

Accountable Now Verein General Meeting

11 March 2025 Minutes

Present:

Rachel Smith (Chair of the Board, Independent)
Mary Brezovich (SOS Children's Villages International)
Tamryn Lee-Fourie (CIVICUS)
Vanessa Goas (Independent)
Babacar Ndong (Educo)
Cheri-Leigh Erasmus (Accountability Lab, representing Jean Scrimgeour)
Alex Sardar (Independent)

With apologies:

Veronica Zambrano (Plan International)

In attendance from the Secretariat

Megan Colnar, Executive Director

Welcome and Board Matters (ACC 25/01)

- The Chair confirmed that quorum was met and the meeting formally commenced.
- The agenda was reviewed and approved with the inclusion of discussions on IRP and board recruitment, the US registration process, and sector-wide funding challenges.
- The minutes from the December 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved by vote in the chat (6 in favor, 0 opposed; Cheri-Leigh abstained as she was not present at the December meeting).

Executive Director Updates (ACC 25/02)

Financial Update and Overview

The Executive Director reported a significant upturn in the financial outlook. 2025 is projected to be Accountable Now's highest revenue year since its inception in 2006. Revenue projections are currently 62% above the approved budget, with expenditures adjusted by 55% to match this growth. The Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) will reassess and potentially recast the budget mid-year. Early 2026 projections are promising, estimated at approximately \$838k. A projected reserve of \$110k, which equates to approximately three months of operations, is expected by year-end.

Multi-year contracts and a shift toward diversified revenue sources, such as grants and partnerships, have helped reduce reliance on membership fees. The Board acknowledged and celebrated this financial turnaround, with special recognition given to Megan and the team.

Financial Support & Procurement

To support strategic financial reporting, a new firm (DRW) has been engaged led by former AN Treasurer Kenneth White based in Argentina. The Board supported this engagement for the short term, but asked that comparative quotes be used before finalizing more permanent arrangements. **(action)**

Organizational Development

Katie and Zipporah have joined the team full-time, enhancing capacity and improving member engagement. Accountable Now continues to operate through its fiscal sponsorship with Accountability Lab. Additional strategic financial support from Kenneth's team is helping to build internal capacity.

U.S. Registration & Governance

Accountable Now is now incorporated in the U.S., with the next step being the application for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Concerns were raised regarding the current U.S. political climate, potential risks, and administrative obligations. **An action** was agreed to arrange a call between Board members, legal counsel, and Accountability Lab to clarify liability issues and explore alternative jurisdictions. The bylaws will also be updated for potential approval at the next board meeting.

Bylaws Review and Approval

The updated draft bylaws, prepared by pro bono attorneys, were circulated for review. Board members discussed questions regarding the indemnity clauses and insurance coverage. It was agreed to defer the vote pending further clarification on the legal implications and insurance responsibilities. Megan will confirm the indemnity coverage and reporting thresholds under 501(c)(3) status.

Community Recruitment Efforts (ACC 25/03)

IRP Recruitment

A new call for IRP members was launched, with Board support requested for promoting the opportunity and nominating strong candidates. The IRP's role will be expanded to include policy reviews and advisory support to members. Mary and Tamryn will assist with candidate interviews, and the Board will assist with outreach efforts.

Board Recruitment and Term Updates

Twenty-one applications for Board membership were received, representing diverse regions and thematic expertise. Three new Board members are expected to be appointed, with a focus on addressing skill gaps and increasing regional

representation, particularly in Asia, MENA, and Eastern Europe. Rachel confirmed her willingness to serve a second term as Chair, which the Board will formally review in June. Alex's final meeting will also take place in June, while Veronica's term concludes in April.

Sector Landscape & Strategy (ACC 25/05)

The Board discussed ongoing challenges in the sector, including the USAID funding freeze and shifting donor priorities. Accountable Now's proactive support to members—including informal calls, site visits, and strategic partnerships—was commended. The Board agreed that Accountable Now should explore opportunities for collaborative action and agenda-setting in response to threats facing global civil society.

Other Business & Executive Session (ACC 25/06)

The next virtual board meeting is scheduled for June 2025. An executive session was held to discuss governance transitions, board succession planning, and operational resilience.

Megan Colnar

Executive Director

Rachel Smith

Chair of the Board

END