

14. Working Groups (W.G) vs Special Interest groups (SIG)

General Information and Discussion Documents

To the Chairmen of the
IMIA Working Groups

Ref. : EC/JW/it/89-546

Leuven, December 28th, 1989

Dear Colleague,

At the Annual General Meeting of IMIA, held in Singapore December 10th, 1989 just preceding MEDINFO 89 Part II, it was decided that all Working Group Chairpersons should re-investigate the goals and mission of their Working Group. The AGM asked for a critical review of past achievements and a description of future actions.

I would highly appreciate if you could send such a report to Dr. H. Peterson (Chairman of a Task Force ad Hoc) with a copy to me before February 15th, 1990.

The objectives of this Task Force is to assess the current activities and make suggestions for a renewed action and organisational structure of the current Working Groups to be renamed eventually in Special Interest Groups or Technical Committees. As members of this Task Force were suggested Marion Ball, B. Barber, J.H. van Bommel, S. Kaihara, Salah Mandil, Hans Peterson, Otto Rienhof, F.H. Roger and myself.

In fact anyone of the current Working Group Chairmen could and should assist in writing. Constructive comments and suggestions of all interested parties are highly appreciated. We will try to organize another meeting of the Chairmen of the Working Group at the next AGM meeting in Glasgow August 19th, 1990 to discuss these items.

I look forward to your continued collaboration and friendship in IMIA and send you hereby my best wishes for 1990.


Prof. Dr. J.L. Willems
President of IMIA



IFIP

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Past-President: H. Peterson (Sweden)

Vice-President: J. L. Willems (Belgium)
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IMIA

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Draft 90-03-28
H. Peterson

GUIDELINES FOR SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

IMIA has acquired a substantial experience in scientific meetings. It is now possible to set out guidelines, taking into account that experience, for the organisation of future meetings.

2. CLASSES OF MEETINGS

Experience that has been gained relates to four types of meetings, generally on an international basis.

- 2.1. Working Conferences : concerned with specific subjects with invited participants, 30-60 attendees.
- 2.2. Open Conferences : concerned with specific subjects in a limited field with invited speakers and up to 200 attendees.
- 2.3. Regional Conferences : normally a General Conference with a theme, keynote speakers and a range of topics, with about 600 attendees (e.g. M.I.E. series).
- 2.4. General Congresses : a full International Conference as the MEDINFO series, with about 1000 or more attendees.

3. WORKING CONFERENCES

- 3.1. The successes of the Working Conferences have been so great, that it should be claimed that they must represent a main activity of IMIA. They are frequently employed as a means of advancing the programme of Special Interest Group or a Working Group of IMIA and occasionally they may initiate the establishment of such a group.
- 3.2. The general principles to be applied are that Working Conferences are meetings by invitation of a small number of appropriately qualified people. Normally, the topic is rather narrow being limited to a specified subject area. The discussions should be the major part of the meeting and should be published as such and a report made for the IMIA News letter.
- 3.3. Organisation of the Conference should be placed in the hands of an Organising Committee, the members of which should belong to the host country. There should be cross representation with the Programme Committee to ensure close coordination and cooperation. The Organising Committee is in charge of:-
 - (a) Financing of the event. (See 3.4. below)
 - (b) Proposing and agreeing with with IMIA secretariat the time and place of the Conference.
 - (c) Finding the Conference accommodation.

- (d) Making available equipment, recorders, visual aids, etc.
- (e) Arranging hotel reservations.
- (f) Any other appropriate arrangements.

It is helpful - but not essential - if the local IMIA representative is a member of this Committee in order to assist in reporting of the progress of the event to IMIA.

3.4. A Working Conference is purely a scientific event, and in consequence is expected to be a venture that achieves a balanced budget, except for the royalties due to IMIA from the publication of the proceedings. The following rules should apply:-

- (a) No fee is required from the invited participants.
- (b) Normally, travel and/or subsistence expenses for the participants are not covered by the Conference budget. However, some contribution towards such expenditure may be made if the attendance of particular individuals is regarded as absolutely essential.
- (c) The expenses of committee members attending committee meetings prior to the Conference should be included in the Conference budget but not for the Conference itself.
- (d) Other expenses provided for include costs of secretarial and typing facilities, audio-visual equipment, photocopying and duplication, telephone, mailing etc.
- (e) Should it be thought to be of assistance of the purposes on the Conference to arrange social events for the participants, then the costs should not be borne by the Conference budget but by the participants or other sources.

