

## Board Meeting

Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025 9:30am to 4:30pm  
In-person at Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Seamus Smith, Stephen Lycett, Claire Byrne, Catriona Curtis, Mary Dorgan, Seán Sheridan, Orlagh Nevin, Teresa Blake, Bríd O'Donovan, Mary Corcoran

**In attendance:** Graham Long, Carmel Beirne, Elsa Flanagan, Caroline Mitchell (minutes), Gary Watters (for items 11, 12, 13), Linda Brady and Vivienne Molloy (South Connacht MABS, item 9), Diarmaid O'Sullivan (South Connacht CIS, item 9), Claudia Carr (Bearing Point, item 5, remotely)

**Apologies:** Fiona Ward, Patrick Gibbons, Rachel Downes, Sarah Harte

## Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
<b>1.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No interests were declared.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Board Business and Approval of Agenda</b>
	Apologies were received from Fiona Ward, Patrick Gibbons and Rachel Downes. Sarah Harte is on maternity leave.
	The Chair offered condolences on behalf of the Board to Rachel Downes on her recent bereavement.
	The Chair noted that an invitation was extended to the Minister following the February Board meeting. In May, CIB was informed that the Minister would not be available. As Board members had already made arrangements and this is the annual off-site meeting, the Chair decided to proceed.
	The agenda was approved.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 were proposed by Bríd O'Donovan and seconded by Seamus Smith.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Report from the Chief Executive Designate and Chair (for discussion)</b>

	<p>The CEO Designate provided an update in a number of different areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CIB will take place on 12 June, while the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NT MABS is being celebrated the day before on (11 June). The Board discussed what could be done to mark the anniversary given that there is rich data available in how CIB has supported people over the years at key junctures e.g. Covid-19, financial crisis.</li> <li>• The Chair and CEO presented at the Management Board meeting in the DSP on 17 April.</li> <li>• CIB is working with Javelin to conduct a review of CIB’s corporate branding. This project is connected to the recently developed Communication Strategy.</li> <li>• The project to develop information for International Protection Applicants, funded by the Department of Justice, is planned to go live in the coming months.</li> <li>• The School Leavers booklet generated some interest in the media during May. The Board requested that statistics for the number of 'clicks' on the school leavers QR code be presented at the next Board meeting in July.</li> <li>• The CEO Designate attended the launch of the Department of Social Protection’s revised Wage Subsidy Scheme on 4 June.</li> <li>• CIB will attend a WRC Conciliation Conference in relation to Regional Administrators in the CIS on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Following an adjournment in May, CIB will also attend a re-commenced WRC Conciliation Conference on 25<sup>th</sup> June in relation to SLIS staff.</li> <li>• An FOI request has been received seeking CIB’s risk register and recent internal audits.</li> <li>• CIB will be compiling a Gender Pay Gap report for the first time in 2025, with work on this due to begin in June.</li> </ul> <p><u>Impact Metrics</u></p> <p>The Board asked about the inclusion in the draft Annual Report of a pilot impact metrics report based on a small sample. It was noted that this was included prior to the presentation of the pilot results to the Standards and Development Committee. The Chief Executive Designate agreed that this should be removed from the draft Annual Report. An agenda item on the impact metrics project will be added to the agenda for the Board meeting of 25 July. This is to look also at how impact metrics are complemented by work on customer satisfaction / customer service measures.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy Mid-Point Review (for presentation and discussion)</b></p>
	<p>A draft mid-term review of the CIB Strategy 2023–2026 was presented to the Board, with Claudia Carr from Bearing Point joining remotely to outline the findings. The report highlights strong progress made to date in the current strategy cycle, including new strategies (Digital and Communication) and improved governance, though some activities have been delayed due to resource constraints. It notes challenges in balancing operational and strategic work, and emerging risks such as misinformation and generative AI. While key goals remain achievable by 2026, delays and budget pressures may impact delivery of some projects. The report also flags issues around underspend, structural inefficiencies, and premises management.</p> <p>The Board held a broad discussion informed by the review, planning for the next CIB Strategy, and the recent meeting with the Department of Social Protection on 17 April. The Chair noted that the Secretary General had requested the Board to consider the long-term sustainability of CIB’s current operating model.</p>

