

Board Meeting

Friday, 25th July 2025 10:30am to 12:30pm
Online (Zoom)

Present: Catherine Heaney, Seamus Smith, Stephen Lycett, Claire Byrne, Catriona Curtis, Mary Dorgan, Seán Sheridan, Orlagh Nevin, Bríd O'Donovan, Mary Corcoran, Fiona Ward (from Item 7), Patrick Gibbons

In attendance: Graham Long, Carmel Beirne, Elsa Flanagan, Rachel Downes, Caroline Mitchell (minutes), Gary Watters (for items 6,7,8)

Apologies: Sarah Harte, Teresa Blake

Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
1.	Declaration of Interests
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No interests were declared.
2.	Board Business and Approval of Agenda
	The agenda was approved. An update on the impact metrics project will be deferred until the September Board meeting.
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2025 were proposed by Mary Corcoran and seconded by Catriona Curtis. Minor amendments were requested under items 2 and 6 of the previous minutes. There were no matters arising.
4.	Report from the Chief Executive Designate and Chair (for discussion)
	The Chief Executive provided an update and noted several developments since the circulation of the papers the previous week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of the International Protection Applicants project documents, initially planned for June/July, is delayed pending Department of Justice review. A soft launch may take place in September. • Birr CIC is being assessed for smoke damage and an issue with asbestos has been uncovered. It is understood that the roof will have to be removed to decontaminate the building. • Naas CIC has been asked to vacate the room it was using. As a result, the Information Officer has been relocated to Maynooth. • CIB's Pre-Budget Submission was submitted to Minister for Finance on 16 July, incorporating input from CIS, CIPS, MABS, and NAS.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS are planning to launch their strategy on 24 September and have asked CIB to liaise with the DSP to request the Minister’s attendance • Local CIS events are planned for September to celebrate the 50th anniversary of CIS. <p><u>Impact of AI on Website Statistics</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive highlighted a decline in website traffic due to AI-generated overviews in search engines. The Board discussed AI’s impact on website statistics, how to measure it, and risks of information misuse. The Board emphasised maintaining CIB’s role as a trusted source of information, advice and advocacy and noted that this issue is prevalent across organisations.</p> <p><u>Amárach Research</u></p> <p>Amárach’s research with 1,200 respondents showed very positive results. They will soon begin a review of CIB’s brand architecture relative to the service delivery companies and the website, with a focus on reinforcing CIB as a trusted source of information. A campaign for radio and social media is planned for September, aligning with CIB’s 25th anniversary. The Chair noted the branding review will require stakeholder engagement and proposed it be added to the ICT, Digital and Data Committee’s agenda as necessary.</p> <p><u>Commissioner Michael McGrath lecture on mis/disinformation</u></p> <p>Following a discussion at the June Board meeting, the Chair proposed inviting Commissioner Michael McGrath to deliver a lecture on mis/disinformation later in the year. A social media and awareness campaign will precede the event. CIB will notify DSP of the arrangements, including potential Ministerial involvement. The Board welcomed and approved the proposal.</p>
5.	Committee Reports
(a)	<p>Report from the ICT, Digital and Data Committee, 27 June</p> <p>Mary Corcoran chaired the meeting in the Chair’s absence and shared key updates, including the finalised Digital Strategy (to be sent to DSP), cyber security, misinformation risk, and the draft AI framework. The draft will be presented at the next Committee meeting.</p>
(b)	<p>Report from the Standards and Development Committee, 2 July</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee provided an update on the two main points of discussion from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts Framework Project - the Chair noted that the current overall approach is too operational, and the Committee recommended that a more strategic, qualitative approach is needed. The impact measures will be crucial in supporting future business cases; however, in the Committee’s view indicators developed to date are not sufficient for this purpose. • NAS Evaluation - Indecon attended the meeting to update the Committee on the NAS evaluation report. After reviewing the draft and related correspondence, the Committee suggested that further work is needed in relation to the report and the overall working relationship with NAS. The Chair has discussed this with the Chief Executive and NAS Chair. The Chief Executive confirmed follow-up is underway, with a meeting scheduled for 11 September.

(c)	<p>Report from the Governance Committee, 17 July</p> <p>The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting which focused on updates from Committee Chairs and a discussion regarding the agenda for the July Board meeting.</p>
(d)	<p>Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 11 July</p> <p>In the Chair’s absence, the meeting was chaired by Declan Norgrove. The Chair gave a high-level overview of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Compliance and Reporting committee meeting did not proceed as scheduled in advance of the FAR meeting as it was not quorate. Taking account of this, members of the Compliance and Reporting Committee were invited for a segment of the meeting to jointly review the updated 2026 draft business cases, including SDC submissions. As members were unable to attend, they provided feedback to the Head of Division in advance of the meeting. • The Committee approved the mid-year budget review, two procurement requests, and the 2025 CIB Compliance Review audit, noting satisfactory assurance. • The annual risk management framework review was deferred until after the upcoming 3-year review by Sumer NI. • The risk register was reviewed, including discussion of a potential new risk related to AI’s impact on CIB website statistics. • The Committee agreed to circulate a summarised version of Sumer NI’s Thematic Review Summary Finding Report to the SDCs. • Sumer NI briefed the Committee on the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and the internal changes required by Sumer NI, the FAR Committee and Management. • Declan Mohan attended an IPA roundtable for FAR Chairs focused on governance, business cases, materiality, and benefits realisation. A briefing note will be added to the Convene document library, once provided by the member. • Cyril Sullivan’s term as external member of the FAR Committee ends on 11 August. The Chair has written to thank him, and a formal letter will be issued on behalf of CIB.
6.	<p>Draft Letter to the Secretary General, Department of Social Protection</p> <p>Following the CIB attendance at the DSP Management Board meeting in April, and discussion at the 6 June meeting, the Executive drafted a letter as requested by the Secretary General. The draft was presented to the Board for review.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Board provided feedback and suggested a number of amendments to be made to the draft.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Executive would amend the draft based on the Board’s feedback and circulate an updated version to Board members for further feedback with a view to sending the correspondence before the end of July.</p>
7.	<p>Finance Matters</p>
(a)	<p>Budget Estimates 2026 (for approval)</p> <p>The strategic budgeting process commenced early in the year at the February meeting of the Board. Throughout the process, the draft suite of business cases was reviewed by the FAR Committee and</p>

