



WITSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

09:00 – 16:00

Friday March 29, 2019

Venue: Hotel Europe
28 Internatsionalnaya Str., Minsk, Republic of Belarus

Room: 7th Floor Conference Room

Yvonne Chiu, Chairman

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Armenia	Mr. Aleksandr Yesayan	UITE
2.	Belarus	Dr. Boris Komrakov	INFOPARK
3.	Egypt	Eng. Tarek Abd-elmonem Taha	EITESAL
4.	Greece	Mr. Yannis Sirros	SEPE
5.	Malaysia	Mr. Sean Seah	PIKOM
6.	Nepal	Mr. Hemant Kumar Chaurasia	CAN
7.	Nigeria	Mr. Olutayo Adeniyi	ITAN
8.	Romania	Dr. Vasile Baltac	ATIC
9.	Taiwan	Ms. Yvonne Chiu	CISA
10.	United Kingdom	Mr. Julian David	techUK

IN ATTENDANCE

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Armenia	Ms. Syuzanna Azoyan	UITE
2.	Belarus	Dr. Valery Malakhovsky	INFOPARK
3.	Belarus	Mr. Vladimir Basko	INFOPARK
4.	Nepal	Mr. Nawaraj Kunwar	CAN
5.	Taiwan	Mr. Po-Wen Chen	CISA
6.	Taiwan	Ms. Hui-Pin Chen	CISA
7.	Taiwan	Ms. Shih-Ying Chang	CISA

8.	Taiwan	Dr. Chin-Yeong (Colley) Hwang	DigiTimes/CISA
9.	Ukraine	Mr. Constantine Vasuk	ITUA
10.	USA	Dr. James Poisant	WITSA
11.	USA	Mr. Anders Halvorsen	WITSA
12.	USA	Ms. Molly Waldron Poisant	WITSA

REGRETS

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Argentina	Mr. Anibal Carmona	CESSI
2.	Bangladesh	Mr. Abdullah Kafi	BCS
3.	Bermuda	Mr. John Kyle	Bermuda Chamber of Commerce
4.	Brazil	Mr. Raul Colcher	ASSESPRO
5.	Hong Kong	Mr. Francis Fong	SEPE
6.	India	Mr. Shivendra Singh	NASSCOM
7.	Japan	Mr. Kazunori Hamano	JISA
8.	Mexico	Mr. Santiago Gutierrez	CANIETI
9.	Republic of Korea	Mr. Woo Keon Park	FKII
10.	Spain	Mr. Antonio Ciorra	AMETIC
11.	USA	Ms. Martha Dorris	PSC

INTRODUCTIONS/CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairman's Remarks / Introductions

Ms. Yvonne Chiu welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting. The Chairman stated that this was the first time she had met Dr. Baltac. She then introduced Dr. Colley, DigiTimes CEO.

In anticipation of the upcoming WCIT events in 2019 and 2020, the Chairman recently visited Armenia and Malaysia. She stated that more and more people around the world now know about WITSA and WCIT. As more countries request details on WCIT and WITSA, WITSA membership should increase.

The Chairman shared that she and Dr. Poisant talked almost every other day and shared a desire to make WITSA great and let the world know about the important work WITSA is doing.

The Chairman extended special thanks again to Dr. Boris Komrakov and his team for hosting the WITSA delegation this week.

2. Roll Call

Dr. Jim Poisant acknowledged that being remotely located around the world, some Board Members had an extraordinarily long trip. Some travelled more than 36 hours each way; others were tied up in Istanbul. He thanked everyone for their commitment and support.

Mr. Anders Halvorsen proceeded with the Roll Call. *Please see Roll Call at the front of this document.*

Dr. Jim Poisant introduced Ms. Molly Poisant who, together with Alicia Standridge, has taken over administrative duties for the WITSA Secretariat. Ms. Poisant previously served as the Vice President of US Business Development for the WCIT 2008 (Malaysia) and two WITSA Global Public Policy Summits (Bermuda and Mexico). In addition to managing member billing and inquiries, Ms. Poisant and Ms. Standridge are working with the Regional Vice Chairmen on identifying potential new members, deploying a CRM to manage the contact database and assisting in Board Meeting preparations. The addition of Ms. Poisant and Ms. Standridge to the WITSA team will allow Mr. Anders Halvorsen additional time to work on important WITSA policy issues.

