

DDI Alliance Executive Board Meeting

12 March 2026

Present: Alina Danciu, Jon Johnson, Maggie Levenstein, Jared Lyle, Johan Fihn Marberg, Katja Moilanen

Membership Benefits and Requirements

Alina, Jon, and Johan circulated a discussion document regarding DDI membership benefits and requirements. The document framed membership value around sustaining open DDI standards through funding and in-kind contributions, highlights benefits to organizations (interoperability, mandates, grant potential) and staff (training, professional engagement), and proposes discussion on whether current fee tiers, commercial participation, and governance rights are appropriately structured to strengthen membership growth and long-term organizational viability.

The Board discussed:

- Clarifying the core purposes of membership
 - Membership should:
 - Engage both people and their organizations, including recognition of in-kind contributions.
 - Generate revenue needed to operate the Alliance.
 - Ensure inclusive representation, including voices from non-OECD contexts.
 - Different strategic goals (voice/inclusion vs. revenue generation) may require different membership approaches and tier structures.
- Understanding who might become paying members — and why
 - The Board emphasized the need to identify organizations that currently benefit from DDI but are not members, and to better understand what would motivate them to join.
 - If increasing financial resources is a priority, the Alliance should consider what concrete value (e.g., influence, services, recognition, funding access, or support) could be offered to attract their membership and financial contributions.
- Clarifying and balancing governance rights and membership benefits
 - Governance rights are currently limited (primarily voting and eligibility for the Executive Board), and may not be a strong motivator for all organizations.
 - The Alliance should more clearly articulate and balance decision-making rights with tangible membership benefits to strengthen recruitment and retention.
- Strengthening and differentiating tangible membership benefits

- There was support for placing greater emphasis on practical benefits, such as access to travel funding or strategic priority funds.
- Some Board members noted past instances where non-members received financial support to attend meetings, and suggested that certain benefits should be reserved for members.
- The Alliance should inventory existing benefits and explore additional incentives to support recruitment and retention.
- Strengthening organizational engagement through participation rules
 - Consider requiring working group officers (and possibly participants) to come from paying member organizations.
 - This could shift participation from individual-driven to organization-level commitment, raising the Alliance's profile and strengthening institutional support.
- Using membership tiers more strategically
 - Tiers should provide flexibility to attract different types of organizations and support varying membership goals.
 - Some existing tiers may be ineffective and could be streamlined.
 - There are notable imbalances -- for instance, ~18 commercial membership tiers exist but no commercial members currently pay dues.
 - Options discussed include lower-cost Associate Membership (potentially with voting rights) to encourage participation and modest financial commitment.
- Addressing complexity in the fee structure
 - The current structure includes numerous fee categories and is difficult to understand and administer.
 - Simplification is desirable, though specific solutions were not proposed.
- Considering (and weighing risks of) individual supporting memberships
 - Some see potential for low-fee individual memberships (e.g., recognition or badge models used in other communities).
 - Others emphasized that organizational engagement is more critical for standards adoption and sustainability.
 - Risks include instability if individuals change roles or retire, and the possibility that existing organizational members could downgrade to individual membership, reducing revenue and institutional commitment.

ACTION ITEMS:

For the next Executive Board meeting, Johan, Alina, and Jon will:

- Develop options to simplify the current membership tier structure.
- Clarify whether participation in working groups and access to funds should be tied to membership status.
- More clearly articulate and balance decision-making rights with tangible membership benefits to strengthen recruitment and retention.

- Identify organizations that currently benefit from DDI but are not members, and to better understand what would motivate them to join.

FY2027 Funding Notices

As with previous years, the Board will solicit requests for funding for this upcoming fiscal year (July 2026 through June 2027). The Board determined to keep the same funding allocations used for last year.

Two separate funding notices will be distributed. One will be an open funding request (\$10,000 USD total) for high-value initiatives aligned with the DDI Alliance [Strategic Plan](#), particularly those that help engage and strengthen the DDI community. The other will be sent to chairs of individual working groups and committees with tentative funding allocations. Allocations will match the amounts from FY27, although groups will still need to submit a brief funding request for FY2027 in order to finalize the allocated funds, and funds may be adjusted based on requests from other groups.

The Board proposed that FY27 funding support be limited to participants from member organizations of the DDI Alliance. If non-members request funding, they will need to join the Alliance to be eligible for funding.

ACTION ITEM:

- Jared and Jon will send the funding notices to the DDI community, as well as to committee and working group leaders.

Upcoming and Recent Activities

- On 6 March 2026, the International Organization for Standardization published [ISO/PAS 25955](#), formally recognizing the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) within the ISO standards framework. An announcement to the DDI community will follow shortly.
- [Annual DDI Meetings](#) - registration now open. Please register.
- [Final public reviews and votes for multiple DDI products](#)
- DDI Community Newsletters: [Fall 2025](#) & [Winter 2026](#)

CDIF4EOSC

The Board discussed the recent CODATA announcement about the Grant Agreement Preparation process with the European Commission for the recently approved proposal “CDIF4EOSC: Developing and implementing the Cross-Domain Interoperability Framework for EOSC.” The €8 million project will build on [the Cross-Domain Interoperability Framework \(CDIF\)](#), and several DDI member organizations are participating as project partners.

ACTION ITEM:

- Jon will follow up with the DDI members involved in the project to better understand how DDI is engaging with CDIF and to clarify the expected benefits and opportunities for the Alliance.