
STRENGTHENING STBP GOVERNANCE

TRACK 3/3: ENHANCING BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Paper (Track 3) is part of a three-track package to strengthen the governance of the STBP Coordinating Board.

The focus of Track 3 is on enhancing Board accountability, in particular on (i) Guiding documents, (ii) Accountability of the Board as a whole, (iii) Accountability of individual Board members, and (iv) Oversight mechanisms.

1. BACKGROUND

Following the first two tracks of this study (Optimizing Board Constituencies and Improving Board Functioning), which focused on the Board's composition and functioning, this paper aims to provide initial ideas on how the accountability of the Board can be enhanced. This will be done by focusing on four issues: (1) Guiding Documents, (2) Accountability of the Board as a Whole, (3) Accountability of Individual Board Members, and (4) Oversight Mechanisms.

2. CURRENT STATUS

Guiding Documents

Guiding documents for Coordinating Board roles and procedures currently include:

- (1) Framework Agreement (2001),
- (2) Manual of Procedures (2004, revised 2006), and
- (3) STBP website.

The Manual of Procedures is the most detailed of these three documents, encompassing 71 pages. However, as the Review of the Manual of Procedures (autumn 2011) found, it is riddled

with inconsistencies and gaps.¹ This not only makes it unnecessarily difficult for Board members to know what exactly they should be accountable for, but also undermines the general transparency and accountability of the Board. Furthermore, many Board members had not seen the Manual for years, with the exception of excerpts covering e.g. Chairperson selection procedures prior to elections.

Information on the website is based mainly on the Framework Agreement, but there are differences to both the Agreement as well as the Manual (the latter which is not available online).

Accountability of the Board as a Whole and of Individual Board Members

A key problem noted above is that STBP's guiding documents are not clear. The list of functions for Board members is extensive, and cannot be found in full in one single location or section.² The general public does not have access e.g. to the Manual of Procedures (as it is not online), and therefore cannot hold the Board accountable for e.g. procedural errors.

Furthermore, individual Board members currently do not receive regular or systematic feedback on their work. They are neither evaluated systematically by their constituency, nor by any third party (i.e. an part of the regular Partnership external evaluation).

3. ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

Making Guiding Documents Available and Clear

Track 2 of this study (Improving Board Functioning) discussed the substance and delineation of Board functions. In order to be held accountable for progress, it is essential that these functions are (i) easily available, (ii) clear, and (iii) possible to be implemented by individual Board members.

(i) In terms of *availability*, publishing the Manual online would allow for STBP Partners to hold their constituency representatives on the Board accountable, or for the general public (including organization watchdogs) to know what Board members should be held accountable for.

(ii) Removing inconsistencies and filling procedural gaps would make guidelines more *clear* to both Board members as well as persons evaluating the board.

(iii) Even if the functions of the Board are clear and easily available, individual Board members must have the *capacity and skills* to be able to implement their functions. Currently, Board members are not offered any training, nor does extensive experience on similar Boards (which would ensure past training) appear to be a prerequisite to membership on the Coordinating Board.³ Providing such training would ensure board members' ability to reach out to their

¹ E.g. the Secretariat, the Executive Secretary and Working Groups all have two different sections in the Manual of Procedures. A full list of roles and functions of e.g. Coordinating Board members can be found only by reading each of these sections (and at times inferring Board functions from another actor's reporting duties to the Board) as well as reading the annexes targeted for e.g. foundation or private sector representatives (which cover further functions of Board members not covered elsewhere).

² See FN above.

³ The Basic Framework 2.2.g. defines that "At a moment of renewal of the Board, the Chair and the Executive Secretary shall ensure that the Board undertakes a review of the diversity of skill available on the Board and the expertise which will be needed in the proximate future. In this task, the Board may be helped by a consultation (organized by the Secretariat via the website) among the partners at large to

constituency prior to and after Board meetings, etc. The efficiency and effectiveness of the Board as a whole, as well as the accountability of e.g. constituency representatives, could thus be enhanced.

Clarifying What the Board is Accountable for (and to Whom)

In 2008, it was suggested by a Coordinating Board member that “indicators” could be linked to Board accountability.⁴ A possibility would be to build on this idea further, making the Board accountable for focusing its policies on certain, agreed-upon indicators (e.g. agreed at a Stop TB Partners’ Forum or in the Global Plan).

It is easier to argue that the Coordinating Board as a whole is accountable for ensuring that the functions listed in the STBP Framework Document and Manual of Procedures are carried out in order to further the agreed aims and vision of the Partnership. These functions should be carried out according to agreed principles and procedures (listed in the Manual of Procedures and various Secretariat documents, such as ethical procurement policies). Ideally, candidates and new Board members would have access to a clear, up-to-date list of duties and expectations (e.g. in the form of Terms of References, ideally available online).

More complex is to decide whom the Coordinating Board is accountable to: (i) the Partnership Forum, (ii) STBP donors, (iii) Board constituencies, and / or (iv) the general public? And what does this mean for oversight functions of these bodies / actors?

Enhancing the Accountability of Individual Board Members

Track 1 of this study (Optimizing Board Constituencies) asked whether the STBP Coordinating Board is a constituency board, a strategic board, or a combination of both (and if the latter, what is the balance between the two?).

If the Coordinating Board is to be primarily a constituency board (representing STBP’s member constituencies), the constituency representative should be consulting their constituency prior to Board meetings, representing these views at meetings, and reporting back to their constituency after meetings. Constituency members should be able to voice their concerns and views through their representative, and hold them accountable for their efforts and outputs.

Some interviewees raised concerns that not all members were attending Board meetings as a representative of an institution / constituency, but rather in a personal capacity. Furthermore, previous work has found that not all constituency members know who their representative on the Board is, or how to approach them. One way to enhance constituency accountability is to ensure that members have adequate resources to communicate with their constituency (e.g. through seed money funding for CSOs, as e.g. GFATM provides). Another is to provide regular feedback on whether a Board member is investing adequate time into this function.

Evaluating individual Board members’ other “strategic” functions (advocacy work, resource mobilization, etc.) could also be considered.

Individual members can, of course, also be held accountable on a more practical level (although these aspects are not noted in STBP guidelines). Issues that could be evaluated include:

request suggestions on the profile and skills required for future Board members.” However, this guideline is not implemented in practice (source: interviews).

⁴ “Indicators...(we need to) create some accountability around it.” (Raviglioni, Verbatim Report, p.11)

- Attendance and activeness in meetings, preparation, and implementation;
- Quality of input in debates; and
- Willingness to invest adequate time and resources.

Creating Oversight Mechanisms

To hold the Board and its individual members accountable for certain issues is one thing - to have a means to do so is another.

Questions that need to be answered include:

- Who defines the issues for which the Board and members are accountable? It is worth noting a warning stated by the Board in 2008: There is a “risk if setting low-risk objectives or broad in order to avoid not achieving them.”⁵
- Who checks on whether Board decisions are implemented by Board members?
- Who has oversight over STBP’s Manual of Procedures? Who will train new Board members on their substance and use, and remind existing members when necessary?

4. INITIAL IDEAS FOR ENHANCING BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY

- **1: Revise STBP Manual of Procedures**
 - i. Undertake a substantial revision of Manual, and where needed, revise Framework Agreement.
 - ii. Make Manual available online after revision.
 - iii. Define who has oversight, revision rights / duties, and timeline for regular revisions.
 - iv. Develop summarized introductory materials (and training) for new Board members on procedures.
- **2: Develop Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Coordinating Board and/or constituency representatives/Board members**
 - i. Clarify in particular functions (see also Track 2: 1.i)
 - ii. Provide expectations on time and travel commitments.
 - iii. Develop separate TORs for (a) Chairperson and (b) Vice-Chair.
 - iv. Develop evaluation mechanism for the Board as a whole.
- **3: Develop e.g. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Coordinating Board and/or constituency representatives/Board members**
 - i. Consider evaluating efforts in constituency representation and / or other strategic functions (advocacy, resource mobilization, etc.).
 - ii. Define oversight and evaluation mechanisms.

⁵ Premmereur, p.53, Verbatim Report