

## Minutes (public version)

### TRA Board Meeting

<b>Date</b>	30 April 2025	<b>Time</b>	12:45
<b>Venue</b>	TRA Office MS Teams		
<b>Members</b>	Nick Baird (Chair)	Chair	
	Steve O'Donoghue (ICE)	Interim Chief Executive	
	Adam Marshall (AM)	Senior Independent Director	
	John Alty (JA)	Non-Executive Director	
	Guita Blake (GB)	Non-Executive Director	
	Patricia Gallan (PG)	Non-Executive Director	
	John Hughes (JH)	Non-Executive Director	
<b>ExCo</b>	Chief Economist	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Director of Communications & External Affairs	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Chief Investigations Decision Officer	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Investigations Delivery Director	Trade Remedies Authority	
<b>DBT</b>	Director Trade Defence,	Department for Business and Trade	
Item 4	Director Trade Strategy,	Department for Business and Trade	
<b>In Attendance</b>	Head of Governance & Business Services	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Board Governance and Secretariat Manager	Trade Remedies Authority	
Item 4	Head of Operational Policy	Trade Remedies Authority	
<b>Observers</b>	Jessica Blakely (JB)	Chief Executive designate	
	Carmen Suarez (CS)	Chief Executive designate	
<b>Presenters</b>			
Item 7	Head of Digital & Technology	Trade Remedies Authority	
	Capgemini		
	FCDO		
Item 8 and 9	Head of Finance and Commercial	Trade Remedies Authority	
Item 8	Head of People	Trade Remedies Authority	
<b>Apologies</b>	Clare Brodie (CB)	General Counsel	

Item Ref	Item	Action owner Due date
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, apologies and declaration of interest</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed JB and CS to the meeting and updated that they will officially join TRA as the new Chief Executives in a jobshare arrangement from 2 June 2025.	
1.2	Apologies were received from CB who was in Geneva attending WTO Rules Week.	
1.3	There were no declarations of interest noted.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of last meeting and actions arising</b>	
2.1	The minutes of the meetings held on 26 February and 3 March 2025 were approved.	
2.2	<b>Action tracker</b> Comments on the TRS items were discussed later in the meeting.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Chair's report</b>	
3.1	The Chair extended on his welcome to the new Chief Executives.	
3.2	JB and CS each introduced themselves covering their backgrounds and previous experience, noting they had been in a jobshare arrangement together since 2017.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Political environment check-in</b>	
4.1	Director Trade Strategy, DBT and the Head of Operational Policy joined the meeting for this item.	
4.2	Director Trade Defence, DBT gave an overview of the current political environment, noting how quickly things have moved since the last Board meeting.	
4.3	Aside from the key issues around British Steel and the US tariffs, he noted the primary focus was the growth agenda and how to extract the maximum growth potential from trade.	
4.4	DW updated that DBT have submitted their spending review bid and expect the settlement figure to be confirmed in June.	
4.5	<b>Trade Strategy update</b> Director Trade Strategy, DBT provided an overview of the current status of the trade strategy, discussing the key features and potential timing for publication.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's report</b>	
5.1	The ICE opened this item reflecting on the all staff event and whether it promoted the right culture and level of engagement needed for the challenges ahead.	
5.2	Feedback from the non-executive directors that were able to attend the event were noted.	
5.3	The Chair suggested a highly skilled process manager could work to fix some of the small issues that are being experienced by staff.	

