

18th January 2021

Agenda items

1. Apologies / introductions (if any)
2. Review last meeting notes
3. Draft of Terms of Reference
4. Other governance documents
5. Financial considerations
6. Next meeting date
7. Any other business

In Attendance

Present: Andrei S. Morgan (ASM), Angela Pinot de Moira (APM), Artur Rocha, Juan Ramon Gonzalez, Kim Cajachagua Torres, Paul Burton, Rosa Gini, Simon Parker, Stuart Wheater, Yannick Marcon, (Elaine Smith).

Apologies: Becca Wilson.

Review of last Minutes

All agreed that minutes from Advisory Board should be published on the website (in the interests of transparency).

Corrections:

- DataSHIELD was conceived at a conference in Edinburgh, organised by McGill University.
- Paul Burton has “observer” status and is not a member of the Board; he has no decision-making powers but is present to contribute his expertise and advice.

Previous Actions

1. All Board members to send an email with a photo and brief comments for website (**ES completed website – if there are any alterations needed, please advise** <https://www.datashield.ac.uk/about/advisoryboard/>)
2. Create a section under the “About” section of the website, about the DataSHIELD Advisory Board, what we are about and how to contact us (**ES**) (NB: will contain Terms of Reference and other information once this is drafted). (**in progress**)
3. Draft of Terms of Reference to be created for review at next meeting (**BW to coordinate; SP, AR, APM, KC, SW in particular expressed interest in helping with this; AR suggested he may be able to ask advice at a later stage of the Data Protection Officer at INSEC TEC**). (**in progress**)

4. All Board members to think about requirements for other documents and longer term coordination of the board, e.g. length of commitment to Board, routes to membership for people to join, equal opportunities/diversity policies. (in progress)

Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) / Other Governance documents

There was a combined discussion on the governance documents that are required. These can be divided into those specifically relating to the DataSHIELD Advisory Board, and those relating to the broader DataSHIELD community (most of which already exist in some form).

All agree that:

- Should build on statements that already exist, for example relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) etc.
- Aim to present the work of the Board in the autumn at the annual DataSHIELD Conference 2021 (if it's possible to hold it) to ensure community participation and approval.
- TOR should be applicable to the Board
- Will also need to establish:
 - How many members need to be present in meetings for decisions to be valid (quorate).
 - How decisions are made in case of disagreement
 - How long members will stay on the Board, and how new members join
- Possibly required other documents include:
 - Diversity Statement – need examples from other groups
 - Code of Conduct
 - Copyright and Software licence
 - Data Protection and Data Management
 - Quality assurance / inclusion process for new additions to DS. Should they be modular or become part of the 'core' software.

Related discussion (governance, objectives of Advisory Board, other)

- DataSHIELD is a Free Software (open source) project. It is mostly licensed under the GPL <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.en.html> but some parts of it vary. For instance, YM highlighted the fact that, as DataSHIELD is made up of different pieces of software, the DSI API, is licensed under the LGPL: <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/lgpl-3.0.html>
- Whilst the central project will always be open source, the current development team in Newcastle have also been looking at licensing potential and have considered the potential for 'modular' or 'add-on' components. For instance, they have thought about creating a Graphical User Interface for health care users, which could increase the ease of use of the software and be licensed separately.
- As a general approach, RG advised the Board to avoid overly bureaucratic processes – make decisions transparent, and focus on functional documents.
- RG is currently involved in reviewing quality control/assurance procedures as part of her involvement in the ConcePTION project; she would be happy to share what she learns with us (in a 3-4 months' time). This could help inform procedures for DataSHIELD
- JRG raised the question of whether it would be interesting for DataSHIELD to develop use cases for clinical (drug) trials. He has previous experience related to creating documents required for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approvals.
- General agreement that the potential to use for clinical trials would be great for DataSHIELD.

- Of potential interest – Artificial Intelligence, with arenas that interface on different levels; there is no way to train a neural network in a distributed way. Key issue here would be updates.
- *It was noted that there should be a set of rules for contributors to the DataSHIELD project*
- Once the documentation is set, the Board will be able to focus on more exciting areas.

Financial Considerations (retain this agenda item, every meeting)

- September 2021 is a pivotal point for the future of DataSHIELD, with some personnel changes and several current academic funding streams due to end.
- PB has identified 3 potential funding streams to maintain DataSHIELD into the future: grant funding; commercial enterprises; a hybrid of the two – commercial grants lead by a company.
- Newcastle University holds the Intellectual Property for the project at present; the Newcastle team are in the process of trying to understand possibilities for spin-out potential, e.g. in terms of licensing, and support, training and advice to users.
- If any Board members have any good ideas on EU grant opportunities, that would be great.
- Discussed the current situation that the most recent European funding program (Horizon2020) is just finishing, and the next one (Horizon Europe) hasn't started yet. The good news is that the United Kingdom will continue to be part of the Horizon Europe program for at least the foreseeable future (next 7 years).

Actions

1. ES to amend website to alter PB status on Board
2. KCT to lead on drafting a Terms of Reference document along with APM, ASM, SW, SP and BW. This will then be circulated prior to next meeting. Will use <https://framapad.org> to facilitate collaborative working (this is a collaborative online tool that is provided for the free software movement to use).
3. ES to contact BW and Eleanor Hyde to ask for example EDI statements.
4. RG will report back about Quality Assurance in May (not next meeting, but the one after)

Next Meeting

Monday 15th March 2021 13:00-15:00 UTC