

IHS AI Board Meeting May 28th - May 31st, 2010



Report

1. Introduction

Between May 28th and May 31st of 2010, the first IHS Alumni International Board meeting was held in the Netherlands. Some of the activities were carried out in the IHS headquarters in Erasmus University, Rotterdam; and some others in Stavoren, north of the country. The meeting was the first 'real' encounter of the board members, after being recently elected and after several preparation online meetings.

The Board, formed by: Jaime Hernandez, as the President; Ivan Katongole, as the Vice-President; Mellyana Frederika, as the Communication Officer; Melis Varkal, as Advisor and Representative of current participants; Sarah Steendam, as Advisor and IHS staff; and Christina Liesegang as Advisor and IHS staff; held several meetings which are the objective of this report.

It is important to point out that IHS alumni is a tremendous knowledge and network force of more than 7,000 people around the World. The IHS directors have acknowledged this by providing the basic support and resources for functioning; which we are thankful. The challenge now is how to make it work for the two parties; for the alumni in terms of professional and social opportunities and for the IHS in terms of consolidate an image of excellence in urban management, and in more practical terms in marketing, more students and more research and consultancy projects. The idea that governed the board meeting and the work of this board for the next two years, is to create and sustain a mutual beneficial relationship between IHS and IHS AI.

2. The Programme

The programme consisted in four full days of activities and meetings. The following lines describe them briefly and point out major outcomes.

2.1. Friday 28th of May, IHS Headquarters

- **Introductory meeting:** Introductions were done, and it was exciting to notice how diverse and interesting the group looked. The four days programme was revised, and some comments to the agenda for the board meeting were done.

- Introduction to IHS staff and general activities: Hosted also Sarah and Christina, the board was taken around IHS offices to be introduced to the staff and have a quick chat whenever possible. Some were 'old' faces to the board members, especially to those who have been recently graduated. It was also the chance to know a little bit more of what the IHS is today, and what it is aiming for the future.
- Meeting with a representative the Erasmus University Alumni Association: Jaime, Ivan and Sarah attended a meeting with Dr. Arie Fakkert (eav@erasmusalumnivereniging.nl); in which Arie explained what his association is about, suggested ideas and tips from his long experience involved with alumni and opened the door for a future collaboration between the two networks.
- Alumni day: organised by Mellyana and Melis was an event that 'connected' with the current participants, who will be the new alumni in a few months. It was a useful and enjoyable activity that not only worked as an introduction of the board to the participants, but also helped to raise issues that they wanted to be included in the IHS AI plans for the future.
- The day finished with an informal conversation with participants and staff in the bar of the IHS, and after that, the board and some alumni had dinner in a nice morocco Rotterdam restaurant that reminded everybody the experience of living in a such cosmopolitan city!

2.2 Saturday 29th of May, Stavoren

- Early in the morning, we headed to Stavoren by train, arriving at noon. After setting in the house we were to spend Saturday and Sunday, we started with the content sessions of the board meeting.

2.3 Sunday 30th of May, Stavoren

- Content sessions continued today, and actually went until very late in the night to get the final and planned product ready. The intensity of the work prevented the group to explore around, and the weather (rainy and windy) also impeded that to happen. In return, a good and consistent work was achieved which can give the basis to IHS AI in the next two years and beyond.

2.4 Monday 31st of May, IHS Headquarters

- Lunch meeting with IHS staff: Some staff attended, and comments and recommendations were recorded. These were in terms of acknowledging the hard work, the interest of the results, and the support in what is coming next.

- Meeting with IHS management Directors: a crucial meeting for IHS AI board to present the ideas and plans to be developed in next two years at least, and to secure current support from the IHS and expand it if possible. The main issue wanted to be clear is the firm conviction that mutual beneficial work can be done from IHS AI, to enhance the IHS position in the World, which is at the same time a privileged position of all its alumni. In other words, the work IHS AI can do is not only for its alumni, but for the IHS in general; in this regard the board believe that investing in IHS AI is investing in IHS. Under this idea the work of IHS AI is presented and support is asked.
- Follow up and evaluation meeting: at the end of the afternoon and just before the commemorative photos to be taken for publicise and remembering purposes, the last board meeting was held, to discuss the production of these four days, the pending issues, and the evaluation of the meeting in general. Hard work, commitment, and high motivation were the common words to describe the work undertaken.

3. The Action Plan

The action plan has been built for two years, from May 2010 to April 2012, which corresponds to the elected time of the current board; however it is believed that its impact could last longer because it is aimed to firmly set up the Network and project it into the future. This section highlights the main issues of the plan.

