

IADISC — its role in animal data management project

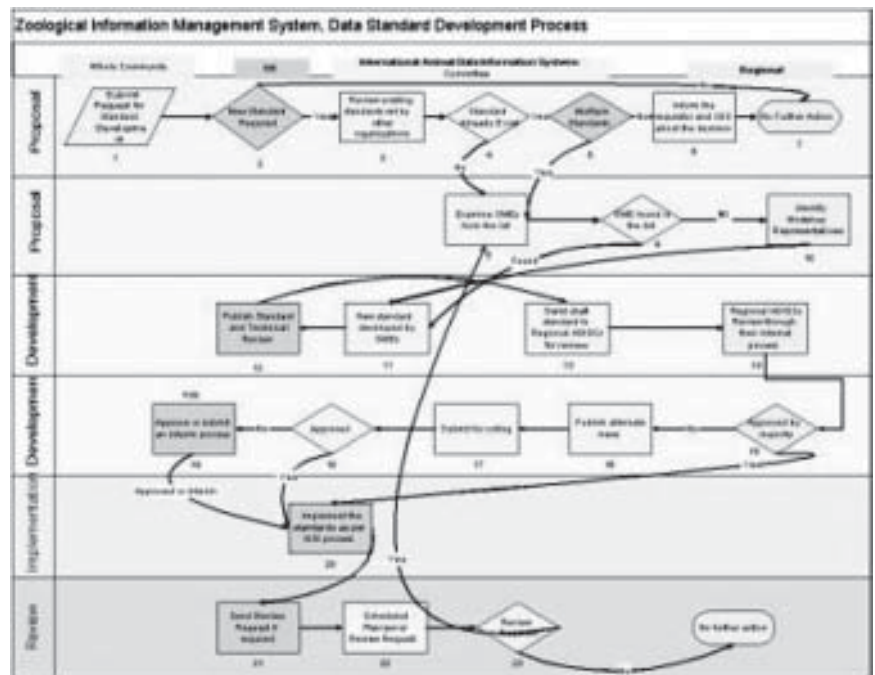
The role of IADISC includes:

- Promoting and coordinating the involvement of Subject Matter Experts in the ZIMS design workshops and standards workshops.
- Promoting Data Quality – though this will be primarily done by regional ADISCs
- Increasing global representation
- Supporting the implementation of ZIMS by:
 - Communicating project activities and progress to the user community
 - Ensuring that regional training needs are defined and addressed
 - Helping users adapt to changing business processes
 - Facilitating user acceptance testing of ZIMS
 - Diverse and equitable representation from all regions of the world has been a primary objective of IADISC and it will continue to seek contacts in new regions both for membership in IADISC and participation in workshops.

In 2004, Subject Matter Experts have been called for 4-8 design sessions with the vendor for both core and veterinary development. In addition, 12-20 standards workshops will be necessary to address the many categories identified needing standardization for both core and veterinary data. IADISC members will be seeking Subject Matter Experts in their respective regions that fit a specific list of criteria.

Data Standards Process

A proposed process drafted by ZIMS Project team members (for developing data standards) was reviewed and endorsed by IADISC at the Costa Rica meeting. The chart below outlines the general steps through which a proposed data standard would flow (proposal, development, implementation, and review) and identifies the specific responsibilities that the community, ISIS, IADISC, and the regional stakeholders will have in the process. The discussion of a standards development process is very important and has not been done before. This is essential as the basis for the software development process. We are also developing, testing and formalizing new organizational structures (such as IADISC) and their interactions and roles.



Questions and Comments from the group during discussion

Will ZIMS include other modules such as Nutrition?

The first release of ZIMS includes core (inventory) and veterinary functionality plus a data warehouse. The full nutrition module will be included in future releases of ZIMS although some basic elements are included in the veterinary module.

Are existing animal database systems, both current ISIS software and institutional applications, being examined by the developers of ZIMS?

Yes, the ZIMS Project Team is utilizing existing knowledge of animal systems and specifically analyzing existing technical systems design documentation. The ZIMS Project Team is interested in acquiring any additional information about other existing animal database applications. Has there been a cost/benefit analysis of ZIMS? What value does ZIMS provide over existing systems? Several business case statements have been developed to explain the benefit of ZIMS but there is still more work to be done. One example of a cost savings is the decrease need for duplicate data entry by studbook keepers who will utilize the central

database rather than create studbooks from scratch. It is roughly estimated that this could save \$1M/year in labour savings across the user institutions. The benefits of higher data quality and better access to data are difficult to quantify though are recognized as being significant to our community activities

How will operating costs of ZIMS be financed? — Nate Flesness reported on ISIS's plans to expand capacity to support ZIMS in the future. The ISIS Board is addressing the need for funding.

How will the zoo community be kept aware of the benefits of ZIMS as they develop?

The ZIMS Project Team and IADISC both have developed communication plans. ISIS will also be hiring a communication officer.

Have you thought of a test plan?

Yes, the details of the plan will not be established until after the vendor is on board and the project schedule is better defined. A test plan is very important and the users must be involved in both the development of the plan and the testing. IADISC will support ISIS in implementing a test plan and suggest suitable user testers.