

## DDI Alliance Strategic Plan, 2014-2017

The [DDI \(Data Documentation Initiative\)](#) is a structured metadata standard for the social, economic, and behavioral sciences. Over time, the standard, which is shaped by the [DDI Alliance](#), has evolved to meet the needs of new user communities, adding coverage and extending its scope across the data lifecycle.

This is a time of rapid change with the potential for growth and innovation for DDI. To realize this potential, DDI must move forward in a strategic way to ensure that it addresses the metadata needs of a broad set of data users and producers.

Looking ahead to the next three years, the DDI Alliance commits to the following three priorities:

- Standards maintenance and development
- Expanding the DDI community – Marketing and partnerships
- Restructuring to achieve our priorities

This paper outlines the Forward Work Plan for the DDI Alliance and sets out the proposed activities to be undertaken in the next three years to advance our agenda. Given that the restructuring mentioned above has already begun and is continuing as planned, this paper focuses primarily on activities relating to the standard itself and outreach activities.

To be successful, the Forward Work Program requires the generation of new resources in the form of time and revenue.

### Work Program

#### I. Standards maintenance and development

- Manage and maintain the two existing product lines (Codebook and Lifecycle):** There is a need to provide ongoing support for the user community and to keep existing standards relevant. This is a continuing activity managed by the Technical Committee.
- Review and vote on RDF Vocabularies:** The RDF Vocabularies Working Group has developed three RDF vocabularies for the efficient use of DDI metadata in the context of the Semantic Web/Linked Data: the DDI-RDF Discovery vocabulary for publishing metadata about datasets into the Web of Linked Data, PHDD – Physical Data Description, and XKOS, an RDF vocabulary for describing statistical classifications. This work will be reviewed and voted on during 2014.
- Develop a next generation model-based DDI specification:** To remain responsive to community needs and expectations, the DDI Alliance has launched a project to create a model-based DDI (DDI 4). The goal of completing the development of DDI 4 by 2016 is ambitious and will require the generation of new resources (in terms of time and revenue) in order to achieve it. To accelerate the pace of development, the Alliance is implementing a number of innovations, including establishing a Project Manager role, employing “sprints” to ensure rapid and continued progress, funding participation in sprints, and setting up an Advisory Group to oversee development.

- d) **Continue to publish new Controlled Vocabularies:** This is an ongoing activity as controlled vocabularies play a critical role in metadata standards and in DDI in particular. The DDI Controlled Vocabularies Group will publish new vocabularies as they are finalized to supplement the core set published to date.
- e) **Gain ISO certification:** The Alliance is pursuing ISO certification for the DDI specifications to encourage DDI adoption and to gain international endorsement of our work. This activity will be undertaken in 2014–2016 and overseen by the DDI Alliance Director.

## II. Expanding the DDI Community – Marketing and partnerships

- a) **Build partnerships and strategic alliances:** The DDI Alliance will look for opportunities to develop partnerships and alliances that will make DDI a key resource in the standards community. In some cases, these partnerships and alliances will create opportunities to progress the DDI specification through shared funding arrangements, grants, etc. The groups to target in the first instance may include:
  - Other standards bodies -- for example, SDMX, Dublin Core
  - Collaborative networks -- for example, Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL)
  - Funding bodies -- for example, National Science Foundation (NSF)
  - The Research Data Alliance (RDA)

This work will be undertaken in 2014-2015 by a Marketing and Partnerships Working Group set up under the auspices of the Executive Board.

- b) **Assess the current state of DDI usage, community needs, and resources:** To inform marketing and outreach efforts, it will be instructive to have a high-level view of the metadata landscape and to understand new and existing user communities and their needs. This can help to tailor outreach and communication to different audiences. Another important component of this work is brainstorming new applications for DDI that will broaden its appeal. For example, DDI could be used in commissioning surveys to specify outputs to firms that collect survey data. This work will be undertaken in 2014-2015 by the Marketing and Partnerships Working Group.
- c) **Improve the DDI website:** The website is often the first point of contact for a new user interested in DDI, so the site must be optimized to ensure that it provides appropriate information and resources (including publications) that support users in their intended metadata-related tasks. This work will be undertaken in 2014 by the Marketing and Partnerships Working Group and a small technical group that is already working on the infrastructure for the site.
- d) **Create new materials explaining the value of DDI to people who are not DDI specialists:** After completing the redesign of the DDI website, the Marketing and Partnerships Group will create literature that is accessible for non-experts such as researchers, program officers at funding agencies, etc. There is a need for new “getting started,” “why use DDI,” and best practice materials as well.

- e) **Build a community around DDI training and increase access through innovative mechanisms:** High-quality training is essential to effective use and understanding of DDI. Training should be audience-specific and provided in a variety of formats; in addition, a library of training materials should be available. This work will be undertaken in 2016–2017 by a training working group set up under the auspices of the Scientific Board.

### **III. Restructuring to achieve our priorities**

- a) **Review governance arrangements, including structure and Bylaws:** Following the restructure of the DDI Alliance in 2013, these new governance arrangements should be reviewed to ensure that they have been effectively implemented. This review will be undertaken by the Executive Board in 2015.
- b) **Review revenue and funding request models:** To ensure that a continuing robust business model is in place, the Executive Board will undertake an annual review of the revenue and funding request models.

# Timetable of Priorities at a Glance

