



BOARD CHAIR – CHAIR OF HR COMMITTEE (INDEPENDENT TRUSTEE)

February 2026

The Start Network Board is seeking a new Chair (Independent Trustee) to lead the Board with strong strategic oversight and governance. The Chair will play a pivotal role in providing inclusive leadership, ensuring effective governance, and safeguarding the organisation's mission, values, and financial integrity. The Chair works closely with the CEO, CFOO, Company Secretary, and fellow Trustees to guide Start Network's strategic direction and support robust risk and financial oversight. The Chair will play a critical role in fostering a collaborative Board culture, supporting the effective delivery of Start Network's strategic priorities, and representing the organisation externally to key stakeholders. The candidate is also expected to chair the HR committee.

This brief contains more information on this appointment and instructions on how to apply. The closing date for applications is 7th April 2026.



WHAT IS START NETWORK?

Our purpose is to be a catalyst for system-level change that improves the efficiency, effectiveness and ethics of humanitarian action. We do this by working as a network to develop, test & spread new ways of collaborating and resourcing locally-led crisis response and anticipation.

Our current membership is made up of nearly 100 local, national and international NGOs based all around the world. We also support 10 national and regional hubs made up of civil society organisations and NGOs as our vehicle for devolving power, resources and accountability.



OUR SOLUTIONS

DECENTRALISING & LOCALLY-LED ACTION:

Shifting power and resources and decentralising decision-making to locally led networks and organisations.

EARLY & RAPID FINANCING:

Building a global financing system that reduces risk, anticipates, and acts ahead of predictable crises.

COMMUNITY-LED INNOVATION:

Incentivising innovative, locally led, and contextual solutions and learning from them together with people affected by crises.

For more information about Start Network and to read about our 2024-2026 strategy, please visit our [website](#).

OUR VALUES

WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST:

Communities come first in our decision-making and programming.

WE ARE BRAVE:

We have great ambition and are willing to explore new things and take risks to achieve it.

WE OPERATE COLLECTIVELY:

We leverage the value of working as a network, sharing risk and resources, and learning together.

WE ARE INCLUSIVE:

We see the value in diverse perspectives and work to remove the barriers that prevent voices from being heard.

WE ARE OPEN:

We work transparently and with integrity, building mutual trust in all levels of our work, from governance to programming.

WE ARE ETHICAL:

We behave and operate based on key principles of anti-racism, non-discrimination, and anti-colonialism. This is a work in progress.

NEW TRUSTEES NEEDED

We are seeking to appoint an Independent Trustee to chair the Board of Start Network as well as the HR Committee. As an Independent Trustee, you will contribute external expertise, objectivity, constructive challenge, and strategic insight to support effective governance and decision-making. This role plays a key part in ensuring our Board remains balanced, accountable, and aligned with our vision of a locally led humanitarian system.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The Trustee will serve a three-year term, extendable to a maximum of two terms. On completion of the first term, the second term will be renewed, subject to Start Network members' approval through a vote. This is an unpaid voluntary role for which reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed, in accordance with Start Network policies.

You will be required to attend a minimum of three out of four Board meetings per year, one of which will be face-to-face in London, with the rest being virtual. You will also be expected to attend the Annual General Meeting / Assembly. There may also be ad hoc answering of queries or suggestions to the CEO, CFOO & Company Secretary.

Overall, the expected time required by Trustees during the course of the year is between 10-14 days, including time spent preparing for and attending Board and Committee meetings.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide strategic and inclusive leadership to the Board and organisation, ensuring focus on Start Network's mission and values.
- Ensure effective governance, ethical leadership, and robust risk management, including oversight of the development and implementation of a risk appetite statement and risk management framework, aligned with the UK Charity Governance Code.
- Foster a collaborative and accountable Board culture, mentoring trustees and promoting diversity of skills and perspectives.
- Build and maintain a strong working relationship with the CEO and CFOO, supporting their performance, development, and recruitment as needed.
- The Chair is responsible for line-managing the Chief Executive Officer, including conducting the annual performance review and providing ongoing guidance and support.
- Represent Start Network externally at key events and forums, and support senior-level fundraising and stakeholder engagement.



PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- **Strategic and Purpose-Driven:** Brings strategic vision and a clear passion for systemic change in the humanitarian sector, aligned with Start Network's mission and values.
- **Committed to Locally Led Action:** Deeply committed to Start Network's goals around locally led responses, fast and early funding, and innovation.
- **Inclusive and Culturally Intelligent:** Champions diversity, equity, and inclusion; comfortable engaging across different cultures and contexts in a global network.
- **Collaborative and Diplomatic:** Works constructively with fellow Board and Committee members, the CEO, and Start Network staff; builds consensus and fosters open dialogue.
- **Emotionally Intelligent and Reflective:** Self-aware, empathetic, and calm under pressure; able to navigate complexity and ambiguity with confidence.
- **Committed and Reliable:** Willing to dedicate the time required for the role, including preparation, additional meetings, and support as needed.
- **Effective Communicator:** Able to communicate clearly in English; fluency not required, but confidence in engaging in Board discussions is essential.



SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- **Understanding of humanitarian or development sectors:** Deep knowledge of, or strong engagement with, global humanitarian or development ecosystems.
- **Board governance experience:** Proven experience as a member of a board or governing body, with a sound understanding of governance responsibilities in a mission-driven context.
- **Strategic and systemic change leadership:** Proven ability to lead or support systemic change initiatives, particularly those involving networked organisations or coalitions.
- **Global perspective:** Experience working in international contexts and a nuanced understanding of power dynamics, localisation, and equity in global systems.
- **Strong communication and facilitation skills:** Ability to lead high-level discussions, build consensus, and represent the organisation credibly to stakeholders.
- **Time and commitment:** Willingness and availability to dedicate the time required for a high-level governance role, including meetings, representation, and support to the CEO and board members.

DESIRABLE

- **Board leadership and governance experience:** Demonstrated experience chairing a board or governing body of a complex, mission-driven organisation, preferably in the NGO, philanthropic, or social enterprise sectors.
- **Lived experience in the Global South:** Direct personal or professional experience working within or in close collaboration with communities affected by crisis, particularly in the Global South.
- **Advocacy and influence:** Track record of engaging with policymakers, funders, or multilateral institutions to influence systemic change.
- **Innovation and change management:** Experience leading innovation or transformational change, especially in challenging institutional contexts.
- **Resource mobilisation:** Familiarity with philanthropic or institutional fundraising, particularly in support of systems change or innovation.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Start Network Board is made up of 7 member Trustees elected by the Network membership. 5 nominated Trustees are chosen based on their skills and expertise – 3 of whom must be independent, and 2 can be either independent or a member.

Independent: The independent Board members ensure that the Board is working in the wider interests of the Network and the sector, guarding against individual members' vested interests, and bringing in additional expertise.

Members: Board members who are elected from the Start Network's member agencies are chosen as individuals and are expected to act in the best interest of the entire membership.



START NETWORK GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

ASSEMBLY

Highest governing body, representing all members

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Oversees the implementation of the strategy, and responsible for the governance of the organisation-ensuring it is effectively run, and is meeting its mission

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Oversees membership issues in the network and advises on the evolution of the hubs.

HR COMMITTEE

Advises the Board on the organisation's HR and remuneration frameworks.

START FUND COMMITTEE

Responsible for the operational and strategic oversight of the Start Fund.

START READY COMMITTEE

Responsible for the operational and strategic oversight of Start Ready.

FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Oversees the management of finances, treasury and reserves policies, and external audit.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Oversees Board composition and election of new trustees.

RISK & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Oversees our risk strategy and management, reporting and compliance with UK regulations.

**EACH COMMITTEE IS EITHER CHAIRED BY A TRUSTEE,
OR HAS A SEAT FOR A TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

HOW TO APPLY?

Start Network is partnering with Red Sea Executive Search for the appointment of this position. Any informal expression of interest or questions about the position not answered by this document can be directed to them in the first instance by writing to Tim Wingrove at applications@redseasearch.com.

To apply, please submit the following via Red Sea's website at this link: - <https://redseasearch.com/job/start-board-chair>

- The CV should not exceed 3 pages.
- The statement must address:
 - i) Your suitability for the role.
 - ii) Your willingness and ability to serve as a Board member; and
 - iii) Your vision for the Start Network going forward.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

7th April 2026

Deadline for applying

April 2026

Interview Process
(Governance & Nominations Committee)

June 2026

Board Approval

June/July 2026

Member's Approval
(Ratification at the Annual General Meeting)

June/July 2026

The results of the vote will be declared to the members and the nominees.

July 2026

The Start Network team will undertake standard vetting checks on the new Trustees to ensure they are fit to serve on the Board.

July/August 2026

The Trustees will go through an induction process, led by the Start Team. This will include conversations with the current Chair of the Board, the CEO/CFO and senior members of the team, as well as undergoing safeguarding training and UK Trustee Essentials training. Any costs will be covered by the Start Network.



WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

KEY RESOURCES

- The [2024 – 2026 Start Network Strategy](#).
- Start Network's [2024 Annual Report](#)
- Start Network's [Trustee Handbook](#)
- [Role description](#) of a chairperson.
- The full [Terms of Reference](#) of the HR Committee

If you have any questions that haven't been answered by this document, then your first point of contact should be Tim Wingrove at applications@redseasearch.com.

START
NETWORK