3. Call to Order / Approval of Minutes

Dr. Poisant called the meeting to order.

Dr. Poisant asked for a motion to approve the Minutes from the October 4, 2018 Board Meeting in Armenia. Mr. Alex Yesayan motioned; Mr. Tayo Adeniyi seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

4.	<p>Welcome to Minsk</p> <p>Dr. Boris Komrakov of INFOPARK welcomed the Board to Minsk. While most of the visitors were here only two (2) days, he hoped they enjoyed the opportunity to experience the history the previous day (during the day trip to the Castles of Nesvizh and Mir) and the culture this evening (during the trip to the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre to see <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>).</p>
<p>TREASURER'S REPORT</p>	
5.	<p>Treasurers Report</p> <p>Mr. Tarek Taha, who joined via conference line, referred to the two slides that reflected Total Assets of \$838,150.29 as of January 31, 2019. Total Liabilities are: \$119,630.17 and Total Equity of \$718,520.12. Total Liabilities and Equity was \$838,150.29. During the first month of 2019, WITSA's Revenue was slightly higher than budgeted (\$1,235.72). Expenses were lower than expected (-\$12,301.85) for a change in Net Assets of -\$11,066.08.</p> <p>WITSA started the year very conservatively in terms of financials. He stated that he was in favor of the proposed budget but suggested the Board delegate Dr. Poisant and Ms. Chiu to make changes, if needed, throughout the year.</p> <p>Mr. Taha stated his desire to operate on a "cash received" basis this year; he would like to keep a reserve in the WITSA account, as was the practice for the past 5 years. Later on, in the meeting, the budget would be discussed, and Mr. Taha had no objection to any line item. Mr. Taha encouraged the Board to agree to cut spending, if need be. The goal, he stated, was to end the year with enough cash to cover the 2020 yearly activities. This would put WITSA in a good position to implement the programs Dr. Poisant would be presenting.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant shared that additional funding, such as two (2) outstanding licensing fees, will bring in additional income since the end of January 2019. One licensing fee had been taken care of (Malaysia) and the other was expected the day of the Board Meeting (Bangladesh); as such, WITSA was on budget in terms of revenue and under budget in terms of expenses.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant committed to Board to stay with this 12-year tradition and thanked Armenia and Malaysia for being on schedule with their payments. Bangladesh owed the only outstanding licensing fee. However, Dr. Poisant reminded the Board that there had recently been elections, in both their government and in their association over the past 4-5 months; while the association turned over, the government didn't change, and everyone remains committed to WITSA and WCIT. By June 2019 WITSA should have Bangladesh's licensing fee in full and be ahead of schedule.</p>

DECISION BLOCK

6. Approval of FY 2019 Budget

Dr. Poisant said this draft budget had been circulated several times so that everyone could review it in detail in preparation for the meeting. He asked if anyone had an objection to the draft budget. With no objections voiced, the 2019 Budget passed unanimously.

7. Business Plan

Dr. Poisant reminded the Board that the Business Plan is available in the Members Only section of the WITSA Website and that the Business Plan matches the detailed KPI/Gantt chart that would be discussed later in meeting agenda. He said that Board Members were able to access these files at any time to get a real-time assessment of where the Secretariat's Office is with various projects. Dr. Poisant asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked if anyone disapproved of the measure to adopt the Business Plan. With no objections voiced, the Business Plan passed unanimously.

Mr. Julian David made a comment about WITSA's focus on producing papers. He asked if WITSA could be doing more convening around WTO, especially as regards the ongoing digital trade talks. In addition to the papers, WITSA should work with the 76 countries currently involved in the digital trade discussions – using members, member governments and relationships to update global trade rules through a new plurilateral WTO agreement.

Anders Halvorsen replied that he agreed with Mr. David 100%, and advised that there would be a discussion on new papers and policies later in the afternoon, on topics such as digital trade and the electronic transmissions moratorium.

