

**THE DONA FOUNDATION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**(July 5 & 6, 2018)**

**SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES**

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**Board Members Present:** Robert E. Kahn (Chair), Gao Xinmin, Antoine Geissbühler, Ed Pentz, Peter Wittenburg, Rashid Ismailov, Steve Wolff (on the phone), and Stefan Eberhard.

**Board Member Excused:** Adama Samassékou.

**Also Present:** Alexander Ntoko, institutional representative of ITU; Patrice Lyons, institutional representative of CNRI; the DONA Foundation's Executive Director, Christophe Blanchi. In addition, several guests were present at most of the Board meeting at the invitation of the Chair:

**1. Opening of the Board Meeting**

On notice duly given, a meeting of the Board of Directors (**Board**) of the DONA Foundation (**DONA** or **Foundation**) was held, beginning at 2:15 PM on July 5, 2018, at the Maison de la Paix, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2, Geneva, Switzerland. The Chair thanked the *Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies* for its hospitality and for making its excellent facilities available for the Board meeting.

A draft Agenda for the meeting had been circulated to the Board members prior to the meeting, as well as the Minutes from the previous Board meeting (held on July 6 and 7, 2017). Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes and the draft Agenda were unanimously approved.

The Chair then gave a high-level overview of the topics that would be discussed at this Annual Meeting. He further explained to the Board that the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations requested that the Foundation's financial report be adopted before June 30, 2018, which had been accomplished by circulation resolution. Mr. Stefan Eberhard highlighted certain legal requirements imposed on Swiss foundations in this respect.

The Chair then presented a brief overview of DONA's activities since the Board's Annual Meeting in 2017. He mentioned, in particular, that criteria for selecting new multi-party administrators (MPAs) had been under development by the Task Force on New MPAs, and would be presented during this Annual Meeting. A discussion of this topic was subsequently presented by Mr. Pentz followed by comments from the Board. Mr. Pentz and Mr. Wolff were asked to finalize their recommendations and prepare a draft policy statement on the subject for review and approval by the Board. In addition, work had also been ongoing on revisions to the DOIP specification. He also pointed out that the status of the DONA MPA Coordination Group was an important issue to be discussed at this Annual Meeting.

**2. Brief Report from the Executive Director**

a) *GHR-related activities:* The DONA Executive Director, Mr. Christophe Blanchi, explained that over the past year his GHR-related activities had mainly consisted in providing operational support to the MPAs and answering requests and questions from them, which had been very diverse

(some very technical and others more organizational). In addition, he mentioned his several visits to MPAs and other organizations, as well as formal presentations at various professional conferences.

b) *Financial Situation*: Mr. Bianchi reviewed the Foundation's financial situation. He reported that at least one new MPA was expected by the end of the year, but that the revenues in the Foundation's proposed budget should be fairly similar to that of last year with only relatively small changes in total revenue and expenses. As regards expenses, Mr. Bianchi stated that the Foundation was now renting offices and had acquired some furnishings for the office.

c) *Personnel*: Mr. Bianchi reported that hiring of support personnel was becoming increasingly important for the development of the Foundation.

### **3. Brief Comments by Board Members and Institutional Representatives**

The Chair turned to the Board members in order for them to provide an update on their recent efforts of possible relevance to the Foundation.

Mr. Peter Wittenburg explained that the European Union had decided to provide funding to the Research Data Alliance Europe (RDA Europe) for several projects including research in the field of digital objects. Also, the Group of European Data Experts (GEDE) had recently agreed on the usage of PIDs and had expressed its wish to move forward with research in this field. In addition, the European Commission planned to launch the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) in November in Vienna; the EOSC would encompass digital objects among its study topics. In Mr. Wittenburg's view, all these developments were very encouraging.

Mr. Wittenburg also announced to the Board that he was exploring a meeting with the European Commission about the DOA later in the year, but that detailed plans were still being formulated

Mr. Gao Xinmin noted that the DOA was acquiring greater recognition in China, and he thanked Mr. Bianchi for his involvement and participation in various conferences, which had been very impactful. Mr. Gao then stressed that there had been some concern expressed regarding a lack of openness and transparency regarding the DOA. In Mr. Gao's view, it was critical for the Foundation to set up more visibly an open (rules-based) ecosystem for evolution of the DOA and its implementation.

Mr. Antoine Geissbühler described upcoming projects in Rwanda and South Africa with which he was involved. He further mentioned that Thomas Schulthess, the director of the Swiss National Supercomputing Center (CSCS), had voiced interest in the Foundation's activities.

