



International Society
of Forest Therapy (ISFT)



MINUTES BOARD MEETING

Minutes

ISFT Board Meeting

Date & Place :

December 19th, 2024 ; 4-6 pm / ONLINE

Participants:

- Manfred Baum (President)
- Prof. Dr. med. Dr. h.c. (mult.) Horst Klinkmann, F.R.C.P. (Honorary President)
- Alex Gesse (Deputy President)
- Dr. Darija Cvikl (Secretary)
- Sven Rüger (Board Member / Research and Innovation)
- Susanne Bauer (Deputy Secretary)
- Nina Schwarz & Daniela Calmon Beier (Landesforstanstalt Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Congress Organisation)

Excused:

- Mag. Dr. Udo Brändle, LL.M.(Com) (Treasurer)

Minutes:

Susanne Bauer

Agenda :

1. Welcome and confirmation of the agenda (Manfred Baum)
2. Preparation for the congress in Germany (Nina Schwarz and Daniela Calmon Beier)
3. Membership structure development of ISFT (Darija Cvikl)
4. Organization of ISFT board (deputy treasurer) (Udo Brändle)
5. Formation of working groups (Darija Cvikl)
6. Status Trade mark application ISFT (Sven Rüger)
7. Collaboration with Korea
8. Interdisciplinary Research and Publications
9. Others

1.) Welcome an confirmation of the agenda

The president welcomes the attendees. The agenda has been distributed to all participants, and there are no additions. Udo Brändle is excused due to a flight delay. Sven Rürger greets the participants and informs them that he had to attend to an appointment at short notice and is therefore on a train. Connection issues are to be expected.

2.) Preparation for the congress in Germany

President Baum informs that Nina Schwarz and Daniela Calmon Beier are responsible for the congress organization and they are already working on the organization of the next ISFT Congress. They have been invited to today's meeting to provide an update on the steps taken so far.

Update from Nina Schwarz and Daniela Calmon Beier to the 7th ISFT Congress in 2025:

- **Date:** 23–25 September 2025 in Waren/Müritz. The exact congress location will be announced soon.
- **Accommodations:** The number of rooms directly at the congress venue is limited, and a list of alternative accommodations will be published.
- **Program (based on the formats in Slovenia and Lithuania):**
 - **23.09.:** Arrival, activities in the surrounding area, and a "Come Together" (Pre-Event on the evening before).
 - **24.09.:** Opening ceremony, presentations, talks, and official evening event.
 - **25.09.:** Outdoor workshops and excursions, including a trip to Lohmen with shuttle service provided by the municipality.
- **Registration:** The registration process will be handled through a landing page, which will also be used for the speaker announcement. Technical details and payment options are still to be clarified to avoid invoicing issues.
- **Scientific Committee:** Prof. Klinkmann will be asked during the board meeting to take on the leadership of the scientific committee. A separate meeting will be scheduled.
- **Accommodations:** Only a limited number of rooms will be available directly at the congress venue. A list of alternative accommodations will be published.
- **Sponsoring:** Partnerships with the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the federal government of Germany are already in place, with funding prospects. Additional support from companies is still under review.
- **Marketing:** The marketing process will need to be coordinated together.
- **PR:** The location of Waren in the national park and near Lake Müritz will be used for PR purposes to promote the congress.
- **Announcement:** The congress announcement will be sent to all members in January once the landing page is available.

3.) Membership structure development of ISFT

Darija Cvikl presented her proposal for the membership structure – please see the attached presentation.

Decision on the next steps: The process for admitting new members was discussed, and the following course of action was agreed upon by the board: From now on, membership applications will be endorsed or rejected by the secretary. In cases of rejection or doubt, the president will be involved. All new applicants will receive confirmation of their formal admission and a welcome email after the membership decision has been made.

4.) & 5.) Organization of ISFT board & Formation of working groups

Udo Brändle, Darija Cvikl and Susanne Bauer had a meeting and would like to propose to the board the introduction of a monthly jour fixe in addition to the board meetings to improve communication and exchange. Furthermore, the idea was raised to establish thematic working groups, which would also be open to members and allow them to actively participate.

Board decision: Working groups can be formed on a topic-specific basis if necessary, with close collaboration already taking place on certain issues. The board decided that a clear separation between board topics and working groups must be maintained to avoid confusion. The process should be structured and implemented gradually. The board meetings must take place four times a year, independently of this.