Dr. Poisant shared that he and Anders would be traveling to Geneva the next week to have a private meeting with the WTO, and do a workshop on globalization, and that there would be more about that in the afternoon as well.

8. Approval of KPI/Gantt

Dr. Poisant referenced the KPI/GANTT chart provided via the Board Packet. Hearing no objection to either, both are approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION BLOCK

9. Status on Mr. Nizar Zakka

Dr. Poisant provided an update of WITSA's colleague Nizar Zakka, who had been unjustly imprisoned in Tehran since 2015. The latest update was that the US Government was looking to discontinue any Iranian student VISAs until the Iran hostage situation with various American citizens and residents had been resolved; additionally, if enacted, any Iranian students currently studying in the US would have to leave.

Last year, the Vice President of Iran had said Mr. Zakka was unjustly imprisoned and should be released. With the prison conditions in Iran so severe, Dr. Poisant was afraid that Mr. Zakka would need to be released in the near future, or else his chance of survival would be minimal. Anyone who wanted to petition the Iranian government to release him was encouraged to do so.

10. WCIT Status

Ms. Suzie Azoyan presented a status update on the 23rd World Congress on Information Technology, to be held October 6-9, 2019 in Yerevan, Armenia. She reported that they were expecting more than 2000 delegates and up to 4,000 people in total from over 60 countries to visit Armenia during the course of the event. The theme for WCIT 2019 was the "Power of Decentralization". She stated that the Congress was a very big event for them and the capital city of Yerevan. Topics included: AI, Internet of Things, Women in Technology, Cybersecurity, and IT to tackle climate change. Expected speakers included former US President Barack Obama, actor Leonardo DiCaprio, Alexis Ohanian (co-founder of Reddit), Michael Dell and many others. The WCIT 2019 was testing the website and would be re-launching it shortly. The Organizers will offer special discounts for WITSA members and those bringing larger delegations. The early bird registration fee for all international delegates will be \$495USD and will increase to \$695 closer to the event. Ms. Azoyan asked the Board for assistance with a special project whereby they are working with the Symphony Orchestra of Armenia. Organizers wish to invite musicians, from various countries, to participate in a WCIT Orchestra through AI real time. (*ACTION*) The performance will take place during the conference opening on the 6th of October.

A video on WCIT 2019 was subsequently played for the BOD.

Mr. Sean Seah asked about group packages and it was suggested that he work with Armenia on this directly. Suggested a few speakers. High level speakers through friends, family and network. Finalize top level speakers then start marketing campaign.

Mr. Tayo Adeniyi congratulated the Armenia team on a very good program.

Ms. Chiu shared that she already provided some comments to the WCIT 2019 team on the program.

Mr. Julian David liked the focus on the history of WCIT by providing continuity and consistency between events. He said this supported a narrative that will help build momentum for future WCITs.

Mr. Alex Yesayan asked if we could talk about maintaining the platform following this WCIT event so that it could be utilized by future WCIT hosts. He suggested that we come up with methods and a budget to maintain the platform, perhaps outsourcing to a 3rd party to maintain year-to-year. They have had many potential speakers ask about the history of the WCIT (past speakers, schedule of events, etc.) so having all of this information in one platform could be useful to future hosts. (*ACTION*)

Mr. David shared that the topics are very relevant but asked if there was a single objective or theme that would tie the topics back to WITSA's core mission.

Ms. Azoyan said "*The Power of Decentralization*" was the overarching theme and the advancements of the internet meant you could be the "center" of it all without being in the Silicon Valley. The hosts would like to hear from other countries with proposed speakers from their respective regions.

Dr. Poisant stated that for many years WITSA suffered by being all over the place regarding event themes and programs. In the Netherlands, for example, the theme was focused on the global recession. This event won "event of the year" but did nothing to advance or brand WITSA. He stated that we have to come to terms with the fact that half the world isn't connected. We must pay attention to the fact that it isn't just about AI and the newest technologies, but also how to connect the next billion. This is why the WITSA mission of "*Fulfilling the Promise of Digital Age*" was developed; that is a theme that is of interest to everyone. He stated that, year in and out, we have to remain focused on the big picture: what is the role of the UN, the World Bank, the WTO, etc. The issues that most affect us, put a flag in the ground and move forward. It's easy to get lost, Dr. Poisant cautioned, so we must advance the ball forward on ICT.

