



Australia's International Development Contractors Community

BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY, 25 September 2020, 2pm AEST

MINUTES

Attendees: Stuart Schaefer (chair), Therese Faulkner, Bernadette Whitelum, Joanne Choe, Nicky Thatcher, Richard Moore, Jane Gresham

1. Welcome, overview, apologies

Nil apologies.

2. Presentation from advocacy consultant Chris Crewther – final report and briefing

Chris was very pleased to work with IDCC and was impressed by IDCC's professionalism. He advised the Board to refer to Section 6 of his report which contains outcomes and recommendations. He provided an overview of the Terms of Reference, including the alteration of the TORs to incorporate COVID-19 issues, and an overview of the briefing papers developed for each meeting. He briefly discussed the list of meetings held with parliamentarians, including Alex Hawke, Eric Abetz, Kevin Andrews, David Fawcett, Dave Sharma, Julian Hill, Patrick Conroy, Kimberly Kitching and touched on his engagement with Advisers and other staffers – in particular senior advisers in Minister Payne's office. Main outcomes of these meetings included:

- Confirmation from Minister Hawke that a 'cap' would not be imposed on contractors in terms of a percentage of the aid budget;
- Understanding on the part of parliamentarians that a cap would be detrimental to Australia's interests;
- Appreciation of the importance of contractors in responding to COVID-19;
- Appreciation of the overlap between development, diplomacy and defence;
- Concerns expressed by Ministers about the (perceived) concentration of the contractor market.

Chris encourages the IDCC to follow up on the concentration issue, and to maintain contact with the JSCFADT and the aid sub-committee on this issue and other bigger issues including COVID-19, and the role of China in regional development. Chris said that recognition of IDCC is increasing and we will become better known over time. Ministers and advisers will come to us for advice more often once our profile increases, and would use us as a sounding board on relevant issues.

3. Approval of previous minutes (28 August 2020)

Board minutes approved, pending any adjustments being emailed through.

AGM minutes still delayed pending financial report being finalised by Marland Accounting. Therese advised that all financial material has now been supplied to Marland Accounting, with the assistance of FocusedBooks (Deb Fraser), and she has chased up Marland Accounting via email, but no response to date. Therese will chase up again.

Action: Therese to follow up the financial report

Noted the actions contained in the Minutes of 28 August would be addressed in the agenda item discussions for this meeting of 25 September.

4. Reports – financial (attached), secretariat (memberships, document storage, insurance, correspondence)

- a. **Financial Report** - Xero dashboard provided. Finances are healthy. More membership invoices have been paid, with 7 invoices outstanding. Current balance is just over \$108,000 with 8 invoices still to be paid. Payments to be made include: to Nineteen Consulting (Chris Crewther) for advocacy work, and Directors' insurance due at end of October.
- b. **Memberships** – noted that new organisation member AVI had paid their invoice. The Directors noted that AVI was a welcome addition to IDCC's membership.
- c. **Document storage** – Therese noted that a shared Google drive had been set up, and available to all IDCC Directors, containing all IDCC key documents, including up-to-date membership lists, board minutes, briefs and submissions
- d. **Directors' insurance** - Directors insurance takes us up to 31 October 2020 and will need to be renewed. Expect to have a quote from Gallagher insurance in early October.
- e. **Correspondence** – Therese noted that Minister Hawke had formally written to IDCC in response to our meeting with him (organized by Chris Crewther), with the hardcopy version of the letter going astray due to mis-addressing of the envelope. Has now been rectified, with the Minister's office sending a soft copy via email, and the IDCC postal address being formally advised to the Minister's office.

5. Current Issues

- a. **DFAT meeting/s** – Board directors met with Aid Business Branch. Discussed deployment of Advisers; appreciated advice from IDCC and will provide a formal response. Noted the issue of dependants – DFAT does not support under the Letter of Assurance – up to contractors on whether they will wear the risks.

Also discussed APAs – will be revised so that they need to be done, but don't need to be lodged with DFAT. PPAs also revised to simplify – new format – to be rolled out soon. Offered to have a webinar if IDCC wants to organize. New format doesn't seem to be linked to the PPA review from a year or so ago. Agreed that members might be interested in hearing about this via a webinar.

Nicky raised the issue of co-design, and the comments coming through from members about their recent experiences; Bernadette raised the issue of costs/time imposition on members, and the perceived shortcomings inherent in the process. (eg. 18 co-design sessions proposed for NCP.) Bernadette offered to develop a survey of members on this, before we raise the issue more broadly with DFAT. Jo noted that we have wanted to be involved at the concept stage of programs; and that involvement after the design has been drafted is not a particularly useful stage for our strategic views to be incorporated. Noted that DFAT needs to be more targeted and selective.

Action: Stuart to contact DFAT to set up a member webinar on APAs and PPAs

Action: Bernadette to develop a member survey on the co-design process

- b. **IDCC Website** – noted the terrific work done by Discovery Data, and the final clearance needed on the content in order to go live. Bernadette has checked, and says it's ready to go. Directors agreed that it should go live as soon as possible – potentially Tuesday 6 October - with a 'soft launch'.

Action: Therese to contact Discovery Data to have the new IDCC website go live

- c. **IDCC Strategic Plan** – noted the meeting with enhanced members earlier in the week, and some good suggestions made which will be incorporated. A major change in focus was suggested by one member – Board agreed that this will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan as an area on which further work is to be done by the IDCC to flesh it out in more detail. Bernadette will make the changes and circulate this final version of the Strategic Plan to members.

Action: Bernadette to make changes to the Strategic Plan and circulate to members

- d. **Video Competition** – Jane and Nicky volunteered to help Richard review the videos submitted and select the winner/s. We will need to give Goodwill Media a steer on what we want to do with the material, ie. making a compilation video for IDCC. Noted that many of the videos entered are existing material rather than new material. Might be challenging to produce a compilation. Suggested working out with more precision what we want. Potentially room to do both a compilation piece and a new, more focused video piece. Will wait until recommendations come through from Richard, Jane and Nicky.

Action: Richard, Jane and Nicky to review videos and make recommendation to the Board

Action: Richard to put Goodwill Media 'on hold' for now, pending Board decision on video winners, and what we want to do with the material

- e. **AP4D** – Richard advised that an AP4D meeting will be held on Thursday 1 October, and will advise the Board how it goes. Still looking to focus AP4D efforts in a specific area, to be agreed by all parties.

6. Any other business

ODE – Jo raised the issue of the demise of the Office of Development Effectiveness, and whether we want to put together talking points or a media release. Also said we should meet with the DFAT Chief Economist Jenny Gordon, who now has responsibility for development effectiveness. Richard mentioned a piece on ODE by the Development Policy Centre, which made some good points. Board agreed we should have talking points, meet with Jenny Gordon, and prepare a media release after that if appropriate.

Action: Stuart to seek a meeting with the Chief Economist, Jenny Gordon

Next Member Update – agreed should focus on the Strategic Plan and be sent out next week.

Action: Stuart to prepare a Member Update

Meeting closed at 3.34pm