

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

04 July 2022 (updated following review)

Present: Samir Parkash (Chair)
Louis Taylor
Esi Eshun
Shane Lynch
Paul Neville
Tim Reid
Cameron Fox
Davinder Mann
Richard Simon-Lewis

Attendees: [REDACTED] (item 1)
[REDACTED] (item 3)
[REDACTED] (item 4)
[REDACTED] (item 4)

Secretary: [REDACTED] & [REDACTED]

1 **Performance Ratings for Validation**

- 1.1 The Director of Resources presented the performance ratings and their distribution across the department.
- 1.2 EC focused on the distribution in respect of gender, ethnicity and disability and noted gaps in relation to ethnicity.
- 1.3 EC signed off the Performance Ratings Validation approach, including changes to the ratings of staff at the Executive Officer (EO) grade.
- 1.4 Members discussed potential improvements to the process including guidance to managers, evidence collection, timeliness and the process and sequence of communicating ratings to staff.
- 1.5 The meeting noted that the process will be reviewed later in the year, at which point, EC will discuss again.
- 1.6 The Director of Resources recorded his thanks to [REDACTED], Head of Casework, Operations and Policy, for [REDACTED] work on this exercise.

2 **Review of Minutes & Actions, and DIT, HMT, x-WH and General Updates**

- 1.1 EC noted that the minutes for 27 June would be available at the next meeting.

1.2 EC reviewed the actions log.

1.3 The meeting noted updates on the headcount review, engagement with HM Treasury and submissions to Secretary of State.

3 Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) Operating Cost 2022-23 – May 2022 Analysis

3.1 The Head of Financial Planning presented the most recent analysis of the 2022-23 RDEL focusing on areas of underspend.

3.2 The meeting heard that the underspend for May was £1.3m and, cumulatively for the financial year so far, £2.7m, although the underspend was temporary due to cost phasing and budget holders' expectations.

3.3 Members questioned the extent to which the underspend was temporary, noting the historical patterns and ongoing challenges particularly around recruitment, and agreed that a contingency fund should be established which could be topped up each month.

3.4 EC discussed the potential uses of a contingency fund and agreed to spend time at the upcoming Away Day to consider the options, especially in relation to Change Board projects.

4 Action: Secretariat to ask [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to flag to SoS' office that we are building up an underspend and we expect to be submitting requests for suppliers going forward.

5 UKEF Sustainability Policy Statement and Environmental, Social and Human Rights (ESHR) Policy Update

5.1 The Head of the Policy and Products Division (PPD) and Deputy Head of the Environment and Social (E&S) team presented a paper proposing a new public-facing Sustainability Policy Statement and an update of the existing ESHR policy.

5.2 The Head of PPD updated the meeting of the review of the current ESHR policy and the need to update it to reflect UKEF's increasingly proactive approach to sustainability.

5.3 EC raised the issue of ensuring that processes are in place to ensure that any expectations raised by the Statement will be fulfilled.

5.4 Members discussed the importance of alignment between the Sustainability Statement and the new Mission Statement as well as with compliance more broadly.

5.5 EC approved the paper, subject to the inclusion of references to compliance and the Mission Statement. EC noted that the paper will be submitted to EGAC, with the possibility of a subsequent consultation with stakeholders.

6 **Any other business**

6.1 EC discussed recent internal communications on the interim Chief Executive arrangements.

[REDACTED]

Strategy, Policy and Climate Change Division

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

11 July 2022

Present: Samir Parkash (Chair)
Esi Eshun
Shane Lynch
Paul Neville
Cameron Fox
Davinder Mann

Attendees: Louis Taylor
Tim Reid
Richard Simon-Lewis

Secretary: [REDACTED]

7 **Review of Minutes & Actions, and DIT, HMT, x-WH and General Updates**

7.1 EC noted that the minutes for 27 June and 4 July were not yet available and actions log was unavailable due to IT issues.