	<p>Key areas that were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic and Organisational Alignment</li> <li>• Budget and Financial Management</li> <li>• Resource and Capacity Constraints</li> <li>• Digital Transformation and Technology</li> <li>• Operational Efficiency and Oversight</li> <li>• Communication of the value of CIB and it's services</li> <li>• Governance and Strategic Risk</li> <li>• Vision, Mandate, and Legislative Framing</li> </ul> <p>Following the discussion, the Board agreed that a letter should be drafted for the Secretary General, with key points to be grounded in CIB's legislative basis. It should also articulate CIB's mission, values, and role as a trusted source of information, with reference to the Programme for Government and the National Counter Disinformation Strategy. It was agreed that the draft letter would be brought back to the Board for review.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Digital Strategy (for approval)</b>
	<p>The Head of Division, ICT, Digital and Data presented the draft digital strategy for the Board's review and approval.</p> <p>The digital strategy was developed in collaboration with 4OC consultants and outlines 14 projects over three years for CIB and the Service Delivery Companies. The strategy was shaped through consultations with CIB, SDCs, and the DSP as key stakeholders, a public survey of nearly 1,000 respondents, and a review of external practices.</p> <p>The ICT, Digital and Data Committee provided oversight of the project, with input from the Standards and Development committee, and identified number of key requirements for the strategy, including clear project timelines and short-term deliverables.</p> <p>The strategy has three themes: empowered workforce, enhanced service, and data as an enabler.</p> <p>The Board's feedback included suggestions for minor changes and a request to change the current cover page of the document to better represent the diversity of CIB and SDC clients.</p> <p>The importance of future proofing the services was emphasised. This would include the development of a common data dictionary to allow for seamless data sharing.</p> <p>The Board approved the digital strategy, subject to the amendments proposed. An update will be provided to the ICT, Digital and Data Committee.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Budget 2026: Service Development Estimates (for discussion)</b>

	<p>In line with discussions at the Board meeting in February 2025, the Executive has developed a set of six draft documents to put forward CIB’s budget request for 2026. These are required to be fully completed by the end of July 2025. The first point of review for these documents was the FAR Committee in May, following which changes have been made to the content and formatting of the drafts. The Board had a discussion which related to the documents provided.</p> <p><b>Six strategic budget requests were presented by the Executive for the Board’s review:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategic Context and Overview</li> <li>2. Existing Level of Service</li> <li>3. Oversight and Compliance</li> <li>4. Information Content</li> <li>5. Digital Developments</li> <li>6. Service Delivery</li> </ol> <p><u>SDC Business Cases</u></p> <p>Twenty-eight business cases have also been received from the Service Delivery Companies, and these will be assessed for inclusion in the estimates in conjunction with the Compliance and Reporting Committee and the FAR Committee.</p> <p><u>Existing Level of Service (ELS)</u></p> <p>CIB is currently completing its mid-year review and budget estimates process for 2026, and so the Existing Level of Service (ELS) request is still in preparation. Similarly, ELS estimates for the Service Delivery Companies are under review following submission on the deadline of 23 May.</p> <p>The Board noted the request for a storyboard summary paper was included and that it provided a clear narrative on the strategic budget requests and ELS requirements. The Board requested that outline of the structure of the organisation is included and a two-page summary document of the budget request.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Closed Session: Board Evaluation (for discussion)</b>
	<p>The Board met in a closed session to discuss the Board evaluation report, undertaken by the Institute of Directors Ireland (IOD).</p> <p>Feedback from the session for the IOD was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External board representation – signposts to any recommendations</li> <li>• Recommendations for committees</li> <li>• Board papers – what recommendations are there for excellence</li> <li>• General assessment of the Board’s overall performance in comparison to other bodies.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair noted that the Board will hold a culture audit session once a year as an agenda item, and it was agreed that no CIB staff members (Executive and staff nominee to the Board) will be in attendance.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Presentations from MABS and CIS</b>

