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**Board Meeting Annecy 21 November 2013**

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**Board Meeting Thursday 21 November 2013**

**Les Pensières, Annecy, France**

**Present :**

Silvia Bino (Chair) SEEHN

Alex Leventhal (Chair elect and the rapporteur\* of this meeting) MECIDS

Pornpit Silkavute APEIR

Stanley Sonoiya EAIDSNET

Suwit Wilbulpolprasert MBDS

Mark Reweymamu SACIDS

Philippe Lacoste Fondation Merieux

Benoit Miribel Fondation Merieux

Florence Fuchs WHO

Alain Dehove OIE

Annie Maxwell SGTF

Deborah Rosenblum NTI

Marlo Libel Independent Consultant

**In attendance :**

Nigel Lightfoot (ED) CORDS

Charlotte S. Atkinson (Finance Director, Consultant) CORDS

Gaëlle Russo DELSOL Lawyers

Angkana Sommanustweechai MOPH, Thailand

**Apologies**

Charlanne Burke Rockefeller Foundation

Ann Marie Kimball Gates Foundation

David Heymann Independent Consultant

Sabrina Salem (Executive Assistant) CORDS

Aurelie Bottelin (Programme Manager) CORDS

1. ***The chair called the meeting to order, established a quorum, and welcomed Executive Board Members***

The Executive Director introduced Gaëlle Russo, a representative of DELSOL, the CORDS lawyers, who is present to record the legal record of the meeting and has drawn up the resolutions that need to be voted on in accordance with the French regulations. She also explained the CORDS bylaws, translated from French to English, in the 3rd item of the agenda.

**\***The rapporteur of the EB meeting is an EB member who is asked by the Chair to perform that function.

Alex Leventhal agreed to be the rapporteur of this EB meeting. The rapporteur is responsible for approving the minutes as prepared by the secretariat (ED).

1. ***Review of 2013 Board Meetings***
* *Resolution 1: Approval of Board minutes from April 2013 & June 2013 meetings*

CORDS executive board members approved the Board minutes from April 2013 & June 2013 meetings with minor revisions of the names of the attendees.

**Review of CORDS By Laws**

Gaëlle Russo presented the CORDS By Laws and pointed out the important agreed statutes.

Article 1. ***Structure***

CORDS is created between the persons subscribing to the present by-laws an association under the French law of July 1st, 1901 and its application decree of August 16th, 1901.

The association is registered under the following denomination: CORDS

It has the following meaning: Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance

Article 4. ***Definitions***

 “General Assembly “means the reunion of all the CORDS’ members with voting rights. The rules applicable to such assembly are defined in internal regulations.

Article 5. ***Membership of CORDS***

* 1. Organizations, even informal structure, are represented by their legal representative or by any other person legally authorized to that end.
	2. More particularly, the association comprises two categories of member:
* The Network members who meet all the qualities above mentioned;
* The Cooperating Partners

5.3 Becoming a member of the association is submitted to the agreement of the candidate by the Executive Board on the basis of the criteria and according to the terms settled by the nomination committee as per article 10 of the present by-laws.

Article 7. ***CORDS Executive Board***

7.1 Functions:

The Executive Board is vested in most extended powers to manage, lead and administrate the association.

7.2 Memberships and Composition

The Executive Board shall be comprised of not more than twenty (20) Members as set out below.

7.2.1 Networks

Up to twelve (12) Networks may serve on the Executive Board through their representative. Networks comprised of more than four countries may have up to two representatives serve on the Executive Board. Networks comprised of four countries or less may have no more than one representative to serve on the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall determine the precise number of representatives from each Network.

7.2.2 Cooperating Partners

Up to eight (8) Cooperating Partners may serve on the Executive Board through their representatives.

7.2.3 Observers

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Director, may invite any non-executive board members to participate as an observer to the Executive Board meetings or other CORDS activities without formal decision-making authority.

7.5 Terms

7.5.2 Executive Board

The terms of Executive Board Members shall be for a period of two (2) years and may be renewable once, for an additional one year. For the inaugural Executive Board, those Networks with two members, one of those members must resign after an initial two-year term to begin a staggering process of Executive Board membership. The Networks will determine which Executive Board Member will resign.

**Comment:**

Currently, the CORDS member “Association” is comprised of 6 networks; Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS); Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network (MBDS); South African Centre for Disease Surveillance (SACIDS); East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet); South East European Health Network (SEEHN); Asian Partnership on Emerging Infectious Diseases Research (APEIR) and 5 cooperating partners; Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI); Skoll Global Threats Fund; Foundation Mérieux; David Heymann and Rockefeller Foundation.