7.2 The meeting noted the Ministerial change and discussed an upcoming call with the Secretary of State and DIT on Ukraine. Members discussed the Ukraine reconstruction conference in Warsaw and asked for the reinstatement of the internal weekly Ukraine meeting.

Action: Secretariat to liaise with Strategy team to reinstate meeting.

7.3 There were several issues outstanding with the Ministers: approval of consultancy spends for setting up a procurement team; the pay remit; and HMT sign-off salary for CEO recruitment. Private Office was alert to these.

7.4 The Director of Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) raised a problem with the government-wide mobile phone contract. UKEF staff had been unable to get reception on their work phones while on trips to West Africa and Central America.

7.5 The Director of Resourcing confirmed the interim arrangements for management of the SPoCC Directorate once the Director leaves at the end of the week. All interim arrangements will revert to the original structure once a new Director is in place, which may be three or more months.

8 **International Update**

- 8.1 The Head of the International Team delivered an update on the current discussions with the OECD in respect of areas of interest to the EGAC. These covered Climate Change Sector Understanding (CCSU), fossil fuel projects, bribery and corruption, sustainability lending and Common Approaches.
- 8.2 The meeting heard the requests that would be made of EGAC. UKEF had received a letter from civil society organisations (CSOs) calling on the UK government through UKEF to propose at the OECD restrictions on ECA support to oil and gas projects overseas. The Committee agreed that while UKEF will engage with some of the CSOs with the support of the COP26 unit, EGAC members should be asked to consider whether their presence at such engagement meetings may be useful.
- 8.3 EGAC members would also be asked to advise on shaping a UKEF-hosted workshop in December 2022 for OECD export credit group bribery experts.
- 8.4 The Chair and Director of SPoCC noted that the International team's activities at the OECD reinforced UKEF's ethos to be a leader in levelling the playing field across ECAs.

9 How UKEF reaches SMEs and considers impediments to greater access and greater use of trade products

- 9.1 Further to a request from EGAC members for more awareness of UKEF's efforts to reach and support SMEs, the Deputy Director for Marketing and Communications presented a paper which should give them more clarity and confidence when publicly talking about UKEF activity.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the update and agreed with the approach. They asked how the work was coordinated and integrated with other UKEF activities. The meeting was advised that it is supported by a cross-divisional SME working group.
- 9.3 After the meeting an EC member observed there was little detail on the impediments, specifically what the challenges are to greater access and greater use of trade products.

ACTION: M&C to consider the comment and whether there is a need to provide detail on the impediments to greater access and greater use of trade products by SMEs.

10 Cabinet Office Clearing House Review

10.1 The Head of Knowledge and Information provided an update on the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's review of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Clearing House, the body that coordinates responses to certain FOI requests across government.

10.2 UKEF's feedback had highlighted tension in the remit of the Clearing House and requested clarity of its role as being advisory and giving guidance rather than directive to avoid overbearing on UKEF's independence.

10.3 The Committee commented on the importance of FOIs and the quality and timeliness of responses from the UKEF team, however noted that resourcing and turnover within the team was problematic.

11 Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) Enquiry

11.1 The Head of Information Access, Briefing and Parliamentary Branch updated EC on EAC's inquiry into the financial sector and the UK's net zero transition, that launched on 30th May 2022. No evidence has been published to date, nor have any dates been set for hearings. The meeting heard that the Terms of Reference were more extensive with a greater depth of detail than is usually found with select committee hearings. UKEF may be approached for detail on projects that have been supported. It was suggested that UKEF could offer staff as witnesses.

12 Any other business

12.1 The Committee noted that it was the last EC meeting with the current Director of SPoCC, Davinder Mann. The Chair and colleagues noted her valuable contributions and work for UKEF over the last 13 years and wished her well in her new role.

