DDI Alliance Executive Board Meeting
17 October 2018

Present: Bill Block, Cathy Fitch, Maggie Levenstein, Jared Lyle, Dana Müller, Barry Radler, Joachim Wackerow

Open Letter Response

The Board discussed the status of its response to the Open Letter. Steve was not able to join the meeting but indicated in an email that he would complete a draft by the end of the week. It was emphasized that the response should address all major points made in the letter, including resourcing, transparency, and governance. It was recommended that the Board define and communicate the decision making process used in prioritizing resources after the DDI 4 prototype review.

The Board also discussed conducting a formal assessment of the membership to better understand what they would like to see – i.e., improvements, new tools, etc. Non-members could also be included in the assessment to understand what they would like from DDI. While this assessment would be useful, the Board did not recommend conducting this as part of the DDI 4 review process.

Jared will schedule a call with Steve and Bill to follow-up on the draft letter so it gets released before the next Executive Board meeting.

Strategic Plan

The Board recognized that the draft strategic plan needs to be finalized. How to complete this will be discussed during the same call with Steve, Bill, and Jared.

Revenue Generation and Resourcing

The Board discussed how to generate revenue and resource Alliance activities. It was suggested that infrastructure development be included in research proposals, similar to how the MIDUS study has funded DDI development.

Several U.S. funding mechanisms were discussed as potential funding channels for DDI development, including NIH Research Conference Grants (R13) https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-18-648.html. A workshop or conference could be a way to bring together several NIA-funded studies, including some already using DDI, to discuss what they would like to do that they cannot currently complete, and whether DDI can help. The NIA has signaled support for such a workshop. Barry will look into support for the R13 funding, both from funders and other NIA-funded studies, and report back to the Board.

Other funding opportunities discussed included R24s, SBIR/STTRs, an earlier NSF and DFG funding collaboration, and https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=11691. It was also suggested to review past funded projects, including MIDUS, CED2AR, and C2Metadata, and determine how we leverage those.

It was noted that the Alliance needs to implement structural support for revenue generation, including grant writing.

Train-the-Trainer Workshop

Achim reported on the DDI Train-the-Trainer workshop recently held in Germany. Participants came from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Malawi, Norway, Romania, Sweden, UK, and the USA. Participants were very motivated and created draft modular training materials. However, Achim indicated that the materials are not in a form that can be immediately published on the Alliance web site. Further work will be required to put the materials into a consistent form in terms of content, clear interfaces between modules, and layout. Achim would like to discuss at the next Executive Board meeting whether the Alliance can support editor and project management roles for a limited time to complete the training materials.

DDI Training in Africa

Achim also discussed high demand for DDI training in Africa. Several African applicants to the Train-the-Trainer workshop could not be accepted either due to limited travel funding or not enough knowledge about DDI (or both). Achim suggested that several organizations might be able to directly or indirectly support an introductory DDI training workshop. These include the World Bank, the Gates Foundation, and the Wellcome Trust. The Board should revisit who will and how to approach these potential funders.

Google Dataset Search

Achim raised the question of how to get DDI instances more visible in Google Dataset Search. It would be helpful if DDI-based repositories have a way to expose their holdings to the Google Dataset Search. Google uses schema.org ("Schema.org is a collaborative, community activity with a mission to create, maintain, and promote schemas for structured data on the Internet, on web pages, in email messages, and beyond."). Having a schema.org extension for DDI might be a way to achieve this. The proposal is to create an explorative working group if there is general interest. There was not enough time for full discussion, so this will need to be discussed during a future call.