

NOOLAHAM FOUNDATION

GOVERNANCE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: 09 March 2025

Time: 5:30 p.m. Sri Lanka Time

Meeting: Governance Board Meeting

Attendance

The following members were present:

1. Meera Bharathy
2. Kopinath Thillainathan
3. Shaseevan Ganeshananthan
4. Dr. Kanaga Sugumar
5. Sanjayan Selvamanickam
6. Prashanth Srinivasan
7. Nalayini Indran
8. Mayooraanathan Ratnavelpillai
9. Mark Balmforth
10. Rajan Bala
11. Mohamed Saakir Ibrahim
12. Sajeev Edward Selvarajah
13. Sinniah Karuppiah Navaratanarajah
14. Ransuthamalar Nanthakumar

Agenda

1. Introduction of New Members
2. Previous Month Meeting Minutes
3. Annual Plan Monitoring
4. Resource mobilization
5. Budget Monitoring and Budget Revision
6. Governance Board Responsibilities and Contribution Analysis
7. Approvals for Submissions
8. Process and Project Dependency Analysis
9. Board Bricks & Contribution Analysis
10. Approvals for Submissions
11. AOB

1. Introduction of New Members

Sanjayan Selvamanickam was introduced as a Governance Board member.

Sinniah Karuppiah Navaratanarajah, Mohamed Saakir Ibrahim, and Rajan Bala were introduced as Grey Board members.

2. Previous Month Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the previous monthly Governance Board meeting were presented for review, based on the previous monthly meetings.

The Board noted that additional tasks should be initiated through Governance Board meetings and appropriately delegated to the relevant sector leads.

It was also noted that meetings relating to processes and projects should be conducted with the respective mentors.

Action ID: 2943

3. Annual Plan Monitoring

The Board reviewed the progress of the Annual Plan based on the achievement during the first two months against the benchmark of **65%**.

No.	Sector	Achievement
1	Organisation Management and Operations	81%
2	Programmes and Projects	98%
3	Digital Processing and Preservation	71%
4	Digital Library and Archive	77%

5	Multimedia Production and Documentation	10%
6	Technology Infrastructure and Development	0%
7	Finance, Human Resources and Administration	54%
8	Advocacy, Communication and Public Relations	0%

The Board noted the need for staff responsible for the **Technology** and **Communication** sectors to report on their respective achievements against the Annual Plan.

Action IDs: 2944 and 2945

4. Resource Mobilization

4.1 Chapter Burn Rate

The Board reviewed the annual fund received and burn rate as of **February 2025**.

Funding Source	Burn Rate
Friends of Noolaham – UK	29.53%
Friends of Noolaham – Canada	76.06%
Friends of Noolaham – Australia	3.13%
Friends of Noolaham – Norway	53.29%

Friends of Noolaham – USA	7.05%
Friends of Noolaham – Singapore	10.72%
Total	30.41%

The Board noted that the Norway Chapter had contributed approximately **53% of the total amount received during the previous two months**.

It was agreed that **Cheliyan** should be contacted to discuss and confirm the amount.

Action ID: 2946

4.2 Chapter-wise Financial Reporting

The Board noted that chapter-wise reporting had been implemented for accounting purposes in the monthly reports.

However, fundraising and resource mobilization activities continue to be managed by fundraisers under the Resource Mobilization Team.

4.3 Fundraiser Follow-up

It was agreed that discussions should be arranged with the respective fundraisers.

Reminder letters should also be sent to contributors who had failed to make their contributions during the previous two months.

Action ID: 2949

5. Budget Monitoring and Budget Revision

The Board reviewed the remaining balances of selected projects.

Project / Activity	Remaining Balance (Rs.)
Vasikasalai 2020	(216,613)
Open Education Resource 2020	(32,270)
Kilinochchi District – Regional Documentation 2020	(227,126)
Endangered Archives Programme 1450	(1,576,386)
Regional Documentation – Trincomalee	(258,743)
Documentation of Panchankam	(293,394)

5.1 Vasikasalai Project Reimbursement

The Board discussed reimbursing the negative balance of the Vasikasalai Project with the support of **Nadukulumam – Yogavalavan**.

If this support cannot be secured, an alternative donor should be identified to cover the outstanding balance.

Action ID: 2956

5.2 OER Project Deposit

A request should be submitted to **Face** to increase the monthly deposit amount for the OER Project.

Action ID: 2957

5.3 Kilinochchi Regional Documentation Project

A request should be submitted to reimburse the negative balance of the Kilinochchi Regional Documentation Project and to seek continuation of the project.

Action ID: 2958

5.4 EAP 1450 Project

The Board noted the need to formally recognise and appreciate the staff members who contributed to the EAP 1450 Project.

