

**INSeCT – Development and Outreach:**

**Towards a Strategic Plan  
Minutes and Progress Report  
Rome Steering Committee Meeting  
Rome Apr 29-May 4, 2019**

**F. Beginning to Develop INSeCT Strategic Plan**

**A. Representing and Building Links for INSeCT at Continental Meetings**

**B. Outreach (Website/Social Media, Newsletter etc.)**

**C. Future Steering Committee Communication and Meetings**

**D. Any Other Business**

This document contains most of our discussions and decisions from June 2018 with regard to developing and enhancing INSeCT's mission.

## **F. Beginning to Develop a Strategic Plan for INSeCT's Future**

### **1. INSeCT's Mission and Priorities**

#### **a. Synodal Function**

- **We spoke about INSeCT fulfilling a synodal function etc. 'Connecting Catholic Theology Worldwide', promoting Dialogue; facilitating North-South links and networking etc.**
- **Model of *concilium* – conciliarist principles to inform and shape the work of INSeCT**
- This is to help fulfill original mission and goals and ensure a clear *raison d'être* and 'product' is clearly visible for key potential funders/supporters and indeed for existing stakeholders
- In order to address existing challenges of INSeCT in terms of funding and long term planning, there is a need to move away from short term and narrower focus – for now at least – and devote energies and attention to bigger picture alongside formal and functional/organizational reflections in order to better impact particular themes and issues later.
- This leads to further deliberations:

#### **b. Dialogue/Representation Function vis-à-vis Official Church**

- **INSeCT to serve as facilitator of exchange and dialogue on multiple fronts.**
- **Such also to include serving as an authoritative go-between with ecclesial bodies and authorities – representing the interests of member societies and of theology and of the global church in our representative regions**
- **INSeCT to serve as prophetic change agent and facilitator**
- Importance of 'Critical solidarity' (retaining independence, so never assumed into official or other organizations)
- The question was raised about funding and admin support for INSeCT, long term. Where to have an eventual independent office, (in Rome, where? Funded by various bodies including the Vatican, but without control from Vatican?).

#### **d. Member Society Expectations and Obligations**

- **Ask not simply what INSeCT can do for General Assembly and member societies but what GA delegates and member societies can do for INSeCT!**
- **So list of expectations and obligations – members are not only to expect but to give and serve as INSeCT is a membership organization first and foremost.**
- **So communicating to member societies that INSeCT should function as something analogous to the United Nations in a sense and therefore the level of support, involvement and collaboration from the member societies is vital to the very existence and effectiveness of INSeCT in general.**

#### **e. We revisited and discussed INSeCT's foundation, mission, and goals**

- **Agreed the latter need some sharpening of focus**
- PA – now after 22 years some societies don't understand the purpose of INSeCT and/or don't interact. Need to ensure that INSeCT's synodal function does not usurp those of local societies (E.g. Kairos project, doc1 no. 6) but where there are no or small societies then the full language can remain.

- GP – invite more from larger societies to Rome 2020 to help ensure Rome GA and INSeCT's impact
- **Those societies should fund their own representation**
- **A key purpose of Rome 2020 will be to help INSeCT hone and develop its mission, in collaboration and dialogue with member societies and church bodies**

## 2. Organizational and Practical Developments

**NB: these proposals can be refined and used as basis for discussion paper distributed to all members in advance of or at Rome 2020**

- We proposed that member society delegates to INSeCT should be proportionate to membership – additional 1-2 delegates can be nominated plus maintaining principle minimum of one delegate per member. This will ensure INSeCT's decisions are more truly representative.
- Clarify membership/affiliation criteria
- (E.g. Europe and US send just one voting delegate yet representation could be greater given membership numbers – and chosen to reflect diversity *within* such societies).
- So, principle of one member one vote on key issues retained to avoid domination (by larger/more wealthy societies), yet as larger societies are more diverse so should have wider representation and also dissemination possibilities of what INSeCT does.