3.5. When the proposal to hold a Working Conference is accepted by IMIA then an appropriate individual, who has been carefully selected and approved, will be asked to set up a Programme Committee. This Committee should commence work at least two before the proposed Conference. The duties of the Programme Committee are:-

- (a) To liaise with the Organising Committee.
- (b) To frame and elaborate the aims of the Conference, the subject area and the relative importance of the various topics to be included.
- (c) To propose a list of invited speakers, to make contact with them and to agree the final programme for the meeting.

- (d) To choose the editors of the proceedings.
- (e) To restrict the number of participants at the meeting to preserve the quality of the discussion.
- (f) IMIA members should be given full information regarding the Conference and their suggestions as to participants given due consideration by the Programme Committee.
- (g) English, being the accepted language of IMIA, should be used as the language of the Conference. However, the Programme Committee should endeavour to assist all the participants by ensuring that English speaking people appreciate the need to speak plainly and slowly without the use of colloquialisms. Should official representatives of the host country require to speak in the local language then this should be accepted and appropriate arrangements made for translation. Only rarely the Programme Committee permit exception to the formal use of English by the participants.
- (h) To select session chairmen of such ability as to maintain the tempo of the discussion, especially having due regard for participants whose mother tongue is not English.
- (i) To make arrangements for the publication of the proceedings (see para 3.6.).

3.6. It is of paramount importance to ensure that the proceedings are published as soon as possible after the event; within three months is a reasonable target date. A number of factors influencing this matter should be considered by the Programme Committee and the editors.

- (a) The written papers should be sent to the Programme Committee three months before the Conference. Copies can be sent to all participants to assist in the preparation for the Conference. In particular for each paper two or three participants should be asked to send written comments to the Programme Committee for the information of the author and the chairman of the session in order to initiate discussion at the meeting.
- (b) When the papers are received by the Programme Committee the editors can commence work to ensure that all the papers are prepared to the same format (title, authors, summary, figures, bibliography etc). If necessary, the authors must be asked to correct their presentations.
- (c) The final version of the finished papers must be in the hands of the editors at the start of the Conference.
- (d) During the Conference, the editing of the discussions requires a sufficient amount of qualified help to be available to the editor. This help comprises two categories:-

1. Scientific Secretaries.

Each session should be attended by 1 or 2 scientific secretaries who are in charge of recording the contributions to discussion, to collect from the participants a written version of what they have said, to listen to the tape record of the whole session and finally to propose to the editors a version of the discussions for suitable publication. These scientific secretaries could be young scientists competent in the field, for who this task could be a good opportunity to attend the Conference.

2. An appropriate number of typists well trained in typing English.

- (e) It may be that there is an element of redundancy in the discussion. It is the responsibility of the editors to shorten and make more concise the reports so that the published version of the presentations reflects correctly what has really been expressed during the meeting.
- (f) If the preceding procedure is followed, there should be no difficulty in completing the manuscript a couple of days following the end of the Conference. It could reach the publishing company a few days after.
- (g) As a Working Conference is a closed event, as defined by IMIA, the proceedings should be issued very quickly. Experience has proved it is possible to do this within 3 or 4 months. It is the main aim that editors should keep in mind.

4. OPEN CONFERENCES

- 4.1. An Open Conference requires a similar organisation to that of the Working Conference, with some variations to take account of an inclination towards presentation to an audience rather than full participation by all attendees.
- 4.2. The Organising Committee would need to provide a similar environment for the conference but when considering the financing of the event may choose to ask a fee for registration and attendance. Invited speakers would not be expected to pay such a fee.
- 4.3. The Programme Committee would need to carry out similar duties as required by a Working Conference. Considering the different nature of an open conference, editing and publishing of discussions is not necessary and the Programme Committee should consider the possibility of having the proceedings available at the beginning of the conference.

5. REGIONAL CONFERENCES

- 5.1. Regional Conferences as exemplified by the M.I.E. series are of such a scale as to require the same level of planning effort as that required for full General Conferences. Accordingly, the work of the Organising and Programme Committees may need to be supplemented by further support, and professional conference organisers may need to be used.

