

DDI Alliance Executive Board Meeting

15 May 2018

Present: Cathy Fitch, Jared Lyle, Steve McEachern, Dana Mueller, Barry Radler, Joachim Wackerow

Strategic Plan

Since our last meeting, Steve has updated the draft strategic plan document.

The Board reviewed and discussed the DDI User Community section, including making the following points:

- You have to understand the users and head somewhere useful in order to market effectively.
- As an open standard, the Alliance has users we don't know about, so we need to keep that in mind before we get to other parts.
- We are also aware of some bigger customers, and their feedback counts quite a bit even though we don't know the entire scope of our customers.
- Regarding the user base and the term 'users', these terms are used very often in the document. It's not clear who the users are. We do understand the members, especially the active members.
- We discuss the interest of users but we don't know their interest and it can be difficult to understand their interest. But it's easier to understand the members, even if it may be limiting. Members are a subset of the user community. Users can become members but they can provide other functions. We don't disagree it's hard to know them. But we need to engage with our members and the broader user base.
- It might be good to include a sentence about our understanding of what "users" mean – i.e., users as members, organizations, software developers, quiet users, etc. A statement like this acknowledges the audience isn't a monolithic group of users. User interests can compete and can be disconnected at times.
- One type of user is national statistical agencies and they have their own section. The Alliance has connected quite a bit over the last 10 years with NSOs, but appreciate that other groups are mentioned, as well.

The Board discussed the importance of connecting commitments with resources and were concerned that committing the Alliance to, for instance, mobilising NSO use of DDI might go beyond what the DDI Alliance has resources to do. One Board member pointed out that the Alliance has been involved with GSIM development and UNECE workshops, and we completely support this work, but they felt that special interest groups would be a better support mechanism than having the Alliance directly manage the work. On the other hand, another Board member suggested that mobilising NSO use of DDI is framed as a user group development program and will not require so many resources.

The Board discussed a tension between ongoing activities and new activities. That is, the Alliance has things to do that require significantly more resources than we have to do them. How do we generate new resources to do everything we'd like to do? Or which items in the strategic plan do we need to drop since we can't do them? The Board emphasized this is the discussion we need to have at the annual meeting.

The Board also discussed how we only have a chance to generate more revenue if we become more attractive in the global digital infrastructure and open interfaces to a lot of different things. Otherwise, we can't generate more resources. Other revenue models were pointed out, especially grants.

The Board discussed how the strategic plan represents what we think the Alliance should do, but that we have resourcing constraints (budget). The Board recognizes that it needs the membership to help prioritize.

The Board also discussed how the strategic plan should define sustainable goals that can be supported in a sustainable way. A Board member emphasized that it's important to discuss both financial resources but also in-kind contributions.

Budget

The Board briefly discussed the Alliance budget, including:

- A) What can we cut and where?
- B) Or, can we overspend this next year to achieve the goals we've outlined to meet the strategic needs of the Alliance?

The Board discussed that it may be dangerous to accept the budget as-is and dip so far into the reserves. As a next step, the Board decided to circulate comments about reducing costs via email before the next meeting. The goal will be to prepare a revised budget to then circulate to members for discussion at the annual members meeting.