

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Governors held in Committee Room 19,
Palace of Westminster on Thursday 19 November 2014**

Present Ann McKechin MP (Vice Chair) – in the Chair
Ken Caldwell
Bronwen Manby
John Osmond
Andrew Rosindell MP
Rt Hon Sir Andrew Stunell MP
Pete Wishart

In attendance Anthony Smith CEO
Kate Fuller Conservative Party
Nabila Sattar Labour Party
Chris Levick Smaller Parties
Lucy Ahad Head, Human Rights & Democracy Dept, FCO
Emma Kouki Desk Officer, Democracy & Elections, HRDD, FCO
Tamara Moluch Minute Taker

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Henry Bellingham, Rushanara Ali and Paul Naismith.

2. Conflict of Interest Declarations - None declared.

3. Minutes of Board meetings (*Documents 1a-b*)

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 September 2014 were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Vice-Chair.

With regards to the 'Implementation Status of Actions Points Agreed by the Board', the Board **NOTED** the progress made by parties under **ACTION POINT 0/FEB.14** and that WFD's M&E Adviser was working closely with all party officers. Considering the importance of this work for WFD's future programming, the Board asked for a report outlining progress and achievements to date.

ACTION POINT 1: A report outlining progress and achievements to date under the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Joint Innovation Bid 2014-15 to be submitted to the February Board.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

4. Chief Executive's Report (*Document 2*)

In introducing his first report, Anthony Smith said that the reports would generally address items not covered elsewhere in Board agendas and welcomed any suggestions on how format and

content might be improved. He highlighted the progress made on the four-part response to the Triennial Review, as approved by the Board in September, with particular reference to the development of WFD's strategic framework. He also reported improvements in both internal and external relationships; staff had responded positively to open communications and there had been good discussions with FCO/DFID around their understanding of WFD's work, how we could work together and what WFD could offer them.

The International Development Select Committee inquiry on Parliament Strengthening had begun to hear oral evidence, which had included references to WFD. Because of the potential impact of this inquiry on WFD, Anthony stressed the importance of demonstrating that WFD fully understood the concerns raised to ensure that WFD's work continued to be fully supported. He confirmed he would be giving oral evidence on 25 November and would be happy to receive guidance from the Board about any key points that should be made.

Anthony confirmed the recruitment of a new Director of Programmes and that, as WFD moved towards the next funding period, plans were being developed on how staffing could be strengthened whilst keeping overheads at current levels.

Ann McKechin welcomed the work to date and, in particular, the round-table discussion on "Democracy in the Doldrums? What next for parliamentary and party support?" organised, as part of work to develop WFD's strategy, to gather input from Governors, practitioners, researchers and external stakeholders, around the context for parliamentary and political party assistance and the upcoming challenges and opportunities for WFD.

In response to Pete Wishart, Anthony confirmed that, as requested at the last Board Meeting, he had met with party officers to agree an alternative to the Triennial Review recommendations concerning party funding allocations. This had been discussed and commented on by the parties and copied to the FCO. Unfortunately, Emma Kouki said that the Triennial Review would not now be published as expected in time for WFD's oral evidence hearing at the Select Committee on 25 November.

Lucy Ahad said she would convey to Ministers the Board's concerns about the delay and the Board **AGREED** that Anthony Smith should meet informally with Ministers to stress the Board's concerns about the delays in publishing the Triennial Review and the adverse effect this was having on WFD's ability to finalise its Strategy and Business Plan for 2015-16.

5. **Strategic Framework** (*Document 3*)

Anthony Smith introduced the discussion paper on WFD's Strategic Framework 2015-18 which focused on:

- WFD's unique strengths, approaches and potential of WFD
- an approach to programming that built on those strengths;
- a collaborative process with FCO and DFID to decide on geographic focus of activities, matching ambition with available resources;
- addressing some common critiques about parliamentary assistance, including the need for evidence.