5.4	CS enquired how are we feeding back to staff what we will do with the ideas floated at the staff event.	
5.5	A discussion followed on the plans in place to progress the three priority areas that had been agreed recently, as well as the 'future-fit' team that was being created to ensure progress was made promptly.	<b>SO'D Jun-25</b>
5.6	Questions were raised on the posts currently being prioritised for recruitment and whether there is flexibility within the skillset being hired. The Board noted that a large portion are investigator roles which could flex into pre-app or be used as backfill for section 7 requests as required.	
5.7	The Chair noted that surging pre-app is not just about adding people, but also doing things differently, for example proactively helping industry put together the data required for an application.	
5.8	There was a discussion around measures and KPIs and what would define success in these new areas i.e. industry feeling things are different, cases being quicker. The ICE agreed to take away the suggestion for creating KPIs in each of the three areas.	
5.9	The Board reflected on the need to focus on outcomes.	
5.10	CS noted that we need to work out how to engage with different sectors who may not be familiar with the trade remedies.	
5.11	The Chief Economist updated the Board on the sectors that may be at risk of trade deflection. He also explained how we already have the ability to manually monitor import data to spot any surges that may require action and work has started to build an automated monitoring system.	
5.12	The Board suggested TRA meet directly with HMRC.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Cases update</b>	
6.1	The Chief Investigations Decisions Officer provided an update on the ongoing judicial review and noted the final recommendation for the case would be going to the SoS later in the week.	
6.2	Other cases including steel safeguards, bus and lorry tyres and engine oils were discussed.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>TRS</b>	
7.1	The Chair welcomed Capgemini and FCDO to the meeting for this item, noting TRS is a critical project for the TRA and should be reviewed at Board level.	
7.2	It was noted that the project is focused on creating a plan with the aim of completing a walk-through with all suppliers and with sign up from everyone. Once completed, it will come back to Board for a decision.	
7.3	The Board requested that TRS comes back to Board for approval at the end of May.	<b>SO'D / Head of D&amp;T May-25</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Business planning, spending review and resourcing</b>	
8.1	The Head of Finance and Commercial provided an update on the spending review settlement due to be confirmed in June. She noted three areas to be funded via the agile fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pre-app expansion;</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management of demand; and</li> <li>• AI/data work</li> </ul>	
8.2	The Head of People updated the Board on resourcing and the market engagement taking place to secure a strategic partnership.	
8.3	Discussion was had on the changes we have made to recruit at pace.	
8.4	The Board noted that the TRA is proactively exploring options to access Civil Service surge response teams and redeployment lists.	
8.5	The need for additional bandwidth at grade 6 was noted.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Finance report</b>	
9.1	This item was noted.	
<b>10.</b>	<b>ARAC Chair's report</b>	
10.1	JH presented this item.	
10.2	It was noted GIAA had completed all audits on time for 2024-25..	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Performance and risk report</b>	
11.1	The Head of Governance and Business Services presented this item noting the paper included both 2024-25 results and an example of the future dashboard.	
11.2	The Board noted the approach to performance monitoring has matured, with the data providing more insight and the process becoming more rigorous.	
11.3	The Board suggested they could be assured with a less comprehensive amount of data and a simple RAG rated report.	<b>Head of GBS Jun-25</b>
11.4	The Board also noted the performance reporting of cases, the 3 priorities from the SoS meeting and change projects would all be reported through her team moving forward.	
11.5	There was a discussion on strategic risks.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Board development and strategy day</b>	
12.1	There was a discussion on holding a Board/ExCo development day ahead of the annual strategy day, for which DBT would usually be present.	
12.2	It was also noted we are due to complete an external Board effectiveness review this year, which was delayed from last year, and agreed we should not merge these items but hold the effectiveness review later in the year.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>To note: Monitoring and evaluation project</b>	
13.1	The Board suggested talking more about the story on this and the Chief Economist agreed to look at this after the trade strategy has been published.	<b>Chief Economist Aug-25</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>To note: Commercial services</b>	
14.1	This item was discussed in the ARAC Chair's report.	
<b>15.</b>	<b>To note: Board forward workplan</b>	
15.1	This item was noted.	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
16.1	There was a discussion on declarations of interest.	

17.	<b>Meeting close</b>	
17.1	The meeting ended at 17:00.	

**Date of next meeting: 25 June 2025**

**Location: TRA office, Reading**