# Scientific Board Restructuring

**Definitions**

Scientific Board: Proposes direction of scientific work to the Alliance.

Scientific Community: Comprises the scientific experts within the Alliance, those identified as fulfilling the scientific role.

Scientific Representative: An individual identified by the Member Organization to act as contact regarding scientific matters associated with the work of the Scientific Board.

Technical Contact: An individual identified by the Member Organization to act as contact regarding technical matters associated with the work of the Technical Committee.

## Background

This short note is intended to explain the thinking behind a new plan to organize, operate, and engage with the Scientific Board of the DDI Alliance. Among the new ideas is the Scientific Community, and this term is defined below.

The current Scientific Board meets mostly once a year in conjunction with the DDI Alliance meeting. It comprises all (associate) member representatives who are interested in the scientific program of the Alliance. As constituted, it does not differ markedly from the representatives in the Alliance.

However, the SB is intended to, and needs to, be more active than the one annual meeting, as the reason the Alliance exists is to support the science needed to underlie, improve, and expand DDI and other semantic products. So, what follows is a short explanation of a new proposal to restructure the SB.

As described the Scientific Board is not as active as it is intended to be. Because of this shortcoming, a small working group was convened to provide a recommendation for restructuring it. The working group was chaired by the vice-chair of the Scientific Board.

## Proposal for Structural Change

The proposal to restructure the Scientific Board and its operations include several inter-locking ideas. These are listed here:

* Member Organizations are invited to identify individuals to fulfill 3 roles that associated with the work of the 3 standing Alliance committee (these roles are defined under definitions). Note that a single person may assume more than one role:
	+ Member representative related to the work of the Executive Board
	+ Scientific representative related to the work of the Scientific Board
	+ Technical Contact related to the work of the Technical Committee
* The Scientific Community within the Alliance comprises the scientific experts, those identified as fulfilling the scientific role.
* The Scientific Board will
	+ comprise 7 scientific experts, elected by the Alliance;
	+ have no power to decide Alliance scientific policy, only to recommend;
	+ seek advice and consult with the Scientific Community;
	+ make proposals to the Alliance, which votes on them;
	+ conduct research to recommend new scientific directions.
* The representative for each member organization is given the power to vote, however the representative is expected to consult, when that is a different person, with the
	+ Member representative on administrative issues;
	+ Scientific representative on scientific issues;
	+ Technical contact on technical issues.

**A. Purpose**

Discussion and consensus on the purpose is summarized at [https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DDI4/pages/850657321/Gathering+Views+On+By-laws+-+Purpose](https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DDI4/pages/850657321/Gathering%2BViews%2BOn%2BBy-laws%2B-%2BPurpose). [this can be added as an Appendix]. Further discussions also took place, which intersected with bylaws relating to organization, voting and elections.

The outcome of the consensus agreement is reflected in the proposed changes to the bylaws. In short, this led to a new clause in the Purpose section to emphasize the strategic and coordinating role of the Scientific Board. As a result of it being reduced in size, the decision-making role has been moved explicitly to the designated membership representatives and the voting clause has been removed, along with the evaluation of new proposals for standards and work productions.

The wording standards and semantic products has been revised in line with the current description of the DDI Alliance outputs "DDI standards and other work products". Detailed changes to the Bylaws are found in “Bylaws 2020 draft”. In summary these include changes in the following areas:

* Section II.A changed definition of Scientific Board and added:
	+ Scientific Community
	+ Member Representative
	+ Scientific Representative
	+ Technical Contact
* Section VI.B.1.a (a) and (d) minor wording changes
* Section VI.B.2.a and b minor wording changes
* Section VII.A. replaced description of purpose
* Section VII.B. replaced description of organization
* Section VII.C. Elections (added)

The ambition is that these changes to the bylaws will engender a smaller, more flexible strategic and co-ordination body that provides an annual report to the membership, which would be expected to also include a forward plan / roadmap which would be approved by the membership and would be able to be actioned through the following year.

When a decision of the Annual Meeting has been reached, appropriate changes to the [Standards Development and Review Process and Procedures](https://ddialliance.org/system/files/DDIAllianceStandardsDevelopmentandReviewProcessandProcedure.pdf) document will be submitted.

*Proposed Revision to the Bylaws* *Section VII.A.*

The purposes of the Scientific Board are to:

1. Provide strategic direction and coordination in the development of DDI standards and other work products of the Alliance by its sub-committees and working groups
2. Oversee the substantive content of DDI standards and other work products
3. Undertake research and testing concerning proposals for DDI standards and other work products
4. Develop and promulgate best practices for use of DDI standards and work products
5. Assess progress and barriers to progress
6. Provide a report on progress of the scientific program over the previous year, and proposals for the future scientific direction and related activities to the Annual Meeting of the Alliance.
7. To enact the scientific program agreed at the Annual Meeting

**B. Organization**

Following the revision of the purposes of the Scientific board, the section VII.B Scientific Board: Organization must be amended to accommodate the change in the size and organization of the Scientific Board. By consensus of the working group the Scientific Board should be comprised of 3 member types:

* Elected members: members elected by the representatives of the Members of the Alliance. These members have voting rights within the functioning of the Scientific Board such in the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair, or in determining proposal to put before the membership. These voting members can be representatives from members or associate members as membership on the Scientific Board is personal, not organizational. Membership in the Alliance is organizational.
* Ex officio members: The Executive Director and the Chair of the Technical Committee serve as ex officio members. The Technical Committee is a standing sub-committee of the Scientific Board and close coordination is needed.
* Advisory members: Non-voting members who represent external groups

The Scientific Board would be composed of 7 elected members, 2 ex officio members, and up to 2 advisory members for a total size of 9-11 persons. This format allows for more regular meetings of the Scientific Board, sufficient size to ensure diversity and allow for the smooth rotation of members over time without major interruption of work.