Discussion revolved around the questions posed:

WFD Strategic Framework 2015-18

- *WFD's aims have not kept pace with our work, eg. they do not mention 'parliaments'. Do we need a clear vision or purpose, eg. 'Politics matter to people. WFD's purpose is to help parliaments and parties in developing and transition countries to build the skills, expertise and democratic culture they need to provide include decision-making and democratic accountability for their citizens?'*
- *The proposed 'Tenets' cover parliaments, parties and civil society and women. Are Governors happy with what they cover and how they describe WFD's approach?*

In agreeing the vision, the Board said that WFD should remain as focused as possible and not over-extend itself. As to the 'Tenets', which reflected the current political context of WFD's work, the Board asked that 'youth' also be covered.

The British democratic experience

- *Have we adequately captured the most relevant characteristics of the British political system?*
- *Should the British link be WFD's explicit unique selling point? Are there risks in this approach?*
- *How would we sell WFD in countries that do not have an historical link to the Westminster model?*

The Board agreed that the British democratic experience should be at the heart of WFD's work but that it should not be seen as a 'purveyor of the ultimate democratic model that all should emulate'. They agreed that WFD had something unique and valuable to offer and, whilst it should not be afraid of promoting this, it should recognise other democratic experiences.

Whilst emphasising the importance of its British link, WFD's unique selling point and its strength lay in its understanding and insight of the British system with its richness, depth and long history as well as its access to British parliamentarians, including the important work being undertaken by the parties in regional peer-to-peer learning. WFD had to nurture and cherish its British links without being prescriptive and draw on that experience as it provided the best available advice, guidance and support in its democracy building activities.

The Westminster model was copied and admired internationally and WFD was in a unique position to share that vast range of democratic experiences without being prescriptive about how countries should or should not develop their own democratic systems. The sharing of this experience internationally was one of WFD's unique selling points as seen, for example, in its work with regional networks where experience, support and knowledge was being shared directly between member parliaments, political parties and organisations, regardless of any historical links to the Westminster model. To reinforce the Westminster image, Andrew Rosindell suggested that WFD adopt a stronger Westminster-identifiable logo.

WFD's core programming model (2015-18)

- *Does this four-part programming model match the reality of WFD's skills and experience and provide an adequate focus for our future programmes?*
- *The programming diagram does not try to fix the scale of each of the four elements but does support the gradual establishment of a significant 'parties in parliament' element. This will also be covered in one of the recommendations of the Triennial Review. Do Governors agree with this?*
- *Do the 6 proposed elements of WFD's approach respond adequately to the main critiques of WFD's past practices (and those of other providers of assistance in this field)?*

Whilst agreeing the 'four-part programme model', the Board felt that the fourth element - the 'democratic environment' - was potentially very broad and that its focus should be narrowed to avoid WFD stretching itself too thinly. In this context, the TWC model of working with parliaments and parties as part of a bigger picture requiring close collaboration with other organisations should be considered.

The Board agreed the gradual establishment of a significant 'parties in parliament' element. In noting the need to strike a balance between the long timescale of democracy building and the need to evidence results, it was agreed that the strategy could not be constrained by the limitations of evidencing impact within a three-year funding period, recognising that a strength of WFD's and of its political party work in particular was its longevity and sustainability.

The Board agreed that the six proposed elements of WFD's approach responded adequately to the main critiques of WFD's past practices.

Geographic scope

- *Do Governors agree with the proposed distinction between allowing a relatively broad geographic operation for sister party programmes on the one hand, and a collaborative exercise with the FCO and DFID to determine our initial priority countries for parliamentary and parties in parliament programmes on the other hand?*
- *Do Governors agree that a phased approach is appropriate, or should WFD try to start fresh with completely new programmes from 1 April 2015?*
- *Does the proposed % of transitioning, core, and new countries match the Board's expectations? If not, what would be a better mix?*

The Board agreed the need for dialogue with FCO and DFID to determine priority countries, whilst noting that the sister-party work could appear far more broadly spread than the parliamentary strengthening work but that this could be misleading where countries were represented through regional networks rather than individual projects. Whilst assuring greater focus, it was also agreed a certain degree of flexibility was required.

The Board also agreed a phased approach to its new programmes.

