



MCA-Vanuatu Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Type of Meeting: Regular Steering Committee
12th October 2006
8.30am

MCA Vanuatu Conference Room

Board Members:

Present:

Chairman	Director General, Prime Ministers Office
Member	Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Member	Acting Government Statistician, National Statistics Office
Member	A/Director General, Ministry of Infrastructure & Public Utilities
Member	Secretary-General, VANGO Civil Society Representative
Member	A/Director, Public Works Department
Member	Representative of Director, DESP

MCA Vanuatu Program Management:

Director Program Management
Economics Analyst
Infrastructure Analyst
Secretary & Support Staff

Observers:

Jeffrey Stubbs, MCC Resident Country Director observed via teleconference.

Apologies:

Director of the Department of Finance

Absent:

Vice-Chairman & Director General of Ministry of Finance & Economic Management
Director General of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
Head of Development Cooperation Foreign Affairs
General Manager of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industries
Director of the Department of Strategic Management

Quorum present? **Yes**

The meeting was quorate.

Government Statistician, Secretary General of VANGO and representative of the director of DESP left during the course of the meeting.

Person Acting as Chairman: Director General, Office of the Prime Minister

Person Acting as Secretary: Director, Program Management Unit

Proceedings:

The meeting called to order at 8.30am by Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed every one to the meeting. An opening prayer was offered by the Secretary General of VANGO.

No members of the Steering Committee attending the meeting or those who did not attend objected to the calling of the meeting or the items on the agenda.

I. Discussion and Action Items

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and reiterated that the meeting should have been held two weeks ago. He noted the difficulties in the Program Management in trying to convene a meeting but to no success. He was away overseas during this period. He reminded members of their duty to attend meetings.

For this meeting the agenda items were circulated two weeks ago by the Program Management and remain the same.

A) Procurement Agent Issues

The chair requested the Director Program Management to brief the SC on the agenda. The Chair stated that the issue is a critical one and one that requires the input of the SC since the Procurement Agent reports to MCA Vanuatu. The Director of the Program Management read to SC Members his emailed letter to the PA's Project Director, Mr Christian Combe. He also read the paper on Procurement Agent Issues to the Steering Committee. The Director requested the SC to note the correspondence between himself and Mr Combe.

The possible options were identified. The Chairman indicated that he has not received from MCC any formal communication on the proposal to terminate the Procurement Agent. After a lengthy discussion, the Steering Committee decided not to support the recommendation to terminate the PA and to give the Design-Build Contract to another firm. It also recommended that the Chairman and possibly a subset of the Steering Committee must meet the Team Leader of the Procurement Agent and present the issues raised in Mr Vuti's email to Mr Combe face to face and requests the PA's immediate rectification within the shortest possible period. This meeting should be held on Friday October 12, 2006 at 3.30 pm. The SC wishes to maintain the services of the Procurement Agent.

B) Update of Environment Social Impact Officer

The Director of the PMU briefed the SC on the appointment of an ESI Officer. The Selection Panel for the above position recommended Ms Catherine Malosu as the Environmental and Social Impact Officer. The SC approved this through the Flying Minutes of 3rd October 2006. In this SC meeting, it was decided by the SC that the new GRT salary scale be used for the new officer along with the Economics and Infrastructure analysts.

The SC unanimously approved the appointment of Catherine Malosu as the ESI Officer and also approved that all Officers of the PMU be remunerated at the new GRT rate equivalent of their current salary scale

C) Replacement of BCEOM Team Leader Fredric Piquier

The Director of the PMU briefed the SC on the replacement of Mr Fredric Piquier by Mr Carl Erik Berentsen, an American as the Team Leader. The SC was requested to approve his CV. The Director General of Foreign Affairs moved to accept Carl Erik Berentsen's CV, seconded by the Acting Director General Ministry of Infrastructure & Public Utilities. All members voted in favor of the motion.

D) Resignation of Jone Rogara & proposed replacement

It was also brought to the attention of the SC that BCEOM interviewed Mr. Manasseh Tari and recommended him to the SC to replace Mr Jone Rogara who resigned his position as Contract Manager. Manaseh's CV was circulated; and he requires no introduction as he served as a former Director General of the Ministry of Infrastructure & Public Utilities. The Director-General Ministry of Foreign Affairs moved to accept Mr. Tari's CV to take up the position of Contract Manager with the Procurement Agent. The Acting Principal Statistician seconded the motion.

The SC unanimously approved the CV of Mr. Manasseh Tari as the new Contract Manager with the Procurement Agent.

E) Procurement Specialist replacement

The Director of PMU also informed the SC that the Procurement Specialist, Mr. SK Agarwal has resigned and left the country. BCEOM, the firm that acts as the Procurement Agent recommends that Mr. Robert Goodyear, a British citizen, be approved by the SC as replacement of SK Agarwal. The Acting Director General, Ministry of Infrastructure & Public Utilities moved to accept Mr. Robert Goodyear's CV to replace Mr. SK Agarwal. The motion is seconded by the Acting Director of PWD.

