



**RHINO**  
Routine Health Information Network, Inc  
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<http://www.rhinonet.org>

**Minutes**  
**RHINO Board of Directors' Meeting**

*RHINO board of Directors' Meeting Minutes  
Arlington VA, December 16, 2014*

**Board Members Present:** Theo Lippeveld, Jason Smith, Barbara Turner, Jean-Pierre DeLamalle, Sally Stansfield, Juan Eugenio Hernandez, Nancy Pielemeier

**Board Members Unable to Attend:** Ann Lion (no phone connection), Peter Speyer (no phone connection), Vincent Shaw (on vacation)

**Invited Participant:** Leah Wyatt, Communications Specialist

**RHINO Secretariat Present:** Evis Farka Haake

The Board of Directors' Meeting was held on December 16, 2014 at JSI Arlington office at 10:00am. The Cisco system was down for the entire organization and the call in system set up for this meeting did not work in order to accommodate the Board Members who were supposed to call in. Only Board Member Sally Stansfield could be called in and was able to attend the meeting by phone.

### **1. Welcome**

The Board Chairman Theo Lippeveld welcomed everyone and started the meeting by introducing Juan Eugenio Hernandez as the new Board Member representing the "Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica" (INSP) in Mexico as well as RELACSYS, the RHIS network for Latin America. He also introduced Dr. Jason Smith, the Deputy Director of MEASURE Evaluation, who will represent UNC from now on.

The Board Chairman briefly presented the MEASURE Evaluation Phase 4 project and the important role that RHIS is playing in the new phase of the project. In fact RHIS strengthening is one of the four results of the project.

### **2. Agenda**

The Board Chairman introduced the agenda and invited the members to suggest other topics or make comments. He pointed out that the focus of this meeting would be around Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy for RHINO as well as fundraising opportunities. Board Members approved the proposed agenda.

### **3. Minutes of last Board Meeting (January 2014)**

Next, the Board Members proceeded to review the minutes from the last Board of Directors Meeting. A correction was pointed out by Barbara Turner that she had suggested contributing to the writing of a short paper on mHealth and RHIS, but RHINO will lead it.

Nancy Pielemeier also pointed out that her term was extended during the last Board Meeting but it was not noted in the notes of page 2.

The RHINO Board Chairman Mr. Theo Lippeveld pointed out that even though the action items on RHINO' fundraising section were noted in the minutes, they were not followed up due to lack of resources and the goal is to address them in the future. The goal for RHINO is to become financially independent with a sophisticated and diverse mechanism to raise funds for the advocacy of RHIS.

Action Item:

- RHINO secretariat to prepare a draft paper on mHealth and RHIS
- RHINO secretariat to further work on RHINO fundraising

#### **4. Discussion of the Annual Report 2014**

##### ***RHINO On-line forums***

The RHINO Board Chairman started the discussion by providing a review of the two on-line forums that happened during 2014. The second forum, Assessing and Improving Routine Health Information System, was currently happening (December 8-20) and the Chairmen shared a few insights of what is currently being discussed. He explained that the RHIS assessment tools such as PRISM need to be updated and adapted to include appropriate assessment of ICT for RHIS as well as RHIS for the private sector. The review and update of the PRISM and other RHIS assessment tools is part of the MEASURE Evaluation Phase 4 portfolio of funded activities. The goal is for the tools to be updated by the end of next fiscal year. The revised tools will be field tested in Year 2 of MEASURE Evaluation.

##### ***RHINO Website***

The website is running smoothly under the World Press format. RHINO Secretariat are looking into incorporating some applications that can help us learn more about the various audience groups of RHINO. Also, it is envisioned to improve the communication tools of the website.

Action Item:

- RHINO secretariat to develop a scope of work for website improvement and to identify a website developer

##### ***RHINO Bibliography***

It is not very user friendly at the moment and RHINO secretariat is looking for ways to change that. RELACSYS has a bibliography that seems to be better build than that of RHINO.

Action Item:

- RHINO Secretariat will review RELACSYS bibliography and identify ways that RHINO can incorporate and improve its bibliography.

### ***RHINO Newsletter***

RHINO Secretariat published two newsletters last year. The last one incorporated a new template from mailchimp.com that allows the Secretariat to learn more how various RHINO audience groups use the newsletter for knowledge management.

#### **Action Item:**

- RHINO Board members to send in additional comments on the 2014 report if any in the next two weeks
- The Annual Report 2014 will then be finalized and published online on the RHINO website.

## **5. Communications and KM Strategy Discussion**

Ms. Leah Wyatt, former Communication Specialist for MEASURE Evaluation/UNC, presented the results of a survey that she conducted in early December via the RHINO listserv. The purpose was to learn about the knowledge needs of the various RHINO audience groups. She gave an overview of the data-knowledge-action cycle. During this presentation, board members emphasized that RHINO's mandate is to advocate for RHIS research and to disseminate research findings rather than lead and/or conduct research themselves. The new MEASURE Evaluation Phase IV project offers an excellent opportunity to explore some of the relevant RHIS research questions. A full report of the study by Ms. Wyatt will be sent to the Board members.