6.) Status Trade mark application ISFT

On behalf of Sven Rüger, Prof. Klinkmann provided an update on an important ISFT-development: ISFT now holds a protected word and image trademark. Sven Rüger commissioned his friend, Claus Simandi, an expert in patent law, to secure these rights for ISFT. The protection covers both the word "ISFT" and the associated logo, which is now a registered trademark globally. This ensures that ISFT is legally protected in international negotiations and certifications. Sven initially covered the costs personally, but the invoice will be sent to the treasurer, Udo, and reimbursement will occur as soon as ISFT's financial situation allows.

Prof. Klinkmann also mentioned that new letterheads and templates for ISFT documents have been created – thanks to Darija!. Darija Cvikl will ensure that all ISFT documents and presentations are standardized in the future to strengthen the organization's unified public image and PR. The president thanked Sven for the upfront payment and emphasized that ISFT is now unique and legally protected worldwide.

7.) Collaboration with Korea

Deputy President Alex and Secretary Darija Cvikl attended the forest therapy congress in Korea, where they gained valuable insights into the development of forest therapy centers. Darija Cvikl described it as an extraordinary experience, noting that Korea has already established 50 centers, with plans for 20 more. They have invested \$100 million in these initiatives, creating a promising foundation for future collaborations. Alex Gesse also highlighted the growing interest in forest therapy worldwide, including in China and the U.S.,

and noted that Korea's non-governmental organization works through networks, with varying approaches.

Both Alex Gesse and Darija Cvikl received positive feedback from other associations, and the collaboration with Korea is expected to grow organically, with a focus on research and potential grants. Alex Gesse also mentioned his strong and close contacts in Taiwan with Chia-Pin (Simon) Yu, an Associate Professor at National Taiwan University, which will significantly strengthen ISFT's network expansion in Asia.

Prof. Klinkmann pointed out that ISFT stands out as a scientific organization and should continue to highlight its unique position in the field. The collaboration in Asia is seen as strategic, with future projects and partnerships likely to expand.

8.) Interdisciplinary Research and Publications

Exchange in the board on the topic of research and publications: ISFT has been receiving an increasing number of inquiries regarding potential involvement in research projects and support for publications. Deputy President Alex Gesse pointed out that such initiatives are usually associated with significant financial and/or organizational efforts, which need to be carefully considered to ensure they can be managed effectively. It was suggested within the board that perhaps a working group should be formed to address this issue.

Prof. Klinkmann added that Sven Rüger is responsible for strategic planning but was unfortunately not present. President Manfred Baum kindly suggested that Sven Rüger, in collaboration with Alex Gesse, could prepare concrete recommendations for the next board meeting in Krems, where this topic can be further discussed.

9.) Others

- **Christmas Greetings ISFT:** Darija Cvikl and Susanne Bauer presented their joint draft, which was well-received and approved. The board decided to add the "Save the Date" information for the 7th ISFT Congress in Waren, highlighting the beautiful location and natural features of the area. The email will be finalized and sent by Darija Cvikl and Susanne Bauer.
- **Realization of the Healing Forest Göttweig:** Susanne Bauer has some thrilling updates regarding the Healing Forest. As of yesterday, the IMC and Stift Göttweig have received confirmation of funding for the Healing Forest project through EU grants for regional development. There was an open call from the Leader Region office. This funding provides a strong start for the project, and in the new year, further funding will be sought. Everyone is extremely happy, and this means that we plan to open in May 2025. A huge and heartfelt thank you to all ISFT board members, whose support has been instrumental in moving this project forward so quickly. All attendees congratulated on the success and shared in the excitement.

- **IMC Symposium “Tourism goes Health” in Krems on April 1, 2024:** IMC is organizing a symposium on the topic of developing a health region using the example of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Stefan Seiberling will attend with colleagues and will give a presentation on the topic of "Dream! One Health Region." Prof. Klinkmann and Dr. Lehmann will also be attending as experts in forest therapy and healing forests. The symposium will highlight how healing forests in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern can pave the way to a One Health Region and the benefits of innovatively designing a region from both a tourism and regional development perspective. The Save the Date will be sent out in early January.
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End of the Meeting:

The president thanks all board members for their participation and excellent collaboration. Many successes have been achieved this year, and he looks forward to continuing this progress in the upcoming year. He wishes everyone a Merry Christmas, a relaxing holiday season, and a Happy New Year.

Next ISFT Board Meeting:

01.04.2025 in Krems in Austria / Invitation is following soon