Minute of UKEF Board meeting – 10 March 2022

**Present:**

Noel Harwerth (Chair)

Alistair Clark

Cameron Fox

Lawrence Weiss

Louis Taylor

Kim Wiehl

Candida Morley

Samir Parkash

Oliver Peterken

Matt Barnes (Observer)

Davinder Mann (Observer)

Gordon Welsh (Observer)

[redacted] (Observer)

**Apologies:**

Andrew Mitchell

**Secretariat:**

[redacted]

**Attendees**:

Jackie Keogh, Davinder Mann; [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] (item 7), E Eshun (item 1), [redacted] (item 4); Shane Lynch (item 5); [redacted] (item 6);

1. Introduction
   1. The Chair welcomed Members and attendees to the meeting and checked whether Members had any interests to declare. There were no interests declared.
2. CEO update
   1. The CEO delivered his monthly update to the Board, which focussed on the war in Ukraine and the impact on UKEF’s business. In addition, Louis covered ongoing progress made across UKEF’s various functions and the Head of Legal joined to provide an update on the judicial review.
   2. The Board discussed the updates provided.
3. Draft Minutes and Actions Log of 27 January 2022 Meeting
   1. The draft minutes were approved, and the actions log discussed.
4. EGAC update
   1. The Chair of EGAC provided an update to the Board on the recent EGAC meeting. It was noted that the agenda for EGAC was dovetailing well with the UKEF Board meeting and that Board participation in EGAC meetings had developed.
   2. **Risks and opportunities of the Trade Finance Division (TFD) working with banks outside of the big 5**
   3. The [redacted] presented a paper to the Board detailing the risks and opportunities of onboarding new banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) onto UKEF’s delegated schemes.
   4. The meeting discussed the issues raised particularly on whether UKEF was comfortable dealing with due diligence on both agents and organisations; and whether there were any banks/ NBFIs lined up.
   5. It was agreed that [redacted] would have a conversation with Alistair Clark to discuss further.

**ACTION: Alistair Clark to meet with [redacted].**

1. People Survey results
   1. The Director of Resources presented a paper on the results of the Civil Service People Survey. It was noted that the paper was discussed briefly at the last Board meeting and that the Board had requested a more detailed discussion.
   2. Members discussed the numbers of staff returning to the office and which demographics were more likely to attend. It was noted that the younger cohort were more likely to want to work from home. It was agreed that a communications detailing how the office should be used would be helpful.
   3. The meeting were informed of the current staff churn rate, noting that it had increased due to the buoyant private sector market. It was agreed that the Director of Resources would provide more data on leavers, where they were going and why, to the May Board meeting as part of the People Update.

**ACTION: Shane Lynch to include data on leavers’ intentions and reasons for leaving in the People Update in May.**

1. CSO Engagement
   1. [redacted], provided a paper on Civil Society Organisation engagement. It was noted that EC approved had SPoCC’s recommendation to “adopt a strategic approach to engagement with civil society” in November 2021 and this paper provided an update to the Board on progress. The paper set out the background of the strategy, the objectives of engagement with civil society and explanation of the approach. Members noted it was informed by (i) feedback from EC and EGAC, (ii) insight into how other ECAs and OGDs engage with civil society and (iii) consultation across the department.
   2. Members discussed the presentation, and agreed it was important to engage but should remain clear-eyed that it won’t remove criticism, rather it will lead to better informed criticism. The meetings were informed of the methodology of selecting organisations to engage with and how. Members agreed it was vital that those that engage with CSOs should be media trained and that agreed lines are kept to.
2. Business Performance Updates
   1. The Chair began this item thanking the Head of Business Group, Gordon Welsh for his long and distinguished service at UK Export Finance, noting that this would be his last appearance at the UKEF Board. The Board agreed that Gordon had done a wonderful job.
   2. Gordon took the meeting through a dashboard and active deal list to update the Board on the performance of the Business Group.
   3. The Chief Risk Officer updated the meeting on the macroeconomic picture and progress within the Risk Management Group. The meeting discussed the stressed cases within the UKEF portfolio and the issues surrounding procurement for the next re-insurance tranche.
   4. The Chief Finance and Operating Officer updated the meeting on the monthly finance dashboard and introduced the Head of PMO who provided an update on the Change Programme. It was noted that the Purchase 2 Programme remained delayed.
3. Mission Statement
   1. [redacted] presented an item on UKEF’s Mission Statement. Members heard that UKEF was undertaking a review of its mission statement, partly in response to the International Trade Committee (ITC) report on the department published last September, which recommended that UKEF’s mission statement should better reflect the UK’s environmental, social, and human rights (ESHR) commitments, including issues such as modern slavery, bribery, and corruption. It was noted that EC had discussed this issue on the 21 February and EGAC had inputted on 7 March.
   2. The Board discussed the two options listed in the paper and agreed that they preferred option 2. It was agreed that the wording should be clarified and expanded on in the Annual Report and Accounts and a session would be set up to discuss this wording further with Members of EGAC and the Board.

**ACTION: Secretariat to set up meeting between Members of EGAC, the Board and Startegy Team to discuss clarifying wording for the Mission Statement in the Annual Report and Accounts.**

1. Committee Chairs’ update
   1. Members were updated on the Audit and Risk Committee meetings that took place in February.
   2. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Oliver Peterken for his service to the Board as a Member and as Risk Committee Chair.
2. Any other business
   1. There was no other business