* According to 5.3, if there is any person interested in becoming a CORDS member, they can submit an application to CORDS. CORDS board members will then make decision in the EB meeting.
* According to 7.5.2, each network will nominate 2 persons in order to be EB members. However there will only be one vote from only one of these persons representing the network.
* According to 7.2.3 CORDS observers can give opinions, take part in the discussion and bring their expert comments.

**Action 1**: Approval of admitting OIE as a member of CORDs as well as board members from cooperating partners. The lawyer will process based on CORDS By Laws. And the voting by email will be followed.

**Action** **2**: ED will invite WHO and FAO to be a board members as cooperating partners rather than being ‘observers’.

* *Resolution 2: Deferral of the by-laws modification and membership*

Following the discussion and exchanges, CORD executive board members approved Deferral of the by-laws modification and membership to a later meeting.

* *Resolution 3: CORDS process for granting membership*

Following the discussion and exchanges, CORD executive board members approved CORDS process for granting membership.

**Note:** The criteria for new membership application should be established - ED.

1. ***Opening remarks:* CORDS achievements, review of the year, challenges ahead - ED**

The ED gave his Annual Report for 2012 – 2013.

It has been a good first year with many successful achievements as follows:

**Funding:** Since 1st September 2012, CORDS has obtained funding from the Skoll Global Threats Fund (SGTF), $1M over two years for operations, the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), $1M over two years for capacity building in the networks, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), $1.5M over three years for innovative operational research projects in joint network enterprises.

**Staffing:** TheED Executive Assistant, Sabrina Salem, was appointed in November 2012. Charlotte Atkinson, formerly of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), was appointed part time consultant Finance Director in June 2013 and the Program Manager, Aurélie Bottelin, was appointed in July 2013 to manage the Gates funded projects. Additionally in-kind support from NTI was received through the secondment of Jaime Yassif , an AAAS fellow canditate to the US government as a full time project associate for CORDS for four months in the summer.

**Activities:** CORDS was well launched at the Prince Mahidol Awards Conference in Bangkok in January 2103; many plenary speakers spoke highly of CORDS and their expectations.

The 1st CORDS Annual Conference was held at the Foundation Mérieux Conference Centre at Les Pensières, Annecy in April 2013. The report has been distributed to Board members

The Bellagio Risk Communication Workshop was held on 8-12 July 2013 at the Rockefeller Foundation Training Centre in Bellagio, Italy. The report has been distributed to Board members

The ED has worked on funding opportunities, he has visited to the Gates Foundation, the United States White House and the departments of State, Defense and Health and Human Services. There are also other developing activities including Innovative Operational Research Projects, a Communications Strategy and Stakeholder Mapping that have been completed. The website CORDS Platform and Portal has been conceptualized with the help of the networks and its implementation has been put on hold by the Board pending Board approval of the proposed contract.

The full report is at Annex A

1. ***Update on expenditures***

Charlotte Atkinson, Finance Director, reported a summary analysis of income and expenditure, by project, up to September 30, 2013. During the 9 months up to September 30, 2013, CORDS received tranches of funding from the Skoll Global Threats Fund (SGTF) and the Rockefeller Foundation. The expenditure by project including CORDS launch for which the budget was set at €61k, the actual spend €120k. Annecy workshop budget set €207k, actual spend €229k, stakeholder mapping budget set €65k, actual spend €71k, Bellagio Risk communications workshop budget set €91k, actual spend €100k, IT Platforms & portals budget set €83k, actual spend €34k, Internal Communications strategy/policy budget set 13k, actual spend €4k, Capacity building budget set €11k, actual spent €7k, Operational Research budget set €228k, actual spent €57k, board meetings budget set €56k, actual spent €18k and HQ budget set €470k, actual spend €152k.

1. ***Presentation on Innovative Operational Research Projects***

The Gates Foundation has funded the start up of 3 operational research projects since Nov 2012. $1.5M has been granted as seed corn money over 3 years.

**1. Mobile Phone Technologies (SACIDS & EAIDSNET, supported by MBDS):**

A project had been implemented through Rockefeller funding in both networks with the objective to pilot the use of Mobile Phones for Surveillance. Following the achievements of this pilot phase, SACIDS has now proposed a scale up the use of Mobile Technologies for Disease Surveillance.

**Update:** In September, the CORDS Executive Director and Programme Manager attended the 2nd International Conference on Digital Disease Detection in San Francisco and organized the first expert meeting of the project. The importance of this technology to increase disease surveillance capacity was pointed out during the discussions. One of the core activities of the research project is the establishment of a resource center in Tanzania. The proposal and roadmap of the project are currently being finalized by CORDS HQ and SACIDS.

