



Report on the CIVICUS Board of Directors Meeting, 22 – 24 May 2023, London – United Kingdom

The CIVICUS Board of Directors held its first physical Board meeting in 2023 from the 22nd of May to the 24th of May 2023.

The Board meeting was held against a backdrop of great global difficulty manifested in shrinking civic space, the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, and escalating cost of living.

On a positive note, the Board celebrated the launch of the State of Civil Society (SoCs) report and CIVICUS' ranking in the Fair Share campaign.

During three days of meetings, the Board covered a broad range of administrative and strategic issues, starting on the first day with a review of the action points from the November 2022 Board meeting. It was noted that most action items had been completed, and the few outstanding are scheduled for completion.

The Chairs of the Operations, Governance and Membership Committees briefed the Board on the work that has been happening in the Committees since the November 2022 Board meeting.

The Board discussed the upcoming Board elections, including the Secretariat's state of preparedness and the establishment of a Nominations Committee to manage the elections.

The Board received a brief on the outcomes of the SIDA Audit, which was followed by an in-depth review of the Risk Register, against which the Board decided to again review the register again at the November Board meeting in line with the comments, suggestions and recommendations noted.

On the second day, the Board discussed the organisation's resourcing strategy and the outcomes of the five-year 2017 – 2022 Strategy Review. It also held a session with representatives of two key networks, the Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) and the Youth Action Team (YAT). The discussions aim to increase the alignment and strengthen working relationships between key groups. The Board also discussed the organisation's accountability mechanism, focusing on the Feedback mechanism and the Safeguarding Policies.

The Board, on the final day, undertook an After-Action Review of the meeting and concluded with a recap of the discussions and agreements from earlier sessions as outlined below:

Board elections:

- The Board established a five-member Nominations Committee (NomsCo) to manage the upcoming Board elections. The NomsCo comprises of four current Board members and one external member.
- The Board requested the NomsCo to develop a diversity statement that reflects the Board's intention to ensure an inclusive elections process. The statement should be shared with members ahead of the election.
- The Board asked NomsCo to draft a list of priorities for the election (criteria) to be emailed to the Board for agreement by July 2023.

SIDA systems audit

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was asked to share the management response to the audit recommendations with Operations Committee (OpsCo) in June 2023. The Management response should reflect Board's steer on reinforcing CIVICUS' values and ensuring this informs internal systems for reporting and accountability.

Risk register

- The Chief Operations Officer (COO) is requested to review the existing risk report for purposes of the external audit.
- The SLT to review the next iteration of the Risk Report that comes to the Board in November 2023, to ensure that strategic risks (relevant to the mandate of the Board) are reflected and assessed.

Resourcing strategy

- A proposal was made to continue the resourcing conversation within the framework of the Costed Strategy for 2022-27. This would ensure that approaches and choices are being made within the context of the organisation's strategic priorities.

2017-22 Strategy review

- Agreement for the Board's involvement in celebrating and communicating lessons and outcomes from the strategy review. The SLT is to revert with a Communications Plan, which includes the proposal for a Board-led webinar with CIVICUS members.

Networks engagement

- It was suggested that the Board Focal Points be involved in reporting to the networks on the outcomes of the network's conversation.
- Proposal to clarify queries raised and timelines for the next steps by end June. This would include:
 - SLT clarification on sub-granting arrangements with AGNA Coordination.
 - SLT clarification on availability of support for AGNA staff requests as part of the 2023-24 Budget Plan.
 - A schedule for quarterly meetings with SLT focal point.
 - NomsCo clarification on the election process and priorities via Board Focal Points
- A written mandate is to be set up for the Board Focal Points, over and above the outline provided in the agreements – a clear outline of the extent of the delegated authority.
- A shared folder that holds existing network agreements is to be set up, and a learning paper on CIVICUS' experience incubating the networks is to be submitted at the November Board meeting.

Mental health services

- It was noted that CIVICUS staff and their families and the CIVICUS Board could access a global platform called Lifeworks for mental health services.
- The Board Chair undertook to investigate other possibilities that are accessible to civil society actors that could be shared with CIVICUS members.

Future of International Civil Society Week (ICSW)

- It was noted that several civil society actors are keen to have the ICSW as the moment for civil society to come together to discuss the post-2030 agenda.
- A concept note on the ICSW will be prepared for discussion at the November Board meeting. The Board noted a call for a more sustainable model for the ICSW.