Action ID: 2959

5.5 Trincomalee Regional Documentation Project

A donor should be identified to support the continuation of the Trincomalee project and to cover its remaining balance.

Action ID: 2960

5.6 Panchankam Project

The negative balance of the Panchankam Project should be reimbursed with the support of **Dr. Sugumar**.

Action ID: 2961

The remaining **70 Panchankam documents** are to be sourced through collection development activities.

Action ID: 2962

6. Governance Board Responsibilities and Contribution Analysis

The Board discussed the responsibilities and expected contributions of Governance Board members in relation to:

- Resource mobilization
- Mentorship
- Collaboration
- Project development and project sales
- Active volunteer engagement
- Sustainable fundraising

6.1 Governance Board Member Responsibilities

The Board noted that members are expected to contribute to resource mobilization by identifying:

- Potential fundraisers
- Contributors
- New projects
- Partnerships
- Volunteers

Action ID: 2964

6.2 Board Member Contributions and Areas of Expertise

The Board discussed the different areas of expertise and contribution of individual members.

Meera Bharathy stated that his contribution was primarily in the area of finance and expressed that he may not be suitable to continue on the Board in its existing form. He suggested the inclusion of additional members with relevant expertise and emphasized that the Board should have a broader range of competencies beyond financial contribution.

Dr. Sugumar stated that while he was unable to connect with additional financial contributors, he could contribute by identifying potential projects.

Shaseevan emphasized the importance of Governance Board members understanding Noolaham's manuals, policies, organisational structure and history. He noted that sessions had previously been organised for this purpose, although participation had been limited.

He further explained the transition from the previous departmental structure to the current process-based structure, which was intended to enable volunteers to contribute more effectively. Examples of individual contributions to collection development and fundraising were also noted.

Kopinath highlighted the importance of developing a sustainable volunteer base. He noted that many volunteers have been introduced through Shaseevan and that some individuals have carried significant responsibilities within the organisation for extended periods.

The Board discussed the importance of contributions extending beyond financial support and noted that members could contribute through different areas identified within the Board contribution framework.

7. Approvals for Submissions

The following submissions were presented for consideration:

1. Partnership with Jaffna Institute for Law
2. Documentation of Ancient Tamil Worship

7.1 Jaffna Institute for Law and Policy

Policy for “Documenting Case Briefs in relation to crimes prosecuted by the domestic courts in Sri Lanka of relevance to the debate on accountability and reconciliation” and “Constitutional Reform Proposals made by Tamil political parties from 1921-present: Documenting the Tamil side of the story in Sri Lanka's fractured process for a Constitutional Settlement”

Action ID: 2986

7.2 Documentation of Ancient Tamil Worship

The Board emphasized the importance of maintaining the quality of volunteer contributions and ensuring appropriate attention to the quality of the work undertaken.

It was also proposed that approximately **60–70 identified videos relating to ancient worship** be uploaded to **Aavanaham**.

Action IDs: 2968 and 2969

8. Process and Project Dependency Analysis

The Board considered process and project dependencies.

8.1 The Board discussed the need to reorganize the Governance Board meeting agenda according to the current organisational context and priorities.

Action ID: 2948

8.2 The Board discussed the need to identify gaps in the skills and knowledge of sector leads and managers that may affect their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Necessary training should be provided to address identified gaps.

Action ID: 2951

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Action ID: 2951

8.4 The Board discussed the need to reduce the amount of time spent repeatedly addressing the same matters with individual staff members and sector leads. Alternative approaches, including changes to job roles where necessary, should be considered.

Action ID: 2952

8.5 The Board agreed that appropriate action should be taken to evaluate the performance of individuals who have not fulfilled their assigned responsibilities.

Detailed reports should be submitted at the next Governance Board meeting.

Action ID: 2953

8.6 The Board discussed initiating a proposal to conduct an HR survey under the Ombudsman process.

The following steps were identified:

1. Select an appropriate anonymous survey method.
2. Share the proposed methodology and details with the Governance Board.
3. Explain the purpose and process of the survey to staff.
4. Conduct the survey.
5. Prepare and submit a report based on the findings.

Action ID: 2955

9. Previous Month Monthly Report

The previous month's monthly report covering sectors, operations, finance and projects was included for review.

No specific decision or action was recorded under this agenda item in the source document.

10. Other Matters

10.1 Local Chapters and Fundraising

The Board discussed several matters relating to local chapter development, fundraising, research, volunteers, education and institutional engagement.

The Board discussed strengthening the local chapter in Kilinochchi, including the involvement of **Ketheeswaran** and **Karunakaran**.

Action ID: 2963

10.2 Motivating Local Chapter Volunteers

Mayooranathan raised the issue of motivating local chapter volunteers to operate their chapters effectively.

It was suggested that the strategy for managing local chapters and their activities should be reviewed.

