



CORPORATE CONTRIBUTORS MEETING
Tuesday 09th Sept 2008
International Convening - New York

Funding review

Simon Zadek opened the meeting with an outline of the Forum's funding situation and strategy to date. The Forum agreed that activities of the Forum's participants would go beyond the two years originally envisioned when the Forum was initiated in 2004. Therefore, there was a need to plan for more long term funding. At the last convening, company participants agreed that contributions from the companies should be regularised, but that there should not be a formal membership nor membership fee and that varied levels of contributions should be accepted. The Secretariat pledged to leverage corporate contributions with public funding on a 2:1 basis. The goal was to raise \$350-400K from the companies and between \$500-600K from public funding per year. With hard work and a lot of time invested, the public funding portion was achieved with three year grants from SIDA and DFID, as well as a good probability of a small grant extension from USAID providing, in all, between \$500-600K (depending on exchange rates).

Corporate participants have made contributions between \$5 - \$125K. Contributors and contributions are not made public, although the Secretariat has had detailed conversations with those who have not made contributions but have been actively involved in the Forum.

With public funding for the MFA Forum's core activities secured the Secretariat may now be able to put capacity into local fundraising for in-country work. Working groups have to put together their own budgets, and the secretariat will help to fundraise in-country. Early indications are that it will be easier to raise money for in-country work than for the initial scoping and convening processes needed to develop a clear plan and support from multi-stakeholder group.

The Forum needs to continue to match public funding with corporate contributions of around \$350K each year. This funding is for the core of the Forum, and is not hypothecated against projects. This funding is crucial because;

- In-country work alone doesn't work, it needs the vertical connections with different levels of authority and international institutions, as well as local connections.
- Entrepreneurial model based on individual championing is limited in its effectiveness, particularly when there is no imminent crisis. The Forum now needs a Secretariat mandated to drive actions and invest resources.
- We need a culture change, with more commitment by participants, leadership from Exco and secretariat mandated to be stronger in driving action. Secretariat will be more challenging, whippier, nipper, more productive. It will be more productive and be seen to be more productive.

While AccountAbility remains the fiduciary body for the MFA Forum, the Secretariat provides quarterly financial reports to Exco and operates to a budget agreed by Exco.



Discussion on corporate funding arrangements

Participants discussed the question of whether contributions should be mandatory, fixed and/or public. They felt that for reasons of equity there should be some recognition of financial support for the initiative, along with a stronger moral pressure for all to contribute. At the same time they did not want the funding arrangements to dissuade people from becoming involved in the Forum.

It was decided that this year the Forum should publish the names and logos of financial contributors on the new website of participants contributing over \$100K in that year.

Next year the decision on whether to provide public information on the amounts contributed (or tiers of contribution levels) will be revisited by this meeting. Participants asked the Secretariat to prepare an informed analysis of the issues, and potential impacts involved in this decision.

Participants asked that the Secretariat send its request for funding in time for corporate budgeting.

Action:

Secretariat will write to companies with a request for contributions, including a financial report, budget and activity plan.

Financial contributors over \$100K this year will be acknowledged on the website.

Secretariat to investigate and prepare analysis of contribution transparency options for next year's international convening.