The RHINO Secretariat circulated the very first draft of RHINO's Communication Strategy and invited the Board members to review it and provide comments and suggestions in the coming weeks. It was also announced that RHINO intends to strengthen the Secretariat with a part-time Communications Manager. The scope of work and funding need to be further discussed.

#### **Action Item:**

- RHINO Secretariat to send electronic copy of the Knowledge Management Survey undertaken by Ms. Leah Wyatt.
- RHINO Board members to send in comments on the RHINO Communications Strategy by the end of January 2015

## **6. RHINO finances and fundraising**

The balance sheet of the RHINO NGO on December 15 2014 showed a positive balance of \$ 49,640.64. These funds are the left-over of the institutional fees that were paid by selected organizations represented on the RHINO board.

The RHINO Board of Directors further discussed the fundraising situation for RHINO. It was pointed out that USAID expects RHINO to become a sustainable and financially independent network by the end of the MEASURE Evaluation Phase IV project. While

USAID has agreed to provide initial financial support to undertake various structural improvements of the Network, it has projected to gradually decrease RHINO funding.

Sustainability of RHINO will be the result of both increased demand for RHINO as a network to strengthen RHIS in lower and middle income countries, as well as a sustainable fundraising mechanism.

As for the demand side, the situation looks better than ever before in the close to fifteen year existence of RHINO. Various donor initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Commission for Information and Accountability on Women's and Children's Health, the Health Metrics Network, Paris 21, and more recently the DATIM initiative of PEPFAR, have underscored the essential role of routine information in measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the health services delivery systems. Facility and community based RHIS can support health services managers and providers at district level and below in their daily decision making and enhance the efficiency and innovation in the delivery of quality health services.

The mandate of the new USAID funded MEASURE Evaluation Phase IV project explicitly calls for RHIS strengthening under its Result 1. One of the strategies proposed by the MEASURE Evaluation team to also reinforce the demand for RHIS at the country level is to decentralize advocacy and capacity building to regional levels. One example is the RELACSYS initiative in Latin America, which, with technical assistance of PAHO and the INSP/Mexico, has led to setting up of capacity building and advocacy initiatives that are more responsive to the needs of participating countries, and that are leading to more country ownership of the RHIS. It is therefore projected to explore the establishment of such regionalized networks in Africa and Asia.

It is hoped that this growing demand for strong RHIS will also influence the fundraising environment for RHINO as an advocacy and knowledge management network. While various fundraising mechanisms have been tried out in the past, most of them have proved not to be sustainable, such as membership fees and grants. RHINO Board member Juan Eugenio Hernandez suggested that online courses such as the ones provided by INSP/Mexico could raise funds by having course participants pay for course certificates. RHINO could join INSP and other training partners in Africa and Asia in promoting and administering the online courses and benefit from funds raised by the certification.

Action Item:

- The RHINO Board and Secretariat to continue exploring fundraising options for RHINO

## **7. Re-election of the Board Membership**

New RHINO Board Member Juan Eugenio Hernandez presented the work of the INSP Cuernavaca, Mexico in strengthening RHIS in Latin America. Board member Jean-Pierre

DeLamalle, who flew in from Brussels funded by his organization, the “Association Européenne pour le Développement et la Santé (AEDES)” presented the work of AEDES in strengthening RHIS in francophone Africa, as well as in the development of computerized hospital information systems.

All the present Board Members supported the extension of the board terms for the Chairman of the Board Theo Lippeveld and of Jean-Pierre DeLamalle.

The Chairman stated that he would like to continue expanding the board of RHINO by inviting representatives from Africa (eventually based outside Africa to decrease costs). All the Board Members agreed on such initiative.

The current list of RHINO Board members and current status of the board terms is provided in Appendix 1.

## **8. Closure**

The Board Chairman notified the members that the RHINO secretariat plans to organize another board meeting within 6 months to follow up on the many ideas generated through this meeting. He closed the meeting at 12:10pm, thanking the Board Members for their participation.

**Signature by Evis Farka Haake**



RHINO Secretariat

## Appendix 1: RHINO Board Members' Current Status

<b>Current Board Members</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Term</b>
Theo Lippeveld	John Snow Inc	December 2016
Jason Smith (replacing Sian Curtis)	UNC	June 2015
Jean-Pierre Delamalle	AEDES/Belgium	December 2016
Nancy Pielemeier	ABT Associates	January 2016
Sally Stansfield	Deloitte Consultants	January 2016
Barbara Turner	URC	January 2016
Elizabeth J. Ashbourne	World Bank	June 2015
Peter Speyer	IHME	June 2015
Ann Lion	ABT Associates	January 2016
Vincent Shaw	HISP/South Africa	January 2016
Juan Eugenio Hernandez	INSP/Mexico	December 2016
<b>Ex Officio Board members</b>		
Najeeb Al-Shorbaji	WHO	