Provisions are included to guarantee rotation in membership of the Scientific Board as well as separation in the positions of officers of the different boards of the Alliance.

The reduction in size will facilitate the Scientific Board in identifying and proposing scientific directions for the approval of the membership.

The Technical Committee and other sub-committees and working groups continue to act within the strategic directions proposed by the Scientific Board and agreed to by the membership.

The Scientific Board will have to report to the Annual meeting of the Alliance.

*Proposed Revision to the Bylaws* *Section VII.B.*

1. The Scientific Board shall be composed of seven members elected by the Members of the Alliance.
2. The Executive Director and Chair of the Technical Committee shall serve as ex‐officio members, without internal vote, of the Scientific Board.
3. The Scientific Board may appoint up to two external Advisory Members, without internal vote.
4. Representatives from Members and Associate Members of the Alliance are eligible to serve as elected members of the Scientific Board.
5. No Member or Associate Member shall have more than one representative serving on the Scientific Board at the same time.
6. Elected members of the Scientific Board shall serve no more than four consecutive terms.
7. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scientific Board are determined by the elected members of the Scientific Board and shall serve no more than three consecutive terms.
8. Only elected members of the Scientific Board are eligible to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair.
9. No officer (chair or vice-chair) of the Executive Board nor of the Technical Committee may serve as an officer of the Scientific Board.
10. The Technical Committee is established as a standing Sub-Committee of the Scientific Board.
11. The Scientific Board may establish Sub-Committees and Working Groups on specific topics.
12. The Scientific Board shall have oversight of every Sub-Committee and Working Group established under it.
13. Other meetings before the Alliance may be called by the Scientific Board as needed.
14. A quorum shall consist of 4 elected members of the Scientific Board.

**C. Elections**

The creation of a smaller Scientific Board with elected membership requires the addition of wording to the Bylaws to govern the election of members.

*Proposed Revision to the Bylaws* *Section VII.C (added)*

1. Members will be elected following an Annual Meeting and serve for a term of four years except for the initial election where three will be elected for two-year terms and four for four-year terms.
2. Terms will start on July 1 of the election year.
3. Any member vacancy will be filled by election as soon as possible and that member will begin serving when elected for the remainder of the vacating member's term.
4. In election years, nominations for members will be solicited in April and a slate will be prepared by the Executive Director for discussion at the annual meeting with the election occurring in June. In the event that there are more candidates than positions, the election will be decided on the basis of those candidates getting the most votes. If a tie vote occurs, a second round of voting will take place.
5. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Scientific Board will be elected by the Scientific Board soon after the regular biennial member elections for a term of two years.

*There is no section in the existing Bylaws about elections.*

### **E. Roles**

*No Proposed Revision to the Bylaws*

The following are recommendations and guidelines therefore non-binding and so have not been added to the Bylaws. Nevertheless, these recommendations and guidelines serve as a base for upcoming processes and should be incorporated into the organizational guidelines document of the Scientific Board when established.

1. Member organizations will be asked to nominate one or more persons to the following roles - Member Representative, Scientific Representative (as before) and Technical Contact (new).
2. The Member Representative serves as the primary contact to the DDI Alliance in general and especially the Executive Board for organizational questions.
3. The Scientific Representative serves as the contact person for the Scientific Board and related workgroups especially for questions on requirements and future directions.
4. The Technical Contact person is a new role which serves as the contact for the Technical Committee to give inputs to technical implementations of the standard
5. All of these roles are invited to the annual meeting where the Executive Board and Scientific Board report to the whole Alliance.
6. The Technical Committee, as a permanent standing committee, reports as a part of the Scientific Board report.
7. During the year all of these roles can be called upon by their respective higher level group (Executive Board, Scientific Board, Technical Committee) to participate in virtual meetings or invitations to working groups
8. Scientific Contacts within the Member Agency should be designated to provide support and/or input to the Scientific activities of the Alliance. Scientific Contacts should express knowledge in one or more of the following areas:
	1. expert understanding of metadata and what it can do
	2. working knowledge of statistical life-cycle and survey methodology
	3. knowledge of future directions in statistical analysis
	4. working knowledge of experimental design
	5. working knowledge of some other (outside social science) data domains
	6. understanding of new data representation techniques
	7. knowledge of data infrastructures
9. Technical Contacts within the Member Agency should be designated to provide support and/or input to the technical activities of the Alliance in the following areas:
	1. Implementation of DDI and other metadata management on a technical level
	2. Modeling in various representations (UML, XML, RDF, JSON, etc.)
	3. Technological changes in data and metadata storage and access
	4. Preparation of technical documentation for implementers of DDI
	5. Technical testing of DDI products and development work