Dr. Tarek Taha commended the Armenian team on a great presentation. He agreed we should explore how to deliver the information from one to Congress to the next in a mechanical way. He also echoed the comments of Dr. Poisant and said it is imperative that the WCIT is seen as one event that isn't changed every year.

Mr. Seah stated that what WITSA has with the WCIT is a contract. In Malaysia, they hosted this event in 2008, so they have a good idea what they want to do. He appreciated Dr. Poisant's help with identifying and inviting a number of VIP speakers for WCIT 2020. It's important, Seah stated, that we work as a team to help find the best speakers that truly represent what WITSA is all about.

Dr. Baltac asked if Congress organizers could put the WITSA logo on all marketing materials moving forward. (*ACTION*)

Dr. Poisant agreed that the event would be much stronger, year to year, if we had a similar brand. How does the World Bank make better investments in ICT? How does the World Economic Forum research

better? The benefit to our industry is more business if more people are connected and there are more people using and benefiting from ICT.

Mr. Seah asked if we could develop Standard Operating Procedures that would tackle handovers such as the database of attendees and exhibitors, delegates speaker database, etc. He said this would provide more continuity.

Mr. Yesayan wrapped up with conversation with a comment that there is a contract between WITSA and the WCIT host on the licensing fee but there needs to be another contract developed that addresses the standard requirements, what are the methods, and any other commitments besides the licensing fees (i.e. branding & theme requirements, etc.) (*ACTION*)

WCIT 2020

Mr. Seah thanked the group for a very productive conversation and turned to the WCIT 2020. The theme will be “*Connecting the World*”. Mr. Seah stated the hosts would like to use WCIT 2020 to connect the world and get the next billion online. The location of the WCIT 2020 is Penang, Malaysia, a culturally rich island with a population of 2 million. Many companies have their manufacturing and testing hubs in Penang, which has a highly skilled technical workforce. There is an international airport in Penang, and it is a very developed city. The venue for WCIT 2020 is the very first solar powered convention center in the world. Mr. Seah shared that while Malaysia is hosting this event, it is an event to showcase all of South East Asia. The population in Southeast Asia is 650 Million population and Malaysia is the gateway. Mr. Seah’s presentation is [available here](#).

A conversation ensued about offering ancillary B2B events in conjunction with the WCIT. In the interest of time, the discussion about WCIT 2021 and WCIT 2022 was tabled.

BREAK

11. **Standing Committee Update /Executive Committee Updates**

Finance Committee

Mr. Seah mentioned that there had already been a lengthy discussion on the financials earlier in the meeting. Currently, there was about \$745K in the bank and the Finance Committee wanted to see this fund stay in the bank account as long as possible. Mr. Seah said it is a positive thing that Dr. Poisant has the WITSA funds spread between checking, savings and two CD accounts.

Dr. Poisant said there is about 1.1 million in the account as of this date with recent licensing payments received from Malaysia and Armenia.

Global Policy Action Committee

2019 Member Survey Results

Mr. Halvorsen stated that the Committee received twenty-nine responses from 23 countries. With regard to WCIT, 2/3 of respondents stated they would be in Armenia, with over 70% sending delegations of five (5) or more. Nearly ¾ of the respondents requested group rates for delegations were requested. The number one reason for non-attendance is budgetary. One complimentary ticket for each association was requested. Nearly 2/3 of the respondents were interested in proposing speakers. Dr. Poisant asked Anders to provide Armenia with the follow up list for potential speakers. (*ACTION*)

Mr. Halvorsen continued, 93% approve of WITSA's efforts to be transparent. The website was noted as one area where improvements could be made. The members would also like to see more podcasts and group chat functions.

Digital transformation, globalization, international trade, cyber security, net neutrality and privacy were all listed as public policy topics of interest.

Mr. Halvorsen continued, less than 2/3 of WITSA's membership said they distributed the papers to their members; just over half made the papers available to their respective government agencies. Ninety percent did not pass the papers along to the press or post in the news section of their websites. However, forty percent of members felt the policy papers help to affect policy changes.

