REPORT OF THE MEAHI : MIDDLE EAST ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH INFORMATICS

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Overview

1. Content Headings :
   a. Revised MEAHI Bylaw
   b. MEDINFO Bidding 2023
   c. IMIA Yearbook Regional Report & IMIA Official Journals
   d. Appointing IMIA ETHICS Committee
   e. MEAHI STC 2017
   f. Strategic revenue growth ideas for IMIA
   g. IMIA President-Elect Report to IMIA BM and GA

2. Summary of projects suggested in this report, for IMIA Board 2017 approval :
   a. Revised MEAHI bylaw.
   b. Supporting the MEAHI Stakeholder Engagement Strategy deployment process.
   c. Updating IMIA JOURNAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY.
   d. Appointing "IMIA Ethics Committee".
   e. Rehabilitation the MEAHI prestige.

3. APPENDIX : Revised MEAHI Bylaw in PDF

1. Revised MEAHI Bylaw

   A. Background: We, for the first time in IMIA history, were host for IMIA board meeting in April 2013 in Dubai, UAE in conjunction with 4th MEAHI Conference. During this IMIA board meeting, we informed the IMIA board about deploying a new Governance Model for MEAHI. The main objective for deploying this governance model, in Social Encounter phase of MEAHI development, is to make orchestration and synergy among regional stakeholders and players. This new governance model expedites the MEAHI sustainability, agility and accountability as was emerged from
      a. lessons learned from a decade of experiences got through MEAHI development phases since its inception in 2003, and
      b. regional priorities and
      c. the necessity for
i. deploying Good Management Practice (GMP) policy and
ii. transparency of the functionalities of the MEAHI Governance entities, and
iii. formative and summative assessments of the MEAHI administration.

The new MEAHI governance model was discussed at MEAHI GA and board meetings in Dubai and agreed in principle by majority of MEAHI GA members who were attended in person. The new governance model has features and requirements which affect the existing MEAHI bylaw so we made necessary changes to respected articles accordingly. We tried a couple of times to submit the revised MEAHI bylaw to IMIA board but this could not be happened as we were banned to attend in IMIA board meetings in Copenhagen 2013 and in Budapest 2014. Our attendance in IMIA board meetings was resumed after a year and half in New Delhi 2014 meetings. We had discussions with IMIA President-elect (2015-2017) with regard to smooth deployment of this model and also revised MEAHI bylaw in Sao Paulo in conjunction with Medinfo2015. Afterwards, he raised a couple of issues through teleconferences and email exchanges about this model and its associated revised bylaw which we tried to adopt as much was possible in last version of the revised MEAHI bylaw which is ready to submit to IMIA board now.

B. Features & Facts: The MEAHI governance model has structural and functional features which are matched with the regional requirements and best practices within IMIA family and other related organization in the world. However, these structure and functionalities are not necessarily the same as other similar associations. Some of those main features are as followings:

1. The structure & functionality fully support and adopt the MEAHI Stakeholder Engagement Strategy through providing enough rooms to accommodate and to engage efficiently and proactively the different stakeholders and professionals with different roles, levels of competencies and caliber in the field of biomedical and health informatics in the region,
2. Without overloading the bureaucracy, the model has different layers of authority and shared responsibilities to guarantee the association good governance,
3. The structure has a built-in council which acts as advisory and functional arm to MEAHI GA so MEAHI GA decisions are translated from policy to daily practice smoothly and continuously,
4. The board structure consists of executive and non-executive officers to play different roles for executing MEAHI mission. The nonexecutive entity in board structure guarantees formative assessment of board practice,
5. The structure spirit has a legislative guardian so called MEAHI’s Code of Professional and Ethical conduct,
6. Transparency in structure and functions through documented process, procedures, structure and functions,
7. To make the decision making process agile and efficient, the e-communication is deemed official in all necessary circumstances.

C. Request of Approval by IMIA Board: refer to article seven of existing MEAHI bylaw; we hereby request IMIA board for approving the revised MEAHI bylaw.

