

Dóchas

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 104 (3-25)
26/06/25

Dóchas Board

held on Thursday, 26th June 2025 at 12:00 in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2

M i n u t e s

- Present:** Rosamond Bennett (Christian Aid Ireland) Chairperson
 John Moffett (Misean Cara) Vice Chairperson
 Olive Moore (Front Line Defenders))
 Martina Fitzgerald (External Board Member)
 Paul Donnelly (External Board Member)
 David Donoghue (External Board Member)
- Apologies:** Siobhán Cassidy (Trócaire) Treasurer & Company Secretary
 Karol Balfe (ActionAid Ireland)
 Frank Long (Oxfam Ireland)
- In attendance:** Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)
 Anna Farrell (Finance & Operations Manager, Dóchas)
 Hannah Coleman (Boardmatch Ireland) – for Agenda item 3 only

1. Meeting Opening and Standing Items

a. Welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting, welcoming those present and noting that Hannah Coleman (Boardmatch Ireland) will join us at 12:30 for agenda item 3 (Governance Review) only.

b. Apologies and Agenda

There were three apologies, noted above, and no changes to the agenda as circulated.

c. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Martina confirmed that she has a conflict of interest in relation to the application for Associate Membership from FoodCloud [Agenda item 5] and so will leave the meeting for the discussion on that item. All other members present confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

Action:

- Anna to update Register of Interests re: above.

d. Minutes of Board Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 27/03/25 were approved: Paul Donnelly (Proposed), Olive Moore (Seconded).

e. Matters Arising and To-do List

All of the items under Matters Arising or on the to-do list, with the exception of the anti-fraud training for staff, have been completed or will be addressed during the meeting.

The CEO said that we will organise anti-fraud training for the team in advance of the September Board meeting.

2. Nominations for Board Officer Roles

It was noted that all Board members were invited (email dated 03/06/25) to nominate candidates for the roles of Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Company Secretary.

- **Vice Chairperson:** John expressed an interest in serving in this capacity for a further term.
- **Treasurer:** Siobhan has expressed an interest in serving in this capacity for a further term.
- **Company Secretary:** Siobhan has expressed an interest in serving in this capacity for a further term.

Decisions:

- John was re-elected Vice Chairperson. Siobhan was re-elected Treasurer and was also re-appointed Company Secretary. Martina Fitzgerald (Proposed). Olive Moore (Seconded). Agreed unanimously.

3. Reports and Updates

a. CEO Report

The **CEO Report**, which was circulated in advance, was taken as read.

The CEO highlighted some key areas of focus during the period covered by the Report:

- **Launch of *Lives on the Line Campaign* and Pre-Budget Submission:** The CEO thanked the Board for their flexibility and for their support with this morning's launch event. We have been working with members and members CEO's on campaign development, branding, key messages and rollout. Going forward we will use online campaigning, video, social media and political engagement to highlight our key messages and will encourage members to get their supporters involved in the campaign.

The Chairperson congratulated the CEO and the team on the successful launch of the *Lives on the Line* campaign.

- **Governance Bilateral with DFA:** The CEO gave an update on the bilateral (24 June), which was attended by the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and CEO. The meeting went well.

b. Emerging Issues

There were no emerging issues.

4. Strategic Topic

• Governance Review

The Chairperson welcomed Hannah Coleman (Boardmatch), who is joining us for this agenda item only. It was noted that the reports on the board effectiveness review, CEO board effectiveness review, recommendations analysis and Board skills audit were circulated in advance.

Ms Coleman presented the report pointing out that the survey was carried out in March and some of the recommendations have already been actioned, the results are very strong and show that there is a high level (86%) of satisfaction with the operations of the Board, the recommendations are about moving from good to great and there are no red flags. The Board culture is very strong with all Board members participating in discussions and feeling encouraged to do so. It will be important to ensure that this is maintained whenever there is rotation on the Board. There are four

themes that require attention: (1) reviewing the exchange with Irish Aid agenda item; (2) reviewing board recruitment and induction; (3) improving board diversity and stakeholder engagement; and (4) creating further opportunities for future planning for Dóchas. Next steps will involve rolling out the recommendations, using the template to allocate tasks which will be sent to the CEO following this meeting. (2) and (4) came up a number of times so it might be advisable to start with those.

In relation to (1) the CEO said that we have already reduced the number of exchanges with Irish Aid to twice a year with the aim of focusing the conversation around our strategic partnership. Outside of our management team will meet with DFA on a quarterly basis.

The Chairperson thanked Hannah for her presentation and she left the meeting.

Hannah and David left the meeting.

Decision:

- The 2025 Board Away Day will take place in the latter part of October (date TBC) and will focus on the recommendations from the review, plans for the EU Presidency Project, a review of the risk register and refresher on roles and responsibilities of Board members.

Action:

- **Anna** to set up doodle poll with suggested dates for Board Away Day.

5. Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

a. Report from Committee

The minutes of the last meeting (16/06/25), together with the January-May financial report and narrative and risk register were circulated to members in advance and were taken as read. The CEO said that the meeting discussed on the January-May financials, reviewed the risk register and agreed to recommend to the Board that we set up an overdraft facility to cover one months unrestricted spend. If it is decided to proceed the committee will develop a short document outlining the rules that would apply if the facility is to be drawn down and will bring it to the Board in September for discussion.

In terms of our Presidency Project, the CEO said that the European Commission have confirmed that a budget of €2m will be divided between CONCORD and the troika (Dóchas, Greece and Lithuania). Dóchas is keen to lead on the Presidency Project and will engage with the other networks to secure this. In terms of DFA's priorities a number of topics have been suggested (e.g. food security, human development, etc) but nothing has been decided as yet. We will continue to engage with DFA over the coming months and will also engage with members to define our priorities.

b. Risk Register: It was noted that:

- Risk 5 (Anti-NGO and civil society sentiment amongst Irish public and EU): Remains Amber in light of increased far-right rhetoric giving rise to anti-civil society and anti-ODA sentiment.
- Risk 12 (Decline in member income): remains Amber to reflect concerns that cuts in funding from USAID and DFID and other pressures on fundraising might impact members contributions to Dóchas.

Decisions:

- FARC to proceed with setting up an overdraft facility to cover one months unrestricted spend.
- There were no changes to the Risk Register as presented.

6. Application for Associate Membership

FoodCloud have applied for Associate Membership. Due diligence was carried out and a briefing document on the application was circulated in the Board pack in advance of this meeting. It was noted

that they don't qualify for full membership because their international focus and spend is less than 50% of their overall activities.

Decision:

- The Board approved the application for Associate Membership from FoodCloud. Paul Donnelly (Proposed), John Moffett (Seconded).

Action:

- Anna to follow up with FoodCloud to advise them of the Board's decision in relation to their application.

7. Other Business

- a. **Financing for Development Conference (Ff4D):** The CEO will represent Dóchas at the conference, which takes place in Seville from 30 June to 2 July. A number of Dóchas members will also be in attendance and the delegation will meet with Minister Richmond on the first day of the conference.
- b. **CONCORD Board:** The Board congratulated the CEO on her recent appointment to the Board of CONCORD.

8. Meeting Dates for 2025

Board meetings in 2025 will take place at 10am on the following dates: 25th September and 27th November.

Chairperson:.....

Date:.....