

General Assembly of the ISBT 2023

Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023

Location: Swedish Congress and Convention Centre (Svenske Mässan),
Gothenburg, Sweden

Time: 17.30 – 18.30 CEST

1. Welcome

Attendees were welcomed to the ISBT General Assembly 2023 by Michael Busch (MB), ISBT President. The ISBT Executive Committee introduces themselves. MB thanked everyone for attending it and highlighted that the meeting was quorate (>2% of the membership) with 78 attendees, so the General Assembly could go ahead, and that the results of the voting would be valid.

2. Minutes of the ISBT General Assembly held June 7, 2022

The minutes from the last General Assembly (June 7, 2022) and the 2022-2023 annual report been previously shared with the members. The motion to accept the minutes was proposed by Miquel Lozano and seconded by Justina Kordai Ansah. The majority of the members present voted to accept the minutes.

3. Report of ISBT President – Michael Busch (MB)

MB summarised the ISBT strategic goals for 2019-24. The ISBT Board held an interim strategy review in Amsterdam in June 2022, in light of the challenges faced since 2019 due to the pandemic. It was decided that whilst the goals remain the same, the means of achieving them have had to be adapted. It was noted that despite the difficulties of not being able to meet in person the output and success of the ISBT Working Parties (WPs) has been outstanding.

MB highlighted some ISBT activities during 2022-23: there have been 13 educational events in eight countries supported by the ISBT Academy. ISBT has had active collaborations with MoU societies (AABB, AfSBT, ABHH, ICCBBA (new MoU), and others), and an ongoing collaboration with Systematic Reviews Initiative (SRI) including Transfusion Round-ups for ISBT members. ISBT has maintained a close relationship with WHO as a Non-state Actor, and the work includes Clinical Transfusion WP working on Clinical Use of Blood, the Haemovigilance WP creating Haemovigilance tools hosted on the ISBT website and support for World Blood Donor Day 2022 (at launch and online). A major project with WHO in 2022-23 has been undertaken by the ISBT Global Blood Safety WP with the launch of the International Coalition for Safe Plasma Proteins (ICSPP) hosted within ISBT. ISBT signed an MoU with WHO in August 2022 in relation to and ICSPP's support for the WHO Achilles project to increase access to PDMPs in LMIC. The ICSPP is led by ISBT in collaboration with International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations (FIODS), World Haemophilia Federation (WHF) and International Patient Organisation for Primary Immunodeficiencies (IPOPI), and associate partners International Plasma and Fractionation Association (IPFA) and Plasma Proteins Therapeutics Association (PPTA).

The new e-learning platform and Transfusion reactions e-learning module has been launched and it is open access for all now, with registration via the ISBT website. The Cellular Therapies WP hosted the first ISBT in person meeting in the form of a hybrid workshop on Eye Drops of Human Origin, in Vienna in May 2022.

The 37th International Congress of the ISBT planned in Kuala Lumpur in June 2022 had to be cancelled due to the pandemic and risks associated with international travel. The congress was held on-line as ISBT 2022 and was still a successful congress with 1186 registrations from 81 countries. The live virtual congress took place over extended days to accommodate, as far as possible, different time zones. All scientific content was displayed on demand until the end of August 2022. Another virtual activity linked to a cancelled congresses (Brisbane 2021) was the Haemovigilance webinar series in August and September 2022.

As of March 2023, there were 1627 individual members and 30 affiliated societies of ISBT. ISBT's reach is extending with around 10,500 ISBT "active contacts" through email and social media and 10,000 SRI contacts receive ISBT "round-up". In 2022-2023 ISBT was supported by 15 Corporate Partners.

4. Report of the Secretary - General Gwen Clarke (GC)

GC presented a graph tracking individual membership which had dipped over the pandemic but is now recovering. *Vox Sanguinis* had a very successful year in 2022-2023 with the move to 12 issues per year and a new look and feel. *Vox* remains a "hybrid" journal, subscription based but with some open access articles. The *Vox Sanguinis* Best Paper Prize 2021 (awarded in June 2022) was given to Davison KL, Reynolds CA, Andrews N, Brailsford SR, Group UKBDSS for the paper "Blood donation by men who have sex with men: using evidence to change policy".

Gwen showed a list 15 Working Parties and their chairpersons and details of the 13 ISBT Academy events that the ISBT Foundation has supported in 2022-23.