Mr. Rashid Ismailov stated that it had now generally been acknowledged in Russia that the DOA technology was promising. Nevertheless, he pointed out that some issues remained with respect to the implementation and the interoperability of the system. Moreover, he mentioned that, in his view, the role of ITU-T Recommendation X.1255 should be reinforced as a relevant standard, since the ITU plays an important role in many developing countries.

Mr. Ed Pentz suggested that the Foundation's challenge was now to get beyond administration of the Handle System and to focus on the use of persistent identifiers with their associated digital objects. In his opinion, education needed to be improved in this respect.

Mr. Stefan Eberhard voiced his concerns about the limited visibility and marketing communication by DONA regarding the DOA technology. He reminded the Board that a detailed memorandum had previously been developed in this respect but had not been used.

Ms. Patrice Lyons mentioned that revisions had been made to the DOIP(v2) Specification based on comments made during and after last year's Annual Board Meeting and that CNRI was prepared to transition it to DONA once the revisions were finalized. She further made the Board aware that a request had been expressed during the DONA MPA Coordination meeting, held immediately prior to the Board meeting, that the MPAs be granted a more formal role in the Foundation's structure.

#### **4. Report on DONA MPA Coordination Group Meeting**

Mr. Bianchi reported, in general terms, on the DONA MPA Coordination Group meeting that took place from July 2 through July 5, 2018 in Geneva, immediately prior to the Board meeting. He highlighted the active discussions and participation of representatives from the MPAs as well as from a few organizations associated with the MPAs. He noted that training materials needed to be developed in order to move forward with the implementation of the current components of the DOA. He also indicated that some new security features may need to be addressed in the system.

Mr. Bianchi pointed out that the Foundation needed a way to consider the technical challenges encountered by the MPAs, such as by providing a platform on which the participants could share their ideas and knowledge. Likewise, he expressed the view that there should be a way for third parties to participate or otherwise be involved in this sharing of knowledge.

Finally, Mr. Bianchi seconded Ms. Lyons input and drew the Board's attention to the fact that the MPAs had expressed a strong wish that the DONA-CG be formalized by the Foundation.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Moez Maaref (the new CEO of ATI), accompanied by Mr. Mourad Melliti (head of R&D Department of ATI) then stressed that, in his view, some MPAs, including ATI, felt uncomfortable with the fact that the MPAs were not a formal part of the Foundation; and he urged the Board to address this concern. Both Ms. Lyons and Mr. Ntoko endorsed this request.

The Chair subsequently informed the guests that the concerns expressed by Mr. Moez Maaref, CEO of ATI, regarding the involvement of the MPAs in the decision-making process of the Foundation had been heard by the Board and that the Board had resolved to formally establish the DONA Coordination Group (DONA-CG) as an internal body of the Foundation, and to allow the DONA-CG to recommend to the Nominations Committee two new Board members to represent the interests of all the MPAs. **Resolution on Establishing the DONA-CG** is attached to these Summary Board Minutes as Attachment A.

#### **5. Discussion of DOIP(v2) Specification**

The Chair invited Mr. Giridhar Manepalli (CNRI) to present the current status of the DOIP(v2) Specification as revised by CNRI, with inputs from the Executive Director, during the past year. Mr. Manepalli reported that the DOIP had been further detailed to allow it to be more resilient to changes and evolution in the technology, such as with respect to access means and security. He further recounted that the DOIP essentials had been introduced during the DONA MPA Coordination Group meeting and that it had been received favorably by the MPAs.

Mr. Wittenburg welcomed the imminent release of the updated DOIP. In this context, he advised that a mechanism be implemented for the MPAs, as well as outside experts, to be able to share their feedback.

The Chair proposed that the Board *Committee on specifications, standards, best practices, and related documentation* (i) review the revised DOIP upon completion to validate its functionality and (ii) if the committee came to the conclusion that the DOIP functionally works, arrange for performance testing, as appropriate. Mr. Ntoko added that some checks should also be made to ensure conformity between the DOIP Specification and ITU-T Recommendation X.1255.

It was understood that CNRI would prepare an updated version of the DOIP(v2) Specification, taking into account the observations made at the Board meeting, after which CNRI would formally transfer the DOIP Specification to the Foundation for it to be made publicly available. At that point, the Specification would be referred to the *Committee on specifications, standards, best practices, and related documentation* for review.

## **6. Role of Type Registries, Availability of Cordra**

a) *Role of Type Registries:* The Executive Director, Mr. Bianchi, advocated that a type registry developed by DONA be made accessible to the MPAs in order for them to be able to make use of new types, it being understood that some access restrictions may be required.

