

# International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science IFBLS

## ANNUAL AND PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2018 - 2019



IFBLS Board of Directors  
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## Board of Directors

IFBLS is governed by a Board of Directors, comprising of the President, President-Elect and Past President (Management Committee) and five Board Members, elected by the members at the biennial IFBLS General Assembly of Delegates.

IFBLS Board of Directors 2018 - 2020 were elected in Florence, Italy, September 2018.

Anne Lindgren Berndt, Sweden  
Alan Wainwright, United Kingdom  
Marie Nora Roald, Norway  
Bert Asbild, Denmark  
Anselm Akume Ewang, Cameroon  
Leila Florento, Philippines  
Hironori Katayama, Japan  
Cathy Otto, USA

President  
President-Elect  
Past President  
Board Member  
Board Member  
Board Member  
Board Member  
Board Member



Left to right: Cathy, Anselm, Marie, Anne, Alan, Bert, Leila, and Hironori.

## Executive Administrator

Ms. Janie Hames

Since 2018, Ms. Janie Hames has been Executive Administrator for IFBLS. During this time Janie has attended the World Congress in Florence and two Board meetings (in Florence and in London). She has provided great support to the Management Committee, Board members and IFBLS Chief Delegates and the member associations. The IFBLS office organization, including bookkeeping, banking and financial reporting as well as communication have been revised, updated and further developed. IFBLS is ready for modern times.

The Management Body is most satisfied with the excellent competences and social skills Janie has brought to IFBLS.

IFBLS also wishes to extend our gratitude to CSMLS for hosting the office and for including Janie.



## *IFBLS Mission Statement*

*To increase recognition and contributions  
of Biomedical Laboratory Science to  
improve global health.*

## IFBLS Objectives

- To support, advance and promote good scientific laboratory practice through the development and adherence to high quality standards in diverse environments throughout the world;
- To support and promote education and advancement of science and technology in the professional development of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists;
- To support, advance and promote ethical and professional values in Biomedical Laboratory Science;
- To facilitate the exchange of ideas through development of partnerships within the global healthcare community.

IFBLS Mission Statement and Objectives were revised and approved by the IFBLS Board of Directors in March 2019.

IFBLS Board of Directors are guided by the IFBLS By-laws and Procedure manual.

At the first board meeting in 2018, the Strategic Plan, outlining main goals and tasks was set up for 2018-2022. The plan was followed up and revised at the board meeting in London 2019.

The Strategic Plan is linked closely with the Mission and Objectives. Tasks are set up for each goal in the plan.

Please refer to the Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023 for details.

In addition to the tasks mentioned in the Strategic Plan, IFBLS also follow up tasks outlined in our By-laws and as required by our members.

## Topic

- Promote the profession
- IFBLS World Congress
- WHO Collaboration
- Promote professional standards
- Education and professional development

## Goal

- IFBLS is the global voice of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists
- The IFBLS Congress is prestigious; to host, to contribute and to attend
- IFBLS influence global health policies
- IFBLS provides support to the Biomedical Laboratory Scientist community
- IFBLS advances Biomedical Laboratory Science professionals

# Management Committee

The Management Committee is comprised of the three officers of the Corporation. The Management Committee makes day-to-day decisions regarding the management and administration of IFBLS.

The Management Committee is led by the President, Anne Lindgren Berndt. Members are President-Elect Alan Wainwright and Past President Marie Nora Roald.



## Report

The Management Committee conducts most of the tasks by regular e-mail communication and web meetings. Skype for Business has been used for digital meetings, almost on a weekly basis, in order to keep up with day-to-day issues and tasks.



In January 2019, the Management Committee met in Hamilton, Canada at the IFBLS office. During the days the tasks and meetings for 2019 were discussed and planned. Also meetings at HSBC, the IFBLS bank, were held in order to conveniently set up President-Elect Alan Wainwright and President Anne Lindgren Berndt as signatories.