6. Review of Board Functioning

The Board agreed to:

1. Delegate to the CEO the authority to approve party and parliamentary project and programme proposals. The CEO shall establish a transparent process and criteria for approval, which will be reviewed by the Board annually. The initial process (see Annex) shall start to be used in January 2015
2. Establish a Programme Quality Committee to maintain an overview of programme quality and impact across party and parliamentary work. The CEO shall propose Terms of Reference of the Committee to the next meeting of the Board, which will determine its membership. The effectiveness of the Committee shall be reviewed by the Board within 12 months of this Decision.

3. Limit standing attendees of Board meetings to the CEO, the Finance Director and the Board Secretary. However, the Board may invite others, notably staff from the political party offices and WFD parliamentary programme staff, to attend for specific agenda items.

Andrew Rosindell disagreed with the third decision above.

The Board noted a range of other proposals to improve its functioning and asked the CEO to prepare a paper on ways of implementing these for its next meeting. This should include proposals on the frequency and timing of its meetings.

ACTION POINT 2: Anthony Smith to (i) begin implementing the new project approval process from January 2015, (ii) work with Board members on the Terms of Reference of the new Programme Quality Committee for submission to the February Board and (iii) submit a paper to the February Board on other actions to improve Board functioning.

7. **Review of Risk** *(Document 4)*

The Board **NOTED** that, following the meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, a Risk Group had been established within WFD to ensure effective identification and management of risks and that some action had already been taken to implement a number of outstanding relevant recommendations.

ACTION POINT 3: The Board welcomed the creation of an organisation-wide Risk Group and looked forward to an update on its work at the next Board meeting.

8. **Strategic Programme for Approval** *(Document 5)*

The Board **APPROVED** the Labour proposal 'Women's Academy For Africa: Training the trainers' (budget £137,260) and noted that, whilst this activity had been intended as a part of a larger programme of work scheduled for the next FY, Labour had taken advantage of the delays to their scheduled work in the MENA region to kick start this programme of work.

9. **Audit & Risk Assurance Committee** *(Document 6)*

The Board **NOTED** the minutes of the 4 November 2014 meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and, in particular, the establishment of the Risk Group referred to under Agenda Item 7 above. They also noted that the Committee would closely monitor the accounting error reported in the Kenya programme.

10. **Terms & Conditions Committee** *(Document 7)*

In introducing the minutes of the Terms & Conditions Committee, Ann McKechin reported that a consultant had now been engaged to assist in preparing staff work in high risk areas and that

WFD's Health & Safety policy, being integral to WFD's work, would now be reviewed and updated at regular intervals. The Board **NOTED** the minutes.

11. Quarterly management report *(Document 8)*

The Board **WELCOMED** the proposed format of the quarterly reports aimed at coherently demonstrating progress to date and reporting performance management by focusing on key issues affecting performance, including budget analysis and management processes. Governors were asked to submit any comments/suggestions they may have to Anthony Smith who would be presenting the first of the quarterly reports to the Board meeting in February.

12. Any other business – None.

13. Date of next meeting: To be confirmed.

Chair.....
Date: 4 February 2015



Project and Programme Approval Process

Revised version: 8 December 2014

Acronyms

WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
DFID	Department for International Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

This document sets out the process for approval of WFD projects/programmes. Most projects/programmes will be funded by the FCO/DFID core grant. In the case of projects/programmes to be funded through other channels, the time available might not allow the full procedures to be followed. In those cases, staff should follow the standard process as far as possible (see Programme Management Manual for further guidance).

Funding cycle

For the 2015/16 – 2017/18 funding cycle our aim is to agree a phased approach as set out in the paper on the Strategic Framework for the 19 November Board. That means that preparation and approval of projects/programmes will take place throughout the year. When negotiations with the FCO and DFID have advanced we will be able to forecast the approval workload.

