

## **UNDERSTANDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL NEUROINFORMATICS COORDINATING FACILITY (INCF)**

The signers of this legally non-binding *Understanding*, concur that a coordinated international scientific effort is needed to advance our understanding of the functions and mechanisms of the nervous system for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life of humans. This is to be accomplished by using the integrated methods of neuroscience and information science/technology, Neuroinformatics. The signers of this *Understanding* may sign on behalf of their country, or on behalf of an intergovernmental or other organization that will represent their country's participation in the INCF. The Signers of this *Understanding* express their intention to become Participants of the International Neuroinformatics Coordinating Facility (INCF) as a forum for technical and scientific international cooperation and in doing so will also establish a neuroinformatics node. These activities follow the recommendations found in the June 2002 final report from the Neuroinformatics Working Group to the Global Science Forum (GSF) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the endorsement of the OECD Science and Technology Ministerial meeting held in January 2004.

Neuroinformatics is a new research field devoted to the development of neuroscience data and knowledge bases together with computational models and analytical tools for the sharing, integration and analysis of experimental data and the advancement of theories of nervous system function. In the context of this *Understanding*, neuroinformatics refers to scientific information about primary experimental data, ontology, meta data, analytical tools and computational models of the nervous system. The primary data would include experiments and experimental conditions concerning the genomic, molecular, structural, cellular, networks, systems and behavioral level, in all species and preparations in both normal and disordered states.

The Participants' involvement in this *Understanding* is subject to the goodwill and voluntary financial contribution by the Participants to ensure that work under the INCF may be carried out.

The INCF and its Participants intend to cooperate to coordinate neuroinformatics global activities to guide and oversee the development of guidelines, ontologies, standards and other unifying activities in neuroinformatics as defined by a work program. The Participants intend to encourage cooperation between and among neuroinformatics nodes and the INCF in the implementation of the INCF and in the establishment and development of work programs.

### **Business Plan**

A business plan of the INCF has been developed and is attached to this *Understanding*.

### **Governing Board**

The INCF Governing Board is the means by which the Participants make collective decisions on all matters relating to the INCF. The Governing Board is to consist of one representative from each Participant. The Governing Board is to select, at its first meeting, a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson.

### **Secretariat**

The Secretariat is to consist of the INCF Executive Director and a staff as approved by the Governing Board to implement the Work Program. The Executive Director of the INCF is to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Governing Board.

**Secretariat Host**

The Secretariat Host is to be selected by the Governing Board through an open competitive process (see Appendix III). The Secretariat Host is to provide the location, facilities and services to host the Secretariat.

**Executive Director**

The Executive Director is to act as the Chief Executive Officer of the INCF and is to have the authority, within limits and guidelines decided by the Governing Board, and, subject to the provisions of the *Understanding*, to enter into contracts and administer funds on behalf of the INCF.

**Neuroinformatics Node**

Each Neuroinformatics Node is to promote and coordinate local neuroinformatics research and training activities at the national and international levels, and participate in the development and the implementation of the INCF Work Program.

**Program for International Neuroinformatics (PIN)**

The INCF is to facilitate international research collaboration in neuroinformatics research based on the Program in International Neuroinformatics funding scheme, which is a voluntary option for the Participants of the INCF (See Appendix II).

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Nothing in this *Understanding* should be read to alter the scope and application of National Intellectual Property Rights and benefit sharing agreements as determined under relevant laws, regulations and international agreements of the Participants. To the greatest extent possible, the INCF is foreseen as an open-access facility. All users, whether INCF Participants or others, ought to have equal access to data in databases affiliated with or developed by the INCF. This access will depend on the specific ethical and medico-legal legislation, which regulates in each country the creation and use of information about animals and humans both at the individual and family levels. The INCF is to encourage the free dissemination of neuroscience data and tools.

