

IPPF Board of Trustees Evaluation and Development Report

Fiona Knight

Susanne Suhonen

June 2021

Project overview, purpose and methodology

PURPOSE

- The Nomination and Governance Committee (NGC) of IPPF asked Russell Reynolds Associates to perform a “light touch” Board of Trustees evaluation in Spring 2021, following IPPF’s major governance reform in 2019-2020.
- The objective was to provide an overview of the BoT’s performance and dynamics after its first year of operating.
- The evaluation took into account the fact that the BoT has not been able to meet in person due to the pandemic and that most of the Board Committees have only recently convened for the first time.
- The NGC plans to perform an in-depth BoT evaluation in advance of the 2022 AGM meeting.

PROJECT FOCUS

- The focus of the BoT evaluation was on alignment around the organisation’s mission, strategy and risks; board structure and processes; meeting agendas and materials; composition; board leadership; and culture.
- Work was carried out utilizing a confidential electronic board survey in April, tailored to IPPF and approved by NGC. In addition, individual confidential interviews were conducted between April and May 2021 with the Trustees, senior leadership team, selected MA leaders and donors.
- NGC reviewed and discussed the results of this external BoT evaluation and development report in June 2021 and will share and discuss the key actions resulting from the independent assessment with the BoT in September during an offsite.

PARTICIPANTS (Board Survey and/or Interviews)

Board of Trustees

- Kate Gilmore (Chair)
- Ulukbek Batyrgaliev (Trustee and Youth Member)
- Donya Nasser (Trustee and Chair, MC)
- Rosa Joyce Ayong-Tchonang (Trustee and Youth Member)
- Isaac Adewole (Trustee and Chair, RATC)
- Jacob Mutambo (Trustee and Youth Member)
- Bience Philomena Gawanas (Trustee and Treasurer)
- Elizabeth Schaffer (Trustee and Chair, CFAR)
- Sami Natsheh (Trustee)
- Aurélia Nguyen (Trustee)
- Abhina Aher (Trustee and Chair, CSIP)
- Surakshya Giri (Trustee and Youth Member)

Leadership Team

- Alvaro Bermejo (Director General)
- Achille Togbeto (Governance Director)
- Anamaria Bejar (Global Director of Advocacy)
- Varun Anand (Director, Finance & Technology)
- Fadoua Bakhadda (Arab World)
- Marie-Evelyne Petrus-Barry (Africa)
- Tomoko Fukuda (Regional Director, East & South East Asia and Oceania)
- Casper Erichsen (Head of Strategy and Planning)
- Manuelle Hurwitz (Director, Programmes)
- Sonal Mehta (Regional Director, South Asia)
- Mariama Daramy-Lewis (Director, People, Organization & Culture)
- Mina Barling (Director, External Relation)

Member Associations

- Syed Kamal Shah (Pakistan)
- Kalpana Apte (India)
- Jackie Edmond (New Zealand)
- Marta Royo (Colombia)
- Lina Sabra (Lebanon)
- Jackson Chekweko (Uganda)
- Bjarne Christensen (Denmark)

External stakeholders

- Tomas Lundstrom (Donor)

Invited but did not engage

- *Anders Nordström (Donor)*
- *Ann Starrs (Gates Foundation)*

Key Findings

Background and Context

- IPPF is an international non-governmental organisation focusing on the most under-served women, men and young people to access life-saving services and programmes and to live with dignity.
- Established more than 60 years ago, IPPF today operates in 142 countries to provide help, advice, services and supplies relating to any aspect of sexual and reproductive health. IPPF’s 30,000 staff, along with millions of volunteers, campaign for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and deliver education and services through 45,000 service points.
- IPPF underwent a major governance reform in 2019-2020 and elected a new Board of Trustees that started its term in June 2020. By May 2021, the BoT had met five times.
- The purpose of the “light touch” board evaluation was to provide an overview of the board’s performance and dynamics after one year of operating as the federation’s international governance and oversight body.
- From the beginning, the new IPPF BoT has dealt with a number of major issues: continuing to implement the governance reform in practice; departure of the federation’s WHR region and as a consequence, changes to the BoT composition; tightening budgets and financial challenges; as well as the COVID-19 pandemic necessitating to conduct all Board and Committee meetings virtually.

