



Minutes (public version)

TRA Board Meeting

Date	4 November 2024	Time	09:00
Venue	TRA Office MS Teams		
Members	Nick Baird (Chair)	Chair	
	Clare Brodie (CB)	General Counsel	
	Oliver Griffiths (CE)	Chief Executive	
	John Hughes (JH)	Non-Executive Director	
	Adam Marshall (AM)	Senior Independent Director	
	Steve O'Donoghue (SO'D)	Director of Corporate Services	
ExCo	Director of Communications & External Affairs	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Investigations Compliance Director	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Investigations Delivery Director	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Investigations Delivery Director (maternity cover)	Trade Remedies Authority	
In Attendance	Private Secretary to Chief Executive	Trade Remedies Authority	
Item 10	Independent member of ARAC	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Head of Governance & Business Services	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Governance and Secretariat Adviser	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Director Trade Defence, DBT	Department for Business and Trade	
Presenters			
Item 10	Head of Digital	Trade Remedies Authority	
Items 8	Head of Finance & Commercial	Trade Remedies Authority	
Items 10	Digital Project Manager	Trade Remedies Authority	
Apologies	Chief Economist	Trade Remedies Authority	

Item Ref	Item	Action owner Due date
1.	Welcome, apologies and declaration of interest	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	He also noted an independent member of ARAC would be attending for the digital items. It was confirmed that appropriate governance around the attendance had been considered with DBT.	
1.3	Apologies were received from the Chief Economist and there were no additional declarations of interest to note.	
2.	Minutes of last meeting and actions arising	
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were approved.	
2.2	Action tracker The action tracker was reviewed and outcomes on funding of capability-based pay noted.	
2.3	The Board noted with satisfaction the closure of all remaining items.	
3.	Chair's report	
3.1	The Chair gave an update on internal and external stakeholder activity since the last meeting.	
3.2	The Chair noted an upcoming interview scheduled with Civil Service World for their December edition. The intention is to raise the TRA's profile within government. This is also the aim of the proposed Parliamentary event, which is currently with DBT for a decision on timing, likely in late January.	
3.3	The Chair updated the Board on the situation regarding the terms and conditions for TRA staff transferring back to the Civil Service.	
3.4	SO'D thanked the Chair for his leadership on the terms and conditions issue and for providing an update to all staff last week.	
3.5	The Chair updated on the current NED recruitment campaign noting how impressed he had been with the quality of candidates.	
4.	Political environment check-in	
4.1	The Board noted an update on the current political environment. This was followed by a discussion about some potential scenarios following the upcoming US election.	
4.2	The Board noted that Minister Alexander is leading on the trade strategy which is still working to an April 2025 deadline.	
5.	Chief Executive's report	
5.1	The CE noted that a new cohort of investigators have just been recruited with surge resourcing due to start by the end of the financial year.	
5.2	He also noted the benefit realisations starting to come from the case strategy and future TRS.	
6.	Cases update	