D. Appendix: The revised MEAHI bylaw is attached to this report in PDF format which consists of twelve Articles and twenty one pages.
2. MEDINFO Bidding : Medinfo 2021 Bidding withdrawal and preparation for bidding for Medinfo2023

A. Updates: One of the defined MEAHI missions since its inception in 2003 is to be host for Medinfo world congress in the MEAHI region. We have been successful for hosting the IMIA board meeting in Dubai, UAE, in April 2013 in conjunction with the 4th MEAHI conference. The MEAHI main reason for Medinfo hosting is to motivate and to engage the maximum numbers of regional stakeholders and individuals to collaborate for hosting this most prestigious world event in the field of Biomedical and Health Informatics. The collaboration for hosting Medinfo will certainly be a referenced practice for deploying MEAHI Stakeholder Engagement Strategy as well; however, shall be managed and orchestrated properly from scratch. Our policy has been focused on making a conglomeration of efficient stakeholders including IMIA member societies in the region under MEAHI umbrella to bid for hosting Medinfo congress. Whereas we are still working to make this policy deployed, we decided to withdraw for bidding for Medinfo2021 but MEAHI will continue the consistent efforts for this purpose towards a successful bidding for hosting the Medinfo 2023 in MEAHI region.

B. Request of Approval by IMIA Board: IMIA board supports the MEAHI Stakeholder Engagement Strategy deployment process in general and for hosting Medinfo in particular in a tolerant and peaceful way transcending nations, cultures, and political or social structures.

3. IMIA Yearbook Regional Report & IMIA Official Journals

A. Background: For IMIA YB 2017, we received a deadline notice for submitting regional reports to IMIA YB by mid-January this year. Whereas IMIA YB is being published in open online format now, I wrote to Prof. Lehmann for considering the deferment on submitting the regional reports to mid-year in order to make such reports much more realistic based on actual activities over the year. The same model has been adopted for IMIA YB 2016 in which the IMIA YB went online in two versions for addressing both 25th anniversary of IMIA YB related issues and other regular chapters. At the end, Prof. Lehman offered a bit more time but addressed that this model costs two times the IMIA and could not be deployed anymore and if we cannot meet deadline, the MEAHI report would be missing this year in IMIA YB! He offered a bit more deferment. Therefore, if this happens this year we will face for the 3rd time the ignorance (the MEAHI 2014 regional report was never considered for publication in IMIA YB 2014) and censorship (the important part of our regional report for YB 2016 with regard to collaboration with HIMSS has been censored without our knowledge and permission). With such background happened so far, we request IMIA board and GA to reinforce the IMIA publication channels authorities to declare conflicts of interests and considering democratic principles to avoid unnecessary censorship and biases in selection process and editorial efforts.

B. Request of Approval by IMIA Board:

1. To update IMIA JOURNAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY: to scrutinize the IMIA official journals (currently four journals) and IMIA YB in order to
   i. protecting the authors’ right and interests by avoiding any censorship and biases in submissions selection and editorial processes, and
   ii. prohibiting any unprofessional actions which spoil the IMIA credentials and face in global community by means of manipulations in citation
(citation stacking) which are led inevitable consequences such as suppression and delisting for Impact Factor (Thomson Reuters suppressed for one year due to Citation Stacking two IMIA official journals: Applied Clinical Informatics (ACI) and Methods of Information in Medicine (MIIM) in 2015).

iii. Reinforce the discontinuation of IMIA relationship with transgressive journals.

2. To consider the extended deadline by Mid-year for IMIA regional reports submissions to IMIA Yearbook.

4. IMIA ETHICS Committee: IMIA’s Code of Professional & Ethical Conduct & Conflicts of Interest Policy

A. Background: The revised version of IMIA Code of Ethics for Health Information Professionals was approved in IMIA GA 2016. However, there are still areas in this code to be enhanced with regard to rules for professional conduct for IMIA members and within IMIA family. Furthermore, we have seen a few cases of conflicts of interest within IMIA in past years which were necessary for declarations and necessary actions and management so there is a crucial need for considering and managing different types of conflicts of interests within IMIA. We investigated that AMIA (American Medical Informatics Association) developed a policy for Conflicts of Interest which covers the three subtypes of conflicts including Conflicts of Interest, Conflicts of Commitment, and Conflicts of Conscience. We highly recommend IMIA board to consider all the possible types of conflicts.

B. Request of Approval by IMIA Board:

Refer to clause 3.1.3 of IMIA bylaw, IMIA board appoints "IMIA Ethics Committee" to

a. Update IMIA Code of Ethics with regard to rules for Professional Conduct within IMIA to make a legislative IMIA's Code for Professional and Ethical Conduct, and

b. Update IMIA Conflicts of Interest policy to cover all types of conflicts including Conflicts of Interest, Conflicts of Commitment, and Conflicts of Conscience and respected necessary management, and

c. Monitor and to report to IMIA GA the deployment and practice of the IMIA's Code for Professional and Ethical conduct, and IMIA Conflicts of Interest Policy, and

d. Evaluate the consequences of all types of Conflicts then propose solutions to IMIA GA including recusal, conflicts declaration and elimination.