**ASSOCIATION AND DISASSOCIATION OF PARTICIPANTS****Inauguration And Association**

The INCF is to come into existence on JULY 1, 2005, or sooner if at least five (5) Participants have signed the *Understanding* and the sum of the voluntary contributions pledged accrues to a minimum of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand (750,000) US dollars. The Governing Board is to come into existence at the first meeting of the Participants after the establishment of the INCF, subject to the provisions of this *Understanding* and accompanying Business Plan. Association with this *Understanding* is open to Participants effective upon signature of this *Understanding* and payment of annual voluntary contribution within three months of signing this *Understanding*. In subsequent years, the annual voluntary financial contribution is to be due within three months of the annual anniversary date of this *Understanding*.

**Duration**

The INCF is to be set up for an initial five-year period. It is recommended that the progress and operations of the Secretariat be reviewed by an independent site visit team and fine-tuned three years following the hiring of the Executive Director. The Participants representatives on the board

are to select appropriate reviewers nominated from professional societies representing the activities of the INCF. Five years following its inception, and every five years thereafter a critical review of the operation and function of the INCF is to be similarly organized. These reviews are to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the governance structure and to recommend any necessary changes or the continuation or cessation of the INCF for an additional five years beyond the initial five years.

### **Disassociation of Participants**

Any Participant may disassociate itself from this *Understanding* by advising the Governing Board in writing of its intention to do so and the effective date. In the event of disassociation of a Participant, the Governing Board is to agree by consensus to adjust the Work Program and the Budget to take account of such disassociation.

### **Termination**

The Participants may terminate this INCF *Understanding* at any time by a majority (two-thirds of the Participants) vote. Upon termination or expiration of this *Understanding*, the INCF Secretariat, acting in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction in which it is located, is to arrange for the liquidation of the assets of the INCF; property held by the INCF Secretariat for the benefit of the Participants is to be regarded, for this purpose, as assets of the INCF. In the event of such liquidation, the INCF Secretariat, so far as is practicable, is to distribute any assets of the INCF, or the proceeds there from, in proportion to the basic financial contributions which the Participants have made from the beginning of the operation of the INCF, and for that purpose is to take into account the voluntary contributions of any former Participants.

## **FINANCE**

### **Basic Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Participants are asked to make voluntary financial contributions, in accordance with the table below, to the OECD or the INCF Secretariat. These voluntary contributions are to be held in escrow by the OECD until the INCF is established. At that time the funds are to be held by the INCF Secretariat in a Central Fund in an interest bearing account or in other appropriate accounts as determined by the source of funds. These voluntary contributions are to be used by the INCF for the direct costs associated with the operations of the INCF (see Appendix I).

Once a Participant signs the *Understanding* and voluntarily contributes to the INCF according to the Initial Year Payment Table below (U.S. Dollars), the Participant may then participate fully in INCF activities and decision making. Failure to make the annual voluntary financial contribution in a timely manner will suspend the decision-making rights of the Participant. Basic Voluntary Financial Contributions are suggested to be based on Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD). This table and associated voluntary contribution amounts for participation are to be updated every year using the appropriate figures from the most recent complete data from the OECD.

**Initial Year Payment Table**  
(\* United States Dollars)

| <u>GERD</u>                      | <u>Contribution</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1— GERD > \$50,000 million*      | \$ 350 thousand*    |
| 2— GERD \$25,000-50,000 million  | \$ 250 thousand     |
| 3— GERD \$10,000-25,000 million  | \$ 200 thousand     |
| 4— GERD \$ 2,000- 10,000 million | \$ 120 thousand     |
| 5— GERD \$ 1,000- \$2,000million | \$ 40 thousand      |
| 6---GERD <- \$1,000million       | \$ 10 thousand      |

**Supplementary Voluntary Financial Contributions**

In addition to Basic Voluntary Financial Contributions, Participants may make Supplementary Voluntary Financial Contributions to fund specific parts of the Work Program, or for other specified purposes agreed to by the Governing Board. Supplementary Voluntary Financial Contributions are to be held by the INCF Secretariat, and used only for the purposes specified by the Participants making them.

**Costs Borne by Participants**

Participants bear the costs of their own participation in the INCF, including the costs of formulating or transmitting reports, travel costs, and other expenses related to attendance by their representatives at meetings of the Governing Board and other INCF functions or events.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.