



**ICoCA Q1 2024 Board Meeting**  
**26<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**Virtual**

**Minutes**

**Present (Board)**

- Frédéric Chenais (Chair)
- Carmen Rosa De León-Escribano
- Frank P. Amoyaw
- Michelle Quinn
- Caleb Wanga
- Susan Benda
- Paul Smith
- Vicky Bowman
- Carmen Rosa de León-Escribano
- Caleb Wanga
- Chinwike Okereke

**Present (Observing/Supporting)**

- Joan Fontaine (UK)
- Orlando Bianchetti (CH)
- Barney Searle (UK)
- Amanda Wall

**Present (ICoCA Secretariat)**

- Christopher Galvin (Head of Communications & Outreach)
- Florie Barbotte (Communications & Marketing Officer)
- Tom Mather (Compliance Manager)
- Ana Farrèr (Human Rights Officer)
- Alexandra Garzotto (Finances Manager and Administrative Officer)
- Nada Bessassi (Membership and Certification Officer)
- Jamie Williamson (Executive Director)
- Antoine Perret (CSO Development Manager)
- Dina Chantre (HR and Office Manager)



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## ICoCA Q1 - Virtual Board Meeting

### 1. Agenda

- 1.1. The Chairperson opened the meeting at 3:30PM and welcomed the two new Board Members. He thanked Susan Benda (US Government), who is being replaced by Amanda Wall for her services on the Board. The Chairperson took note that each of the three stakeholder pillars was represented by at least two Board Directors and that at least eight Directors were present. The Chairperson declared that a quorum was present according to [Article 7.6 of ICoCA's Articles of Association \(AoA\)](#), that the meeting was duly constituted and that the Board could adopt resolutions in compliance with the Articles of Association.
- 1.2. Round table for introduction.
- 1.3. The Board approved the meeting agenda.

### 2. Budget and Fundraising

#### 2.1 Budget

- 2.1.1 The Secretariat reported continued growth of ICoCA membership, with 140 companies having joined ICoCA. This growth translates to increased activities for the Secretariat, across all three core functions. The Secretariat is operating to full capacity, and will likely need to expand going forward as the ICoCA membership grows and the organisation's global footprint expands.
- 2.1.2 The growth of the organisation whilst positive, has natural consequences on the demands placed on the Secretariat to serve the membership and external stakeholders.
- 2.1.3 Comparatively, over the last 5 years total expenses have remained relatively stable, with incremental increases to meet demands placed on the Secretariat. Core expenses of \$1.4 million are predicted for 2024, compared to \$1 million in 2019. This represents a 10% growth each year, which is both reasonable and expected.
- 2.1.4 Core funding, on the other hand, has never been lower. Government contributions are decreasing, despite contributions from membership dues having increased, but not sufficiently to meet the drop in core contributions from Governments.
- 2.1.5 Investments in the Secretariat, reduction of overheads and office costs from August 2024, building of strategic partnership with CSOs to bid for project proposals, development of training platforms and more targeted yet expansive outreach and communications, creation of new PSC membership levels, are all initiatives on which real returns will only be seen from 2025 onwards. For membership dues to meet core operational costs, a 2026 horizon at the earliest is envisaged.
- 2.1.6 In Q1, ICoCA submitted a number of project proposals to the EU and US agencies. Regarding the EU proposal, on Accountability, ICoCA has been successful in making it to the final stage of review. A fuller proposal will be submitted in May for decision in Q4 by the EU. The total revenue that could be generated from all of the proposals if



successful would amount to +/- USD 1.8 million, but only from 2025 onwards. The Secretariat noted that the development of such proposals and grant writing is time consuming and requires redirection of critical Secretariat resources for their preparation and submission.

- 2.1.7 For 2024, the only secured core Government funding is from Switzerland. Given the predicted shortfall in core Government funding in 2024, Strategic Reserves will be utilized, as well as additional cost reductions will be required to avoid a deficit. These measures will be essential to bridge the budgetary gap until returns from cited investments materialise, or more core funding from Governments forthcoming. A broader more strategic review of the current business model of ICoCA is also envisaged.
- 2.1.8 The 2024 target for additional core funding is \$300,000 (\$400,000 if there is an AGA and RSF to be organized). This translates into 5 governments investing \$60,000/\$80,000 each annually, over a period of 2 years.

## 2.2 PSC Growth

- 2.2.1 As of the end of Q1 2024, there are 140 PSCs, with 8 new companies but 4 departures which is a natural attrition rate. There is a strong pipeline with 13-15 active applications and the Secretariat anticipates a growth to 170-180 companies by the end of 2024.
- 2.2.2 The number of approved certification bodies has increased, with 11 CBs now, including 2 from maritime security Libero and QMS.
- 2.2.3 The revised Board membership approval process, developed by the Secretariat and adopted by the Board in Q4 2023, has improved efficiencies, and should avoid the delays and revenue losses experienced in 2023.