Mr. David stated, with regard to the WITSA Papers, without a global, regional, or national triggers, it is hard to get the paper the attention they deserve. He suggested WITSA link papers to specific events so stakeholders will understand how it fits. He also asked if it was possible to segment members to receive certain papers.

Mr. Halvorsen asked about the best way forward on policy projects to help with papers, stakeholders, delivery strategy, etc.

Dr. Baltac shared that he found the papers quite interesting but asked if there was a way to formalize and summarize the positions: “WITSA says....” with link to papers.

Mr. David said Big Tech has two agendas going on in EU. One, he said “WITSA should be getting involved in data privacy and security, etc.” He also said: “How do we stop US companies from dominating?” Jason Fermin (sp) has been commissioned to issue an opinion. He suggested WITSA focuses on data and not on relative size of companies or their national origin.

Dr. Baltac stated that before we decide where WITSA stands, we need to consider how our members will be affected. We live with the big tech companies, he said, and they give us lots of support. Only after very careful consideration should we consider weighing in on issues like security and privacy.

Mr. Halvorsen stated regulation may be inevitable and asked if WITSA should be at the forefront by taking a stand with regard to Big Tech and how best to address data and competition concerns. Recently, many politicians in the U.S. and elsewhere had made troubling statements about breaking up tech companies and other dubious tactics, including limiting profits. Mr. Halvorsen suggested putting together a small working group to examine limitations, strategy, etc. Mr. David said he would like to be involved in that. Mr. Halvorsen asked for others to consider such a role and advise him. (*ACTION*)

Mr. Yesayan stated there was a lot of uncertainty for companies operating in EU as there were a lot of unresolved issues regarding the implementation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making it very difficult for companies to know how to operate in compliance with said Regulation. He suggested we try to make this a priority topic for WITSA. With regard to the WCIT 2019, there were many Ministers interested in participating, and he suggested we address this topic during a Ministerial session; members were encouraged to reach out to their IT Ministers to join in on this panel to have a broader discussion on the topic. (*ACTION*)

Dr. Poisant cautioned the Board to tread lightly on this topic. He was not saying WITSA shouldn't do it but should go into this recognizing there are more challenges in this evolution/revolution that should guide this discussion.

Mr. David said Digital Trade was the most significant business item and being active here was most essential. He suggested WITSA move that up to the top priority. How to spend the money – do more convening. He asked if WITSA could actively put missions out (WTO under attack) even unexpected places, like the US, where WITSA can be involved.? Would WITSA consider sending a delegation to G20?

Dr. Baltac asked if WITSA would consider a paper on shortage of ICT professionals. In Europe, the number of ICT workers had decreased and there was currently a shortage of half a million to one million jobs in the ICT sector in Europe. WITSA should have a position paper, understood by the government, to have more ICT professionals prepared and working.

Mr. Halvorsen said this is an excellent idea, and he will look at the paper previously prepared on that topic and send to Dr. Baltac to examine whether there was a need to update it. He will work with Dr. Baltac on this. (*ACTION*)

GROUP PHOTOS

BREAK FOR LUNCH

13. Dr. Boris Komrakov Reports

Dr. Boris Komrakov provided a report on the Status on European/ Minsk, Belarus Office, the Committee on Education, Training & Human Resources and the Non-EU Regional Report.

Dr. Komrakov stated that Europe must be united. Europe is experiencing a lack of programmers and spending more than three (3) billion euros fighting youth unemployment. Dr. Komrakov shared details of his program that identified talented youth who can move from early training to early job entry. People can stay at home to do their jobs from their home. He first proposed this seven (7) years ago and thanked Dr. Poissant for accompanying him to visit the Belarus IT Minister earlier in the week. Dr. Komrakov also stressed that his program would be an important incentive for participating European ICT industry associations to join WITSA as well. Congresses, he said, are in the past and we need to find greater value propositions that give them a reason to be involved. He shared details of his 3-day workshop on From Early Training to Work. A copy of Dr. Komrakov's presentation is [available here](#).