The IFBLS Board of Directors has had one meeting in March 2019 and will meet before and after the CD meeting and Alternate GAD in Brisbane in September 2019. Having two physical meetings per year requires continuous e-mail communication within the committees as well as within the board, and tasks and deadlines have therefore to be realistically set.



Members of IFBLS are invited to submit a Chief Delegate report annually. All members input for further activities are collected and followed up on. Many of these provide input for the discussions and workshops held during CD meetings and Open Forums.

The Management Committee has received several invitations to participate and send greetings to national member association events. All invitations have been followed up and greetings have been sent in reply to requests.



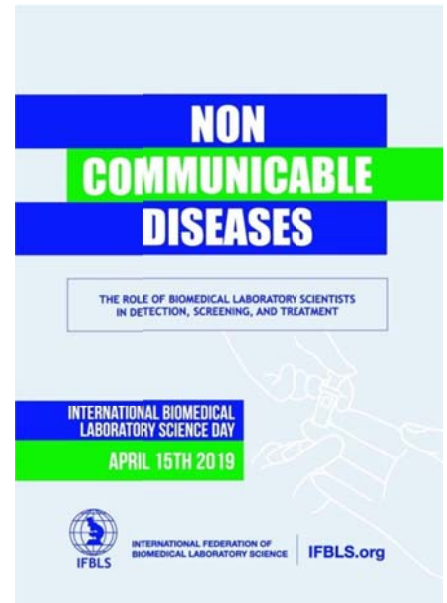
The topic for BLS Day 2019 and 2020 is "Non-Communicable Diseases - The role of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists in Detection, Screening and Treatment".

On 15 April, President Anne Lindgren Berndt was invited by EPBS's President Fernando Mendes to give a statement on Biomedical



Laboratory Scientist's role regarding diagnosis and treatment of Non-Communicable diseases, through digital link at the BLS Day celebration at the Coimbra Health School, Portugal.

Anne wrote an article for the journals of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish member associations on the same topic, highlighting the importance of international cooperation within the profession.



The Membership Committee is led by Past President Marie Nora Roald, with Board Members Bert Asbild and Anselm Akume Ewang.

## Report

### **New member applications for approval**

At this time, there are no new membership applications for approval.

### **Membership renewals 2019**

IFBLS now has 36 paid member associations, in 32 countries, representing approximately 185,000 members worldwide.

The membership status for Russia and Thailand has been revised on the IFBLS website to Lapsed Member.

Portugal and Uganda unfortunately failed to pay their membership dues both in 2018 and 2019 and have been removed as members from the IFBLS website.

### **Implementation of suspension**

Members who fail to pay their membership fee are placed under suspension until the time they reinstate their membership. Suspension means they lose their rights to nominations, voting, apply for awards, to host meetings, to have members in the Scientific Network of Experts or to claim the IFBLS member congress fee.

### **Recruitment of new members**

Four associations have been in contact with the IFBLS office and have been sent membership application forms and more information. The office has received one member application, but additional documentation is still required.

Additionally, our Executive Administrator has had many inquiries from individuals usually inquiring about student membership, or volunteer opportunities, or IFBLS award information. These inquiries are generally referred back to their national association for more information on their student membership or volunteer opportunities.

As we know the personal touch with colleagues from other countries appears to be the best way to increase membership, we encourage all IFBLS members to use the opportunity to profile IFBLS membership when meeting with non-member associations who are eligible for membership.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marie Nora Roald  
Chair, Membership Committee

The Scientific Committee is led by Board Member Cathy Otto, with Board Members Hironori Katayama and Leila Florento.

## Report

### Advisory Group in Microbiology

The Chair has met via telephone with Chair of the Advisory Group, Pat Tille. Group has identified authors and topics for three papers to be submitted to our journal for a themed issue: Sepsis

1. Definition of sepsis (overview, incidence, criteria, types, etc.)
2. Clinical and laboratory diagnosis (microbiology focus - manual to direct)
3. Biomarkers (cytokines, procalcitonin, microbial markers)

Group is working on identifying topics for lectures and workshops for the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.