Action ID: 2670

10.3 Awareness among Teachers and Students

The Board noted that many teachers and students remain unaware of Noolaham.

It was proposed that district-level chapters engage with students and teachers through the relevant Provincial Director structures.

Action ID: 2971

10.4 Internship Opportunities

The Board proposed involving students from Colleges of Education, particularly students studying library science, in internship opportunities at Noolaham.

Action ID: 2972

10.5 Leadership of Local Chapters

The Board discussed encouraging teachers or lecturers to take leadership roles in local chapters rather than relying primarily on existing individuals.

Noolaham should develop an appropriate framework to support the effective and independent functioning of local chapters.

Action ID: 2987

10.6 Reference Documents for Local Chapter Policy

The following documents were identified as references when developing the policy framework for local chapters:

- *Vilakku Sanchikai* (1995)
- Kerala State Archive model

10.7 Collaboration with Prof. Aarasu

The Board discussed organising a programme with **Prof. Aarasu** and sharing the relevant presentation with **Rajan Bala**.

Action ID: 2975

10.8 Building a Research Community

The Board discussed the following steps for developing a research community:

1. Establish local chapters.
2. Establish field researchers through the Canadian Embassy project or NTT.
3. Prepare a presentation based on existing experiences involving Mark, Thamilini and Kuruparan.
4. Engage Master's and PhD students in research through chapters and collections.

Action ID: 2976

10.9 Connecting Users with Collections

The Board noted the importance of connecting users with the appropriate collections in order to strengthen outreach activities.

Action ID: 2928

10.10 University Engagement

The Board proposed creating a university-level body through student unions and establishing connections with relevant lecturers.

Action ID: 2979

10.11 Technology Sector Volunteer

The Board discussed identifying a volunteer to support the Technology sector with the assistance of **Rajan Bala**.

Action ID: 2989

10.12 Recruitment of New CEO

The Governance Board members were requested to take action towards the recruitment of a new CEO.

Action ID: 2063

10.13 Local Registration under NGO Secretariat

Local registration under the NGO Secretariat was also noted as a matter for consideration.

11. Key Decisions and Action Points

No.	Decision / Action	Responsibility	Action ID
1	Initiate and delegate tasks through GB meetings and conduct process/ project meetings with respective mentors	Sector Leads/ Mentors	2943
2	Submit Annual Plan achievement reports for Technology and Communication sectors	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2944/ 2945
3	Confirm the Norway Chapter contribution with Cheliyan	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2946
4	Reorganise the GB meeting agenda according to the current organisational context	CEO	2948
5	Meet with fundraisers and send reminders regarding outstanding contributions	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2949
6	Identify skills and knowledge gaps among sector leads and managers and provide training	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2951
7	Review staff/sector lead roles and consider alternative arrangements where necessary	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2952
8	Evaluate performance where responsibilities have not been fulfilled and report to the next GB meeting	CEO	2953
9	Conduct HR survey under the Ombudsman process	CEO/ Leads	Sector 2955

10	Address the Vasikasalai Project negative balance through Nadukulumam – Yogavalavan or an alternative donor	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2956
11	Request an increase in the OER Project monthly deposit	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2957
12	Request reimbursement and continuation of the Kilinochchi Regional Documentation Project	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2958
13	Appreciate staff involved in EAP 1450	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2959
14	Identify donor support for the Trincomalee project	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2960
15	Reimburse the Panchankam Project balance with support from Dr. Sugumar	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2961
16	Source the remaining 70 documents through collection development	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2962
17	Strengthen the Kilinochchi local chapter	Relevant Team		2963
18	Strengthen Board members' contribution to resource mobilization and organisational development	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2964
19	Implement the Jaffna Institute for Law and Policy project	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2986

20	Improve quality of volunteer work and upload identified ancient worship videos to Aavanaham	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2968 / 2969
21	Develop a strategy for motivating local chapter volunteers	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2670
22	Increase awareness of Noolaham among teachers and students	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2971
23	Develop internship opportunities for relevant College of Education students	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2972
24	Develop an appropriate leadership framework for local chapters	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2987
25	Organise a programme with Prof. Aarasu and share the presentation with Rajan Bala	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2975
26	Develop the Noolaham research community	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2976
27	Connect users with relevant collections to strengthen outreach	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2928
28	Establish university engagement through student unions and relevant lecturers	CEO/ Leads	Sector	2979
29	Identify a Technology sector volunteer with support from Rajan Bala	Relevant Rajan Bala	Team/	2989

12. Closing

The Governance Board noted the matters discussed and the actions identified under the respective agenda items.

The relevant Board members, sector leads, managers, staff, mentors and project teams are expected to follow up on the assigned actions and provide progress updates at subsequent Governance Board meetings.

The Meeting concluded at: 8.33 P.M.(Sri Lankan Time)