

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

Information pack
July 2025

Practical
ACTION





Foreword

Thank you for your interest in joining Practical Action as a Trustee.

Practical Action exists to change the systems that keep people in poverty and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, nature loss and pollution. We work alongside communities to build resilient livelihoods and inclusive, thriving societies.

Over 50 years ago, our founder – radical economist and philosopher E.F. Schumacher – published his influential book *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as If People Mattered*. He believed in the principles of local people leading their own development. That ethos has always been, and will continue to be, the driving force behind our organisation.

Since then, we've continued to build a strong reputation and a track record for people-centred, sustainable development.

And now, we've launched a bold new organisational strategy to take us to 2030, shaped to respond to the scale of the climate emergency and the rapidly changing world around us.

This is an exciting time to join us.

Your skills, experience, and passion could play a vital role in our next chapter.

If you'd like more information or guidance on how to apply, please contact Trustee.Recruitment@practicalaction.org.uk (see 'How to Apply' below for more details).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sazini Mojapelo
Chair of the Board of Trustees

The roles

The Trustees of Practical Action share responsibility for governing the organisation and directing how it is managed and run by the Executive Team. Trustees make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it was set up and is in the best possible position to achieve its aims. Trustees promote and safeguard the organisation's reputation. Each brings their own unique skills and experiences to support and shape our strategic direction and work.

Following a governance review, an audit of existing Trustees, and considering Trustee retirements due in 2026, we are looking to appoint a number of new trustees. We have a particular interest in candidates with strong experience in the following areas:

- Supporting us to diversify and grow our **funding** base, especially through **philanthropy** and **climate finance**.
- **Opening doors** to potential donors and providing **intelligence** to inform our approaches to donors.
- A strong background in **charity finance** and UK charity governance (one Trustee may take on the role of chairing the Finance Audit and Risk Committee). Knowledge of the UK pension environment would be useful.
- Experience of **senior organisational management and leadership**.
- Understanding the **local contexts** and **partners** of our work in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In addition, these are our key behaviours for all Board members:

- A commitment to the mission, values and work of Practical Action.
- Strategic vision.
- Analysis and critical thinking with good, independent judgement.
- Curiosity and constructive challenge with the ability to think creatively.
- Valuing diversity, welcoming diverse views.
- Learning, encouraging change and innovation.
- Team players, with humility and ability to get on well with others.
- Commitment to developing Practical Action, not just for attending meetings but also the important work in between – including opening doors to funders and partners and giving expert advice.
- Understanding - or willingness to learn swiftly - and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship of a UK charity.

Title: Trustee

Location: Our trustees are based across the world and the majority of Board meetings are held virtually. In-person Board meetings are held at key strategic times and to ensure effective governance, roughly every 12-18 months.

Time commitment: At least 10 days a year, although Trustees often give more time – ideally 15-20 days. Four Board meetings take place a year (in March, July, October and December), mostly online, and lasting about 3 hours. In-person board meetings will be 2 days. The next in-person board meeting will take place in Spring 2026.

The Finance Audit and Risk Committee and the Governance and People Committee also take place four times a year, and all of these are virtual meetings.

Term: Trustees are appointed for a term of three years which may be renewed once.

Remuneration: None. This is a volunteer role (in line with UK charity legislation). However, reasonable expenses to undertake the role will be covered.

Trustee responsibilities

Ensure that Practical Action has a clear vision, mission and strategy

- Agree the vision, mission and strategic plan, ensuring there is common understanding of these throughout the organisation.
- Ensure the annual business plan supports the achievement of the strategic plan.
- Maintain oversight on the external environment where this might impact the strategic plan.

Oversee performance and provide advice

- Agree the annual business plan, ensure measurable indicators of progress and monitor progress throughout the year.
- Provide constructive support and challenge to the CEO and senior staff.
- Ensure all major risks are identified and regularly reviewed and that there are appropriate risk mitigation strategies.
- Use expertise to support Executive team in specific areas and be a committed thought partner.

Ensure that governance and compliance is of the highest standard

- Regularly review the Board's performance and modus operandi against sector best practice, ensuring that the Board has the expertise to govern the charity well. Ensure that the Board continues to develop.
- Review governance structure periodically to ensure it remains appropriate for the organisation and its operating context.
- Ensure that the organisation complies with its constitution and charitable law.

Ensure the financial resilience of the organisation

- Approve the annual budget ensuring the financial risks are identified and monitored.
- Review regular financial reports from senior staff on financial performance.
- Ensure systems of control are rigorous and regularly evaluated and reviewed.
- Ensure an appropriate reserves policy is agreed and implemented that helps Practical Action manage financial risks whilst ensuring that charitable resources are used as effectively as possible.