Key Findings

According to our assessment, the IPPF Board of Trustees is performing well in most governance and board effectiveness aspects.

- The IPPF BoT is a well functioning and fairly effective board. It adheres to best practices of governance and is led appropriately and effectively by the Chair.
- The results of the board survey and interviews confirm a nascent yet strong and inclusive board culture that is trust-based and open yet challenging with appropriate behaviours.
- There are no major concerns arising based on this initial and “light touch” evaluation, especially when taking into account the fact that BoT has only met virtually five times to date and is still forming as a team. It has successfully strengthened the new governance structure; navigated a major change in the federation’s composition; and undertaken an assessment of the DG.

Nevertheless, we would like to suggest the following as areas of opportunities to further strengthen the many positive practices and culture that the BoT currently exhibits.

- Development of long-term vision and strategy
- Further improving some of the board processes and operations
- Augmenting board skills and commitment

IPPF BoT assessment by performance area

■ Good performance
■ Potential development area

■ Mission, Strategy and Risk Alignment

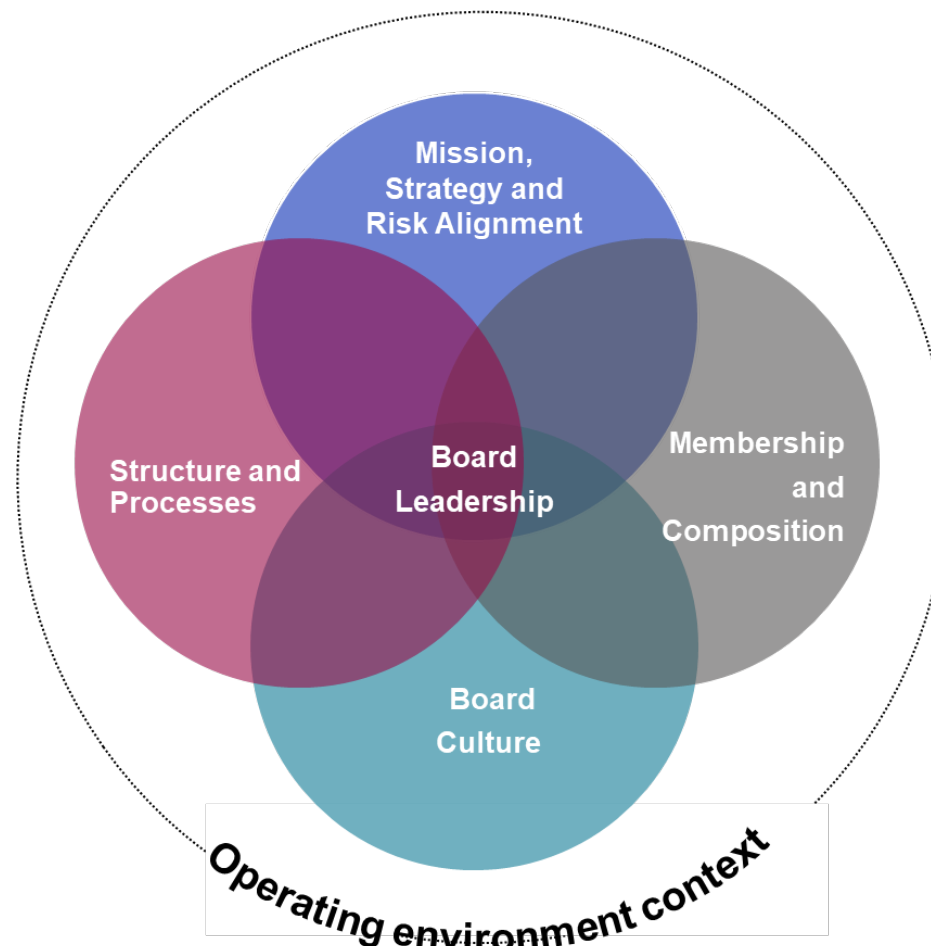
The mission is clearly defined and the BoT's oversight on finances and key risks has improved compared to the previous board. The BoT and Senior Management Team are well aligned and there are no negative tensions between them. However, more work is required on the long-term vision and strategy development.

