

Accountable Now

Board of Trustees Meeting

08 June 2017

Minutes

Attendees

Janet Dalziell, Greenpeace International – *from ACC 17/20*
Clare Doube, Amnesty International
Elie Gasagara, World Vision International
Brendan Gormley, Independent (*Chair*)
Caroline Harper, Sightsavers (*Vice-Chair*) – *from ACC 17/20*
Rosa Inés Ospina Robledo, Independent
Bettie van Straaten, CIVICUS (*Treasurer*)
John Clark, Chair of Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel

In Attendance from Secretariat

Karenina Schröder (Executive Director)
Ezgi Akarsu (Programme Manager, *minutes*)

Welcome (ACC 17/17)

- All action points from the [last Trustee meeting minutes](#) are either completed or currently being processed.
- Trustees shared updates from the field and a common theme was the restructuring of organisations to allow for more power sharing and innovation.
- Karenina Schröder announced that she will be moving to a new stage in her career, and thus stepping down as Executive Director of Accountable Now in August 2017. The Board Director and other Trustees thanked her for her great leadership over the past six years. A search committee comprising Caroline Harper, Bettie van Straaten and Janet Dalziell has been formed to find a new ED as soon as possible. Karenina was asked to lead all agreed projects until her departure. Any strategic decisions e.g. on the Global Standard Secretariat or future relationships with the Centre shall be taken by her successor.

Executive Director's Report (ACC 17/18)

- The Executive Director presented the outcomes of the latest meeting of the Global Standard's nine project partners in India in April. She shared the [final version of the Standard](#) and Trustees **expressed their support** for adopting it to replace Accountable Now's current Charter Commitments.



- Accountable Now has been asked by the other project partners to host the Secretariat of the Global Standard in its second phase, from May 2018. A final decision on this will be taken when the new director is on board, but Trustees welcomed this opportunity to further underpin our global stream of work.
- Accountable Now's pilot project on [People-Powered Decision Making](#) was presented briefly. Trustees support the project as a way of showcasing how to implement dynamic accountability.

Board Development and Trustees (ACC 17/19)

- Board Director Brendan Gormley shared the outcomes of the first Finance and Risk Committee call which took place in May. It suggested to consider raising a bigger proportion of funds from external sources in coming years. A final decision on this will be taken when the new ED is on board.
- It was agreed that in order to attract new Members, there is a need to develop clear language demonstrating the added value of Membership. [This will be formulated following the discussions about Accountable Now's strategy \(ACC 17/21\)](#).
- Three Trustee seats were open for discussion:
 - In order to foster stability in a time of changing leadership and strategy, Trustees **decided** [unanimously to extend Janet Dalziell's second and final term for one additional year, until June 2018](#).
 - Bettie van Straaten announced that she will stand for re-election for a second term at the Annual General Meeting on 9 June.
 - Trustees **decided** [not to seek a replacement for Miklos Marschall](#), who submitted his resignation from the Board, at this stage. Once Accountable Now's future strategy is clear, the Board will carefully consider the qualities they are looking for in a new Trustee and recruit accordingly.

Financial Report and Legal Update (ACC 17/20)

- The Treasurer presented Accountable Now's finances to 11 May 2017 and flagged that Accountable Now is likely to break even at the end of the year. She said that it is important to work towards achieving a surplus, which would allow further development of the Secretariat, including increased capacity for fundraising.
- There were no issues relating to the 2016 finances, with the auditors' recommendation to create a Finance and Risk Committee taken on board, and an accruals policy currently being developed.
- Trustees **acknowledged** [the financial overview \(01 Jan – 11 May 2017\)](#).
- An update on Accountable Now's application for charitable status was also given. The Charity Commission requires one more amendment in Accountable Now's Articles of Association before approving the application; namely to remove the following from the objectives: *"promote compliance with the law and ethical standards of conduct"*. The Board supported the amendment being voted on at the Annual General Meeting on 9 June.

Revisiting Accountable Now's Strategy and Operating Model (ACC 17/21)

- Trustees discussed Accountable Now's future strategic direction in light of the newly developed dynamic accountability concept and the Global Standard Project Partners asking us to host a future secretariat. Trustees



agreed that Accountable Now should promote dynamic accountability among three key target audiences:

- its ICSO Members
- national accountability codes across the world
- the public and in particular also funders, interested in more feedback for more adaptive CSO management

Any formal changes to our current "Strategy Beyond 2015" will be agreed with the new director. The Secretariat is asked to formulate the dynamic accountability concept in simpler language.

New Accountability Commitments (ACC 17/22)

- The Executive Director presented the [final text of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#) and highlighted that the current Charter Commitments are all reflected in the new text, with an additional focus on evidence of sustainable impact and stakeholder engagement.
- The Executive Director clarified that the commitments are explicitly ambitious and that Members are not expected to fulfil all criteria from day one, but are encouraged to improve their practices over time.
- Trustees **support** the adoption of the new Accountability Commitments to replace the current Charter.

New Reporting and Assessment Framework (ACC 17/23)

- John Clark, Chair of Accountable Now's [Independent Review Panel](#), presented the Panel's suggestion for a revised Reporting and Assessment Framework to accompany the planned adoption of the Global Standard.
- The main changes proposed include:
 - Reducing reporting questions
 - Splitting reports into an Executive Summary on the Cluster level and a detailed report at Commitments level
 - Introduction of quantitative scoring and a traffic light rating system, good practice rosettes, and additional fact checking by the Panel
 - De-coupling reports from audited financial accounts to allow for timelier submission
- The traffic light system was identified as rather sensitive: It may present a hurdle for new Members and render current Members more vulnerable than peer CSOs who do not publish such data. The Independent Review Panel is asked to consider not publishing the scores in the first two years of experimenting with it. Based on any insights gathered in this period of time the decision will be reviewed with an open mind to full publication.
- The new assessment criterion on evidence of impact achieved was flagged as being ambitious and potentially difficult to assess. It was suggested that the focus could be on demonstrating that there is careful consideration about impact within organisations, and systems in place to monitor it – rather than impact data itself
- The Board **noted** the [paper on the new Reporting and Assessment Framework as developed by the Independent Review Panel](#). The paper will be discussed further by the Panel at the end of the year and the Board looks forward to seeing the final version. The new framework will be implemented from 2018.



Any Other Business (ACC 17/25)

- Trustees discussed the recruitment of a new Executive Director and a three-person search committee was formed, to begin the recruitment process immediately.
- The next Trustee meeting will take place on October 25, 2017 (via GoToMeeting).

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