



Québec association for Impact assessment project

Professional recognition system (PRS) from training to global recognition



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- Non-profit organization - Affiliate of IAIA
- Dedicated to advancing the practice and quality of IA in Québec and across the francophone community
- Brings together more > 600 IA practitioners: government, industry, consulting firms, academia, First Nations organizations & civil society
- 10 agreements with other associations
- 13 board members
- 11 volunteers across our committees
- 3 part time staff members
- And we are celebrating our 35th anniversary!



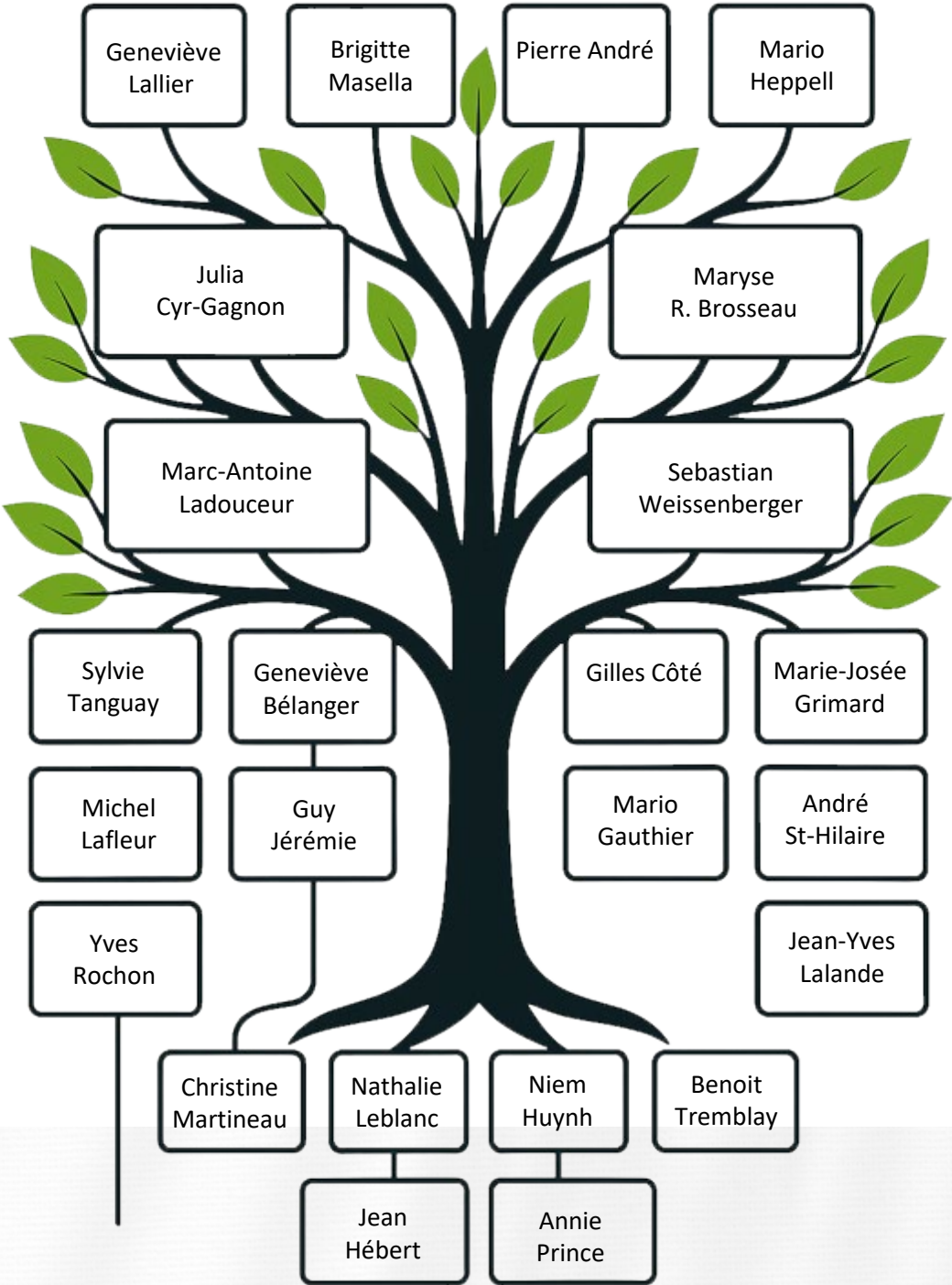
THE TEAM!



