IADISC Report to the ISIS Board of Trustees
May, 2005

The past six months have been very busy ones for IADISC members. We have been supporting the ZIMS Project and ISIS in many ways including the following:

- IADISC members coordinated the regional involvement of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the review of ZIMS Business Use Cases, meeting all deadlines for each of the review iterations. There were over 1400 pages of technical documents reviewed multiple times.
- The IADISC online database grew to over 381 SME contacts (up from 250 reported in November, 2004) across multiple disciplines and regions. These are SMEs that are involved in the ZIMS workshops and electronic design and standards discussions or have indicated an interest in becoming involved.
- IADISC members Kevin Johnson and John Inkson set up and continually manage a web-based discussion forum. This has been a very successful tool for SMEs' electronic involvement in data standards work, user interface reviews, and use case feedback.
- We spent countless hours educating new SMEs in our respective regions about the process of reviewing technical documentation, promoting the mission of ZIMS and ISIS, and communicating ZIMS Project activities to regional ADISCs and stakeholders.
- We set up 18 Focus Groups and have begun the process of orienting SMEs to the next large body of technical documentation to be developed, System Use Cases.
- We coordinated the participation of over 100 regional SMEs in the Mega 1 and Mega 2 (to be held in a few weeks) Data Standards workshops.
- We hosted an initial training strategy discussion in December, 2004, with ISIS and CGI, to begin planning for ZIMS training needs.
- We submitted a proposal to AZA for a Conservation Endowment Fund (CEF) grant to host a workshop later this year that will help prepare IADISC members for training and deployment activities within their regions.

The next 4 months present some significant challenges pertaining to the user community's involvement in the ZIMS Project. There are many concurrent bands of work requiring SME input:

- final business use case signoff
- standards development
- reports elaboration
- system use case definition
- training planning
- user interface review
- data migration planning

This will require an even greater effort in coordinating, educating and communicating with SMEs. There will be a significant increase in the volume of electronic communication on the

web based discussion forum, zimsforum, which will require administration. The schedule established for system use case reviews alone calls for at least 30 web conferences, 2-3 hours each, between May 9 and August 11. IADISC has established 18 Focus Groups made up of 3 to 8 regional SME representatives to interact with CGI in reviewing system use cases and participating in web conferences. It should be noted that the risk of volunteer burnout on such an aggressive and demanding schedule is very high. Some possible means for mitigating the risk include:

- Prioritize the activities and tasks. Move activities less critical to construction to later (such as some of the standards development).
- Increase the communication about project timeline and deliverables, due dates and responsibilities so that everyone is clear about the tasks to be performed. Provide a monthly (or more frequent) status report to continually monitor status.
- Manage scope more aggressively. Focus on doing the core requirements well.
- Dedicate one person, at least half-time, to the coordination of Focus Groups and participation in web conferences.
- Provide better training material and orientation for SMEs so the assignments are very clear. Examine the overall training strategy and seek continuity between training activities through construction, user acceptance testing and through deployment.
- Clearly establish the roles and responsibilities of all involved (SMEs, Focus Group leaders, ISIS staff support).
- Provide even more positive feedback to volunteers and team members during this high stress time.

IADISC members will continue to work very hard to ensure that we have the broadest possible regional representation and that adequate SMEs are involved in the process to ensure the successful delivery of ZIMS. At the IADISC just held in Melbourne, Australia, April 29-30, we discussed the challenges we face and how best to approach them.

On the membership front, we have four new members since November, 2004. EAZA designated two new representatives to IADISC: Dr. Ulrike Rademacher and Dr. Sandra Silinski. We also added new member representatives from national associations, ACOPOZOA, Jairo Maldonado, and AZCARM, Dr. Richard Sheffield.

During the meeting, IADISC discussed a vision for future activities and resources which may be required. Kevin Johnson, ARAZPA, was also confirmed to the position of Co-Chair.

Respectfully submitted by:

Sue DuBois
Chair, IADISC