### **Developments re: General Assembly**

- **Rotate General Assembly meeting regionally**
- Make more linguistically inclusive where practical and possible (acknowledging practical, logistical and financial challenges this entails).
- Decide two GA venues (and themes?) in a row as a norm.
- We have already committed to 2023 in South Africa (St Augustine's to host?)
- Member Societies/Regions to HOST and organize General Assemblies?

### **Wider General Assembly**

- Possibility of organizing **full General Assembly** every X years – **with one delegate minimum from every Catholic Theological Organization in world**, not simply those actively affiliated to INSeCT through regional organizations – not just regional.
- So General COUNCIL in regional form (excluding national and smaller associations) every 2-4 years (or one of the 3 years cycles)
- Then a PLENARY General ASSEMBLY every 6 years (or 5?, 8?), i.e. full assembly inviting every Catholic association and society.
- Ecumenical groups to have different voting rights?
- Alternatively, just invite all associations and societies to every council meeting (but hold this every four years?)
- Would be about 56-60 different organizations.
- **We need further deliberations on this going forward.**

## 3. Developments re: Leadership and Organizational Roles/Officers

Need to develop 'job descriptions' for Board members and generic as well as specific duties

- a. **All Steering Committee members henceforth to be Vice Presidents, each with distinctive role (does this need vote at General Council to change constitution? To be discussed).**

E.g.

- i. administration (secretary),
- ii. finance,
- iii. development,
- iv. member relations
- v. outreach and communications/media

Such roles can be combined/separated as necessary.

- b. **On the final day of our meetings, we discussed the following division of responsibilities:**

- **VP for Finance/Economy: Gunter**
- **VP for Outreach and communications/media: Maeve (or temporarily VP for Administration/Secretary/Secretary General?) – then distinct and separate roles**
- **VP for Development: Nontando**
- **VP for Institutional Outreach: Paolo**
- **OR alternative roles/priorities in this developmental phase??**

We now need to also supplement those originally brief and somewhat vague titles with further discussions and (alas!) additional responsibilities to be integrated into the final titles for each VP we decide upon – drawing together the other key needs we have identified in this section and elsewhere in this document.

- c. We still need to identify specific aims for each area, therefore -

**Action: each one identify and prioritize three goals for each area for the year, to be shared with other members of the steering committee and decided upon.**

- d. **This also leaves us without someone to focus primarily on administration (what most societies would call its secretary).**

**Should we seek to reappropriate such responsibilities for one of our number, among all five OR to try initially to seek a graduate student/post-doc to help here until we can raise funds for a permanent admin person (a la many larger societies)?**

- e. **Additional matters in terms of leadership continuity:**

**VP for Admin (Secretary) and VP for Finance to serve longer than normal term (e.g. minimum of two full terms of office with possibility to continue longer term for continuity and organizational memory/stability).**

**Or entire board to serve longer terms and staggered transition with new members  
As indicated, some roles or even additional roles not necessarily have to be VPs or with voting rights on SC.**

**E.g. admin person could be paid/postdoc**

**Action: To be reflected upon and discussed at Assembly**

- f. Other possible roles needed:
- i. Member liaison
  - ii. Database(s) management
  - iii. Archivist

*g. So one option is to broaden the committee membership further still – look at the typical number of officers at some of the key membership societies for example.*

**h. April 2020: do we need MORE board members from different SUB-Regions?**  
But key representation needs to be where there are the **most active societies of theology**  
Not every representative needs to be a board member.

#### **4. Possible Sources of Institutional Support**

See list above for Rome in the first document post-Indianapolis

#### **5. Admin assistance & Support (Graduate/Post-doc possibilities?)**

#### **6. Finances – Development and Organization**

**a. We need to join forces on funding, in that we send out letters everywhere to gain funding for short-term and long-term funding.**

**Action: Gerard to write a base letter about the project that each one of us will use for reaching out to the organisations we feel might be open to funding.**

#### **b. Dedicated Officer(s)**

- As discussed above INSeCT needs a treasurer/finance/fund raising person? (short-term we could possibly make do with a secretary and treasurer combined?)
- Ideally, that person/those persons would need to be based in region of INSeCT bank account.
- We spoke about whether or not they would need to be full SC member or officer/VP?
- If they are officers (rather than paid officers or graduate students/postdocs etc. or volunteers – all of which present possibilities) then, as mentioned above, we reiterated they can exceed two terms of office.