The SC unanimously approved Mr. Goodyear as the new procurement specialist replacing Mr. Agarwal.

F) Implementing Entity Agreement with National Statistics Office

The Director of the PMU briefed the SC on the progress of the Implementing Entity Agreement. The Implementing Entity Agreement between NSO and MCA Vanuatu was already approved by Steering Committee through Flying Minutes of October 6, 2006.

The SC Meeting noted and accepted the approval.

G) Bid Challenge System

The Director of the Steering Committee mentioned the importance of the Bid Challenge System and also the urgency of having it approved by the SC. The Bid Challenge System was approved by Steering Committee through Flying Minutes of October 6, 2006.

The SC noted and accepted the approval.

H) Procurement Plan

The Procurement Plan was approved by Steering Committee through Flying Minutes of October 6, 2006. The SC meeting noted and accepted the approval.

I) Database Developer Technical Assistance

The Director of the PMU briefed the SC on the status of the Database developer, the Consultant responsible for building a Management Information System for the PMU. The PMU has found some difficulty in recruiting someone from overseas as the cost of the consultancy is quite small. Expressions of interest sent out has already been received and evaluation is been done. A shortlist was prepared, however its budget allocation is causing a problem. The issue has been discussed with MCC and MCC also feels that it is not possible to get someone from overseas for that amount of contract, therefore it is suggested that the EOI be cancelled and the consultancy advertised locally. The budget allocated for this consultancy is US\$18,000. The PMU is proposing that the SC considers cancellation of the EOI and have the TA advertised as a local contract. The budget allocated will cover input and warrantee services and upgrade (should there be a need).

The Acting Director General of the Ministry of the Public Utilities and Infrastructure moved to accept the proposal to cancel the EOI and have the consultancy advertised locally. This motion was seconded by the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The SC unanimously approved the cancellation of the database consultancy EOI and move that the consultant be advertised locally only.

J) Data Quality Auditor - deferred

This agenda has been deferred to the next SC Meeting as the Program Management has not received any procedures from the Procurement Agent.

K) Advance Payment to the Procurement Agent

In consistent with the Procurement Agent Agreement, MCA Vanuatu should pay an advance of 20% of the value of the procurement agent's costs. The Program Management brought to the Steering Committee's attention, an understanding between MCC/MCA/PA was to with-hold that payment until two months lapsed from 24 July, 2006. Such date is now due and the Program Management recommends that such payment be made.

The SC agreed that such payment should be made without further delay.

L) Financial Plan – Third Disbursement

The Program Director briefed the SC that the PMU has prepared the Third Disbursement Request but there a Conditions Precedent that depends on the work of the Fiscal Agent (i.e Fiscal Accountability Plan, Audit Plan) that needs to be completed. The Procurement Agent also will need to complete the Procurement Operations Manual, Bid Challenge System and Bidding and Proposal documents. Some activities may have to be waived e.g. the IEA with PWD, procurement of the Data Quality Auditor, etc.

The Financial Plan is being prepared but requires SC's approval of new salary scales based on the new GRT, a cleaner and an ESI Officer before it can be sent to MCC for no objection.

The SC instructs the Program Management to follow-up with the Fiscal Agent on its expected deliverables and approved the implementation of the new GRT scale and the transfer of the ESI Officer to the PMU.

M) MCA Vanuatu Office Cleaner

The Steering Committee has approved that a Cleaner/Office Assistant be hired on casual basis for a 5 days week. The SC noted that it has already approved this via the Flying Minutes of 11th October 2006 and accepted this approval.

N) Prequalification for Civil Works Document

The Prequalification Document is being finalized and will be circulated for SC's approval. Because of the urgency of having this document approved and forwarded to MCC, the Program Management advised that as soon as it finalize, the approval of the SC will be sought through the Flying Minute system.

O) Other Business

1: Invoices from MCA Legal Counsel

The Program Director raised his concerns about the Legal Counsel's invoices, particularly costs relating to emails. The Chairman stressed the importance of time and record keeping by program management. The Director responded by saying they have kept times and records.

The SC recommends to the Program Management to negotiate with the Legal Counsel over the charges and at the same time seek alternate arrangements with other lawyers in town.

3. Rob Evan's Statement

The Chairman advised of the upcoming visit of the Assistant Secretary of State to Vanuatu and requested the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to meet with the US Ambassador during this visit of the Assistant Secretary of State over Rob Evan's statement in relation to US funding.

4. Steering Committee Quorum

The Chairman expressed concerns over SC members' attendance, and stated that it needs to be improved. He asked SC Members to circulate options for adoption in improving members' attendance at SC Meetings. The Program Director suggested a day of the week and time is set aside for MCA matters only.

5. Allowances for SC members:

Some members of the SC feel that they should be compensated for the time they spent in MCA-Vanuatu SC meetings. The issue has been pursued with the Minister of Finance & Economic Management through two letters but to date there is still no response.

The Chairman thanked all members for their attendance, and officially closed the meeting at 11.19 am.

Certified by: /S/
Secretary, MCA-Vanuatu

Acknowledged by: /S/
Chair of the Steering Committee