### Patient Safety Position Paper

The Chair has requested member organizations to share their position papers on Patient Safety. Four associations submitted their position paper.

1. Review and compilation of member association Patient Safety position papers.
2. Draft position paper is in process.

### Other Position Papers

Considering sending a survey to member associations requesting input as to other position papers that would be of benefit to them.

Potential future position paper to be considered is workforce shortage.

## IJBLS Development

Working with the Microbiology Advisory Committee to identify the theme, topics and potential authors for a Microbiology themed issue.

Sorting through the abstracts from the 2018 World Congress in preparation of the abstracts in an issue of the journal.

Collecting qualifications requirements for editorial board for other journals to consider using for our journal.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Otto  
Chair, Scientific Committee

The Development Committee is led by Board Member Anselm Akume Ewang, with President-Elect Alan Wainwright and Board Member Bert Asbild.

## Report

The Development Committee activities are still on-going based on what were identified in the 2018-2020 development plan.

The Operational planning 2018-2022 has identified the following as main themes of work:

1. Review of the functions of the Development Committee
2. Communicating between members
3. Student engagement in the IFBLS General Assembly of Delegates and World Congress
4. ISCO classification and supporting statement
5. Recognition of Biomedical Laboratory Scientist as the preferred title

A summary of the work since the last two board meetings of September 2018 and March 2019 are stated as follows:

### Review of the Functions of the Development Committee

Functions are described in section 8.6 of the IFBLS Procedure Manual. Committee will review this and make recommendations to reflect current and future areas of responsibility within the IFBLS strategy.

### Communicating between members

Ideas to improve communications between members were discussed as a workshop in Florence. The outcomes of this were reviewed by Committee and it was agreed that the current communication channels provided a suitable platform for members but the benefits/opportunities this brings could be highlighted more clearly to members.

Committee also considered a proposal by the Chair for the use of branded communication amongst the IFBLS Board of Directors but it was agreed that in order to ensure cohesion this would not be appropriate. All communications are currently channelled through the IFBLS Executive Administrator and considered by the Management Committee to ensure response and actions were appropriate to the work of the Board of Directors.

### **Student engagement in the World Congress**

Outcomes of the student forum at the World Congress in Florence were considered together with a proposal from the IFBLS 2018 Student Forum for future developments and engagement of students, and ways IFBLS can build on their vision. Committee recommended to the Board that the Development Committee should continue to work on a structure to support this process. Bert Asbild will share with the Copenhagen Organizing Committee as it develops the Student Forum for Congress 2020.

### **ISCO classification and supporting statement**

It was noted that although the reclassification of ISCO groups is being delayed, further work by the IFBLS can be completed with regard to describing professions in Biomedical Laboratory Science on this (this relates to work for the IDBLSE and recognising Biomedical Laboratory Scientist as our preferred title). Alan Wainwright will continue to lead on this work.

### **Recognition of Biomedical Laboratory Scientist as the preferred title**

The challenges of recognizing Biomedical Laboratory Scientist as our international title will be discussed and the political implications considered in the context of raising our profile and ability to influence national policies. Recommendations will be made to the Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anselm Akume Ewang  
Chair, Development Committee

The Awards Committee is led by Leila Florento, with Board Members Cathy Otto and Hironori Katayama.

## Report

Guidelines for the Awards Committee were reviewed and approved during the meeting in London, March 2019. Dates set for announcements for 2020 Congress in Denmark.