6.1	The Investigations Delivery Director gave an update on case strategy, expressing how pleased they were with the positive innovations coming through but noting the picture is still mixed.	
6.2	The case strategy project board would meet in December and decide which trials to keep and which to stop.	
6.3	The Board received an update on some specific cases.	
7.	Performance and risk report	
7.1	SO'D presented the performance and risk reports.	
7.2	Performance report It was noted the KPIs and PIs relating to the People Survey scores will be updated in January and the external stakeholder survey results will be available in time for the February Board meeting.	
7.3	There was further discussion and suggestions on communications and cybersecurity KPIs and PIs.	
8.	Finance report	
8.1	The Head of Finance and Commercial joined for this item and reported on the budget for the current financial year.	
8.2	25/26 - Spending review Director, Trade Defence updated the Board that the DBT ExCo were anticipated to be making a decision this week on the TRA budget allocation for FY25/26.	
8.3	He also noted the commission for the spending review process is expected to be issued in mid-November.	
8.4	The Head of Finance and Commercial clarified to the Board that the TRA's business planning exercise for FY25/26 will be an internal exercise only and there will be no requirement for Board involvement.	
8.5	The Board questioned if there is a risk of over-expanding in FY25/26 only to find there are insufficient funds to maintain this in future years.	
8.6	The Board will be involved in the 3 year spending review process and extraordinary Board meetings will be set up to facilitate this.	Secretariat Dec-2024
9.	Post Board strategy day update	
9.1	The Head of Governance and Business Services noted that the outcome of the strategy day will feed into the spending review bid.	
9.2	The Head of Governance and Business Services proposed to delay launching the next 3yr plan until April 2026. This would allow for better alignment with the spending review period (which begins April 2026). It would also allow time for external stakeholder consultation after the trade strategy is launched.	
9.3	The Head of Governance and Business Services walked through the planning assumptions that came out of the strategy day and stressed the TRA's openness to quantifying the cost of policy options.	
9.4	The Board and Director, Trade Defence confirmed their agreement to delay the publication of the next TRA 3yr Plan until April 2026.	
9.5	A discussion was had on communication to external stakeholders and what public communications should be provided ahead of the start of financial year	

	2025/26, noting the 2025-26 annual report and accounts will need to report against TRA targets.	
9.6	The Head of Governance and Business Services suggested a simple 2-pager outlining slightly updated KPIs and an explanation of why the 3yr plan has not been updated.	
9.10	Other suggestions were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the new timelines clear • Provide good narrative to assist with lining up the TRA Forum 	
9.11	It was noted that revised KPIs will be brought to Board for approval in February.	
10.	Digital and data strategy	
10.1	The Head of Digital, Digital Project Manager, and independent member of ARAC joined for this item.	
10.2	The Chair explained the purpose of this session was to gauge the level of opportunity on digital.	
10.3	There was an in-depth discussion on the TRA's digital strategy and appetite for AI.	
10.4	The Board noted the greatest opportunity AI can provide is on efficiency savings.	
10.5	The Board agreed the opportunity is large but suggested the strategy needs to be more explicit before tools are discussed.	
10.6	The Board decided that developing a roadmap for an AI project is the next most important priority. This should be progressed at the earliest opportunity.	
10.7	The Board noted ExCo and ARAC would be tasked to ensure current priorities stay on track.	
10.8	TRS contingency The Board discussed the contingency figure for Future TRS.	
10.9	It was confirmed that the CE would inform Board if and when any contingency is used.	
10.10	The Head of Governance and Business Services explained changes to the scheme of delegation are currently in progress and this will come to Board for approval once finalised.	Secretariat Dec-2024
11.	Annual Board effectiveness evaluation	
11.1	The Board were provided with a summary of the evaluation outcomes.	
11.2	The Head of Governance and Business Services explained there would be an independent Board evaluation taking place next autumn. The timing was to ensure new members had attended at least two full Board meetings. The Board agreed this would be most appropriate.	
11.3	The Board approved the suggested changes to the Board, ARAC and RemCo terms of reference.	Secretariat Nov-2024
12.	ARAC Chair's report	
12.1	JH gave an update on the last meeting, reminding all that ARAC is a sub-committee of Board and responsible to them.	
12.2	Items discussed at the last meeting included:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit action tracking • Finance • TRS • Governance oversight audit 	
12.3	JH also gave two member updates. Firstly, the appointment of a new independent member of ARAC with digital expertise and secondly he noted that the independent member of ARAC with finance expertise, would be leaving next year after the conclusion of the ARA. The aim would be to launch a similar style recruitment campaign for their replacement.	
12.4	It was also noted the ARAC away day would be taking place at the end of November.	
13.	RemCo Chair's report	
13.1	The Chair updated the Board on the recent RemCo meeting.	
14.	To note: Board forward workplan	
14.1	This item was noted.	
15.	Any other business	
15.1	There was no other business.	
15.	Meeting close	
15.1	The meeting ended at 12:32.	

Date of next meeting: 26 February 2025

Location: TRA office, Reading