**Comment:** The strong point of this study is to strengthen surveillance data sharing between the various countries of the 2 networks such as Rwanda-Uganda, Kenya-Tanzania, Tanzania-Zambia, Tanzania-Malawi, etc. It would fit with the CORDS’ mission if the collaboration goes across two different geographical regions; MBDS who have experience of mobile phones for surveillance is the supporting network for this project.

**2. Leishmaniasis and Surveillance (MECIDS & SEEHN):** Leishmaniasis is one of the important vector borne diseases in south Eastern Europe, Israel, Jordan and Palestine. This research project brings collaboration between the public health sector and the animal health sector in order to identify reservoirs and vector ecology, that play a vital role in the control and prevention of Leishmaniasis.

**Update:** In November 5th 2013, the first project meeting between SEEHN and MECIDS was organized at the Southeastern Europe Centre for Infectious Diseases (SECID), in Tirana, Albania, to complete the project proposal and roadmap.

**Comment:** This study will provide the best practices of human-animal-environment coordination under One Health concept to control a vector borne disease.

**3. Differential Diagnosis of Fevers (EAIDSNET & APEIR)**

**Update:** The research area is currently being redefined. There are many players in the East African Region for potential cooperation as for instance, The World Bank through the East Africa Public Health Laboratory Networking Project. The next action step of this project is a visit to to Uganda and Tanzania in February 2014 of CORDS ED and PM.

**Comment:** The coordination between EAIDSNet and APEIR is still not implemented in this study. The research project would fit with the CORDS’ mission of linking disease surveillance networks if they collaborate among more than one network from different geographical region. APEIR could join EAIDSNet with their expertise in the research area.

1. ***Communication Strategy***

Information sharing and communication are important strategies to detect infectious diseases outbreaks earlier and to respond more quickly. The CORDS networks have expressed an explicit need and united demand for improved information sharing, better communication and coordination; however, due to diverse cultural, political and social circumstances this communication does not come effortlessly and easily.

Considering the particularities of the CORDS network, the communication strategy puts forward three key principles: 1) Sensitivity of information, 2) Communication as an integral process of the networks, 3) Holistic approach to communication.

**Action plan suggestions for CORDS Headquarters**:

CORDS headquarters should take the lead in developing and implementing the communication strategy; however, it is important to note that HQ should not be doing the communication FOR the networks, but to support the networks to improve THEIR communication and information sharing.

**Action plan suggestions for networks**:

Networks have contributed superbly to the development of this communication strategy draft and provided material and suggestions and gave insights into their routines and their situation. During this process, focal points have been identified and good working relationships have been established bi-directionally between network and consultant.

Focal points are important to help coordinate the communication between HQ and networks; however, it is important that every network member should perceive communication and information sharing as part of his and her work. In order to connect people and improve communication it is not enough to nominate or employ one person who should do all the communication. CORDS networks are much more: it is the connection of expertise and regional knowledge that allows information sharing and assessment – no communications person substitute or replace this unique expertise and knowledge. An agreement on this role and responsibilities is an important step in the networks.

**Comments by the Board:**

* According to Board policy for a lean headquarters, we should reconsider hiring a full time or part-time communication officer, but we may consider inviting CORDs network members to voluntarily manage this strategy based on the agreed TOR. This can also be seen as one of the capacity building activities of CORDS networks.
* The communication strategy should focus on informal professional communication NOT on official communication. The scope should cover 1) internal communication at CORDS level: ED, secretariat and network members, 2) inter network and 3) network to outside CORDS for example the policy community.
* The means of communication can be a part of CORDS branding. It would be good to communicate One Health in an effective way. One method of communication is by engaging people; making people realize the importance of collaborations.
* A website can be a good platform for information sharing and managing the network.

Risk communication will be raised following 6 building pillars of health systems as part of the CORDS communication strategy. We need communication within and between networks, also policy guidance and policy advocacy.