#### **c. Fundraising Needs and Opportunities**

- INSeCT needs to build a working surplus of funds sufficient to ensure that it is not reinventing the wheel every cycle and can build for long-term future and fund its actual core work and essential meetings.
- Explore possibility of establishing named funds in honor of past presidents and key INSeCT figures such as Peter Hünemann & Anne Patrick to sponsor parts of INSeCT program/delegates from outside regions by CTSA and ET respectively?
- Explore similar commitments from SOTER (e.g. in honor of L Boff?); ACTA (e.g. for later in honor of Gerry O'Collins and Tony Kelly); Canada (Lonergan); South Africa (Albert Nolan, Kevin Dowling)?

**Action:** To request in separate request circular.

- Societies with greater resources to be asked to commit routinely to sponsor delegates from elsewhere and meetings – i.e. standing agreement rather than ad hoc requests
  - When requesting membership dues we can set a minimum but also state that societies can exceed their donation and/or offer sponsorship for steering committee and general assembly/council meetings.
  - We could also have a tiered structure of memberships/sponsorship (e.g. Benefactor/Sustainer/Supporter etc. along the lines of AAR and other organizations)
  - Also allow and invite individuals to support INSeCT in this way
  - **Set up page on website to elicit such support and sponsorship.**
  - Ask for funds for two-three cycles in a row to include Steering Committee meetings in years outside General Council meeting
  - **Societies that cannot pay membership could offer other services instead – hosting, coordinating, etc.**
  - **Extraordinary members should now also have to pay a fee at a lesser level**
  - Encourage wider organizations to join and become fee-paying members – all national and interest groups e.g. in Europe (revise membership fee structure); Catholic-linked NGOs etc.
  - Groups such as CTEWC; EI; ATMT
  - Possibly explore eventually establishing further divisions of INSeCT e.g. ‘Ecumenical Division’; ‘Field-Specific Division’ etc.
- c. Accounts and Fees etc.**
- We spoke about opening a Paypal or Apple Pay account or something similar – but this would presently need to be the German paypal account.
  - Until/unless we can set up such an account, to minimize administrative headaches, membership fees and contributions to be paid once every three years?

## **7. Further aspirations for the Future of INSeCT/Ongoing Delivery of Strategic Plan Objectives**

- **With regard to no. 8 we commit to regularly revisiting this present document and our new Strategic Plan and the first post-Indianapolis document on a regular basis.**
- Distribute CTSA Document/Suggestions on Future of INSeCT and Martin’s Response among present SC membership as further food for thought for future discussion

## **H. Outreach**

### **1. Website/Social Media - Future Development and Co-ordination**

GM discussed this further with Martin in Sarajevo in July. He graciously agreed to temporarily continue to oversee the website and Facebook page but we really need someone new to take these over as a matter of urgency.

**Action taken: Maeve to take on Facebook and Webpage and seek research student help on admin of these pages.**

### **2. Communication Responsibilities and Strategy – duties for all VPs:**

- We need a consistent system to draw together news from different regions and wider membership
- What is the regularity of outreach for each region?
- We suggest at least twice a year we reach out to the area and each society in the region so we are gathering the info of what is happening regularly and sharing this – a core activity/service of INSeCT

#### **Key actions points:**

- Each regional rep to contact president of all associations in region for updates and interaction every 2-3 months
- Also, to check member society websites and report on news, events etc. in 2 page report every 6 months minimum
- Reports will go to Nontando for analysis and summary and Nontando and Maeve will work together to see how this is both sent out and what is featured on the website.