### List of Awards - 2020 Congress in Denmark:

1. Nordic Award - 15,000 Swedish Crowns (may be given up to 2 with 15,000 Swedish Crowns each).
2. JAMT Award - 200,000 JPY (may be given up to 2 with 100,000 each).
3. Good Poster Award - ASCLS will award the best three (3) posters and normally consists of a gift.
4. DVTA Continuing Education Award - 1,200 EURO (may be given up to 2 with 600 EURO each)
5. KAMT Young Scientist Award - \$2,000 USD total - (1) young scientist winner \$1,000 USD and medal - and (2) \$500 USD each.
6. JSHT Award - \$300 US and the fee of an article for magazine of JSHT.
7. TMER Award - confirmed for 2019 Overseas Training Project
8. Elisabeth Pletscher award - IFBLS Board will choose awardee (plaque and certificate).
9. IFBLS Student Award - \$1500.00 USD
10. Past President Award - plaque or work of art
11. Outstanding Oral Presenter - plaque and certificate

Plan with Congress Scientific Committee for announcements

- Mechanics for Student Award revised
- Judging mechanics for oral and poster presentation for 2020 Congress revised

Respectfully submitted,  
Leila Florento  
Chair, Awards Committee



## WHO Executive Board Meeting

The IFBLS - WHO collaboration report 2016-2018 and the proposal for new workplan 2019 - 2021 was submitted and IFBLS' status as Non-State Actor - (NSA) in official relations with WHO was renewed during the WHO Executive Board meeting in January 2019. Four statements from IFBLS were submitted and accepted (topics were NCD, AMR, elimination of cervical cancer and human resources).



President-Elect Alan Wainwright gave the statement on NCD and Biomedical Laboratory Scientist's role and the WHO video clip was shared on IFBLS's Facebook page.

The additional statements are included in the WHO EB meeting documents.

IFBLS's Designated Technical Officer Adriana Velazquez-Berumen held a meeting for Non-State Actors - (NSA) during the Executive Body meeting and one central topic was identification of potential collaboration constellations between NSA in order to generate good synergies. Adriana also encouraged IFBLS to participate in an open meeting regarding the Essential List of Diagnostics (EDL) in March.





IFBLS Board Member Leila Florento and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization, at the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, October 2018

## World Health Assembly 2019

Due to time restraints and other commitments, IFBLS did not attend the 2019 WHA.

## Open meetings and Work groups

### SAGE IVD

WHO has established a Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on In Vitro Diagnostics (SAGE IVD), acting as advisory body to matters of global policies and strategies related to in vitro diagnostics (IVDs). Past President Marie Nora Roald attended the Open Meeting in the SAGE IVD held at WHO in March.

An *Essential Diagnostics List* (EDL) has been set up and is intended to provide evidence-based guidance and set a reference for the development or update of national lists of essential in vitro diagnostic tests. IFBLS has provided input to the formation of this working group and provide input to the revision of the EDL.

### Cervical Cancer Elimination

IFBLS was represented by Gabriella Lillsunde Larsson from Sweden at the WHO workgroup WebEx meeting on Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative (CCEI).

The purpose of the groups are; to develop technical package for the management of invasive cervical cancer including diagnosis, staging, treatment, survivorship and palliative care; to support implementation of activities for improvement and scaling up of cervical cancer management starting with priority UNGJP countries; and to contribute to other working groups (e.g. research, monitoring and surveillance, advocacy, etc.) to reflect the elements of management of invasive cervical cancer in their outcomes.

From the working groups call summary, the following was addressed/ discussed:

- Basic histopathology capacity (H&E staining) is required for confirmation of cervical cancer diagnosis.
- Achieving as rapid as possible specimen turn-around time should be aimed at.
- Major barriers are lack of adequate infrastructure, sufficient and skilled human resources (education, training, certification), and low productivity due to all above and, additionally, suboptimal work organization.

Strategies for capacity building of pathology health workforce:

- Use of telepathology to assist with difficult lesions or differential diagnosis.
- Task-shifting (e.g. technical staff can be trained to do initial triage of specimens and with shorter period of training).