■ Board Meetings, Structure & Processes

The Board's committee structure is new and adequate for now. Board agendas tend to be very busy with little time for discussion. The timeliness of materials (there are last minute additions) and length (could be more succinct) could be further improved.

■ Board Culture and Behaviours

The Board has an open, respectful, transparent and inclusive culture where people can speak their mind. However, there are several challenges stemming from pandemic-induced virtual meetings, use of technology and in some instances, meeting preparedness, engagement and commitment.



■ Board Composition

The composition of the new IPPF BoT is diverse in gender, age and geography and it has relevant subject matter expertise. There are currently three vacancies, and the BoT could benefit from further strengthening SHRH, finance, technology as well as HR and communications experience.

■ Board Leadership

The Chair is experienced and highly respected. She has an open, engaging and inclusive style and she leads and orchestrates the board well. The performance of most of the committee Chairs is good, and the materials presented to the board are at an adequate level.

■ Stakeholders

We spoke with several Membership Associates and a donor, and they confirmed a good level of transparency, responsiveness and a strong performance from the Chair and DG. Some MAs wish they would have even more interaction and visibility of the new BoT post-pandemic.

Prioritised focus areas and actions for the next 12 months

Priority Area	Recommendations	Owners
1 Long-term vision and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicate more time for in-depth, long-term strategic discussions during H2-2021. The BoT's agenda and priorities to date have been relatively light on strategy discussions but an offsite to focus on this topic is planned for September. ▪ Continue to improve risk management preparedness, especially vis-a-vis MAs. In addition, there could be more discussion about the risk appetite, financial oversight and strategy linkages. To what extent does the BoT put the money at risk? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Board Chair ▲ Chair of CSIP ▲ Director General
2 Board processes and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Augment Board agenda and discussions. To-date, the BoT agendas have been quite busy and heavy on statutory items. Once all the Committees are established and functioning, they could free up time on the BoT agenda to allow for more content-rich debates (e.g., external environment changes, Youth, MA). Ideally BoT could delegate more to Committees, provided by-laws and legal framework allow it. ▪ Invest in a longer-term onboarding programme. There is a desire and need for ongoing development of the Trustees. The initial induction program could be extended over a year to include educational sessions about IPPF and its operations (especially field visits post-pandemic). In addition, IPPF could consider a BoT "buddy" system, i.e., teaming up more experienced Trustees with new joiners. ▪ Improve the timeliness and quality of the Board papers. The Board materials could sometimes be more succinct and last minute additions should be avoided, where possible, to allow time for translation. ▪ Deliver full impact from the Committee's work. Other Committees beyond CFAR have yet to report of their recommendations and work to the full BoT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Board Chair ▲ Committee Chairs ▲ Director General and SL team
3 Board skills and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform a skills gap analysis and recruit for the three vacant positions with these in mind. A few skills areas were suggested that could further strengthen the BoT: SHRH / programmatic knowledge, finance, technology, HR and communications. ▪ Every Trustee should ensure they attend and are fully present, read the papers and come prepared to the meetings. ▪ Improve Trustee engagement in-between the meetings, especially when there is a need for a formal electronic vote in order not to delay important decisions. Increase awareness and improve the process where possible. ▪ Ensure proper succession planning for Board leadership positions, in case of emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Board Chair ▲ Nominations and Governance Committee