#### **Additional points:**

- **Especially important to report after annual conferences of member societies in different regions.**
- (Facebook page has many more regular updates which can also be used to help compile such reports)
- Also, each Regional VP to compile these into report for document at next GC. (and each member society to produce more extensive document)
- These tasks could also be systematized and completed by, for example, graduate students, interns or postdocs at regional level and/or working for INSeCT centrally.
- Action: twice a year we report back on the region. This implies that each person of the region work on ongoing research and liaison with the region. Reports will go to Nontando for analysis and summary and Nontando and Maeve will work together to see how this is both sent out and what is featured on the website.

### **3. Expand – improve use of Regional sections on website for news**

- **So need regional news representatives to gather materials – or board members to do this for their region.**

- **Add website tools/platforms to insure regularly updated**
- **Allow news from members to be uploaded/posted online**

#### **4. Develop Newsletter**

- Requires Editor/editorial team/ reps from each region
- Produce a Bi-Monthly/Monthly/Quarterly newsletter (but logistics – across disciplines, languages etc.)
- Portal for members to submit items for newsletter to and subscribe to newsletter online

#### **5. Slogan & Logo Updates**

- Feedback to our new motto so far has been very positive!
- **On the final day we discussed perhaps reordering - Connecting Catholic Theology Worldwide: INSeCT.**
- A change in emphasis and order, as opposed to change of theme completely.
- Here obviously we also need to revamp the website, too.
- We spoke about somehow seeking initial funds to revamp the website image-wise and structure wise too.
- One suggestion was perhaps lose the butterfly and looks for another image - bridges, and mirrors were among initial ideas floated .
- As such is closely bound up with the overall website issues (as detailed above), obviously we will work on these together.
- GM to consult for some initial advice from a contact who has constructed multiple websites for an initial assessment of what we may need to do to carry out changes desired (I am almost certain he will NOT have time to help us with the work himself and we would need funds for this in any case).

#### **6. Visibility**

**Draw up a set of key facts and ‘did you know?’ points about INSeCT for website and wider distribution [THIS IS A KEY PRIORITY]**

**Ask members and former board people in different regions who’ve been around for a while to contribute 2-3 (can be thematic)**

**Each Steering Committee member to undertake this in their region ASAP**

#### **7. Publications:**

- New series? (Georgetown university press?)
- New Journal?
- We discussed such possibilities. In some ways desirable, in other ways risk of entering an already bloated marketplace.
- Another possibility is to form partnerships with existing book series and journals
- A further suggestion (which could be both/and with the above) was possibility of an ongoing publication, and perhaps to approach *Concilium* about dedicating one edition per year to INSeCT, and as they publish in various languages, it is a natural outlet for us.
- **GM to follow up on this.**
- Discussion to be continued.

#### **8. Miscellaneous**

### **J. Any Other Business**

- We spoke to the overall aim of INSeCT and the work we share. The aim is that INSeCT becomes an important presence in the contribution to Catholic Theology into the future. We are very different but unified in the common aim to open a space for theological discussion into the future and that the organization/network that is INSeCT moves into the future: *quaestio* that opens us to heuristic thought, as opposed to dogmatic closure.

Possible New regions/countries for outreach?

Palestine

Engage Caribbean and Cuba (aim for a General Assembly in Caribbean within six-ten years?)

Canada – wider engagement

Indonesia

South Africa

### **K. Additional Suggestions – April 2020**

Previous boards of INSeCT have explored finding an institutional home and base for INSeCT (once upon a time it had one in Tübingen). This would help with administration, support, research assistants etc. and processing finances and fund-raising etc etc. The expectation would be that the institution would help give support for INSeCT and facilitate its work on multiple fronts.

Should we explore this again? For the long term future.

Suggestions, for example:

- A larger University – e.g. Georgetown (pursue through Vice-President for Global Affairs, given INSeCT's *raison d'être*)
- A distinctive unit of a university (e.g. Loyola Institute at TCD?)
- Ask Tübingen (IOF?) to become the home for INSeCT once more?
- A stand alone smaller Catholic Institution (e.g. Margaret Beaufort Institute Cambridge?)

### **L. Future General Assemblies/Councils**

The model could move towards where future assemblies are hosted by regional/national societies (not necessarily always but regularly) – this would encourage further cross-fertilization internationally.