Two distinct approaches for local training:

1. Volunteer staff from HICs to assist with case load and improving efficiency.
  2. To train local staff by sending them abroad and arranging participation in major pathology professional society meetings.
- Providing physical resources such as book, manuals, etc.
  - Certified online training programmes with obtaining digital certificates (challenge: the issue of recognition of certificates locally).
  - Setting up a national programme for specialist training is a good long-term strategy, however, the challenges are that it is costly, requires time and certain level of local expertise. Example of Zambia, where national training was set in 2011.
  - Before initiating national training, it is important to conduct thorough assessment of existing resources and infrastructure, so that graduates have a place to practice once qualified (e.g., guarantee a position).
  - The weakest link between each step should be examined to improve turn-around time and better equip them with essential resources. The most common weakest link is related to issues with central procurement.
  - A holistic approach is needed to strengthen pathology service, with pathology workforce capacity building and investment in infrastructure, based on the country needs and reflected in national policies.

Next steps include sharing existing resources and best practices.

The annual membership fees and the biennial world congress fee fund IFBLS's activities. The financial situation is stable, but due to increasing costs, the Board of Directors suggested during the Chief Delegates meeting Florence 2018 to look into increase of membership fees.

A proposal will be presented to the Chief Delegates for discussion.



In 2017, IFBLS received a donation from the estate of Britta Karlsson, a former IFBLS member. Ms. Karlsson was a longtime supporter of IFBLS, education and internationalization for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists.

The donation has been invested as the Britta Karlsson Fund.

## **Britta Karlsson Advancement Program**

The annual profit from the Britta Karlsson Fund will finance the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.

The program is aimed for IFBLS member associations, primarily from Low-and Middle-Income Economy Countries (LMICs), to sponsor an international lecturer to travel and share their knowledge in a workshop or similar event as outlined in the criteria.

The purpose is to promote the education and professional advancement of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists (BLS), and to provide updated information for BLS in specialized fields (e.g. clinical chemistry, clinical microbiology, clinical hematology, clinical immunology, etc.)

## Scientific Network of Experts

The Scientific Network of Experts was set up in 2018, and currently approximately 28 experts are registered in the Network, covering a wide variety of specialties and from nine different countries / member associations.

The Network will be used for a variety of tasks, primarily providing input to IFBLS work related to the WHO, IJBLs and providing experts for the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.

## IJBLs

The International Journal of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IJBLs) was launched 2010 and is hosted by Taiwan Society of Laboratory Medicine (TSLM). Professor Chuan-Liang Kao has been Editor in Chief since the launch.

During the World Congress in Florence IFBLS met with Professor Kao to discuss how to strengthen the journal with a new editorial board, more peer reviewers and how to encourage authors to submit articles.

## E-learning

IFBLS e-Learning modules are produced for IFBLS by JAMT, Japanese Association of Medical Technologists.

Two new topics were presented in 2018: Risk Management and Infection Control.

All e-Learning modules can be accessed from our website [www.ifbls.org](http://www.ifbls.org)

## Website

The IFBLS website is updated regularly in order to provide relevant information and news, supported by a newsletter to member associations four times per year.

## Social Media

The IFBLS Facebook page keeps increasing its number of followers, being the communication channel that reaches the largest number of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists. The Facebook page is IFBLS's platform for interactions of both formal and informal aspects, sharing information but also creating interest in IFBLS and the profession we represent, as well as inspiration to become involved in the associations, globally or nationally.

## Newsletter

The web page and the regular member emails are supported by a newsletter to member associations four times per year. This is short information on news and upcoming events in a format that can be shared.



The IFBLS World Congress is the biennial event where Biomedical Laboratory Scientists worldwide meet, present our scientific work and learn more about Biomedical Laboratory Science globally. This is an opportunity to find out about our cultural differences and professional contexts and realize that our similarities are stronger than differences.

The World Congresses are organized by IFBLS member associations. This contributes to the variations between the congresses, which are also part of the charm. All input from congress participants is taken to heart, documented and discussed by the Board of Directors. Important issues and aspects are forwarded to the organizer of the upcoming congress, in order to assure continuous improvements. The Congress Guidelines will be revised if experiences from the congress demonstrates a need to make clarifications.