5. Report of the Treasurer - Eric Jansen (EJ)

EJ presented the finance report outlining the financial highlights of 2022-23. He mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine war had an impact on the ISBT finances. The total income was €300K lower than 2021-22 mainly because of the virtual congress in 2022 instead of face-to-face. The total financial result is negative €383K and we budgeted already a negative result of €207K to allow for investment in education, e-learning and supporting work towards the BGA database. However, the overall result across the three years of the pandemic (2020-23) is still positive: +€95K, and €478K were donated to the Foundation. The donation to the Foundation is intended to support educational events, mainly in LMIC, via the ISBT Academy and ICSP project with WHO. The expenditure related to the Blood Group Allele (BGA) Database is an investment for the society. The group who will finalise the database has been selected and it is expected to be available by the beginning of next year. Nevertheless, the total equity (accumulated surplus) in the society is still very healthy: €2.243K. This is a contingency to support the society in the next years in case of any unexpected expenses or loss of income. For example, as we move *Vox Sanguinis* more toward open access this could represent a lower income than what initially budgeted. Corporate Partnership income increased as did income from advertisements in the

Transfusion Today magazine and Newsletters. Interest rates in the Netherlands are no longer negative so a small amount of interest was received as was an annual donation from ICCBBA.

The congress income is very important and is expected to recover in the coming years. The members benefits have associated costs. The staff / office expenses increased in 2022-2023, in part due to investment in new IT. Travel costs for the first face-to-face meeting of the Board since 2019, held in Amsterdam in June 2022, were high. There were some income tax expenses. In the past we automatically donated any surplus at the end of each year to the ISBT Foundation without incurring income tax. The decision has been taken to instead keep any surplus within ISBT, to take forward the society's strategy, and to pay any tax due.

In summary, there is a negative result of about €382K for 2022-2023, but the accumulated surplus is still healthy.

EJ asked if there were questions regarding the financial statement – no questions were asked. A recommendation to accept the financial statement was proposed by Katy Veale and seconded by Leo van de Watering. The majority of the members present voted to accept the financial statement.

6. Proposal for membership fees

EJ suggested that the membership fees for 2023-2024 should not be increased. The motion to not change the membership fees for 2023-24 was proposed by Helen Haysom and seconded by Martin Smid. The majority of the members present voted to accept no change to the membership fee.

7. New Judith Chapman Award

GC announced the ISBT Board decision in 2022-23 to establish a new award in honour of the Society's first Executive Director, Judith Chapman, reflecting Judith's passion for mentoring and professional development particularly in the fields of leadership and management. The award would include fees for a leadership/management course up to €7,500, 1-year membership of ISBT (if not already a member) and

complimentary attendance at an ISBT congress. Transfusion professionals in a leadership role at an early stage of their career (5-10 years' experience), will be eligible for nomination by an ISBT member. Nominees need not be a current ISBT member. To be awarded biennially at the ISBT International congress, from 2024.

8. Retiring Working Party chairpersons and Standing Committee members

GC thanked the retiring WP chairpersons, Christine Lomas-Francis (Rare Donors WP) and Martin Smid (Global Blood Safety WP) for all their hard work and leadership.

9. Any other business

MB asked if there were any other business. Jo Wiersum asked what the Society could do to reduce its carbon footprint in view of climate change. MB said that we need to discuss which activities we could do to achieve it. Jenny White (JW) said that it is in our strategic plan, and we are making gradual changes. This year we chose a very eco-friendly congress venue in Gothenburg. The production of *Vox Sanguinis*

has now moved to the UK, reducing the carbon footprint of the journal by 42%, and there are plans to go to on-line only for both the journal and Transfusion Today magazine. There was a question on how many delegates are in Gothenburg, the exact number will be announced during the closing ceremony, but the current count is a close to 2000. There were no other questions.

10. Announcement of the date of the next General Assembly

The next General Assembly is planned to take place on Wednesday June 26, 2024, in Barcelona, Spain. There will be WP meetings on Sunday instead of Saturday, with the main programme running Monday – Thursday. MB mentioned that more information will be shared at the closing ceremony of ISBT Gothenburg 2023. He added that abstract submission for the Cape Town congress is already open and by the end of the year, it will be open for the 2024 International congress in Barcelona.

11. Close of meeting

MB thanked the members present for attending, proposing, seconding and voting.