Bylaws

Membership Affiliation Program
for Support of the
Alliance for the Data Documentation Initiative

BYLAWS

The University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) will create a Membership Affiliation Program for Support of the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Alliance to be operated in accordance with these Bylaws and the policies and regulations of the University of Michigan.

Terms Used in This Document

Member Organizations: The organizations that collectively comprise the Alliance and provide much of its financial support.

Host Institutions: The organizations that take direct financial and legal responsibility for the Alliance.

Host Associations: The international membership associations that have nurtured the development of the DDI standard and that offer an avenue for its propagation.

Steering Committee: The policy-making and oversight body of the Alliance.

Expert Committee: The scientific and technical body of the Alliance.

Observers: Individuals from nonmember organizations participating (without vote) in meetings of the Expert Committee.

1. ## Purposes and Organization.

   The **Alliance for the Data Documentation Initiative** is an international coalition of diverse organizations that share a commitment to meeting the worldwide requirement of a publicly available standard for documenting social science data. The Alliance's purposes are to (a) oversee the continued development of the DDI standard, including revisions, corrections, and new releases; (b) promote the adoption of the DDI social science metadata standard by data producers, data archives, data users, and software suppliers; (c) offer entry-level and advanced training in the uses of the standard for all groups of potential adopters; (d) insofar as possible, ensure compatibility of the DDI standard with emerging metadata standards in other fields; and (e) resolve the varying and sometimes conflicting interests of the diverse community that is developing and using the DDI standard.

The Membership of the Alliance is intended to represent all active stakeholders in the development and adoption of this metadata standard. From the beginning, the DDI effort has been international and interdisciplinary. The commitment of Members to the Alliance's goals is evidenced by their in-kind contributions and their payment of annual Member dues. Members have, in effect, "bought a seat at the table" for decisions concerning further developments of the DDI standard. By doing so, they have assured the financial security of the DDI effort and made it more easily possible for developers of the DDI to raise external funding for special projects. They have also made a significant commitment to the DDI, including a commitment to adopt the DDI within their own organizations as appropriate.

The Alliance also greatly benefits from the contributions of Host Institutions and Host Associations. The Host Institutions provide the organizational stability that is essential to any successful research and development effort and afford a means for Alliance members to work together. The Host Associations are the principal proponents of adoption of the DDI, as well as contributors of much of the Alliance's expertise.

A Director and a Steering Committee manage the operations of the Alliance, and its scientific and technical work is primarily done by an Expert Committee. The Alliance maintains a small Secretariat to administer its day-to-day operations. The Alliance is financially self-supporting through Membership dues; workshop, symposia, and publication fees; and through external research or training grants and contracts to a Host or Member Institution.

2. Membership.

a. Terms of Membership and Dues.

Membership in the Alliance is open to any for-profit or not-for profit educational, commercial, or governmental organization that agrees to the terms of the Membership Agreement and maintains its dues in good standing. The Steering Committee shall establish a schedule for payment of annual dues. All dues must be paid in U.S. dollars. At the discretion of the Steering Committee, annual dues may be reduced for regular Members located in developing countries or in countries whose economies are in transition. From time to time, the Steering Committee may raise or lower these dues after consultation with the Membership, except that no Member may have its dues raised until the end of its full Membership period.

b. Rights of Members.

Each Member Organization enjoys the following rights and benefits:

- The Member Organization appoints one Representative to the Expert Committee.

- Employees or designated representatives of Member Organizations may participate in working groups of any kind.

- Employees or designated representatives of Member Organizations may receive discounts on publications and participate in workshops and symposia without payment of workshop and symposia fees, except that, if necessary, the Steering Committee may limit unpaid participation to one employee or designated representative per Member Organization and set a fee for the participation of additional persons.

- The Representative serves as the liaison between the Member Organization and the Expert Committee for the submission of proposals and comments.

- Representatives participate in the review of proposals and vote upon them.

- Employees or designated representatives of Member Organizations may access Member-only information, with the consent of the Representative.

- The Member may display the DDI Alliance Member logo on promotional material and publicize the Member's participation in the Alliance.