## IFBLS World Congress 2018

The 33rd World Congress was held in Florence, Italy 22-26 September 2018, and hosted by *Associazione Nazionale Tecnici Sanitari di Laboratorio Biomedico*, ANTel. The theme of the congress was E-health, Gender Medicine, Personalised Medicine and Biomedical Laboratory Science. The congress had almost 700 participants from more than 50 different countries. 22 sessions, 6 plenary lectures, 36 lectures were spread over the five days, as well as a substantial poster session, student forum, laboratory visit and social events.

IFBLS organised two workshops during the congress; *Future trends in Biomedical Laboratory Science - Where are we heading and how to take command?* and *Discussing Ethical Dilemmas using Reflection Model*.

The IFBLS Congress 2018 congress succeeded in gathering Biomedical Laboratory Scientists from around the world, and at the same time giving the participants a flavor of the host country, Italy.

## IFBLS World Congress 2020

The 2020 World Congress, *Join the Lab Race* is hosted by the Danish member association Danske Bioanalytikere (dbio) in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1-5 September. The program is divided into four tracks focusing on what is the latest within Biomedical Laboratory Science, related sciences and where will the Biomedical Laboratory Scientist be in 2020 and beyond.

We are sure the congress will fulfill all our dreams.



## Future Congresses

Bids for future congresses are welcomed at any time.

It takes member association support for the congresses to continue being the global meeting point for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists where scientific work is shared, networking done and inspiration for the future is generated.

IFBLS collaborates with numerous organizations for mutual benefits.



**World Health Organization (WHO).** The World Health Organization (WHO) is the global guardian of public health. The goal at the World Health Organization (WHO) is to build a better, healthier future for people all over the world. Working through offices in more than 150 countries, WHO Secretariat staff work side by side with governments and other partners to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people. IFBLS is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in official relations with the WHO.



**Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI).** IFBLS has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CLSI for many years. This agreement is used to build collaborative endeavors

based on mutual interests. The main goal is to use each other's strengths to further promote the development and dissemination of globally applicable consensus standards and guidelines to further education of Biomedical Science and healthcare professionals.



**European Association for Professions in Biomedical Science (EPBS).**

IFBLS has had a MOU with EPBS since 2012. We recognize that IFBLS has a global focus, while EPBS has an European focus. Both organizations prepare various policy documents; this is an area we will work together, when appropriate. Both organizations promote each other.



**International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA).** IFBLS has

had a MOU with IFBA since 2014. Each organization will promote the activities of the other when appropriate. Policy documents can be shared, when applicable. At conferences, we could utilize the expertise from each organization for educational purposes. We may collaborate on projects of mutual interest.



**International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).** The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is an international classification for which the International Labour Organization (ILO) is responsible. ISCO is a tool for organizing jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job. IFBLS has established a task force with the aim to achieve correct classification for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists, in ISCO Group 2 professionals.



**International Organization for Standardization (ISO).** ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 162 national standards bodies. Through its members, ISO brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges. IFBLS is a Category A liaison to ISO/TC 212 - Clinical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems.

## IFBLS wishes to extend our gratitude to

- Associazione Nazionale Tecnici Sanitari di Laboratorio Biomedico, ANTel for hosting the IFBLS World Congress 2018.
- Australian Institute of Medical Scientists (AIMS) for sponsoring the Chief Delegates Meeting and Alternate GAD 2019.
- Danske Bioanalytikere (dbio), in process to host the IFBLS World Congress 2020.
- All IFBLS member associations and Chief Delegates for your trust and support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Lindgren Berndt  
IFBLS President 2018 - 2020



The International Federation of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IFBLS) is an independent non-governmental association of national societies in 32 countries, representing more than 185,000 biomedical laboratory scientists and technologists worldwide