Mr. Yesayan stated that 260 schools in Armenia are equipped with IT engineering education from the 1st grade and recently decided to employ IT engineering labs in all schools. Dr. Baltac also voiced support for the initiative and stated that numerous initiatives were already underway in Romania and elsewhere in Europe.

14. **Regional Vice Chairman Reports**

African Region

Mr. Tayo Adeniyi thanked WITSA for the opportunity to be in Belarus. With regard to the African region, instead of gaining members, the region is losing members. The major issues in Africa include the governments in Africa do not see ICT as a matter of importance because of other pressing matters like hunger, power, safety. When the world leaves 1/3 billion people behind that will be very serious, he said. So, industry is fighting hard to educate the governments while addressing the problems they think are important. Mr. Adeniyi said he wanted to plan together with WITSA to reach out to the other countries about coming along. There is no other organization that is in the forefront like WITSA. The goal is to make other countries in Africa understand how ICT is a driver for advancement.

Dr. Poisant suggested Mr. Adeniyi contact Tanzania and Ghana first. (*ACTION*) Also. He also mentioned that the regional association, AFICTA, has indicated they are ready to come on board. Also mentioned was the work WITSA is doing with the African Union may bear fruit. WITSA asked the Union to sign a simple MOU to invite each other to different events and begin a dialogue. It's a cooperative arrangement and WITSA wanted to make it very simple; WITSA is waiting patiently to sit down and begin the discussion. Mr. Adeniyi was asked to follow up with AFICTA. (*ACTION*)

Middle East/North Africa Region

No report at this time.

Caribbean Region

Ms. Poisant shared that she had been working closely with Mr. Kyle and had made some progress with re-engaging Jamaica. They also have some good leads in Trinidad and Tobago.

Europe – Non-EU Region

Previously given with Dr. Komrakov's reports.

North America Region

Dr. Poisant shared that there are only three (3) countries in this region; both the USA and Mexico have active members. Molly Poisant is exploring an alternative to ITAC who has been largely uninvolved. ITAC also serves mainly US companies doing business in Canada, so WITSA is seeking a member organization focused more on Canadian companies.

Europe – EU Region

Mr. Julian David shared that the content WITSA provides, many EU companies feel like they are getting elsewhere. Mr. David felt like this information is valuable, but some felt many companies in the EU feel they can do these things on their own. He stressed with WCIT every year there can be continuity but cautioned with WITSA, there is the perception it is an event organization.

	<p>WITSA needs to show the kind of convening power it have in the rest of the world. Mr. David committed to continuing to work on engaging potential members throughout Europe.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant previously sat on a stage with two (2) gentlemen from BITKOM (Germany), who asked why their organization was not a member of WITSA? Sometimes it is a matter of approaching multiple individuals within an organization to get the prospect involved. We want that global outreach, he said.</p> <p>Mr. Halvorsen suggested there be an opportunity to strategically invite current non-members through WITSA’s policy work and engagement. (<i>ACTION</i>)</p>
	<p>Status Taipei, Asia Pacific /Taipei, Taiwan Office</p> <p>Ms. Chiu and the team from Taiwan shared details and photos from recent visits to: ASOCIO Smart City Opening, Vietnam, the Opening Digitec Armenia, Softcon in Philippines, Japan MOU with ASOCIO, WCIT 2020 launch in Kuala Lumpur, Brunei, Belgium (Digital Europe), Malaysia, Myanmar, PIKOM Press Conference. A copy of this presentation is available here.</p> <p>Special Presentation “How WITSA Helps Emerging Economies in ICT World”</p> <p>Dr. Chin-Yeong (Colley) Hwang, Digitimes President and Chief Advisor for CIS, offered a presentation on how Taiwan started from scratch to become the ICT hub of their region. Best practices and other examples were shared during the presentation that can be viewed here.</p>