6. GENERAL CONGRESSES

- 6.1. General Congresses as exemplified by the MEDINFO series are the most important scientific events supported by IMIA. They are held every three years with the aim of achieving a world wide state of the art of information sciences as applied to all aspects of the health care services. It is obviously essential that great care must be taken in the planning and organisation of such undertakings. Emphasis must be made of the key lead time that is necessary for the preparations required; at least 4 years before the event (i.e. one year before the previous MEDINFO).
- 6.2. Because of the importance of these events to IMIA a Steering Committee should be appointed by IMIA, the chairman being the President of IMIA. (Chairman of the Programme and Organising Committees would be members of the Steering Committee ex officio). The Steering Committee should ensure that the rules of IMIA are observed and be prepared to advise and coordinate as required. Should emergencies arise the Steering Committee should be empowered by IMIA, to make such decisions as are deemed necessary. It should also be noted, that the Chairman of the Organising Committee should be approved, the Programme Committee Chairman together with the Editor(s) of the proceedings should be appointed by IMIA AGM.
- 6.3. The Organising Committee is responsible for the environment of the General Conference and would be drawn from the host country. In order to facilitate the work, professional assistance is almost certainly required and it is advisable to delegate the problems of budgeting and expenditure to a financial sub-committee. Particular elements requiring the attention of the full Organising Committee is the setting of the fee and insurance. The fee must be set at such a level as to provide a balanced budget for the minimum expectation of attendance and yet not so high as to discourage potential participants. Insurance is required to cover failures and disasters especially for the critical period immediately prior to the conference when expenditure and commitments have been incurred. It should be noted that the budget and accounts of the event should be kept in both local money and Swiss francs. Budgets must be contained within the IMIA standard policies and where other expenses are envisaged the host country will be expected to make appropriate arrangements.
- 6.4. The rules for the payment of expenses for committee members are as set out in paragraph 3.4. above. Only rarely, and in exceptional circumstances should such expenses be paid for speakers, chairmen and vice chairmen of the sessions, although registration fees may be waived.

- 6.5. One further element for consideration by the Organising Committee is the role of the National Societies. In the broad international context the National Societies (and the representatives of IMIA) must be encouraged to publicise the event in their own countries. Wherever possible assistance should be requested in making arrangements for identifying and supporting participants (invited speakers, chairmen, etc). Such cooperation is essential to the success of the venture.
- 6.6 It is essential that an appropriately experienced individual of international status be appointed the Chairman of the Programme Committee. The members of the Programme Committee should be drawn from the leading exponents of the application of information science to health care in various countries. Normally, it is valuable to retain the expertise of the previous MEDINFO Programme Committee Chairman as a member of the next Programme Committee.
- 6.7. The Editors may have the assistance of a proceedings sub-committee to assist in the work of editing the papers; the language must be carefully checked and the required format adhered to. Some changes to, and re-typing of papers may be arranged by the editors before the publication at the conference. Normally the author's permission will be sought before this is done but, where this is not possible, then the author must be informed after the event. Proceedings must be available at the conference in their final form. No alteration to papers can be accepted, nor papers added, after the conference. It is generally accepted that in such a large forum, it is not possible to add detail of discussions to the publication.
- 6.8. The formal language for IMIA meetings is English and as has been stated previously, it is essential that the Organising Committee ensure that consideration is given by English-speaking presenters and participants to assist the understanding of others. There is no doubt the extensive and systematic use of audio-visual aids - pictures, transparencies, slides, etc - can be of considerable assistance to all. Simultaneous translation is expensive and should be avoided; if this is not possible then the host country should make the necessary arrangements without drawing on the conference budget.

7. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1. Applications to IMIA to hold a scientific meeting must be made in good time and a check list of the information usually required to support the application is given in the appendix. Care must be taken to take into consideration the timing of other conferences, particularly on similar topics. IMIA has links with other international bodies and it should be possible to appropriately time-table events and/or cooperate with other groups for joint meetings. The dates of the Regional and General conferences are arranged well in advance and it is already the practice not to hold Regional meetings in the year of the General Conference of MEDINFO.

APPENDIX 1.INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION FOR IMIA CONFERENCES AND CONGRESSES

1. Proposed Title
2. Dates
3. Place
4. Country
5. Sponsoring Organisation(s)
Address, Telephone No. and Telex
6. Name of responsible individual
7. Name of responsible IMIA member
8. Schedule for conference planning
9. Brief description of conference scientific content
10. Social factors
11. Associated sponsoring organisations (with common interests)
12. Other sponsors
13. Names of Organising Committee
14. Names of Programme Committee
15. Names of Editors
16. Name of invited IMIA representative
17. Editorial contract description (brief)
18. Budget - Income (incl. all other sources)
- Expenses (according to IMIA Guidelines)
19. Any request for loan from IMIA
20. Guarantee that IMIA won't be liable for loss
21. Proposed Formula for profit sharing. (royalties belong to IMIA)
22. Statement undertaking provision of progress reports to IMIA.

