

Meeting of the DDI Executive Board
January 22, 2014
Minutes

- Gillian Nicoll, Australian Bureau of Statistics (Chair)
- Ron Nakao, Stanford University (Vice Chair)
- George Alter, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research
- Mari Kleemola, Finnish Social Science Data Service
- Steve McEachern, Australian Data Archive
- Anita Rocha, University of Washington, Center for Studies in Demography & Ecology
- Leanne Trimble, University of Toronto Scholars Portal
- Mary Vardigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ex officio)

1 Updates on Action Items from last meeting

DDI modeling work

1. Agree on work packages, in line with the “visualization of packages” document.

This work is complete, although subject to changes as work on the model progresses. A set of work packages has been specified and a Gantt chart with timelines has been created to record progress.

2. Identify a team leader for each work package.

This work is under way and nearly complete. Leaders have been assigned to six of the eight packages worked on to date.

3. Complete Project Plan template for each work package.

These templates have been roughed in and will be completed soon. They are needed for the forward work program.

The Executive Board also had a discussion about the need for a project manager for the modeling work. While individuals had been approached about this position, none was able to serve in this capacity. The idea of allocating funds for this work was discussed (see budget discussion) as this could make the position more attractive. Also, related to this, the Technical Committee sent a document to the Board just before the meeting emphasizing the need for a project manager and the risks to the success of the project if this position is

not filled. Because there was not enough time to digest this document, the Board decided to meet the following week for a more detailed discussion.

It was mentioned that a second sprint took place in Paris at the Reseau Quetelet on December 5-6, 2013, after EDDI. Future sprints are planned for the week before NADDI in Vancouver (week of March 24) and the week before IASSIST in Toronto (week of May 25).

Three-year Forward Work Plan

4. Update the Roadmap document using the information from the individual modeling project plans, and then update the three-year Forward Work Plan.

This will be ready before the March 2014 meeting.

Revenue plan

5. Finalize the Revenue paper (complete: see Current Business).

6. Revenue is to be increased by agreed 10% in 2014-15, with the new revenue proposal to be discussed at the Annual Meeting of Members, with the intention of seeking approval for increasing fees in 2015-16 (complete: see Current Business).

Principles for funding participation in DDI Alliance events

7. Consider how to take this forward. Principles to enable funding mechanisms should be transparent.

Finished -- see Approvals

Update on larger discussion of governance

8. Consider how to bring the Forward Work Plan, revenue, and funding mechanisms together in an integrated way. What governance issues are there to think about? What is the Executive Board's role in this work?

The group agreed that governance should become a standing item on agenda (and therefore this action item will be closed).

2 Approvals

A. Update on principles for funding participation in DDI Alliance events

A draft of the principles was reviewed. Board members suggested reordering them to prioritize having the needed expertise at Alliance events. It was also suggested that those individuals interested in receiving funding write a paragraph about their relevant expertise.

After the reordering of the document is complete, it will be circulated again and approved via email. A template for individuals to complete when they are seeking Alliance funding will also be developed.

B. Meeting of DDI developers on the topic of data transformations

George Alter described a project to generate the DDI elements and vocabulary needed to document data transformations with the goal of encouraging developers to create tools to update DDI XML when data in a statistical software package change. The plan is to publish a call for participation and to accept 12 to 15 people (mainly DDI developers) on a competitive basis for a meeting to be held in the spring. Funding is available for this project.

It was pointed out that this project has similarities to the DDI process and provenance model discussion that began in Washington, DC, around IASSIST in 2011. It is also the case that an SDMX working group is creating a nonproprietary language to represent data transformations. We need to try to bring these three strands together.

The Executive Board approved the project and asked to receive updates.

3 Current Business

A. Update on current budget and preview of the 2015 budget

The current budget with all expenses incurred as of December 2013 was reviewed. The Alliance has underspent on some line items so there could be roughly \$15K to allocate towards participation in sprints (accommodations and food) and the time of a project manager (plus his or her travel). Note that repurposing these funds would still leave the Alliance with a roughly \$17K deficit according to the budget approved for this fiscal year.

It was pointed out that overspending even by an additional \$15K for project management (beyond the \$17K) may be necessary and worth it if we want to reach our goals with the modeling work. We might also ask if any of our organizations would be willing to contribute, say, \$10K towards the modeling project.

After discussing the issues, the Executive Board agreed to \$15k being allocated to assist people to participate in sprints, and an additional \$15k to be set aside for costs associated with the project manager.

The 2015 budget was also reviewed. With an increase of 10% in membership fees, revenues would be \$96,250 (35 members x \$2750). Expenses include \$10K for a project manager and \$10K for a sprint. The \$12K for collective mark fees will not be required because these expenses are likely to hit in the current fiscal year. With the added revenue, the budget looks balanced, but the Executive Board agreed to set aside additional funds, similar to what has been done for 14-15, associated with a project manager.

B. Update on revenue plan

A revised proposal for increasing revenues through a tiered membership model and the resulting spreadsheet of revenues were reviewed. This was the work of a small committee - Mari Kleemola, Anita Rocha, and Leanne Trimble. Brief information on grants was added to the document after it was reviewed at the November meeting.

Some text changes were suggested. There was also a discussion of individual membership, which would require a change to the Bylaws. Currently, there are no individual memberships, but there is a provision for “observers” (“individuals from Member Organizations who are not Member Representatives, or individuals from non-member organizations, participating in meetings. Observers participate without voting rights”).

The group decided to amend the Bylaws to allow individual memberships as described in the revenues document. We will want to combine all suggested changes to the Bylaws so that members can vote on them as a package (see C below).

It was noted that the proposed revenues include five premium memberships. As members will self-select their membership category, we will want to work with specific members to make sure that a group of members choose the premium membership category.

The revenues group will make changes to the document and circulate by email. The final paper will be added to the June 2014 Members meeting agenda.

C. Governance Issues

With governance becoming a standing item on the Executive Board agenda, it was proposed that a small team be constituted to work on governance-related items that arise, including drafting changes to Bylaws (noting that proposals to amend the Bylaws must go to the annual meeting of Member Representatives). We may also want to consider

developing policies in areas where there is ambiguity in the Bylaws. Gillian, Ron, and Mari will take this on, and will deal initially with the bylaw change required as a result of (B) above.

D. DDI External Review Document

The DDI Alliance undertook an external review of its activities in 2010, and the review report was provided to Board members with the suggestion that they familiarize themselves with this document and propose items for further discussion to the director. There are topics in the report -- organizational audit, marketing plan, and succession plan for the director -- that we should discuss as a group at the March 2014 meeting.

4 Announcements

Version 1 of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA) model was published in December by the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services (HLG).

5 Future Agenda Items

- Technologies for meetings (distributed sprints)
- Training
- DDI External Review Document