Trustee and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee

British Institute of International and Comparative Law

About BIICL

The British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) has spent over sixty years building a reputation as one of the world's most respected independent research institutes for international and comparative law. Our researchers, members and Forums shape thinking on some of the most pressing legal questions of our time, from human rights to investment law to the rule of law itself - work that depends entirely on our independence. We rely on a diverse mix of research grants, training income and philanthropic support to fund our work, which means the financial discipline provided by our Board of Trustees isn't a background function - it's what keeps BIICL able to do the work it exists to do.

Our **vision** is for a just, peaceful, and safe world where the rule of law is upheld and human rights respected, underpinned by resilient legal systems that respond to social, economic, technological, and environmental change.

Our **mission** is to contribute towards informed, independent thinking in law and decision-making for a global community and to uphold the rule of law at the international and national level.

We deliver our mission through our **values**: integrity in our work, collaboration across disciplines and networks, and leadership in using our expertise to advance the rule of law.

You can read more about our vision, mission and values at https://www.biicl.org/aboutus

The opportunity

The Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) provides BIICL's Board of Trustees with oversight and assurance on our finances, controls, investments, and audit. We're looking for a chartered accountant or senior finance leader to chair the Committee and join our Board of Trustees at a pivotal moment: a new Director and CEO, a new Director of Operations in post, and a new strategy launching in 2027. You'll bring real technical credibility and the judgement to translate financial detail into confidence for a Board whose backgrounds are mostly legal and academic. In return, you'll help shape the next chapter of one of the world's most respected independent legal institutes.

The current Chair's term ends in December 2026. We are seeking a successor to join in October, allowing time for handover and induction ahead of the November FAC meeting and the December Board meeting.

Purpose of the role

The Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee provides strategic, non-executive financial oversight rather than day-to-day accounting.

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As a **trustee**, you hold joint legal and fiduciary responsibility for the charity's overall governance, strategic direction and financial health.

As **Committee Chair**, you will act as a trusted advisor and critical friend to the Director and Chief Executive and the Director of Operations, ensuring that BIICL's income is robustly governed, financial risks are mitigated, and resources are deployed optimally to deliver maximum social impact. BIICL outsources financial management to a specialist non-profit accountancy firm, overseen internally by the Director of Operations; you'll evaluate how well that arrangement is working and recommend change if needed.

Key responsibilities

Strategic financial oversight

- **Budgetary scrutiny:** oversee the annual £2.5m operational budget and financial forecasts provided by the executive team.
- **Performance monitoring:** review quarterly management accounts, analysing variances, cash flow health, and performance against key performance indicators (KPIs).
- **Reserves management:** champion the regular review of a robust Reserves Policy to safeguard the charity against sudden funding fluctuations.
- **Investment assets:** oversee the performance of the charity's cash reserves and any investment portfolios, ensuring alignment with ethical investment strategies.

Audit, risk and internal controls

- **Statutory reporting:** lead the FAC in reviewing the Annual Report and Accounts, ensuring compliance with Charity SORP FRS102 and statutory filing deadlines.
- **External audit:** manage the relationship with the External Auditor, leading on the tender process and reviewing the post-audit management letter.
- **Risk mitigation:** oversee the financial section of the organisation's risk register, ensuring internal controls are sufficient to prevent fraud and compliance failures across complex funding streams, and ensure FAC oversight of the wider Risk Register.
- **Fiscal compliance:** monitor compliance with complex tax regimes relevant to this scale, including VAT, Gift Aid, and trading subsidiary operations (as applicable).

Committee leadership and Board reporting

- **Meeting governance:** set the agenda and chair quarterly FAC meetings, fostering an environment of collaboration, constructive, and high-quality challenge.
- **Board communication:** report clearly to the full Board of Trustees, translating complex financial positions into strategic insights for non-financial board members.

Statutory trustee duties

- **Legal compliance:** ensure the charity complies with charity law, company law, and all other relevant legislation or regulation.

- **Strategic direction:** contribute actively to the Board of Trustees in setting the charity's overarching vision, mission, values, and strategic goals.
- **Asset protection:** act as a responsible custodian of the charity's assets, ensuring funds are spent solely in furtherance of its charitable objectives.
- **Effective governance:** attend and actively participate in full quarterly Board meetings, the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and strategic away days.
- **Collective decision-making:** maintain the principle of collective board responsibility, upholding and supporting decisions made by the wider board.

Legal and regulatory frameworks

The postholder is required to understand, uphold, and apply the following core regulatory frameworks:

- **The 6 Essential Trustee Duties (Charity Commission Guidance CC3):** You share collective legal liability to ensure the charity carries out its purpose for the public benefit, complies with its governing document, acts in the charity's best interests, manages resources responsibly, acts with reasonable care and skill, and remains fully accountable.

- **Financial Reporting Standards 102 and the Charities SORP:** Because our annual income exceeds £250,000, the accounts must be compiled under the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP), transparently separating restricted, unrestricted, and designated funds.

- **The Charity Governance Code:** Our Board intends to benchmark itself against this code. You will directly champion Principle 5 (Board Effectiveness) and Principle 6 (Risk and Control) to ensure internal controls are regularly evaluated.

Person specification

Experience and qualifications

- **Financial qualification:** chartered status (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA) is **essential.**
- **Senior leadership:** proven experience operating as a CFO, Finance Director, or partner in a professional services practice in an organisation of similar or larger scale.
- **Sector expertise:** strong working knowledge of Charity SORP, restricted and unrestricted funding, and UK charity law is highly desirable.
- **Governance background:** previous experience as a trustee, non-executive director, or committee member is advantageous.

Core skills and attributes

- **Strategic clarity:** ability to look past the numbers to see systematic risks and strategic opportunities.
- **Collaborative challenge:** ability to robustly hold senior staff and third-party advisors to account while maintaining a supportive, professional working relationship.

- **Communication:** ability to explain intricate financial matters plainly to non-financial audiences.
- **Commitment to the cause:** a demonstrable passion for the charity's core mission and alignment with its values.

Terms of appointment

Term:	Trustee appointments are for a three-year term, renewable for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
Time commitment:	Trustees are required to commit approximately 8-10 days per year. There are four board meetings, four FAC meetings per year, a strategy day, plus approx. 2-3 hours per month for executive consultation.
Location:	London/Hybrid – FAC meetings usually take place online; Board meetings and strategic away days are in-person, usually at our London office.
Remuneration:	This is a voluntary role and is not accompanied by any financial remuneration; however, all reasonable travel and out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed.
Reporting to:	Board of Trustees / Chair of the Board

How to apply

To apply formally, please submit a CV and supporting statement, each no more than two sides of A4, clearly outlining your suitability for the role against the criteria in the person specification and your motivation for applying.

Please include your home address, contact email, and mobile number.

Please ensure your application is emailed to people@biicl.org with '**Application for FAC Chair**' in the subject field.

We aim to acknowledge receipt within 2-3 days.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. We expect to interview candidates from mid-September with a view to appointing by the end of October.

For further information about the role or to arrange an informal discussion, please contact Tom Asher, Director of Operations on t.asher@biicl.org or +44 (0)20 7862 5151.