## 2.3 Communication and Outreach

- 2.3.1 In Q1 2024, the Secretariat has focused on engaging investors, clients and key stakeholder in global supply chains. The Secretariat presented the ESG and Investors Guide as examples of recent tools developed to engage with corporate and financial constituencies.
- 2.3.2 The client working group has been active, allowing for stronger cooperation with ICoCA observers, which includes a number of VPI corporate members.

## 2.4 Fundraising

- 2.4.1 The Secretariat has been focusing on developing a submitting a range of project proposals in cooperation with a range for CSO with which strategic partnerships have been established.
- 2.4.2 The Secretariat summarily reviewed the various projects proposals, including a major Accountability focused EU project, and half a dozen US funded project. Countries of implementation, if successful would include Togo, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Kenya. The Secretariat underscores the importance of a long-term strategy, funding, and relation with the EU.



### 3. **Basra Trip Report**

- 3.1 The Secretariat briefed the Board on the Q1 Basra field mission. Following prioritisation as a key context for ICoCA, Iraq currently boasts the highest number of ICoCA companies and membership dues. More companies are headquartered in Basra than in Baghdad, with all Baghdad-based companies maintaining offices and operations in Basra, primarily due to the presence of oil companies.
- 3.2 Expectations are for continued growth in the number of companies from Iraq joining ICoCA. The ratio of international to national companies is shifting, driven by the increasing professionalism of national companies and heightened government scrutiny faced by international ones, resulting in less profitability than before. There is a growing demand for ICoCA, notably from Chinese companies operating in East Africa.
- 3.3 While ICoCA compliance is generally high, non-ICoCA companies pose risks, particularly concerning modern slavery and human rights abuses, alongside issues like bribery and corruption.
- 3.4 Future steps involve increasing applications, exploring the feasibility of ICoCA presence in Iraq, visits to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and return visits to Baghdad/Basra. The Secretariat emphasized that having a representative in Iraq or the region would be beneficial for reaching out to companies.

### 4. **Mozambique field mission**

- 4.1 The Chairperson discussed Mozambique's accession to the VPs, highlighting a joint mission by DCAF with the UK and Swiss governments for VPs implementation, where ICoCA was represented.
- 4.2 The Executive Director underscored the added value of such joint missions, and reported on the meetings with Private Security Companies in Maputo. He called on Board Government members to consider reach out/démarching Mozambique to join ICoCA.
- 4.3 The chairperson confirmed the need to discuss this further.

### 5. **Uganda field mission:**

- 5.1 The Secretariat noted that with the East African Crude Oil Pipeline project and exploration for critical minerals there is an increased interest in ICoCA membership. Following outreach by the Secretariat and strategic engagement by ICoCA in the region, ICoCA is referenced in the EACOP tendering document.
- 5.2 Regarding ICoCA presence in Uganda, several companies are under review, and given some of the issues arising following the review of membership applications, one company has been rejected and another is under review. The Board emphasizes the need for increased engagement with PSCs rather than outright rejection.
- 5.3 The Board approved a field mission to Uganda in Q3 2024.



## 6. Allegations against ICoCA member company

- 6.1 The Secretariat informed the Board that it had been made aware of allegations against an ICoCA member company of potential human rights abuses in east Africa.
- 6.2 In line with its procedures, ICoCA is engaging with concerned Governments, the company, its client and other relevant entities, including the key human rights NGOs involved in the case.
- 6.3 ICoCA will be submitting formal responses to requesting Governments, and address any compliance concerns.

## 7. AGA and RSF

- 7.1 The Secretariat outlined the logistics and associated costs of the AGA and RSF.
- 7.2 A summary of the AGA showed the attendance of 14 companies, 11 Civil Society organizations, and 5 governments on the first day, with additional attendees on the second day, and 20 Observers. There was a total of 65 participants during the second day, 70 participants during the evening cocktail, and 90 participants at the Responsible Security Forum. A total expenditure of CHF 73,476 over three days (including the Board meeting, AGA, and RSF).
- 7.3. Organizing a second Responsible Security Forum would cost between CHF 25,000 and CHF 40,000, depending on what we are targeting.
- 7.4 The Secretariat questioned the rationale behind spending significant amounts on companies that do not attend and strongly suggested shifting focus to regional meetings, with the RSF likely to be hosted while the AGA may be held remotely to reduce costs.
- 7.5 The chairperson requested the Secretariat to distribute the survey on the AGA and RSF. A decision will be made based on the survey results.

## 8. Wrap Up

- 8.1 This meeting included discussions on project funding, financial matters, and the need to gauge interest from a group willing to invest their time. The Chairperson provided a summary of the main points discussed and the decisions taken at the Q1 2024 Board Meeting and expressed his appreciation to the ICoCA Secretariat for planning and organising it.