3.1 Objectives for 2010 – 2012

- Build up and firmly establish the IHS AI
- Build up a mutual beneficial relationship with the IHS
- Create and strengthen visibility of IHS AI, under the motto 'Linking Urban Professionals'
- Create and sustain services to IHS alumni
- Promote and support Local IHS Alumni Associations and Regional IHS alumni meetings around the World
- Link IHS AI with other networks in the search for more visibility and opportunities for alumni

3.2 Strategies

- Permanent communication with IHS and look to work together in certain issues
- Enhance communication with alumni
- Focus on building from Local Associations
- Division of board members as contact persons per continent
- Building up from current participants ('alumni to be')

3.3 Milestones

- 2010:
 - IHS Alumni Day
 - 1st Board Meeting
 - Regional Alumni meeting in India
 - Increase alumni active members
 - Increase support to current and new Local Alumni Associations
 - Improve communication with alumni

- 2011:
 - Extended IHS alumni day
 - Celebration 1st anniversary of IHS AI: May 1st
 - Resource mobilisation
 - Regional meeting (place to be confirmed)
 - Increase alumni active members
 - Increase support to current and new Local Alumni Associations
 - Increase services provided to alumni

- 2012:
 - WUF
 - IHS Alumni award
 - Elections and transition to the new board

3.4 Summary of the Action Plan

The action plan is organised around three main aspects: 1) Set up and basics; 2) Services; and 3) Operational. Each aspect is disaggregated in sub-aspects, and each one has an outcome expected, activities to be developed, concrete actions to carry out the activities; each action is prioritised and put into a time line of 4 semesters, has a responsible within the board, some resources to be allocated, and where these funds can come from. As a summary; aspects, sub-aspects, outcomes and activities are presented here; as mentioned earlier, the whole plan can be seen in the annex.

1) *Set up and basics*

1.1) Board: board organisation and main set up and planning issues

- Rules and regulations, board elections
- Framework
- Fulfilment of action plan

- Celebration of IHS AI anniversary: May 1st
- 1.2) Alumni involvement: search for alumni and encourage participation
- Database maintenance and upgrade
 - Membership
- 1.3) Local associations: encourage creation and improvement of local alumni associations
- Permanent communication with local alumni associations and support them
 - Review set up guidelines
 - Support regional and local meetings
 - Support regional and local short courses
- 1.4) Relations with IHS: build mutual beneficial relationship
- Establish and feed a permanent relationship
 - Build advisor status to courses, research and consultancy activities

2) *Services*

- 2.1) Professional: provide professional and career services to alumni
- Job and training opportunities are identified and used
 - Provision of support and sharing experiences
 - Establish of 'alumni helps alumni' project
- 2.2) Academic: provide academic services to alumni
- Scholarships, PhD and courses are identified and used
 - Support and sharing experiences
 - Establish a joint publication
- 2.3) Social services: recognition of IHS alumni
- IHS alumni day
 - Provision of IHS AI kit
 - Communication with and amongst alumni is enhanced
- 2.4) Cross aspects: recognition of IHS as leading international knowledge institute in urban management
- Award for outstanding work in the urban field

3) *Operational*

- 3.1) Finance: resources are mobilised
- Fundraising
 - Budgeting
 - Treasuring
 - Sponsorship
 - Membership fee

3.2) Communication: communication with alumni is maintained and enhanced; IHS AI activities are informed and looked for feedback; visibility of IHS AI; and communication with external stakeholders are established

- Administration of active members
- Newsletter
- Active members are engaged
- www.ihs.nl is used as the platform for IHS AI
- IHS AI website/blog is created
- Alumni newsletter is distributed in a printed version
- Campaign on 'linking urban professionals'
- Stakeholders are identified
- IHS AI is introduced
- IHS AI is linked with relevant stakeholders

4. Concluding Remarks

This report summarises the work carried out during the IHS AI board meeting held in The Netherlands from the 28th to the 31st of May, 2010. But it also represents a concrete proposal to what IHS AI can be; from firmly organising the foundations, to project alumni into a worldwide and promising future, and with them, the IHS as a world leader training, research and consultancy institution. The mutual IHS AI – IHS beneficial relationship that this plan wants to create is clear; we firmly believe that if IHS AI successes in connecting alumni and provide a platform to develop professional, academic and social services, will be redundant to IHS image, worldwide recognition and at the end, marketing results. In the same regard, if IHS successes in providing a quality training, research and consultancy; it will be beneficial to all alumni in terms of visibility, recognition, and at the end, better jobs. It is therefore, a win – win relationship, but we need each other to success.

The challenge now is how to convert these beautiful ideas into actions and results. Obviously, the action plan presented here move forward into that direction; however we need help. As said before, we need support and financial contribution from the IHS; but perhaps even more important, we need help from the more of 7,000 IHS alumni around the world. With the kindly support of two members of the IHS alumni relations office staff, Christina and Sarah; the board is 4 people 'working' on voluntary basis, believing in the idea and the potentials of IHS AI. But we will not get very far just by ourselves; we need the participation, engagement and contribution of the alumni in the plans outlined here. Alumni can start with making themselves visible, by contacting the IHS alumni relations office, update their details and become active members; also they could join in the social and professional networks: facebook and linkedIn, for a more instant and permanent communication. After that you could join the local IHS alumni association, or connect the local contact person and try to move things forward; and if there is not any local contact person, take the initiative and become you that person

and start forming the Local IHS Alumni Association. At the end, the only way to make local a global association as ours, is through local initiatives. The IHS AI board will do every effort to support these initiatives.

The future is ours, but we need to work for it!