Support the organisation to grow and diversify its funding

- Use relationships and networks to open doors to potential donors.
- Provide advice to inform overall approach to fundraising and intelligence on how to approach specific donors and new key partners.

Contribute to the development of Practical Action

- Build the reputation and credibility of Practical Action.
- Develop relationships and networking opportunities to increase funding, awareness and profile of Practical Action.
- Use individual specific skills to advance Practical Actions agenda.
- Support occasional working groups, sit on interview panels or provide other support from time to time.

Outside of the formal board and committee meetings we encourage trustees to use their specific skills and networks to advance Practical Action's agenda.

Responsibilities of the Chair for Finance Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee

- Help the Board understand its financial duties and responsibilities.
- Chair the FAR Committee and report to the Board on its deliberations.
- Help the Board understand the financial performance of the organisation.
- Report to members at the Annual General Meeting on the financial performance of Practical Action.
- Act as a critical friend to the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer.
- Act as a reporting line for the Head of Internal Audit.

About Practical Action

Practical Action is an international development organisation with over 50 years of experience working across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our vision is for a world that works better for everyone.

Today, our mission is more urgent than ever.

We collaborate with communities, local, national and international partners, businesses and government bodies to support people to lift themselves out of poverty and deal with the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises. And we work to change the wider systems that keep people – especially women and marginalised communities – in poverty.

As you read this, we're:

- Leading influential collaborations between Indigenous Peoples, governments, and conservation organisations, improving biodiversity and supporting sustainable livelihoods across millions of hectares of rainforest.
- Supporting young farmers to regenerate land into productive farms, building secure futures for themselves.
- Enabling low-income sanitation workers to transform urban waste into saleable energy, turning surviving into thriving.

And so much more.

Now, in 2025, the challenges we face are increasing in complexity and scale, and so too is the need for bold, effective solutions that work for people and planet.

To meet the demands of today and tomorrow, we need strong, committed, influential leadership and access to funding that enables the delivery of our mission.

We need your expertise, your vision, and your drive to help shape the next chapter of Practical Action.



Structure and governance

Practical Action is a global change-making group, founded as a UK registered charity in 1969. Today, programmes and partnerships in Africa, Asia and Latin America are developed and overseen by Regional Directors with support from staff who are mostly located in Asia, Africa and Latin America, supported by core services in the UK and regional centres. We have 12 country offices, an independent development publishing company, and a technical consulting service.

As a charitable company registered in the UK, Practical Action has Articles of Association that set out rules for running the organisation. Trustees of the charity are simultaneously Directors of the (private limited) company.

Working in partnership with the CEO and Global Leadership Team, the Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for effective governance and delivering the objectives of the charity. Under UK law, the Board of Trustees (Directors) shares collective responsibility for their decisions. The Board appoints a Chair and a Deputy Chair to lead them and has also established two subcommittees: Governance and People (GAP) and Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR). Most Trustees serve on a subcommittee and may also join occasional working groups depending on their availability and specialist expertise.

Practical Action's Trustees are drawn from all over the world, with regular, virtual meetings. Our new strategy launched this year and runs to 2030 – we are recruiting now so that Trustees can join the board early in 2026 and be part of our two-day in-person meeting, which is likely to be in May 2026.





Equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging

Practical Action is committed to embedding Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) across all aspects of our work. We value the unique contributions of every individual and are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind and actively promote inclusion regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, class, caste, tribe, sexual orientation, disability, or any other personal characteristic.

Supported by our leadership and upheld by all staff, this commitment is central to our values and vital to achieving lasting, positive change for people and the planet.

If you need any reasonable adjustments or have any additional needs with your application, please get in touch, either through email ukpeopleandculture@practicalaction.org.uk or telephone +44 (0) 1926 634404.

Practical Action is committed to safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults. Preferred candidates will be subject to pre-appointment checks including criminal records and terrorist financing.

Queries

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information, or would like to have an informal discussion, please email Trustee.Recruitment@practicalaction.org.uk in the first instance.

How to apply

Please submit your CV and cover letter (as two separate documents). Your cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

Please save your documents as PDF files, and name the files like this:

Firstname-Lastname-Documentname-DDMMYY

(e.g. *Jane-Smith-Trustee CV-080725* or *John-Smith-TrusteeCoverLetter-120725*)

Please submit your applications to: Trustee.Recruitment@practicalaction.org.uk

Selection process

All candidates will receive an update about their application after the closing date (so we recommend you add our email to your 'safe senders' list!).

Timeline

- **Closing date for applications: 12/09/2025**
- **Interviews: October 2025**
- **Expected start:** Negotiable, but we would need you to join us in time for our Board meeting in April-June 2026