

SIRIUS aisbl. Board Meeting
October 12th 2020, 11h CEST online

Present:

Board: Lana, Thomas, Michalis, Hanna
Secretariat: Mialy, Tom, Miloš

The **aim** of the Board meeting was to discuss the roles and tasks for the Secretariat and its possible expansion given the 2021 budget possibilities/forecasts of SIRIUS aisbl.

Suggestions for tasks and roles within the Secretariat

First, Mialy gave an **overview of the suggested tasks, roles and needs** of the Secretariat. Her presentation is available upon request.

Key tasks of the Secretariat:

- Administration (including overseeing financial matters);
- Communication
- Coordination of the Board
- Strategic development, research coordination
- Monitoring and evaluation.

To be able to implement the above-mentioned tasks efficiently, the Secretariat needs to have the necessary **human resources with the following roles:**

Role	H/week	Function <i>(based on Board's questions and Mialy's clarifications during the call)</i>
Executive Director (ED)	28	Building the strategy Implementing the strategy of aisbl. Following the workplan (pursuing the part of Porticus, looking at the budget, moving on the Clear Agenda, high-level communication for Sirius 2.0, developing relationships with strategic partners, liaising with DG EAC) Overseeing financial strategy and making financial decisions
Administrator	4	Financial reporting and tracking
Communications officer (CO)	15	Following and updating SIRIUS social media, websites, newsletters Developing podcasts Performing dissemination tasks for Erasmus + and Horizon projects
Project coordinator	2.5	administering existing SIRIUS aisbl projects developing/conceptualizing new project ideas
Student intern		Supporting the above roles Expanding SIRIUS aisbl membership and bringing more diversity to the typology of members

Such changes in the Secretariat will have the following impact on the Board:

- Board takes an oversight role
- Each Board member has very specific oversight function and liaises with the ED

Risks and concerns

The Board appreciated the proposal and detailed justification for the roles, which is a great foundation for further expansion of the Secretariat. However, in the current financial context of SIRIUS aisbl, the Board expressed **the following concerns/risks**, associated with the current proposal:

- *Insufficient emphasis on financial management.* Not enough attention/resources are planned for the **financial management and financial strategy** of SIRIUS. The financial management role of the Secretariat must be emphasized – ED performing financial oversight and SIRIUS administrator (or financial officer) performing financial reporting – and proper resources have to be planned. Lana suggested that at least one day a week needs to be allocated for financial reporting. It can be performed either by administrator (who should possess necessary skills) or specifically hired financial officer.
The more projects SIRIUS aisbl is engaging into, the more financial administration workload needs to be handled. The financial officer/administrator will also need to prepare the necessary documentation/analytics for strategic financial management: assessing/planning cash flows, understanding critical months and potential need for re-distribution of funds, etc.
- *Financial system needs to be in place before SIRIUS starts hiring new staff.* The current proposal for the expansion of the Secretariat implies employing different types of staff with different contractual obligations towards them. This means that SIRIUS has to have transparent planning of cash flows (based on 2020/2021 overall budget forecasts), financial reporting system (e.g., timesheets tracking), filing and accounting process established. In this light, the first steps (before hiring any new employees) need to be taken:
 - Discussion on the strategy for the financial management (Secretariat to propose, Board to discuss and advise)
 - Transfer 2021 budget to a cash flow
 - Thinking through all the procedures on timesheets, filing, accountant encoding
 - Overview of different types of rates on different projects (Erasmus and H2020) – and how the funding and financial reporting rules for each project fits into our financial strategy.
 - As an alternative to a full-time employee and an emergency solution for lack of HR needs, there can be a possibility to contract professionals for specific tasks (short-term).
 - Consulting a financial professional on setting up the initial financial management system for SIRIUS. Secretariat to identify relevant professionals to consult.
- *Resources planned for communication officer (4 days per week) are excessive and can be re-allocated to the ED and financial officer/admin.* Lana suggested to disaggregate 2021 budget looking into more details at staff costs and roles (in dissemination activities) planned under each project. This should serve as the basis for estimation and calculation on how much time of Communication officer can be covered from projects and how much need to be added from core funding.
- *More clarity on tasks for each suggested role and financial resources (optimistic and pessimistic scenario) allocated for each role is needed.*

Agreed next steps:

- Mialy to prepare more detailed matrix of roles vs tasks/functions vs financial resources needed/planned.
- Mialy to transfer 2021 budget into a cashflow.
- Board to prepare the ED position description with details list of tasks/functions.