Publish What You Fund Board of Directors meeting
Wednesday 6th July 2016, 16:00 – 18:00 BST

Attendees
- ➤ Giles Bolton, Chair (GB)
- ➤ Owen Barder (OB)
- ➤ Karin Christiansen (KC)
- ➤ Simon Gill, Treasurer (SG)
- ➤ Paul Lenz (PL)
- ➤ Fran Perrin (FP)
- ➤ Rupert Simons (RS)
- ➤ Eloise Todd (ET)
- ➤ Nicholas Winnett (NW)

Agenda
1. Welcome and updates since last meeting
2. Advocacy and staffing update
3. Strategy and structure
4. Fundraising
5. Finance report
6. AOB

1. Welcome and updates since last meeting

This is FP's last meeting. The Board thanks FP for all her efforts over the last three years; a small gift was received before the meeting.

Minutes approved by those present.

Actions
NW to also sign off previous minutes with KC as previous Chair.

2. Advocacy and staffing update

As part of our new role on the IATI Board, we were working towards increasing the member contributions to IATI's budget at the recent IATI Member's Assembly. Pleased to say we hope to have nearly doubled commitments.

US, UK and EU all backed the increase. World Bank and other multilaterals expressed potential difficulties.

Liz Steele, who has been providing consultancy support as our EU Representative, will no longer be working with us with effect from October. We are taking two immediate steps to deal with this, with a third pending:

1. Advertising for a Director of Advocacy (title to be determined).
2. Discussing setting up a formal Advisory Committee in Europe.
3. Hiring a new EU Representative. Pending until later in the year when new Director in place and funding situation is clearer.

Actions
Add discussion on World Bank engagement to future meeting.

3. Strategy and structure

The Board is asked to approve the workplan for 2016-19 and changes to the organisation structure.

Proposal to bundle all data use work into a new workstream. This would include aid and budget work and joined-up data. It does not indicate a restructuring of the team.

Request to better understand what is in the scope of data use. RS described some of the tangible results he wants to see, including good examples of countries using the budget ID and the use of data by civil society and accountability organisations. Initially thinks this will be about learning rather than committing to big outcomes.

GB notes differences in Board opinion over Publish What You Fund's role in data use. There is an evaluation planned under the new strategy and a need for a more considered view over what others are doing as well as what we plan to do.

KC of the view that we should commit to making data "usable" rather than used. We cannot set ourselves targets that we cannot reach or are out of our control. We can rightly be held accountable for usability, but not for data use.

SG notes opportunity for country focus. Liberia and Uganda good candidates. Real need to partner with local organisations to show data is being used, which in turn will make it more usable.

OB of the view that data use is not Publish What You Fund's job.

GB questioned whether we need to answer this question right now.

RS stressed if we are not going to directly demonstrate impact then we need to explain who is, in a more precise way than "governments", "civil society", or "citizens". Longer term future is reliant on demonstrating impact.

GB notes the primary objectives remain and the near term priority is to deliver the Hewlett Foundation application. This is not critical because we have a proposal to answer it in the form of the upcoming evaluation.

SG suggests wording around partnerships with organisations to promote the use of data.

ET interested in comparing the success measures for "usability" and "used" and consider how hard it is to hold ourselves accountable. It seems like we might be signing ourselves up to do both.

OB suggests we say that we will contribute to the use of the data by making sure it is usable.

GI notes this is a major issue in the US. Demonstrating use is critical to moving forward. It is not that Publish What You Fund has to data use directly, but we must make sure the examples are there that we can use.

PL notes we can make it usable and it still may not be used. This is existential risk. Our remit is to make it happen and to support it.

RS therefore suggests wording to the effect: "Publish What You Fund will work in partnerships with others to make data used. Our responsibility is to make it usable."

We will share a Theory of Change in mid-August when it is developed. We would like Board member feedback on this then.

Board approves the full strategy, including unfunded elements, with the data use element pending for further approval.

We will combine two roles of Deputy Director and Director of Advocacy. Proposal to rename to Director of Advocacy. The data infrastructure teams will report to this person.

We plan to recruit this position and an Aid Information Advisor imminently. EU Representative recruitment pending.

OB and GB note RS can determine these details without Board approval. No objections raised.

Actions
Circulate Theory of Change in August.
Circulate Director of Advocacy job description.
Discuss restructuring of finance system to fit a new workstream with the Finance Committee.

4. Fundraising

Hewlett Foundation proposal in development. Flexible on length but not amount. Proposal is to opt for 30 months, allowing us to do two Indexes and an evaluation.

PL queried whether there was indication of follow on funding afterwards.

SG notes 24 months provides higher funding levels. Can show more impact. Relates back to follow on funding.

SG suggests second Index can be pitched elsewhere.

OB would like to see ambition: Shorter timescale.

SG and PL expressed difficulty in attracting bilateral funds.

RS given dispensation to approach bilateral funders for whatever he sees fit: Whether project based or as a coalition.

GB encourages use of the Board, who are keen to help.

RS confirmed Omidyar matched funding requirement now has a deadline of February 2017. Any funds received will release Omidyar funding on a pro-rata basis.

5. Finance report

SG notes exchange rates beneficial.

Monitoring cash flow to ensure three months of operation in reserve.

Potential to increase year one of Hewlett bid to remove some pressure.

Outstanding discussion is in website upgrade.

Need to separate out the editorial and brand changes.

6. AOB

GB formal note of thanks for fantastic work by the team on IATI.

RS will observe the Friends of Publish What You Fund Board meeting on July 21, at which the relationship between Friends and Publish What You Fund will be discussed, including in relation to the Hewlett proposal.