

Bank Information Center  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
February 22, 2010

**Present:**

Richard Bissell (chair)  
Chad Dobson (ex-officio)  
Mamadou Goita  
Korinna Horta (Secretary)  
David Hunter (Treasurer)  
Atila Roque  
Lisa Veneklasen

**On the Telephone:**

Athena Ballesteros  
Juliette Majot

**Board Minutes**

The Board approved the minutes of the previous Board meeting (October 22, 2009).

**Board Officers**

Richard Bissell began his assignment as the new Board Chair, David Hunter as the Treasurer and Korinna Horta as the Secretary.

**Investment Policy Statement**

After review of the draft guidelines for the management of BIC's liquid assets, the Board unanimously approved BIC's Investment Policy Statement.

**Board Development**

Richard informed us about his communications with a candidate who is a highly respected human rights and gender expert. At present, she is unable to join BIC's Board, but she expressed interest in potentially serving in the future. The Board agreed to reconsider her again in 2011.

We had a discussion of Sandra Smithey's proposed membership on BIC's Board. We considered the potential view of other sponsors about a Mott Foundation presence on BIC's Board. It was noted that Ms. Smithey is invited as an individual to serve on BIC's Board and not as a representative of the Mott Foundation.

Decisions: The Board invites Sandra Smithey to become a member of the Board. Within a year the Board will review BIC's conflict of interest policy to ensure that it is up-to-date. We will also review the composition of the Board for 2011 and consider program areas in which we might want to look for potential new Board members.

## **Financials**

### Budget 2009

The Board reviewed the Budget for 2009 that has not yet been audited. It showed a surplus of US\$ 153,960 for FY 2009. Audits of the accounts for 2009 are scheduled for later this month.

Grants from two funders helped make up for loss of one other grant. The Board congratulated BIC staff on its fundraising successes in these difficult times.

The Board discussed on how best to build a financial reserve for BIC. We were reminded that it is a requirement that funding from project-specific awards be spent or taken into the next year. However, unrestricted income can be moved into reserve. In addition, some foundations allow grant requests for reserves. Furthermore, some grants for a specific deliverable are also considered unrestricted because they do not request details on how money is spent. The Board will continue to pay attention to the building of a BIC reserve, which, ideally, would cover 3 to 6 months of expenses.

### Budget 2010

Both revenue and expenses will be increased by about US\$ 100,000 in this fiscal year. Significant grants from three funders were critical to the increase in revenues. Once again, the Board expressed its appreciation of BIC's successful fundraising.

In 2011, grants from two core funders will terminate. Their funding is especially important because it represents general support grants. Significant work will need to be done to ensure continued funding and/or tap new sources of general support grants.

## **BIC Organization**

Chad Dobson explained BIC's traditional growth pattern: Once BIC has secured fresh grants, it hires the person(s) to do the work.

The questions raised were: how big should BIC become? Should it grow indefinitely and raise all the money it can get? How do we match program grants to the organization?

BIC will continue to have a 3-year strategic plan focused on 2 -3 campaigns running simultaneously. The campaign on the Information Disclosure Policy was just concluded. BIC will now be working with the Bank on its implementation.

The Board examined an organizational flow chart. At present, 8 staff report directly to the executive director. The proposal is to reduce this number to 3 people by creating three positions of assistant director. There would be an assistant director of development (operational side), an assistant director of regional programs and an assistant director of campaigns. The annual cost in the near term would amount to US\$ 400,000, meaning that the budget would have to increase to US\$ 3 million.

Assistant directors would not just be middle management but they themselves would be actively engaged in substantive work.

The Board endorsed a phased-in approach for the organization's growth plan over a multi-year period.

As for possible funding, it was suggested that BIC explore the possibility of diversifying its funding sources by considering individual donors as well as opportunities with bilateral agencies, such as the ones from the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark.

### **African Development Bank**

Chad Dobson reminded everyone that facilitating an NGO network working of the AfDB was part of BIC's strategic plan. This objective, however, cannot be achieved in a rushed fashion.

Mamadou reported on BIC's contribution to setting-up the network and on greater NGO engagement at annual meetings. But the network needs to be further strengthened before it can take over BIC's role. Many challenges remain. One idea is to set-up a committee of regional and non-regional members. BIC should be part of this, as it has a lot to share on processes and experiences. BIC helps open doors and provides technical and political support. The plan is to have a coordinator in Tunis based at the offices of the local trade union federation. A number of opportunities are coming up: the AfDB will revise its disclosure policy, as well as its environment and social safeguards. There will also be the lever of the AfDB's capital increase.

The basic idea is to prepare a proposal to fund the network and hire a full-time coordinator based in Tunis. The question for BIC is how to create the space to be able to responsive to the network's needs.

BIC will provide an up-date on the development of the network at the June Board meeting.

### **MENA Program**

The Board was provided with an interesting up-date on the opportunities and challenges of BIC's MENA program. The program is focused on Egypt but includes other countries on the southern Mediterranean as well. Information disclosure is what MENA civil society is most deeply interested in. Since water is the predominant environmental/development issue in the region, disclosure demands are often related to water projects.

### **World Bank & REDD**

BIC staff provided an update on World Bank involvement in REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) which is becoming increasingly important. REDD is one of the few areas where governments gathered in Copenhagen were in agreement: REDD must move forward. The World Bank is pioneering REDD as it finances plans to help countries get ready for REDD. The Bank has so far been ambiguous about whether its safeguard policies will apply to its REDD Readiness work. We urge staff to try to obtain a written statement from the World Bank to ensure that the Forest Carbon Partnership and the Forest Investment Program are subject to the World Bank Group's Safeguard Policies.

### **Energy Policy**

The World Bank started consultations on its energy approach paper in Paris last week and will end the consultations in March in Washington, D.C..

BIC relates the timing of the consultations to the Bank's General Capital Increase meetings scheduled to take place during the Spring Meetings. Bank management wants to make sure that there won't be trouble with donors on energy policy.

BIC has prepared an alternative architecture for an energy framework. It used the format of regular World Bank strategy papers to provide a "Sustainable Energy for Equitable Development" strategy paper as a contribution to the Bank's development of its own strategy. Energy access for the poor and the environmental sustainability of energy projects are its central tenets.

The Gibe III dam in Ethiopia and coal-fired power plants for South Africa's Eskom are projects currently in the pipeline that represent the Bank's current strategy. The Bank's draft energy policy is expected to be released in June or July 2010.

**Items on the agenda for the next Board meeting in June**

- Up-date and review of financial situation;
- New areas of fund-raising – individual donors and bilateral agencies;
- Revisit progress on AfDB;
- Consideration of conflict of interest policy for Board members.

**Executive Session**

The Board and the executive director met in executive session to discuss staffing issues.