Appendix 2.GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION OF GRANTS

1. General

Grants can be obtained for organising conferences. Grants will only apply when

- a) The event is an international conference (i.e. limited participation by invitation, reviewed papers, ample time for discussion and/or group work)
- b) The event will result in publication of proceedings including discussion of papers
- c) There is no conference fee other than to cover copying of preprints, refreshments and meeting facilities, etc.

Grants will be limited to SFR 2 000. Financial support beyond this must be solved by applying loans instead of grants. Loans can be given up to SFR 2 500.

The procedure to obtain grants or loans is outlined in the "working conference guide".

2. What a grant can be applied for

The purpose of a grant is twofold

- a) To provide seed money to establish an event
- b) To finalize editing of proceedings

The following cost items may as an example be covered

- Printing and distribution of call for papers and conference invitation
- Telecommunication and copying costs for paper review and conference invitation
- Clerical assistance
- Renting of meeting facilities
- Printing of copying of conference preprints
- Assistance in editing discussion of papers
- Clerical and office expenses in preparation of proceedings

3. What a grant should not be applied for

IMIA being an ideal organization, expect all conference participants to cover their own costs of attendance and cannot pay any form of honoraries to the same. In general, grants shall not be used to cover the costs on the event itself (only before and after).

Examples of cost not be covered by the grant are:

- Travel and accommodation
- Honoraries to speakers or participants
- Conference meals

4. Justification of expenditures

After the conference a brief conference report should be submitted. The working conference guide gives further details on what to be included in the report.

In addition the organizer must provide a justification of how the grant has been spent. The justification shall list a reasonable number of items and the amount of money spent on that item.

The justification shall be sent to IMIA secretariat with a copy to the IMIA treasurer within two months after the conference.

Examples of cost items to be stated are

- Postage and distribution
- Telecommunications
- Printing of preprints
- Copying and other printing
- Clerical assistance
- Meeting facilities
- Recording and editing discussion
- Others (specify)

Appendix 3.BRIEF WORKING CONFERENCE GUIDE

1. Definition and purpose

The purpose of this guide is to advise SIG/WG chairmen and others on formal steps involved to obtain approval of a working conference. It will contain some practical guidelines for conference organization together with some established rules.

In this context a working conference is characterized by the following:

- . Limited number of participants (usually 30-60)
- . Usually participation by invitation only
- . 2-3 days conference
- . 9-12 presentations
- . Ample time for discussion and eventually group work
- . All participants activated
- . Published proceedings with results of discussions and group work included

According to IMIA practice working conferences should be international which means papers and participants from several countries.

2. Conference organization

The official IMIA conference language is English. This means that all presentations and written documentation should be in English. However, simultaneous translation can be arranged for non English-speaking part of the audience.

Only papers that are documented in the preprints should be allowed for presentation on the conference.

Paper selection is done by an international program committee (IPC). It is required that this committee is truly international. Members of the working group, enforced with other experts if necessary, will often form the IPC. It is recommended, although not necessary, that the IPC chairman is recruited from the country where the conference is held.

All papers should be reviewed by the IPC. At least two persons should give their opinion on each paper. This is usually done by mail and organized by the IPC chairman. The review should contain recommendations as to whether the paper is inside the scope of the conference or not, the originality of the paper, clarity and applicability to the conference. Remarks to the author should also be given. The final paper selection should be done in a meeting or by mail based on the proposal from the IPC chairman. The WG chairman should be kept informed continuously.

A local organizing committee should be established to take care of all the practical details. The IPC chairman should be member of the organizing committee. Bearing in mind that working conferences usually are small, it is usual that the IPC chairman himself actually also is the organizing committee.

For the proceedings an editor should be appointed. His task is to edit the papers and the discussions, and handle the contacts with the publisher. All papers should be typed on special forms. These will be mailed directly to the author by acceptance of paper together with typing and mailing instructions. North Holland should therefore be informed at earliest possible event about the decided program. It is recommended that the typed forms are returned to the editor before the conference. Thus the same sheets can be used for reproducing the preprints. In the proceedings should only occur papers that were actually presented at the conference.

If the editor's mother tongue is not English, a co-editor whose mother tongue is English, shall be appointed.

3. Conference advertising and invitation

Usually a call for paper (CFP) is issued, encouraging people to contribute a paper to the conference. An answer to a CFP could be an abstract of at least one type written page. Based on the abstract, a preliminary acceptance of a paper can be given. When the full written paper is received, the final acceptance can be given. It is recommended to request a statement from the author together with the full paper that he is willing and able to come to the conference and present the paper. On the preliminary approval the author should be made aware that he is expected to come to the conference, and that he will have to cover all travelling expenses himself.

