

Bank Information Center
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
October 22, 2009

Present:

Athena Ballesteros
Richard Bissell
Alvin Carlos (staff: development/finance)
Chad Dobson (ex-officio)
Mamadou Goita
Korinna Horta
David Hunter (chair and acting treasurer)
Juliet Majot
Atila Roque

Regrets: (None)

Board Minutes

The Board approved the previous Board meeting minutes.

Board Staffing

The Board elected Richard Bissell as the new Chair, Korinna Horta as the new Secretary, and David Hunter as the Treasurer. This will be effective as of January 1, 2010.

Executive Directors Report

Chad Dobson presented the Executive Directors' Report. Ten months into the new strategic plan, the organization has undergone a fundamental change towards the direction of a focused campaigning organization. The staff has taken this change on willingly and with a good heart even as it presents many challenges to fulfill it. Overall, the executive director feels very positive about how the staff is implementing what is a complex and difficult strategic plan.

Budgeting and Finance

The budgeting and financial administration of the organization remains extremely strong and Alvin continues to do terrific work. As the organization considers growth into new campaign areas, we have to ensure that we maintain sufficient support throughout the organization. We are projecting a \$70,000 surplus for 2009. The Board approved the budget for 2010, with projected revenue of \$2.5 million, and a slight surplus of \$40,000.

Program Update

Programmatically, the organization has just completed a busy and productive period. BIC helped to organize a Congressional Hearing with Congressman Frank's committee. Rich Bissell represented BIC and a coalition of NGOs, including World Wildlife Fund, Transparency International, Oxfam and others. Joe Stiglitz among others spoke at the hearing. BIC was also out 'in full force' at the World Bank annual meetings in Istanbul. BIC had nearly a dozen staff and 30 partners there from all over the world. BIC held

eight different events. Although it took a lot of work, Chad believes the annual meeting was very successful. Athena confirmed that the meetings were productive and BIC was ‘everywhere’.

More generally, the organization is moving forward with the strategic plan with the following issues highlighted by the Executive Director:

- All of the Banks have asked for a general capital increase, which gives us some additional leverage for reforms.
- The World Bank Board is expected to vote on the transparency policy on November 22nd, and BIC believes the policy reflects many of our campaign priorities.
- BIC needs to add “developing partner capacity” as an explicit goal in the Strategic Plan.
- BIC is in the process of developing a new institution/network to monitor the AfDB. We have funding, but it will likely take longer than the current year timeline to assist that network in running well.
- BIC is preparing a draft energy policy, as we did for the transparency campaign. There will be an NGO consultation about draft BIC energy policy and scenarios March 15-17 at Pocantico. The World Bank has scheduled a consultation on its energy policy for April 24.
- In Latin America, we are in the process of transitioning from a focus generally on development infrastructure in Latin America to a focus on WB-financed projects and partner capacity building.

Staff Developments

Chad then reminded the Board of recent staff developments. After eight years, Bruce Jenkins left the organization and that position will not be filled immediately. Jelson has been moved to become head of the Asia region based in DC. BIC is moving to close the office in Bolivia and restart with one person in Peru. Current openings or needs include a director for the ECA program, an assistant manager for LAC, and an energy campaigner. The current budget did not include any performance-based pay raises, but Chad would like to add them. There was also a discussion of additional money for staff development. Currently each staff member has \$500, but it is almost never used.

Fundraising and Development

Fundraising has gone well in general; the Executive Director highlighted the following developments and concerns:

- General support from the Ford Foundation is guaranteed only for one more year. It is unknown whether the grant will be renewed but in any event general support may be less likely.
- Novib is experiencing a reduction in its funding, which could affect long term support from them. Our work in MENA and Africa is supported by Novib.
- BIC has received new grants from: Climate Works to support an energy campaigner; additional support from the Open Society Institute. In answer to a

question, the executive director stated that there is currently no “core proposal” that quickly summarizes BIC’s mission for funders.

- A grant of \$109,000 was transferred from GTI to BIC to support implementation of the transparency policy

The Board then had a discussion of the need for BIC to initiate a campaign for a reserve fund. An initial target could be a 3-month reserve of \$500,000, with an effort to tap new and diverse sources including individuals. Eventually, BIC would like to develop six-month reserves. A task force could be established to look at a reserve campaign and time should be set aside to discuss this further in the next Board meeting

Forestry Program Proposal Discussion

The Board discussed the possibilities of a new forestry program. The Packard Foundation has expressed an interest in funding BIC on the forestry policies of the World Bank. A consultant was hired to evaluate BIC’s comparative advantages in working on the forestry issues. Several areas of concern were raised, including that the Bank has not yet agreed to engage on a new forestry policy and that this is a major area of work that could require new staff in several BIC regional departments. BIC staff are currently working ‘full out’ and it is not clear whether Packard is willing to fund the four or more new staff a major campaign would require. Currently, Packard is offering around \$200K, one staff member plus conference and program costs—although other funders may be interested in this effort.

The executive director recommended, and the Board agreed, to put off any final decision until more intelligence could be gathered from outside BIC and that staff input could be solicited from within BIC. The executive director agreed to return with a recommendation at the next Board meeting that would include greater clarity regarding BIC’s niche and strategy, if the recommendation is to move forward in the forestry sector.

Board Development

The Board discussed recruitment of new board members.

Executive Session

The Board and executive director met in executive session to discuss the outcome of the performance evaluation of the executive director.