Mr. Wittenburg commented that this should be discussed by the relevant Committee rather than in Board meetings, but he stressed that DONA should ensure that “core types” are preserved. The Chair added that the Board should consider how it wished to handle this issue and what responsibility DONA would take for the Type Registry going forward. He recommended that best practices be agreed upon.

c) *Availability of Cordra:* The Chair then invited Mr. Manepalli to introduce the CNRI software called Cordra, which merges the DO Repository and DO Registry software into a single integrated package. He informed the Board of CNRI’s intent to make this software available to the Foundation for licensing by the Foundation to the MPAs in the coming months, once to implementation of DOIPv2 was completed.

## **7. Funding Mechanisms for Outreach and DOA Development**

a) *New Funding Mechanisms:* The Chair reiterated that the fees currently paid by the MPAs were not sufficient for long-term growth of the Foundation, and he proposed to develop an approach with the Finance Committee for increasing revenue and for it to be submitted to the Board for discussion at a future Board meeting.

b) *Public Communication:* The Board continued with a general discussion on public communication activities of the Foundation. Mr. Eberhard recalled a detailed note that had previously been developed by the Committee, but which had not been acted upon, and he reiterated the need for the Foundation to improve its public relations and interactions with stakeholders and prospective MPAs.

c) *General Discussion:* A general discussion took place about liaison agreements with other organizations. The Board also discussed several developments with regard to the performance of the GHR.

## **8. End of Board Meeting**

Pursuant to the procedures previously adopted for staggering the terms of Board Members, the Board acknowledged the reelection of Mr. Wittenburg, Mr. Samassekou and Mr. Gao for additional three year terms each. No Board member requested the discussion of other matters. With no further business at hand, the meeting was adjourned.

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **RESOLUTION ON ESTABLISHING THE DONA-CG**

The DONA Foundation Board, meeting on July 6, 2018, resolved that:

The DONA Coordination Group (“DONA-CG”) is hereby established as a formal body of the DONA Foundation (“Foundation” or “DONA”). The DONA-CG membership shall consist of DONA (through the Foundation Delegate, as defined below), as well as every Multi-Primary Administrator (“MPA”) authorized by DONA and in good standing to provide GHR Services as part of the Global Handle Registry (“GHR”).

ITU will participate in the DONA-CG with the Foundation and MPAs, as envisioned for the DONA-CG.

The DONA-CG shall meet (i) to discuss technical coordination and cooperation among themselves concerning the operation of the GHR, and (ii) to review and provide advice and guidance to the Board of the Foundation with respect to standards, specifications, software implementations and other documentation pertaining to the Digital Object (“DO”) Architecture, it being understood that final approval of any such proposed changes to the operation of the GHR, or recommendations relating to the DO Architecture, rests with the Board.

The DONA-CG shall have a consultative function to the Board. For the avoidance of doubt, it shall not have or purport to exercise any powers of the Board nor will it have the power to bind the Foundation contractually.

Each MPA shall appoint one individual as its delegate (“MPA Delegate”) to the DONA-CG for voting purposes, and may designate other individuals to participate in the deliberations of the DONA-CG. The Executive Director of DONA is hereby designated as the Foundation Delegate to the DONA-CG for voting purposes, and may also designate other individuals to participate in the deliberations of the DONA-CG.

The DONA-CG may invite other qualified organizations or individuals to participate as observers in DONA-CG meetings and activities. Members of the Foundation Board and the authorized institutional representatives to the Board may participate in DONA-CG activities as observers.

The initial Chair of the DONA-CG shall be the DONA Executive Director, who shall serve until such time as the DONA-CG, by a formal vote, elects a new Chair from among the MPA Delegates in accordance with the DONA-CG Working Procedures.

A key function of the DONA-CG shall be the recommendation to the Nominating Committee of the Board of individuals to serve on the Board as MPA representatives, acting in their individual capacities in accordance with the Statutes of the Foundation.

The DONA-CG shall meet at least annually adjacent to the annual Board Meeting, and such other times and places as it deems appropriate. Minutes shall be prepared for each meeting of the

DONA-CG and shall be made available to the Board in due course. The Working Procedures of the DONA-CG shall be prepared by the DONA-CG and require approval by the Board.

The DONA Executive Director shall be responsible for providing routine administrative support to the DONA-CG. The reasonable administrative expenses incurred by the DONA-CG for its annual meeting (excluding travel and accommodation costs) and for the administrative support provided to the DONA-CG by the DONA Executive Director shall be borne by the Foundation within the limits of its annual budget for DONA-CG meetings. Unless otherwise agreed, the costs of any additional face-to-face DONA-CG meetings and other activities shall be the responsibility of the MPAs.