

MINUTES OF THE CHS ALLIANCE INTERIM BOARD TELECONFERENCE, 27 AUGUST 2015, 12.00-14.00 BST

PRESENT:

John Beverley (JB), Annabel Cruz (AC), Véronique de Geoffroy (VdG), Anne de Riedmatten (AdR), Robert Glasser (RG, Chair), Takeshi Komino (TK), Willem van Eekelen (WvE), Jeff Wright (JW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Marian Casey-Maslen (MCM), Carol Curran (CC, minutes only), Judith Greenwood (JFG)

APOLOGIES:

Joan Coyle (JC), Nick Guttman (NG), Jacquie Heany (JH), Loretta Hieber-Girandet (LHG), Thea Hilhorst (TH), Camilla Knox-Peebles (CKP), Bijay Kumar (BK), Sajid Qaisrani (SQ), Mudasser Siddiqui (MS – unable to join due to technical difficulties), Di Willis (DW)

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were noted. There were no declarations of interest. The agenda was accepted.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2015

It was noted that VdG has been present from the beginning of the meeting and not from Agenda Item 5; the minutes of the last Interim Board meeting on 30 July were adopted subject to this correction.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT APPEARING ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

(a) Agenda Item 7 Management of Board Meetings and Papers: It was reported that it may not be possible to incorporate a team-building exercise at the October meeting as this had a very full agenda. The regular ED report would commence from the October meeting.

(b) Agenda Item 9 Date of Next Meeting: There had been some confusion over the date of the October meeting in Geneva. It was confirmed that the Board Meeting would take place on the 12-13 October. It was reported that the Geneva launch of the CHS Alliance and the HAR would not coincide with the World Humanitarian Summit consultation on 14-16 October.

Action: MCM will circulate the link to the HAR to Board Members.

MCM

4. GENERAL UPDATES

4.1 MEETING OF EDs, TREASURERS AND CHAIRS ON 4 AUGUST

The meeting, held at People In Aid's request, had been a useful opportunity to understand the slow progress in obtaining Swiss registration and to clarify some financial matters. Formal submission for the Swiss registration had taken place the week preceding the Board meeting and it was hoped that the registration number would be confirmed within ten days.

4.2 OPENING OF UK ESTABLISHMENT

A formal Board resolution was required by UK Companies House to authorise opening of the London branch of the Alliance. The UK establishment was necessary to deal with third parties, e.g. the office landlord and suppliers, and for staff employment contracts. It would be the same legal entity as the parent organisation, it had no implications for Board governance or executive management, and it would be under the same financial controls.

It was **unanimously resolved** that:

The Alliance authorises the opening of the London branch and delegates authority to conduct the business of the Alliance to the future UK establishment. **JP**

It was noted that it may be advantageous to keep People In Aid's UK charity registration, which is challenging to obtain, to benefit from certain gifts and donations that a branch would not be eligible to receive. **FRA**

5. FINANCE, RISK AND AUDIT (FRA) COMMITTEE

5.1 REPORT FROM MEETING ON 19 AUGUST 2015

The minutes of the meeting were noted. JB paid respect to the work undertaken by the financial and fundraising teams. This had concentrated on:

- developing the finance manual, policies and procedures;

- implementing a unified IT system;
- sourcing a new financial system.

Merged management accounts, reporting on actuals rather than a forecast, were still unavailable; it was anticipated that the first set would be prepared in time for the next FRA meeting on 6 October.

RG highlighted three significant risk areas:

- Unified IT system: this was the lowest risk and arrangements were in hand.
- Unified accounting system: no decision had as yet been made about which software would be adopted.
- Unified management accounts: this was the greatest risk but a timetable was in place in mitigation although it was still a month away.

The reserves policy was discussed. Its purpose was to facilitate financial stewardship by the Board and to set 3-6 months' operating costs as the level of reserves to be held against a catastrophic failure of funding. In addition, within the new organisation, some funds would need to be restricted to People In Aid activities to satisfy outstanding obligations and donor demands.

Action: JB to circulate the fundraising pipeline.

JB

6. IN CAMERA ITEMS

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- It was reconfirmed that it would be useful to have an update on progress against the strategic objectives and information on the main achievements; this would form part of the ED's report to the Board.
- The Humanitarian Accountability Report (HAR), the Alliance's first publication, was recognised as an outstanding piece of work.
- Jonathan Potter and Marian Casey-Maslen were congratulated and praised for their great work in their respective organisations in bringing the CHS and the Alliance into being.
- The membership fee structure was confirmed as that agreed at the General Assembly apart from a decision remaining with regard to charging 'federation' members.
- MCM gave a brief report on activities highlighting: the submission of two documents to the WHS consultation (on the HAR and on people management); the Ukraine and other locations were trying to use the CHS

JFG

in the field; key messages within each chapter of the HAR could be used by the Board; work was underway on the guidance notes and the verification framework. MCM thanked the Board members for their kindness and support to herself and JP during challenging times.

- (f) JFG gave an overview of her first four days in post. She was extremely encouraged by the work done so far and impressed by how the two Boards and EDs had put aside personal and professional interests to make the CHS and the Alliance work. She had had several excellent meetings and had heard genuine interest and commitment to make the CHS work. Verity Stiff had been recruited as the new Head of People Capacity and Development. JFG would shortly be sending a letter of welcome to all members in which she would introduce herself.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting would take place in Geneva on 12-13 October 2015.

The meeting closed at 13.15 BST.