



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

**Minutes of the Board of Governors
Held on 30 September 2019 at the Aga Khan Centre
Meeting No. 09/19**

Governors Present: Professor Afzal Ahmed
Dr Aziz Esmail
Dr Mohamed Keshavjee
Mr Naguib Kheraj
Mr Zauhar Meghji

Governors Absent: Dr Shafik Sachedina

Quorum present: Yes

Others present: Dr Farhad Daftary (permanent guest)
Mrs Selina Ramji (permanent guest)
Mr Shams Vellani (permanent guest)

Others absent: Mr Aryn Kassim-Lakha (permanent guest)

The meeting was called to order at 2.30pm

Minutes of Meeting No. 08/19, held on 2nd September 2019, were approved as submitted.

1. Conflicts of interest

- 1.1 It was noted there were no conflicts of interest arising from matters to be discussed.

2. Co-Director's Report

- 2.1 The Co-Director's report for September 2019 was considered.
- 2.2 Dr Daftary noted that that IIS was co-organising a conference, with the Oriental Institute in St. Petersburg, to honour the late Wladimir Ivanow. Dr Daftary will be attending the conference. The Central Asian Study Unit was working with the Department of Communications and Development to agree a communications plan for the conference.
- 2.3 Dr Daftary informed the governors that Dr Tullio Lobetti has been appointed as Head of the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Unit. In addition, Mira Skura has been appointed as the interim Head of Finance.
- 2.4 It was noted that the recent ITREB members training programme had been generally well-received and Dr Aziz Esmail's session had been particularly valued by the participants. The governors noted that it was important to ensure that speakers that we put forward are made aware of the needs of non-academic audience they are addressing.

- 2.5 With regard to the proposed key activities for 2020, the following comments were made: (1) it would be helpful to know if any current programmes or projects are not continuing; (2) staffing and financial implications should be included; (3) there are several IIS-wide initiatives, such as Language Policy, and the proposed new Research Governance Framework, which need to be captured; and (4) a proposal should be submitted for the proposed oral history project.
3. Central Asian Studies Unit - Department of Academic Research and Publications (DARP CASU) – Updated Impact Analysis and Collaboration note
- 3.1 The submissions from DARP CASU were considered.
- 3.2 Our goal should be to promote Ismaili studies, access to and study of Ismaili related manuscripts held in Russian institutions and other IIS goals such as pluralism.
- 3.3 It was noted that IIS-CASU publications are filling a gap in both the Russian and Tajik contexts.
- 3.4 It was noted that we need to increase awareness of our publications which are currently driven by book launches. We should be pushing much harder for an online presence, either through the IIS website or search engines in the Russian context.
- 3.5 It was noted that DARP CASU has done a good job over the past 10 years in positioning knowledge about Ismailis in Russia and Tajikistan in Russian and Tajik. It would have been helpful to have seen a reflective piece in the report on DARP CASU's experience over the last decade – what could we have done differently, what would we change, keep the same, etc.
- 3.6 With regard to the proposed suggestions for moving forward, it would be helpful to prioritise these and assess if any additional resources are required.
- 3.7 We should also consult with the University of Central Asia who have established academic partnerships in the region.
4. Proposal for an IIS wide Research Governance Framework (RGF)
- 4.1 The submission was considered.
- 4.2 The governors agreed that we should develop a formal Research Governance Framework for the IIS. The proposed composition of the working group comprising Dr Shainool Jiwa, Dr Tullio Lobetti, Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda, Dr Amier Saidula and Tara Woolnough was approved.
5. IIS and Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) – Collaboration on Educational Materials
- 5.1 The submission was considered and it was noted that use of AKTC cultural materials in IIS' educational materials was extremely important. The governors were pleased to see the proposed initiatives.
- 5.2 We should explore whether and how the Department of Curriculum Studies (DCS) can contribute to the educational mandate of the AKTC, and in particular, the work the Aga Khan Museum is doing with children and adult education.
6. Department of Academic Research and Publications-Constituency Studies Unit (DARP-CSU) – Briefing note on *Salat al-Istiqā*
- 6.1 The submission from DARP-CSU was considered.

6.2 It was noted that this was original ground-breaking work.

7. Any other business

7.1 Procedures around how to treat cases of plagiarism should be reviewed and tightened – There must be zero tolerance to plagiarism.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.

Selina K Ramji
IIS Board Secretary
October 2019