Instead of an abstract, the full paper may be requested as an answer to CFP. No preliminary acceptance is necessary in this case.

Based on the (preliminary) acceptance, a preliminary program is set up. This is usually also the invitation to the conference containing a registration form. Since participation is limited to a certain number, it is recommended that participants apply for participation. The IPC chairman should (in cooperation with the WG chairman) select the participants from the applicants.

SIG/WG members and members of the organizing group should receive an invitation and will automatically be approved for participation without application.

A final program should be set up based on the final acceptance of papers. The final program will be distributed at the conference.

Call for papers and preliminary program should always additionally be mailed to:

- . Newsletters editor
- . IMIA secretariat for information
- . All SIG/WG members

For all correspondence concerning the conference, IMIA stationery should be used. Stationery can be obtained from IMIA secretariat.

4. Financial considerations

In IMIA it is a practice that everybody pays his own expenses for participation. This should therefore also apply to the working conferences. If there is any requirement for financing travelling for certain speakers, this can be solved by organizing tutorials.

Working conferences should not have any conference fee. However, a fee can be collected to cover preprints, refreshments, etc., if required.

It is possible to obtain either a grant or a loan from IMIA for a working conference. A grant should cover extra costs for preparing proceedings (summarizing discussions etc.). For further details see Appendix 2.

For each conference a budget should be set up and made known to the SIG/WG chairman.

5. To obtain approval of a conference

Conferences should be planned well in advance. IMIA issues every year an updated three year plan. It is recommended that conferences are scheduled for this time horizon.

When a SIG/WG has decided to organize a conference, the chairman should write an application letter to the IMIA AGM. The application should contain as much as possible of the following information:

- . Purpose and scope of the conference (in order to justify and define it)
- . Title of the conference
- . Place and dates
- . Sponsoring organizations
- . IPC chairman and IPC committee
- . Organizing committee chairman
- . Editor(s)
- . Financial requirements
- . Address for correspondence

At least purpose and scope, title and place and approximate time must be given. Other details should be filled in as soon as they are known.

The money will be available for call after the AGM in the year when budgeted. The money is released by writing a formal letter to the IMIA treasurer requesting the grant/loan under reference to the approved budget. A brief specification what the money should be used for must be given. (i.e. copying, mailing expenses, telephone expenses, etc.). It is recommended to give a bank account where the money should be transferred to.

6. Final conference report

After the conference is finished, an one page final report should be issued to IMIA president and the IMIA Newsletter editor. The report should contain the following information:

- . A short narrative review of the conference
- . The number of papers presented

to : H. Peterson
Halsö-och Sjukvardsnamnden
P.O. Box 9099
S-102 72 Stockholm
Sweden

2 March 1990

Dear Hans,

Referring to Jos's letter of 28 December 1989, I would like to propose that the work of IMIA, and hence its working groups, should include the following health informatics or health informatics related issues or substantive areas (the order is insignificant) :

- (1) National policy and strategy on health informatics ;
- (2) Legislation related to health informatics ;
- (3) Security and confidentiality of health informatics facilities and related data/information ;
- (4) Standards (whereas some aspects of data standards are addressed in WG6, there are other informatics standards that should be addressed) ;
- (5) Administration of health services (not to be confused with "management" which is a broad term for the sequence of planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, evaluation and re-planning).
- (6) Health insurance ;
- (7) Pharmacy (which could range from informatics support to information on adverse reactions to drugs to drug logistics) ;
- (8) Industrial health care.

Clearly, it is not possible for IMIA to insist that a Working Group must exist for each issue, but it is essential that IMIA should have a clearly spelled out and widely accepted "classification" of the health and medical informatics sector so that the unavoidable voluntary wave with which IMIA operates would not lead to an ad hoc categorization of its work and its structure.

I would also recommend that we use the term "Special Interest Group" not because it is the best term, but because it is widely used and accepted.

I would also like to suggest that you entitle the entire mission of your Task Force as : "Classification for categorization of the mission (or work) of IMIA".

Finally, kindly let me know when you expect to come to a definitive recommendation for discussion at an IMIA Board ? Will you be ready for Tbilisi ? The reason for my enquiry is because I believe that the scientific programme of MEDINFO 92 could and should be influenced by the "classification", you are embarking upon. Since I am a member of your Task Force, I would also appreciate information as to when, if at all, you plan to have a consultation between the Task Force members on this important issue.

My best regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Salah H. Mandil
Director, Division of
Information Systems Support, WHO

cc : Dr. J.L. Willems, President of IMIA
and other members of the Task Force