ICoCA Q3 - 2024 Board Meeting
24 September 2024
Virtual

Minutes

Present (Board)
- Frédéric Chenais (Chair)
- Carmen Rosa De León-Escribano
- Vicky Bowman
- Chinwike Okereke
- Caleb Wanga
- Amanda Wall
- Paul Smith
- Michelle Quinn
- Crispin Kennedy
- Cui Shoujun
- Frank Amoyaw

Present (Observing/Supporting)
- Orlando Bianchetti (CH)
- Elizabeth Kiingi (US)

Present (ICoCA Secretariat)
- Christopher Galvin (Head of Communications & Outreach)
- Tom Mather (Compliance Manager)
- Ana Farrèr (Human Rights Officer)
- Alexandra Garzotto (Finances Manager and Administrative Officer)
- Jamie Williamson (Executive Director)
- Antoine Perret (CSO Development Manager)
- Dina Chantre (HR and Office Manager)
- Valentina Potapova (Membership Development Officer)
- Florie Barbotte (Communication and Marketing Officer)
- Livy Keane (Intern – From Boston University program)

Agenda Items

ICoCA Q3 - Virtual Board Meeting

1. Agenda

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 3:35PM and welcomed the Board members. 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.

The Chairperson congratulated the Secretariat for the move to the new office.

The Board approved the meeting agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approve 2023 AGA Minutes

The Board reviewed the Minutes of the 2023 AGA Minutes. No comments were made, and the Board approved the Minutes of the 2023 AGA Minutes.

2.2. Approve Q2 - 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

The Board reviewed the Minutes of the Q2 2024 Board Meeting. No comments were made, and the Board approved the Minutes of the Q2 2024 Board Meeting.

3. Update Project Proposals

The Secretariat presented an update on project proposals.

The Secretariat reported that ICoCA has successfully secured project funding for the first time from the European Commission. The Secretariat said that this should be considered a significant achievement as this was one of the most highly contested tenders in this domain in recent years with many human rights organisations submitting bids. The Secretariat reported that the project will have a total timeline of 3,5 years and involves 6 countries (Guatemala, Colombia, Nigeria, DRC, Iraq, and Mozambique). The CSO pillar representative emphasized the importance of this project in highlighting the issue of private security companies in countries like Guatemala, where the government does not perceive PSCs as a significant issue.

The Secretariat reported that significant time has been invested over the last 9 months in developing project proposals, 11 of which have been unsuccessful. Among these were projects involving the US government. The secretariat reported some frustration about the lack of feedback received and emphasized that this is important so that we can learn and strengthen future proposals.

The US representative requested to be notified whenever projects are submitted to the US government, so they can reach out to the responsible individuals to clarify any questions regarding ICoCA. The industry representative also asked to be informed about ICoCA's proposals.

ICoCA is awaiting responses for 3 additional projects, having advanced to the final round of consideration. This in itself is considered a significant achievement given that these were highly competitive calls. Most decisions are expected in November.

After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions. The questions focused on the allocation of funds from these projects to ICoCA. The Secretariat explained that the funds would be divided between HR costs and other non-HR expenses, such as events, travel, and other expenses related to project implementation, including funding consortium partners. ICoCA is not expected to generate any profit from these projects.

The Chairperson welcomed the EU Initiative and expressed a willingness to support the project's on-site implementation through Swiss embassies. The Secretariat appreciated this offer, highlighting the importance of such support for fundraising opportunities.

4. Budget and Cash flow Update

The Secretariat reported on actions taken since the Q2 2024 Board Meeting to address the actual and anticipated decrease in government funding. These included:

- submitting and following up on project proposals,
- reducing HR costs,
- moving the AGA to an online event,
- holding extensive discussions with the UK and US governments to secure funding for 2025, and managing FX coverage.
- maintaining momentum in increasing the number of company members and affiliates of ICoCA.

With these efforts, Q2 2024 budget shortfall predictions have been substantially reduced. Going forward, it was reiterated by the Secretariat that securing additional core funding from Governments remained a critical priority, as a complement to project funding, which covers predominantly activities costs rather than Secretariat expenses.

Diversification of funding streams for ICoCA was identified as a continuing priority.

5. Membership Update

The Secretariat reported that 14 companies have joined in the last quarter, reflecting a 13% growth in 2024 so far. While the majority of these new companies are from the Middle East, there has been an increasing number of companies joining from Africa.

The Secretariat indicated that three companies are to be issued termination letters.

The subsequent discussion focused on the existence of monitoring mechanisms for potential subcontractor abuses, the feasibility of requiring subcontractors to follow the Code, and the practices of ICoCA-Certified companies concerning subcontractors.

6. Strategic Plan

The Secretariat thanked the Working Group for its efforts in supporting the development of the new Strategic Plan. The Plan includes five new goals, which were identified as priorities during the AGA and by ICoCA members.

The Chairperson opened the floor for questions and suggestions. The discussion focused on maintaining the essence of ICoCA's work while avoiding repetition, the rationale for separating the mission and vision statements, the need to include more references to PSCs in both statements, the importance of retaining a reference to IHL, and the possible inclusion of "protection/respect for the rule of law."

The Secretariat reminded Board Members that the new Strategic Plan must be approved by the next Board Meeting, at the latest, before the AGA, and that the current draft has broad support from the Board. If any important comments need to be made, they should be submitted within the next 10 days.

7. Approval AGA 2024 dates

The Secretariat informed the Board that the AGA 2024 will take place online so as to allow for greater participation of ICoCA's global membership, the proposed dates being the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of December.

The Secretariat suggested that an in-person AGA could be held every two years. Additionally, it proposed the possibility of holding regional meetings throughout the year. No objections were raised.

The Chairperson suggested the idea of having an in-person Board Meeting at ICoCA's new office at the beginning of the year, which will be discussed further.

8. Wrap Up

This meeting included discussions about the upcoming event in Uganda, aimed at enhancing ICoCA's presence in the country.

The Chair of the Board of Directors provided a summary of the main points discussed and the decisions made at the Q3 2024 Board Meeting and expressed appreciation to the ICoCA Secretariat for its planning and organization. The Board meeting was officially closed at 5:54 PM.