Board on a number of occasions. The FAR Committee reviewed, with feedback from the Compliance and Reporting Committee members, and approved submissions from the Service Delivery Companies on 11 July.

The 2026 budget estimates were presented to the Board for final review and approval prior to submission to the DSP. The following two changes have been made since the 11 July FAR Committee meeting:

1. Decreased contingency budget to €455,000 which represents a proposed increase over 2025 of €305,000 and equates to 1% of the SDC proposed grant allocation.
2. Addition of a post in MABS Support to recruit a Best Practice Quality Executive at a total annual cost of €63,751.

The Executive gave an update on the strategic budgeting requests as well as the main drivers of the ELS, which are included in the papers.

In total for 2026, CIB have sought €73,697,794, of which €69,417,164 is for Existing Level of Service (ELS) and €4,280,630 for service development.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Board approved the 2026 Budget Request, subject to minor updates. The Chair thanked the Executive, members of the Board and Committees for their work on development and consideration of business cases.

(b) Budget Mid-Year Review 2025 (for approval)

A draft mid-year budget review 2025 was presented to the Board for approval, following approval by the FAR Committee on 11 July. The Finance Manager provided an overview of the budget review. DSP permission is needed to use the decrease in salary costs to increase funding for non-pay costs. The Board approved the 2025 budget mid-year review.

(c) Budget Monitoring Report June 2025 (for review)

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. At the end of June, CIB had an excess of expenditure over income of €229,000. The Finance Manager highlighted the main drivers of underspend.

(d) Annual Financial Statements 2024 (for approval)

The Finance Manager outlined the minor amendments to the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) since the March Board meeting. The Board approved the Annual Financial Statements. The AFS will be sent to the Chair and the Chair of FAR Committee for signing following the meeting.

(e)	<p>Letter of Representation (update)</p> <p>Included in the papers was the final letter of representation for noting. This letter was approved by the FAR Committee and Board in March and has not changed since. It will be submitted to the C&AG together with the signed Annual Financial Statements.</p>
(f)	<p>Comprehensive Report to Minister (for approval)</p> <p>Included in the papers for approval was the draft comprehensive report to the Minister which will accompany the final signed Annual Financial Statements and the audit certificate, once issued. This letter is required as part of CIB’s obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The Board approved the draft comprehensive report to the Minister.</p>
(g)	<p>Procurement (for approval)</p> <p>The Executive sought the Board’s approval for the following procurements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval to procure ICT Technical Support Services – SAOR for a term of 4 years and budget of €1.5m • Approval to award Microsoft Licences for a term of 4 years and total budget of €2.5m <p>The Board approved both requests.</p> <p><u>Procurement of consultants for the next strategic plan</u></p> <p>The Board approved one Board member to be part of the evaluation process. The Chair noted that any Board member who wished to be considered for the panel of the evaluation process for should contact her directly.</p>
8. Risk Management	
(a)	<p>Strategic Risks (for review)</p> <p>Updates to CIB’s strategic risk register, containing eleven risks, were presented to the Board for review.</p> <p>The Chair of the FAR Committee noted that the risk of fraud in the SDCs (CIB 00005-25) would benefit from more robust mitigants and requested that the removal of petty cash and credit cards in the Service Delivery Companies following the findings of the thematic audit review Thematic Review Summary Finding Report be added as a mitigant.</p> <p>Misinformation risk (CIB 00011-25) was updated following discussion and agreement at the June Board meeting. However, it was noted that the risk rating and associated mitigants would benefit from a review to assess whether a higher rating and more mitigation measures would be appropriate.</p> <p>In relation to mitigation of risk that adverse publicity damages the reputation of CIB or the SDCs, the Chief Executive highlighted the communication strategy and crisis communication plan.</p>

(b)	<p>The Chair advised that oversight of the strategic register is the Board’s collective responsibility, however each Committee is responsible for reviewing the strategic risks under its remit.</p> <p>Risk Register (for review)</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as risk changes and new risks added since June 2025.</p>
9.	Closed Session
	<p>The Board met in a closed session to discuss the external evaluation of the Board and the CEO contract.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair and another Board member will go ahead with the end-of-probation meeting, regardless of the timing of the contract. This will take place before the September Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board asked that the Governance Committee consider an approach to presenting and discussing the board review, without need for input from the external consultant. A further discussion on actions arising from the evaluation will take place at the September Board meeting.</p>
	Date of next meeting
	The next meeting will be held in person in George’s Quay House on Friday, 26th September.