Phases of Project/Programme Approval



Proposals

There are three types of proposals:

- Concept proposals – these will set out the strategic case for the intervention (why it is needed, why WFD), the main objectives and a range of possible budgets. They should include a description of how the project/programme proposal would be developed, i.e. elaboration of adequate detail on outputs, activities and management arrangements and, if necessary, refinement of the objectives. A proposed budget for any preparatory work (i.e. needs assessment visit, baseline study etc.) should be included.
- Programme proposals – a programme could cover a range of projects, e.g. across a geographic region. The individual programmes would be managed with a single overarching set of objectives and resources could be vired between them in order to maximise impact. The proposal will set out a full explanation of the programme's strategic case, objectives, outputs, activities and management arrangements.
- Project proposals – a project is a discrete set of activities, usually focused on one location or theme. A proposal for a stand-alone project would need to set out a full explanation of the project's strategic case, objectives, outputs, activities and management arrangements. Projects that form part of a wider programme concept that has already been approved do not need an additional concept proposal and other elements (e.g the strategic case, could cross-refer to relevant parts of the programme documents).

Review of proposals

- Internal Review
 - a) Concept Review – Concept proposals will be reviewed internally by the Director of Programmes, M&E specialist and Finance to ensure relevancy and affordability. A minimum of one week should be allocated for review of proposal prior to its submission¹.
 - b) Programme/Project Proposal Review – Programme/project proposals will be reviewed internally by the Director of Programmes, M&E specialist, Communications, and Finance to ensure relevancy, likelihood of impact, quality and affordability.

Feedback should be on a standard form that sets out the issues to be reviewed, e.g.:

- Relevance to WFD’s purpose and objectives
 - Likelihood of impact, ie adequate use of evidence, demand and ownership, robust theory of change, effective implementation plans
 - Quality of monitoring and evaluation plans
 - Affordability
- External Review - Final proposals will be sent to FCO and DFID for comments.

Submission of proposals

Approval Committee meetings will normally be held every two months, on the 30th. Proposals must be submitted by the 15th of that month (please see ‘Approval of proposals’ below). In the event that the submission date falls on a non-working day, the proposal should be submitted on the first working day following the submission date. In the event that Committee meeting dates fall on a non-working day or a Friday or during parliamentary recess, the meeting will be rescheduled to the closest practical date. Taking account of this, the timetable for 2015 is as follows:

Bi-monthly Meetings	Due date for submission	Date of Approval Committee Meeting
January	15 January	29 January
March*	18 February	4 March
June**	21 May	4 June
July	15 July	30 July
November	16 November	30 November

Proposals should be submitted in electronic format only by email to the Secretary of the Approval Committee (tbd).

Assessment of proposals

Constructive assessment of all proposals is essential to (i) enable learning, (ii) promote adoption of good practice, and (iii) ensure consistency across WFD’s portfolio.

Each proposal will be assessed by the Approval Committee during the two weeks from submission of proposal (15th of month) to approval committee meeting (30th of month). The proposal should include the review comments and the proposed response.

¹ Failure to provide sufficient time for review process may result in the proposal delayed to next scheduled submission deadline.

* March 2015 PAC Meeting has been rescheduled for early March ahead of the dissolution of Parliament on [30 March 2015](#).

** May 2015 PAC Meeting has been rescheduled for early June following the parliamentary elections on [7 May 2015](#).

Approval of proposals

Following assessment, proposals would be considered by the Approval Committee.

The Approval Committee will consist of:

CEO

Governor (political party)

Governor (independent)

The Director of Finance, Director of Programmes, M&E Advisor as well as political party officers, Heads of Programme, and programme officers would attend as appropriate. There would be appropriate safeguards in case of confidentiality of political party proposals and to avoid conflict of interest.

The Committee is advisory in nature and the Governors will be nominated by the Board but serve in their personal capacity, normally for a two-year term. The Committee will seek to reach consensus on each decision. However, since the Board has delegated project approval to him, final decisions are for the CEO. The committee will use a standard assessment sheet to ensure consistency of approach.

The committee will meet on a bi-monthly basis in line with the timetable above (i.e. 5 times per year) to consider proposals. For proposals made at other times, the Committee may agree to receive proposals via email under exceptional circumstances. The Committee will develop appropriate procedures for approval of project extensions.