15.	<p>WITSA’s Global Outreach</p> <p>Ms. Poisant shared details on the Membership Recruitment Drive, including outreach to over two dozen associate members and new member prospects. APKIT (Russia) had re-engaged as a member in good standing. Molly Poisant and her staff are working with each Vice Chair on specific targets in each region. Since January 25, 2019, the administrative office had secured 19 payments totaling \$23,100. The goal was to get all active members to pay 2019 dues by July 31; next year, we would like to see payments made by the end of Q1.</p> <p>Dr. Komrakov reiterated that we need to offer prospective members more of a value proposition.</p> <p>The group had a short conversation about the possibility of offering additional workshops, webinars, or perhaps a 1-day meeting out from of the WCIT events that was focused on introducing prospective members to WITSA in hopes that we could convert them to new members. The group also discussed the ability to take on a second organization in a given country; in this case one country would have voting rights and the other would not.</p>
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	<p>Dr. Poisant shared that MOU’s had been signed with Inclusite, ITU and others; he is still hoping to execute an MOU with DigitalEurope. Additionally, he suggested Board Members look to economic development groups in their respective regions for potential partnerships.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>2019 ICT EXCELLENCE AWARDS/ EMINENT PERSONS</p> <p>Mr. Halvorsen asked for comments by the end of following week and then WITSA will launch the awards’ process by mid-April.</p> <p>The Selection Committee will be formed, and the awards ceremony will take place in Yerevan. Ms. Chiu asked about the possibility of covering airfare for the student winners. The WITSA office clarified that the host offers winners a complimentary registration and, three (3) nights hotel stay.</p> <p>A conversation ensued about the real value proposition to student winners is the possibility of media exposure and publicity around their award-winning technology/solution. Mr. Halvorsen said he would look for testimonials from previous award winners. <i>(ACTION)</i></p> <p>Mr. Yannis Sirros asked if we could take a moment for an item that may require a budget vote. With WCIT attendees coming from developing countries around the world, Mr. Sirros asked if it was possible for WITSA to set aside some funds to assist member delegations with attendance to WCIT 2019.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant suggested the following: WITSA will match whatever Armenia does, so for example if a delegation buys five registrations and gets one for free, WITSA will cover one additional registration fee. The Board unanimously approved this recommendation. <i>(ACTION)</i></p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Director’s Travel Financial Allotment Program – 2019</p> <p>Dr. Poisant reminded WITSA Board Members that they have a total of \$1,000 USD to be applied towards Board Meeting travel/lodging. Members should talk to Molly Poisant about their hotel bills being covered (room and tax) or a reimbursement towards their airfare.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>WITSA’S Business Excellence Certification Program</p> <p>Dr. Poisant shared details of WITSA’s newest program which is an opportunity for both WITSA and WITSA members to generate income. Companies belonging to a members’ association may apply for the (BECF) certification, and the cost per company is based on the number of employees. For example, a company with less than 10 employees would pay \$99 a year to apply for this certification. Through the online portal, which Kevin Chen in Taiwan is setting up, companies may apply. They will be required to share details on their company and secure recommendations (via a survey sent to their customers). Once a company has met the requirements, both a hard copy of the certificate, and a thumbnail badge they can place on their website, will be send to the certificate holder. The certificate is renewable on an annual basis.</p>

Kevin Chen confirmed the portal for the program will be completed and ready to launch within two (2) months (*ACTION*). Taiwan will be the first country to roll out this program.

Dr. Baltac liked the idea but asked about the possibility to make the certification valid for a term of two years; Dr. Poisant would like to keep this an annual renewal for now because of the financial implications and the need to ensure the companies are continuing to do a good job for their respective customers. Handouts on the new program were provided to the Board.

Mr. David shared that they have a similar program in place in the UK.

Those member countries interested in launching this program in their respective region should reach out to Dr. Poisant. (*ACTION*).

19. **Overview of WITSA BOD Meeting Schedule**

Dr. Poisant advised that the Fall 2019 Board Meeting will take place October 5, 2019, in connection with, the October 6-9 WCIT in Yerevan, Armenia.

The Spring 2020 meeting location is open, he said. Mr. Seah said PIKOM would like to host the Spring 2020 Board Meeting. There was a motion to hold the Spring 2020 Board meeting in Penang, Malaysia. This passed the Board unanimously.

Ms. Chiu again thanked Dr. Komrakov and his team and thanked the WITSA Board for a productive meeting. With that, she adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT