

Minutes of CoST Board Meeting No.32

28 April 2020 (virtual meeting via Zoom)

Participants			
Board: Chrik Poortman (Chair) George Ofori (GO) Petter Matthews (PM) Gavin English (GE) Natalie Forsyuk (NF)		In Attendance: Alexandra Habershon (AH) World Bank John Hawkins (JH) International Secretariat Charlotte Broyd (CB) International Secretariat Evelyn Hernandez (EH) International Secretariat Sean Henderson (SH) International Secretariat Nora Pesheva (NP) International Secretariat Maria Prado (MP), International Secretariat Rory Moody (RM), DFID	
	Discussion & Decisions	Responsible	Deadline
Item 1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks			
1.1	The Chair welcomed Board members and observers to the call and explained that his extraordinary meeting was convened to consider COVID-19, its impacts on our work and to discuss how CoST can help support the responses to it in member countries.	N/A	N/A
1.2	Apologies were received from ZL, VL and IS.	N/A	N/A
Item 2. COVID-19			
2.1	MP gave a presentation setting out the issues that should be considered.	N/A	N/A
2.2	The meeting expressed its sorrow at the tragic loss of life being experienced across the world. It also acknowledged the tremendous efforts of key workers who in very difficult circumstances, were continuing to provide essential services.	N/A	N/A
2.3	New investments are being announced, aimed at strengthening public health infrastructure. Ghana for example, is to build 88 new district hospitals and 6 regional hospitals with community participation a key component. It is essential that all new investment is subject to scrutiny and CoST has a role to play in this regard.	N/A	N/A
2.4	NF reported that international financial institutions are making resources available to deal with the pandemic. CoST should follow these developments and be ready to provide support where appropriate. Whilst investment in public health infrastructure is essential, so too is the associated infrastructure that is needed to ensure people can access the services. The use of emergency procurement procedures come with inherent risks due to the speed of decision-making and the	N/A	N/A

	relative lack of oversight. CoST is one of the measures that can help reduce these risks.		
2.5	<p>GE suggested that consideration be given to developing a 'CoST light' approach, that could provide guidance on establishing transparency and accountability measures during crises. The Board supported this suggestion and the Secretariat will work on it.</p> <p>GE also expressed concern about how the pandemic will affect low-income countries. High-income countries with developed health systems have struggled and the impact in many parts of Africa and Asia could be even more devastating.</p> <p>We must consider the pressures this will bring to CoST members in low-income countries and be ready to adapt our approach where necessary.</p>	CoST IS	June 2020
2.6	There is anecdotal evidence of funders directing resources away from efforts to strengthen transparency and accountability. The Secretariat is in discussion with other organisations about drawing attention to the risks associated with this, possibly through a letter campaign.	CoST IS	May 2020
2.6	CP was keen that the Secretariat engage with international partners to see how CoST can support their response to the pandemic.	CoST IS	May 2020
2.7	<p>National Secretariats are being encouraged to talk to government and other partners to see how CoST can support their response to the pandemic. Where necessary, the CoST approach can be adapted to new challenges.</p> <p>The CoST Latin America members are developing a joint study that assess how each government is responding to the pandemic, how infrastructure is being funded and the emergency procurement regulations that are being introduced. The Government of Honduras has also requested that CoST Honduras monitors the rapid delivery of new health facilities.</p>	CoST IS	Ongoing
Item 3. Funding			
3.1	<p>Discussions are continuing with the World Bank about the possibility of establishing a Multi Donor Trust Fund to support CoST.</p> <p>The Bank is aggregating its individual trust funds into umbrella trust funds to avoid duplication and where possible, align the various results frameworks.</p> <p>Challenges for CoST include where it is positioned in this new landscape and determining what the most appropriate governance arrangements are</p>	N/A	N/A
3.2	A concept note will be submitted by the end of June. It will outline the value-added to the Bank's operations and speak to how CoST can support responses to the current pandemic and similar crises in the future.	PM & JH	June 2020
3.3	It was reported that DFID funding for 2020-21 will be less than expected, the long-term risk to CoST is low as the	N/A	N/A

	business case for DFID support has been approved in-principle.		
Item 4.	AOB		
4.1	It was agreed that the minutes from the last Board meeting would be approved by email on a no objection basis. The financial report for Q1 2020 will also be circulated shortly after this meeting along with the minutes from this meeting.	JH & SH	May 2020
Item 5	Future Meetings		
5.1	The date for the next Board conference call is provisionally on Tuesday 23 rd June 2020 at 1330 UK time. Board members were asked to confirm their availability.	All	June 2020
Item 6	Closing remarks		
6.1	The Chair thanked everyone for joining the call and the Secretariat for preparing the presentation and documents for this meeting. These are challenging times and we must ensure that CoST rises to the challenges that confront us. The need for transparency and accountability is undiminished and if anything, has been heightened by the pandemic.	N/A	N/A

These minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.



Christiaan J. Poortman
Chair

Date: 23/06/2020