If the Member Organization is itself a consortium, user society, professional association, or otherwise has members or sponsors, the rights and privileges granted under Alliance Membership extend only to the paid employees or designated representatives of the organization, not to the organization's members or sponsors.

If a Member Organization has subsidiaries, the rights and privileges granted under this agreement shall extend to all subsidiaries that are substantially under the legal and financial control of the Member Organization. A unit of an educational institution will be considered to have met this criterion if it is located on the same campus as that of the Representative of the Member on the Expert Committee. There is no bar to multiple memberships from a single campus or institution. In that case, each member would be represented on the Expert Committee.

3. Host Institutions and Associations.

The Host Institutions shall initially include the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The Host Associations shall initially include the Council of European Social Science Data Archives, the International Association for Social Science Information Service & Technology, and the International Federation of Data Organizations in the Social Sciences. The purposes of the Host Institutions are to (a) raise and manage funding for the research and training undertaken by the Alliance; (b) employ staff on Alliance projects where needed; and (c) provide an administrative and employment home for the Alliance Secretariat and the Director. Host Institutions and Associations are all expected to contribute in-kind to the work of the Alliance (including by the acceptance of Visiting Experts at Host Institutions). Host Institutions may also join the Alliance as Members and would then be entitled to a Representative on the Expert Committee. Additional host institutions or associations may be named in the future by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

4. Steering Committee.

The Host Institutions and Associations shall each have one voting representative on the Steering Committee. In each case, the representative will ordinarily be the director, president, or senior staff member or officer of that organization. The Steering Committee shall also include the Chair of the Expert Committee and one other individual elected by the Expert Committee from among its members. The purposes of the Steering Committee are to (a) select a Host Institution to house the Director and Secretariat; (b) set overall policy and budget for the Alliance; (c) provide strategic guidance and review of the Alliance's activities; (d) in consultation with the Director of the Host Institution housing the Secretariat, appoint a Director for the Alliance from among the staff of one of the Host Institutions for a term not to exceed five years; (e) oversee the management of the financial affairs of the Alliance on behalf of the Members; (f) set Alliance member fees and length of membership term; (g) set fees for Alliance-sponsored activities and products, such as workshops and publications; and (h) make decisions on allocation of funds for innovative work and testing. Members of the Steering Committee shall elect a chair from among themselves for a term of three years and shall meet at least once a year. The Chair may serve no longer than two consecutive terms.

5. Director.

The role of the Director is to (a) supervise the Alliance Secretariat and prioritize its work; (b) convene meetings of the Steering Committee and the Expert Committee; (c) represent the Alliance in conferences, meetings, and other forums, or designate someone from the Alliance to do so; (d) make programmatic decisions based upon the recommendations of the appropriate committees; (e) coordinate Alliance activities around the world; and (f) assist the Host Institutions and Members in raising funding for DDI-related activities. As appropriate, the other members of the Steering Committee will assist the Director in these activities. The Director may also appoint appropriate staff from his or her Host Institution as needed. In addition, the Director has the responsibility to engage the services of an XML expert. The Director serves as an *ex officio* member of the Steering Committee and the Expert Committee, without vote.

6. Expert Committee.

a. Purpose.

The Alliance Director and Secretariat shall establish an Expert Committee, the purposes of which are to (a) undertake research and testing concerning proposals for the DDI standard and its annexes, such as the Tag Library; (b) develop and approve major version revisions; (c) evaluate technical proposals through the Alliance review process; (d) develop and promulgate best practices for use of the DDI; (e) analyze and evaluate annual plans of work; (f) assess progress and barriers to progress; (g) plan and conduct training activities; and (h) suggest future directions for Alliance efforts. The Expert Committee shall be composed of one Representative of each Member Organization and shall be staffed by the Alliance Secretariat. The Director may invite others to participate as observers (without vote) in activities and meetings of the Expert Committee -- for example, individuals who have made or have the potential to make significant contributions to the development and dissemination of the DDI standard (but who are not members of the Alliance). Members of the Expert Committee shall elect a Chair from among themselves for a term not to exceed three years. The Expert Committee shall also elect two persons to serve as voting representatives on the Steering Committee. These will be the Chair and one other member of the Expert Committee. If and when it is appropriate, the Expert Committee may subdivide itself into topical committees. The Expert Committee may also form working groups on specific topics, and these working groups may include non-voting persons who are not members of the Expert Committee.

b. Appointment of Representatives.

Each Member Organization is entitled to appoint one expert as its voting Representative on the Expert Committee for a term of not less than one year.

c. Meetings and Organization.

The Expert Committee will meet approximately twice per year. Meetings for other activities are scheduled as they are needed. Meetings need not take place at a Host Institution. During the formative period of the Alliance we expect that the responsibility for hosting meetings and for local arrangements will rotate among member institutions.

7. Alliance Secretariat.

The Steering Committee will negotiate an agreement with one of the Host Institutions that will enable that Institution to house and manage the Director and the Secretariat. The work of the Secretariat will be supported by Member dues and other fees. The tasks of the Secretariat will evolve as the organization grows. They can include the following: to (a) develop and manage a Web site for communication within the Alliance and with the public; (b) create a Members-only portion of the Web site; (c) arrange for and facilitate meetings of the Steering and Expert Committees; (d) support the Director's work; (e) publish such material as is directed by the Expert Committee or the Steering Committee; (f) organize workshops as directed by the Expert Committee; (g) organize a periodic Alliance Symposium for general discussions of metadata, metadata standards, and the DDI standard; (h) collect dues and fees and maintain auditable accounts of this income; (i) annually produce a Financial Report detailing income and expenditures for review by the Steering Committee and circulation to the Expert Committee; (j) annually produce an Activities Report for the Expert and Steering Committees; (k) solicit additional Members of the Alliance, largely through the assistance of the Host Associations; and (l) conduct such other business as is assigned by the Steering Committee.

8. Support for Innovative Work and Testing.

The Steering Committee shall establish a budget that provides for three kinds of activities: (a) support for the Director and the Secretariat, (b) support for expert consultation on XML, and (c) support for innovative work and testing. Member Organizations are eligible to apply for this latter funding to support work towards the development of a proposal or its review and testing; matching institutional funds or in-kind contributions are expected. Excess funds, if any, may be carried forward by the Alliance from year to year. A report is required from each Member recipient of such an award on the uses of those funds and the results of this investment.

9. Standards Review Process and Procedure.

Every proposal for a modification to an existing standard goes through the following process, unless an alternative process is later approved by the Director and the Steering and Expert Committees. The Steering Committee shall develop a similar process for the control and review of minor version revisions. That process must also include a period for public comment.

To be considered by the Alliance, a proposal must be sponsored by a lead Member Organization and supported by at least three other Member Organizations. The proposal must include a complete draft statement of specifications and functionality. The lead organization should present the proposal to the Alliance Director for formal consideration and should designate an individual who will act as an Architect for the specification (who need not be employed at the sponsoring organization or be a Representative of a Member Organization). The Director will then ensure that the proposal is circulated to all Expert Committee Representatives, and brief Trial Review will be begun. The purpose of the Trial Review shall be to determine if the Alliance should conduct a Technical Review of the specification, and to allow Member Organizations to prepare sufficient resources to conduct that Technical Review. At the end of the Trial Review, there will be a Call for Objections. Each Expert Committee Representative will be offered the opportunity to give the Director a "No" vote, which must be accompanied by comments to explain the vote. The Director will consider the results of the Call for Objections and make an informed decision as to whether to proceed with the Technical Review. The Director must explain his or her decision in writing to the Expert Committee.

If the decision is to proceed, then a Technical Review of about two months will begin. A Web posting and an electronic mailing list will be created at the Secretariat for discussion; participation on this list will be open to all Member Organizations, without constraint. As issues are raised during the Technical Review, it is expected that participants will vote seriatim (formally or informally) on how to resolve the issues. The Architect should post responses to these issues. The Architect of the proposal will consider the votes on each issue and make an informed decision on whether to change the proposal accordingly. Meetings may be called, as deemed necessary by the participants or the Director.

At the end of the Technical Review period, each Representative will be asked to give the Director a "Yes", "No," or "Not-Yet" vote. A "No" vote, to discontinue the Review and reject the specification, must be accompanied with comments to explain the vote. A "Not-Yet" vote indicates that the specification either needs substantially more design work or that the complexity of the specification requires a longer Technical Review cycle. A "Not-Yet" vote also must be accompanied with comments to explain the vote. The Director will consider the votes and make an informed decision as to whether to proceed to the next stage of the process, or to extend the Technical Review, or to dismiss the specification without prejudice and ask the sponsor to resubmit after redesign, or to reject the specification. In order to proceed to Public Review, at least 50 percent of those voting must have voted "Yes." The Director must explain his or her decision in writing to the Expert Committee.

If the specification is accepted, then a Public Review of at least two months will begin. The Director will make a reasonable effort to distribute the specification to the public, primarily by posting on the public Web site of the Secretariat. All public comments will be published on the Web site. Any issues raised during this Public Review must be publicly answered by the Architect. The period of Public Review may be extended at the discretion of the Architect or the Director.

In parallel with the Public Review, a "proof of concept" implementation of the specification should be undertaken. Proof of concept typically requires a complete, public, portable implementation, but a public implementation is not a requirement. Alternatives to proof of concept may be proposed on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the discretion of the Expert Committee. It is not required that the lead sponsor of the proposal be the organization that undertakes the proof of concept implementation.

When Public Review has ended and the Director believes proof of concept (or its alternative) has been established, each Expert Committee Representative will be asked to give the Director a "Yes" or "No" vote. A "Yes" vote indicates that the validity and usefulness of the proposed modification have been demonstrated and that the specification should now be accepted as a part of the DDI standard. A "No" vote indicates the case has not yet been made for the proposed modification. A "No" vote must be accompanied with comments to explain the vote. The Director will consider the votes and make an informed decision as to whether to accept the specification or to restart the process at some earlier stage. In order for the specification to be approved, at least two-thirds of the Expert Committee must vote "Yes," but the Director is not required to approve the specification even if a higher proportion of the Expert Committee recommends its approval. The Director must explain his or her decision in writing to the Expert Committee. Ordinarily, the Director will override a substantial vote of the Expert Committee only when he or she perceives that the proposal would compromise the DDI as an international standard in the social sciences. The decision of the Director may be vetoed by a two-thirds vote of the Steering Committee.

Once a specification has been approved, the Web posting and mailing list will continue to be used to discuss possible clarifications or additions to the standard. The Director will appoint an Architect for such changes; this Architect may differ from the original Architect. Resolution of issues will be handled in the same way as during previous Technical Reviews.

10. Visiting Experts.

Member Organizations may volunteer to contribute staff on short-term assignment to one of the Host Institutions or Member Organizations for specific implementation efforts sponsored by the Alliance. If the Host Institution has the resources to accept such staff, the visitors will be provided with unsalaried appointments as Visiting Experts at the Host Institution. For the portion of their time assigned to Alliance activities, visitors will take their technical direction from the Director of the Host Institution of residence.

11. DDI Standard Publicly and Internationally Available.

The DDI standard shall be publicly and internationally available free of charge to any organization interested in adopting it, whether or not that organization is a Member of the Alliance. Except for participation in the work of the Expert Committee as enumerated in section 6[a] above, Membership in the Alliance shall not confer any special benefits upon a Member as a user of the standard.

12. Intellectual Property.

While the Alliance recognizes that the creators of intellectual products using the DDI and their host institutions should have substantial rights over how their products are created, modified, and distributed, the Alliance's policy is to encourage open access to all DDI-related products.

13. Amendments to These Bylaws.

Proposals to amend the Bylaws may be initiated by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee or by a petition presented to the Steering Committee signed by at least one-third of the Member Organizations. Amendments must be adopted by both a two-thirds majority vote of the Expert Committee and a two-thirds majority of the Steering Committee,

in mail ballots after written notice of at least 60 days. If either Committee does not approve the change, the amendment will not be adopted. No amendment may void the condition of the Bylaws in Section 11 above: The DDI standard is publicly and internationally available.

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