<p><b>(a)</b></p>	<p><b>South Connacht MABS</b></p> <p>Linda Brady (Money Advisor, South Connacht MABS) and Vivienne Molloy (Service Delivery Manager, South Connacht MABS) gave the Board an overview presentation on the South Connacht MABS service, highlighting some of its recent development and challenges.</p>
<p><b>(b)</b></p>	<p><b>South Connacht CIS</b></p> <p>Diarmaid O’Sullivan (Regional Manager, South Connacht CIS) gave the Board an overview of the South Connacht CIS service, its recent developments and most significant challenges.</p> <p>The Board noted both presentations as very helpful and informative. There was a discussion with the SDC representatives about their presentations and their experiences. The representatives highlighted the changes in the nature and demand of services required, including need for more mental health support for clients. The effects of addiction and gambling on personal financial issues was observed by MABS.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the shared challenges of CIB and the Service Delivery Companies as an independent, trusted source of information and noted there are synergies and opportunities to explore a constructive approach to counter mis- and dis- information.</p>
<p><b>10. Committee Reports</b></p>	
<p><b>(a)</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Standards and Development Committee, 30<sup>th</sup> April</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee provided an update on the main points of discussion from the meeting, including a presentation on CIS service offer capacity and demand, CIS client feedback report 2024, update on the impact metrics project and the NAS evaluation. Progress is being made but would benefit from further resourcing.</p>
<p><b>(b)</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Governance Committee, 29<sup>th</sup> May</b></p> <p>The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting which focused on the Chair and CEO Designate presentation to the DSP Management Board, the review of the Public Appointment Service booklet for upcoming Board recruitment, the draft CIB strategy 2023-2026 mid-term review report, and discussion around the upcoming Board meeting.</p>
<p><b>(c)</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 7<sup>th</sup> May</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee gave a high-level overview of the Committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee reviewed the initial 2026 business case drafts, approved the reprofiled budget, requested PQ statistics for each meeting, and noted that an external member vacancy will be advertised in August.</li> <li>• The 2024 C&amp;AG audit has been outsourced to Moore Ireland, who also audit St Raphael’s Credit Union, where the Chair of the Committee is CEO.</li> <li>• Following a thematic review carried out by SumerNI, the Committee recommended discontinuing credit cards and petty cash in the 22 SDCs and introducing a €500 annual budget for volunteer recognition. The CEO Designate will inform the companies.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee discussed the strategic risk of misinformation and recommended updating the risk wording to reflect CIB’s role as a mitigant, in line with the Programme for Government. The Governance Committee supported this, and the Executive will revise the wording.</li> <li>• The Committee also requested a summary report of outstanding internal and external audit findings be brought to the Board.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Finance Matters</b>
<b>(a)</b>	<p><b>Budget Monitoring Report (for review)</b></p> <p>The Finance Manager presented the management accounts. The budget for 2025 is €66.796m, which represents an Existing Level of Service (ELS) budget of €61.748m and a budget for SDC pay Claims of €5.048m. The main drivers of underspend were highlighted and detail provided.</p>
<b>(b)</b>	<p><b>Updated Bank Mandate (for approval)</b></p> <p>Board approval was sought to implement changes to CIB’s bank mandate and CIB’s list of authorisers on AIB’s online banking platform (iBB). These changes are necessary to ensure the mandate is up to date and there are enough authorisers for processing payments.</p> <p>The updated bank mandate was approved by the Board.</p>
<b>(c)</b>	<p><b>Internal Audit Tracker (for noting)</b></p> <p>The Finance Manager presented the external and internal audits findings tracker, of CIB, to the May meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The Committee asked the Finance Manager to bring a summary status report to the Board, focusing on Medium/High level findings. Outstanding items are just from recent report to FAR.</p>
<b>(d)</b>	<p><b>Insurance Long Term Agreement (for approval)</b></p> <p>The Board’s approval was sought to enter into a three-year arrangement with IPB on foot of advice received from CIB’s brokers, Marsh. The LTA would provide certainty on CIB’s insurance rating on combined commercial cover for three years, which is a positive development in the context of a difficult insurance market. The current renewal cost for combined commercial cover is €217,000, representing 42% of CIB’s insurance costs.</p> <p>The Board gave approval to enter a three-year engagement with IBP.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Risk Management</b>
<b>(a)</b>	<p><b>Strategic Risks (for review)</b></p> <p>There are ten risks on the strategic risk register. Following the Board meeting in March, a risk on misinformation was added. The risks have been reviewed, with updates added in the comments section. The risk ratings for the strategic risks have not changed since March.</p> <p><u>Misinformation Risk</u></p>

	<p>The Executive proposed an updated version of wording and associated mitigants for the risk that misinformation erodes confidence in the Citizens Information Board or SDCs, as requested by the FAR Committee in its recent meeting. The revised wording was approved.</p> <p><b>(b) Risk Register (for review)</b></p> <p>The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as risk changes and new risks added since March 2025.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Corporate Documents</b>
<b>(a)</b>	<p><b>Code of Practice Update – update to bank signatories and approval limits (for approval)</b></p> <p>The Board approved the updated Code of Practice to incorporate changes to the CIB bank mandate, bank signatories and approval limits.</p>
<b>(b)</b>	<p><b>Annual Report 2024 (for approval)</b></p> <p>The draft CIB Annual Report 2024 was presented for the Board’s approval. The report must be submitted in advance of June 30<sup>th</sup> to the Minister for Social Protection. The Board noted the report should be sent to Oireachtas members.</p> <p>The Board approved the report subject to the removal of a graph with pilot impact metrics and any more detailed changes Board members wished to convey to the Executive following the meeting.</p>
	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
	The next meeting will be held online on <b>Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> July.</b>