[REDACTED]

Strategy, Policy and Climate Change Division

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

18 July 2022

Present: Samir Parkash (Chair)
Esi Eshun
Shane Lynch
Paul Neville
Cameron Fox
Julia Beck

Attendees: Louis Taylor
Tim Reid

Secretary: [REDACTED]

13 Review of Minutes & Actions, and DIT, HMT, x-WH and General Updates

13.1 EC noted that the minutes for 27 June and 11 July were not yet available and agreed the minute from the 4 July was an accurate record. The actions log was noted and discussed.

13.2 The meeting noted the pay remit agreement; that the sign-off for the CEO recruitment had gone to the Chief Secretary of the Treasury but was being delayed; discussed the latest position on the civil service staffing cuts; and that a meeting with the new Minister of Exports was pencilled in for w/c 25th July.

13.3 Members heard that HM Treasury had signed off the FRC business case but had not yet signed off other parts of the budget. It was noted a paper would be provided to EC giving details on the status of the project. HM Treasury had been delayed reviewing the FRC Business case because of internal issues, not project-related.

13.4 It was noted that the Secretary of State was on leave until September and Members noted the duty minister process.

14 Talent Management

14.1 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] introduced this item following the completion of the 2022 Talent Management cycle, and EC were asked to review the Talent Management Departmental Profile for 2022/23.

14.2 Our current Talent process is aligned to the 'start of year' actions to help with making the distinction between performance and talent discussions stronger.

14.3 Members noted that the succession planning talent box featuring the names of G6/G7 staff was shared with Remuneration and Nominations Committee every 6 months.

14.4 The meeting discussed what a journey through the 9 boxes might look like and heard that some of the professions within Government look at the grid box and target moving staff within Government. There was a request for more guidance on the talent journey to help managers have such discussions.

ACTION: Director of Resourcing to review guidance available for managers on the talent journey and ensure there is clear access to the guidance.

15 Short term products – premium reconciliation issues

15.1 Members noted that a paper was presented to EC in February 2022 outlining some of the issues around the short term (ST) products, particularly in relation to the reconciliation of premium owing from the banks.

15.2 The meeting heard that a contractor and two temporary staff were recruited until the end of June to support on reducing the backlog and formulate proposals for improvement in the medium to long term.

15.3 Members were informed that a considerable amount of work had been done clearing the historic backlog numbers which had reduced significantly from 223 legacy BSS items to 24, and 622 legacy EWCS items to 48.

15.4 The Committee discussed the performance of the Banks, and the lack of clarity on their data. Whilst initial feedback from the Banks on aligning BSS and EWCS reporting with GEF reporting was positive, when this was raised in the Banks operational forum, the response was much less positive.

15.5 The Committee were informed that individual meetings with each Bank were convened to understand their processes and discuss any reluctance to move to monthly reporting. To date, three Bank meetings had taken place ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]) and all these Banks can provide reporting in line with our requirements. [REDACTED] has also confirmed it will pilot a new

EWCS case on monthly reporting and this was to be discussed in more detail during the upcoming meeting with them.

15.6 Members discussed [REDACTED]'s reluctance to change their processes for EWCS as this would involve significant system changes for them. [REDACTED]

15.7 **ACTION: Esi to speak to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about potential fraud risk.**

16 New website - OCCMC

16.1 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] presented a paper detailing progress on the design of a bespoke website, ukexportfinance.gov.uk; to increase awareness of UKEF and our offer; increase SME lead generation and uptake of export finance – making it simple for SMEs and key partners to understand what we do and how we can help.

16.2 The meeting discussed the limitations with the gov.uk and GREAT sites. It was noted that the plans for the new website were being road tested with clients and colleagues. In particular it was noted that it was important for the website to cater to overseas buyers as historically, our web material was not made with them in mind.

16.3 Members discussed the governance around the website project and it was agreed that [REDACTED] would speak to [REDACTED] as this project was outside the scope of Change Board.

16.4 **ACTION: [REDACTED] to speak to [REDACTED] re: governance of website project.**

17 Any other business

17.1 There was no other business.

[REDACTED]

Strategy, Policy and Climate Change Division