5. MEAHI STC 2017: an e-conference with theme “Biomedical Informatics: From Cell to Bed”

We were in discussions with a couple of regional leading academic institutions including Kuwait, Oman and UAE universities to hold the MEAHI STC 2017 (Special Topic Conference). We are working on organizing this MEAHI event with the theme “Biomedical Informatics: From Cell to Bed”, for the first time, in format of an e-conference. The e-conference model will help to extend coverage of conference audiences and to overcome the traveling costs issues for the individuals in the region.
6. **Strategic revenue growth ideas for IMIA**

Thanks to Prof. Park for bringing this issue to the table. This is a quite important issue especially with regard to a not-for-profit organization like IMIA to be analyzed, remodeled and deployed with high priority. The fact is IMIA has financial resources in the accounts which have been kept for so many years to be spent on some regular missions with almost ultra conservative approach in most cases. Nevertheless of periodical profit and loss cycles which are quite normal, we shall focus to use and reuse these resources in a meaningful way to bring growth to IMIA. The current membership and revenue generation model cannot fulfill the fast growing and diverse requirements and priorities in this field nowadays. With considering this preamble, we would like to suggest designing and deploying a functional Marketing Model with following characteristics:

a) The model shall be transparent and relied on both unused money in the IMIA accounts and new financial resources for projects which lead to IMIA growth in all regions irrespective of their economic developments, races, cultures, religions and believes and political ties, and

b) The model shall be sustainable with a built-in proper blending approach (top down and bottom up) for maximizing the collaboration by covering the interests, needs and opinions of a diversity of the members and stakeholders in different regions, and

c) The model shall define the mutual benefits by creating actual membership values and value chain and a basket of added value services for different IMIA stakeholders and members, and

d) The model actors shall be IMIA VP for Membership & Marketing and IMIA VPs for regions to lead the aggressive Marketing and business development activities for IMIA, and

e) The model shall be flexible, acceptable and understandable for motivating and attracting the important players and industry leaders by securing mutual benefits, and

f) The model shall adopt the best marketing practices from successful organizations like AMIA, and

g) The model shall bring visibility to IMIA in the related events around the world with regard to broad spectrum of Biomedical and Health Informatics field, and

h) The model shall utilize the communication channels including current four IMIA official journals for broadcasting and penetration into the market.

7. **IMIA President-Elect Report to IMIA BM and GA – New Region!**

A. **Background:** With regard to IMIA President-Elect (2015-2017) proposal to IMIA board for replacing MEAHI with a new association, we, as MEAHI officials are quite disappointed about disrespectful behavior towards MEAHI administration and taking this wrong approach which is initiated by IMIA president-elect. With regard to his report, with all due respect, there are important remarks from different perspectives as followings to be considered by IMIA board and GA:

a. **Legal perspective:**
   i. The taken action is in violation of MEAHI as an existing established and legitimate IMIA regional chapter with 14 years track records and accomplishment.
   ii. It is against clause 2.1 (inclusivity) of IMIA bylaw as well.
   iii. This action is a proven and clear case of breaching the IMIA Code of Ethics (mainly Part E) and a clear case of Conflict of interests in form of Conflicts of Commitment and Conflicts of Conscience.

b. **Professional & Ethical Perspective:**


i. even without using text mining technics, it is quite obvious that the main body of provided support letters and proposed bylaw are clearly prepared by IMIA President-Elect. The transcript of support letters were circulated after his invited keynote talk in one of conferences in Middle East in April this year.

ii. the provided information in his proposal are clear attempts to devaluing, disqualifying, defaming and accusing all track records of MEAHI as a legitimate party.

c. Political perspective:
   i. The taken action is a dictated aggressive action and interference, orchestrated and planned conspiracy, plotting and violation against MEAHI and
   ii. on top of that is an attempt for “Divide and Conquer” in the region.

Considering the situation and all issues, we will present our plan in IMIA board meeting.

B. Request of Approval by IMIA Board: IMIA board rehabilitates the MEAHi prestige in most proper form and in writing and through all IMIA channels.