

FOR DECISION

Board/committee self-assessment

Background

As the governance transition commenced, board members received a paper from the governance consultant Cambridge Economic Policy Associates which stated good governance increases the accountability and transparency of an organisation and governance functions typically include self-evaluation.

The Board acted on this advice, giving the Governance Committee the responsibility to develop and oversee a performance self-assessment process for the Board and each committee of the Board and provide a report of the results to the Board.

The most common form of self-assessment at the board level is a process which involves the board constructing a questionnaire, each board member completing one, the Governance Committee compiling and analysing the results, and the board reviewing the results with an eye toward implementing improvements. See Annex 1 for a sample board self-assessment questionnaire.

Board self-assessments tend to have two areas of focus: accountability for past performance, and ways to enhance the board's future effectiveness. Prior to fulfilling these mandates, a board (and its committees) must have decided upon its specific duties and objectives. In this sense, "duties" are those compliance and oversight responsibilities outlined in the governing documents – the Statutes, By-laws, governance guidelines, and committee charters.

"Objectives" are more mission focused and include those things a board believes must happen for it to deliver effective results. For example, objectives may include:

- Understanding the organisation's mission and activities
- Providing intellectual capital and fresh ideas
- Establishing high and realistic standards
- Enhancing decision making
- Energising management and holding it accountable

The Governance Committee usually drives the process of identifying objectives with the guidance and ultimately the imprimatur of the full board.

Governance Committee deliberations to date

On 15 April, the Governance Committee discussed various methods to perform the initial self-evaluation and agreed to a self-assessment administered by an outside consultant reporting to the Governance Committee. It is common for boards to hire a consultant to do "detailed work" such as developing questionnaires, administering the self-evaluation, and drafting the initial report. The Governance Committee, with assistance from the Secretariat governance team, will oversee the process and ensure the consultant is sufficiently aware of the issues to produce a meaningful report.

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As such, the Governance Committee requested the Secretariat to construct a request for proposals (RFP) for the outside consultant in time for Committee review at its 1 June meeting. The RFP will be available to board members once approved by the Governance Committee.

In addition, the Governance Committee requested the Secretariat to propose a timeline to complete the self-assessment. On 1 June, the Governance Committee will discuss the timeline and provide the Board with its recommendations at the Board meeting.

ANNEX 1**Sample Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire**

	Considerations	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Ave.	2 Fair	1 Poor
1	The Board members have full and common understanding of their roles and responsibilities					
2	The Board members understand the organisation's mission and its programmes					
3	The governance structure (Board, committees, officers, management) is clear					
4	The Board has clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning					
5	The Board attends to policy-related decisions which effectively guide operational activities of staff					
6	The Board receives regular reports on finances/budgets, products/programme performance and other important matters					
7	The Board helps set fundraising goals and is actively involved in fundraising					
8	The Board effectively represents the organisation to broader community					
9	Board meetings facilitate focus and progress on important organisational matters					
10	The Board regularly monitors and evaluates progress toward strategic goals and product/ program performance					
11	The Board regularly evaluates and develops the chief executive					
12	The Board has approved comprehensive human resources policies which have been reviewed by a qualified professional					
13	Each member of the Board feels involved and interested in the Board's work					
14	All necessary skills, stakeholders and diversity are represented on the Board					

Please list the three points on which you believe the board should focus its attention in the next year. Be as specific as possible in identifying these points.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.