful.
- Over the past 5 months Accountable Now has participated in several meetings where we have been able to position our 12 Commitments, these include: the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\) Summit](#), Venro members' meeting, the IATI members' meeting, the International Civic Forum and Global Perspectives.
- Since April, Accountable Now has taken over the Global Secretariat of the [Global Standard](#). Our responsibilities include facilitating and coordinating the efforts around the Standard. This year, the Project Partners are focused on positioning the Standard and encouraging more organisations to use it. This new phase is being funded by Sida.
- [Development Alternative](#): In August we started working with a consortia of 9 organisations that wish to explore a new way of doing development. This should be youth led and should include the dynamic accountability approach. The project is funded by DFID and we are currently in the co-creation phase. Accountable Now is involved primarily in the Engagement and Influence Workstreams; however, we are also engaging in the Research and Development one.

The Executive Director mentioned that during 2018 there was a strong push to build stronger relationships with members, to consolidate the membership base, and to strengthen internal capacities. The Trustees did not have any questions on the report.

The Board [approved the changes made to the Independent Review Panel's Terms of Reference](#) (ToRs) which now establishes a procedure to remove panel members who are unresponsive.

### Membership Update (ACC 18/20)

The Board acknowledged that Islamic Relief had decided to withdraw their membership. Trustees asked that the Secretariat keep in mind that it is essential to maintain the diversity of members.

The Board instructed the Secretariat to reach out to those member organisations who were behind on submitting their accountability reports to develop a work plan to get them up to date and compliant. It was also agreed that if these issues were not solved by the next Board meeting (February 2019) then the Board would intervene.

### Financial and Legal Update Report (ACC 18/21, ACC 18/22 & ACC 18/23)

Bettie van Straaten provided an overview of Accountable Now's finances for 2018 and Rocio presented the 2019 budget and work plan. Some of the main takeaways include:



- **Income:** In 2018, Accountable Now's income is expected to close at 443,327€. This figure will be less than what was expected by 12,206€. This difference can be explained by lower membership fees than expected, the Global Standard Extension Phase project being approved later than expected which led to fewer resources being available to use in 2018, and in lower participation fees than projected.
- **Expenses:** With the exception of Legal and Finances, all expenses will be in line with what was budgeted at the beginning of the year. Accountable Now had to pay an external accountant to provide support. We also hired an attorney to provide support and guidance in identifying the options for registering Accountable Now in Germany. Accountable Now is expected to close the year with 462,617€ in expenses.
- **2018 Balance:** With this scenario, we would be ending the year in a deficit of 19,290€. This can be explained by higher unforeseen expenses and lower income.
- **Expected Income 2019:** Accountable Now's secured income for 2019 is expected to be 401,440€. This amount is 54,093€ lower than what we would have received in 2018. The difference can be explained by fewer resources to spend on the Global Standard Extension Phase, the Development Alternative Co-creation phase ending in April, and reduction of estimated workshop fees based on the actual income from 2018. In addition to Accountable Now's projected income, we will also seek to diversify our sources of income.
- **Projected Expenditures 2019:** If Accountable Now secures the targeted income, then our expenses for 2019 will be significantly higher than those estimated for 2018. By securing these additional resources we would be freeing a large portion of unrestricted income. If we were only to secure resources for the Global Standard and the Development Alternative, Accountable Now would be in a solid financial position all throughout 2019. If we are not able to secure all the targeted income, then Accountable Now will spend resources in a conservative way to guarantee that we end the year with a surplus.

The Board agreed that Accountable Now needs to work to diversify income and that the Secretariat has to look at a cost recovery strategy.

The Board also made a point of ensuring that Accountable Now is no longer only a member based platform but that we are also becoming a resource for civil society organisations around the world on CSO accountability. We need to make sure that the budget allows us to do this.

### Revisiting Accountable Now's Strategy (ACC 18/24/1 and ACC 18/24/2)

The Executive Director presented to the Board the Beyond 2018 Strategy. Whilst in the same vein as the existing strategy, there are two main changes. The first is that we have aligned our strategy with our commitments by making sure that Accountable Now is not promoting just any type of accountability, but a dynamic one. Second, there is an increased focus on collaboration with and providing support to Accountable Now's members.



- The Board appreciated reading the members' inputs on the strategy. They agreed that it was important to include members' needs and expectations in the work of the Secretariat, but were also mindful of the amount of time and resources this would require.
- With the new strategy we are asking members to change their organisational cultures, which is not a straightforward task. It is important to develop an engagement strategy to avoid creating another box-ticking exercise.
- The Secretariat needs to be mindful that the Dynamic Accountability approach is not understood by everyone. We need to unpack it and better explain it.
- The Secretariat needs to work on a comprehensive work plan that will help them identify priorities and resources to carry out said activities.
- It was **decided** that the Board approves the new strategy. The Secretariat will further refine the aims and activities. These will be ranked by priority, which will guide their work in the upcoming years.

#### Changes to the Board (ACC 18/26)

- Trustees **noted** that in the past two months, a subcommittee of the Board was working with Macauley Search to find a new Chair. Brendan Gormley will be stepping down as Chair in May 2019.
- Out of four people that were interviewed, the Board chose a most preferred candidate to meet in person. Hopefully an appointment will be made before the year ends.

#### Any Other Business (ACC 18/27)

- Trustees finished the meeting with a closed session without the Secretariat.

END