* It is clear from the proposed strategy that it is the ‘joint activities’ or so-called ‘gathering’ that will gradually create ‘friendship’, ‘collegiateship’ and ‘trust’ among ‘members of the CORDs community’. This is a great summary from the consultation and from the output of this work we must put it as the core principle of CORDs strategies, not only communication strategies.
* The activities under communication strategy, focus at ‘gathering’, should be classified systematically in to 5 groups including a) Joint capacity building based on individual, institution and networks and working together to create trust among partners, b) Joint management of knowledge through joint researches, joint publication, joint sessions in international conference, c) Joint outbreak investigation based on informal collaboration to reduce bureaucratic hurdles, d) Joint action at governing body of global regional health mechanism like the WHA, RC, the EB of WHO, and e) Joint media advocacy. In addition, what CORDS should NOT do in terms of communication strategy are: 1) use of hard rules, 2) start formal information sharing, 3) hire part time or full time staff, and 4) convene too many face to face meetings.
* A disease surveillance information sharing system is the strong point of the CORDS network. However, WHO-OIE-FAO should be involved in the approval of this report.
* *Resolution 4: Approval of the strategic plan for communication*

**Note:** The approval is pending the revision of the communication strategy based on the comments from the Executive Board.

The revised Communication Strategy will be circulated in January

1. ***Discussion of CORDS strategic plan and proposed upcoming work plan***

The ED presented the CORDS strategic plan which focuses on four strategic objectives including 1) **Improving capacity**: *IT Platforms and Portals (Skoll), 2014 Annual Conference (UNFUNDED), Networks Communications Strategy Workshop (UNFUNDED),* 2) **Advancing One Health**: *One Health Workshops (Skoll)*, 3) **Promoting Innovation** through three operation researches *(Gates)*, and 4) **Building sustainable network**. ED has been aggressively pursuing funding opportunities through the US Government and the Canadian Government. CORDS also intends to approach the Skoll Global Threats Fund for follow-up on funding. CORDS will also submit a proposal in response to an ECDC tender specification for developing public health emergency preparedness in the Mediterranean region. It will involve SEEHN and MECIDS

* *Resolution 5: Approval of CORDS’ strategic plan for 2014 development*

Following the discussion and exchanges, CORD executive board members approved the strategic plan for 2014 development.

1. ***Report from the Finance Subcommittee***

Deborah Rosenblum presented the budget plan between January 1, 2014- December 31, 2014 and budget narrative. CORDS management presented to the Board a budget scenario, which shows what CORDS will be able to accomplish in 2014 with existing grant commitments, (“the 2014 budget”). The 2014 budget assumes that the existing grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Skoll Global Threats Fund are spent down in the donor-stipulated timeframe.

Under the 2014 budget, CORDS HQ is fully funded until October 31, 2014. In November and December 2014, only Gates Foundation money remains, supporting Gates deliverables and significantly reduced HQ staffing and administrative support. Two program activities are not funded in this budget – an Annual Conference, and follow on work, building on the 2013 Risk Communications workshops. If funding is not found, these activities will not go ahead.

CORDS management would like to note the flexibility and generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation, who permitted a portion of their funds to be used to cover the brought forward start-up costs, which showed as a deficit in the December 31, 2012 financial statements. As of December 31, 2013, there should no longer be a deficit outside of usual exchange rate fluctuations.

1. ***Presentation of the 2014 Budget***

Charlotte Atkinson, CORDS Finance Director gave the details ofthe 2014 budget with assumptions that the existing grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Skoll Global Threats Fund are spent down in the donor-stipulated timeframe. Under the 2014 budget, CORDS HQ is fully funded until October 31, 2014. In November and December 2014, only Gates Foundation money remains, supporting Gates deliverables and significantly reduced HQ staffing and administrative support.

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* *Resolution 6: Approval of the Finance committee’s composition, report and budget for 2014*

Following the discussion and exchanges, CORD executive board members approved:

1. to authorize Nigel Lightfoot, Executive Director “to ensure that expenditure matches income received” to ensure that the total as amended to continue the secretariat through December 2014”

2. to “commit to take action to aggressively pursue additional funding sources to maintain CORDS’ viability”

3. to “approve resource mobilization initiatives to pursue funding for proposed activities as outlined to the executive board by the ED”

1. **Board Financial Policies & Procedures**

Update on the financial policies and procedures.

The financial policies and procedures are being checked by Delsol for compliance with French law and will be circulated to the Board in January.

1. **Discussion regarding Fundraising**

* *Resolution 7: Setting-up a board fundraising committee*

Following the discussion and exchanges, CORD executive board members approved Setting-up a board fundraising committee.

**ACTION:** Alex Leventhal has been selected to be the Chair of the fundraising sub-committee.

**Note:** Skoll will provide introduction to potential funding.

1. **USG Funding**

ED presented details of his discussions with the United States Government in Agenda item VIII.

**XIV. Closing remarks and adjournment**

 The chair closed the meeting thanking all for their contributions for a successful meeting.

**ACTION**: The basic document and meeting document will be shared to CORDS website or drop box soon.