Trade Remedies Authority

TRA Board meeting minutes (public version)

Date: 29 October 2025

Time: 12:00

Venue: TRA Office Reading; MS Teams

Members:

Nick Baird — Chair

Carmen Suarez — Chief Executive

John Alty — Non-Executive Director

Guita Blake — Non-Executive Director

Clare Brodie — General Counsel

Patricia Gallan — Non-Executive Director

John Hughes — Non-Executive Director

Adam Marshall — Senior Independent Director

Steve O'Donoghue — Director of Corporate Services

ExCo:

Chief Economist — Trade Remedies Authority

Investigations Delivery Directors — Trade Remedies Authority

DBT:

Director Trade Defence — Department for Business & Trade

In Attendance:

Private Secretary to the Chief Executive — Trade Remedies Authority

Head of Governance and Business Services — Trade Remedies Authority

Board Governance and Secretariat Manager — Trade Remedies Authority

Presenters:

Items 6 — Head of Finance and Commercial — Trade Remedies Authority

Item 7 — Head of Reconsiderations and Compliance — Trade Remedies Authority

Item 7 — External Independent Reviewer

Observers: Nous Group

1. Welcome, apologies and declaration of interest

The Chair introduced Nous Group as observers as they are conduction the board effectiveness review this year, as per Cabinet Office guidance it is best practice to hold an external review every three years.

The Board noted a declaration of interest from a non-executive director in relation to a new role, with no expected conflicts identified.

2. Minutes of last meeting and actions arising

The Board approved the minutes of the meetings held on 25 June and 7 July.

The Board requested a further update on the TRA's desktop services provider once TRS had been completed.

3. Chief Executive's report

The Board received a strategic update from the Chief Executive covering Secretary of State priorities, risk appetite, TRS, finance, organisational restructuring and the strategic refresh.

The Board noted progress against Secretary of State priorities.

The Board noted that budgets for the current and following year were challenging and that TRA was working with DBT on finance matters.

The Board discussed the strategic refresh and noted the need to consider other value for money options in future stakeholder engagement.

4. Political environment check-in

The Board noted updates on the spending review, DBT restructuring, the WTO, the steel strategy and potential implications for TRA case demand.

5. Finance report: FY25/26 and FY26/27

The Board reviewed the finance report and noted the FY26/27 scenarios presented to DBT, expected funding issues and the impact of slowed recruitment on funding requirements.

The Board discussed FY25/26 financial pressures and TRS costs.

6. Procedural improvements

The Board discussed procedural improvement recommendations and agreed that the action plan be reviewed regularly by Board and ARAC.

7. Strategy day follow up and TRA strategy

The Board received an update on the process for updating the vision and mission and agreed to hold an additional Board session in December to consider this and other live issues.

8. Cases update

The Board noted an expected increase in case activity and the value of the work being undertaken by the Advisory Service.

9. ARAC chair's report

The Board received an update from the ARAC Chair on TRS, finance and commercial services, assurance routes and a risk relating to the internal audit programme.

The Board noted that an informal finance discussion may be needed in December and that ARAC's finance expert should be invited.

10. Performance, risk and forward workplan

The Board noted the need to express and communicate its risk appetite clearly across the organisation.

The Board requested changes to the forward workplan.

11. Any other business and close

The Board discussed the cadence of Board meetings.

The meeting closed at 16:46.