Luc
Valiquette



Jean-Philippe
Waub



Benoit
Lagarde



Jean
Cadieux



Économie,
Innovation et Énergie
Québec



Environnement,
Lutte contre
les changements
climatiques,
Faune et Parcs

Québec



INRS
UNIVERSITÉ DE RECHERCHE

CENTRE

EAU
TERRE
ENVIRONNEMENT

 **mitacs**

 **UNIVERSITÉ
Concordia**
UNIVERSITY MONTRÉAL

UQO
UNIVERSITÉ
DU QUÉBEC
EN OUTAOUAIS

UDS Université de
Sherbrooke

UQÀM

Université 
de Montréal | La recherche

 **UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL**

**UNIVERSITÉ
TÉLUQ**

Transports
et Mobilité durable
Québec



ENGLOBE 

PESCA **BORALEX**



Industries
Services



auditer**terra**



Agence d'évaluation
d'impact du Canada
Impact Assessment
Agency of Canada

 **Stantec**



SYSTRA

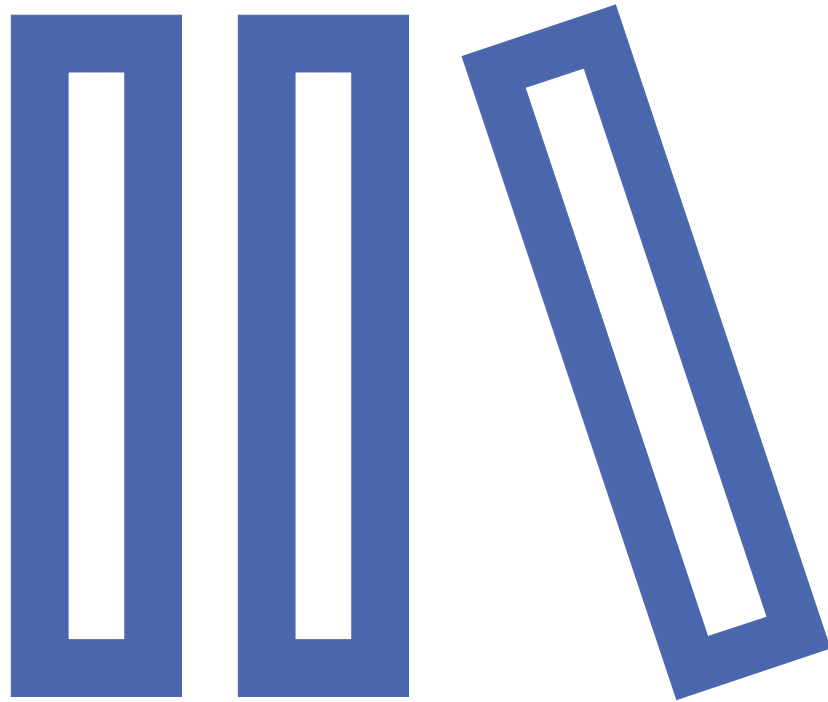
Challenges related to IA

- Extended timelines
- Uneven study quality
- Large volume of documentation
- Insufficient training



Benefits of a PRS

- Improving the quality of IA
- Reduce ESIA preparation time
- Reduce documents volume
- Facilitate the analysis
- Enhance the professional credibility
- Increase trust among stakeholders
- Create business opportunities
- Provide recognition to qualified professionals
- Offer targeted continuing education
- Achieve international recognition



3 key pillars

1. Training
2. Operationalization
3. Outreach and visibility



1. Training



Define target audiences



Identify required competencies in IA



Review existing university training programs



Assess practitioners' needs through a survey



Conduct a competency gap analysis



Design a work-oriented training framework



	Target audience
Targeted IA Stakeholders	• Project directors / manager conducting or reviewing IA • Strategic and methodological advisors • Professors, researchers, and instructors in IA • Regulator and government
Potentially interested IA stakeholders	• Technical project managers (project proponents) • Specialists from various disciplines involved in IA • Geomatics specialists • Legal advisors • Consultants in communication and public relations
Potentially interested society stakeholders	• Journalists • Financiers • Environmental, social and economic groups • Professors, researchers, and instructors (related fields) • Students • Members of professional associations



Quality of IA

Produce rigorous studies
Evaluate improve report quality

Analysis

Analyze data and issues
Identify VECs
Prioritize criteria
Compare alternatives
Conduct/review analyses

Technical & digital skills

Use geomatics and models
Understand tools and limitations

Management

Manage projects, budgets, and teams
Coordinate expertise, manage stakeholders and conflicts
Apply ethical practices



Competencies

Methodology and strategic assessment

Select and apply IA methods
Develop scenarios and options
Anticipate impacts
Link to SDGs

Communication and public participation

Communicate clearly
(oral/written)
Engage stakeholders
Facilitate consultations
Structure arguments

Authorization, monitoring and follow-up

Assess project acceptability
Develop mitigation measures
Ensure follow-up and monitoring

Gap analysis

Types of Competencies	Number of sub-competencies	Frequency of Competency Taught and Assessed	Frequency of Competency Taught but Not Assessed	Frequency of Competency Not Taught
Methodology and Strategic Assessment	5	52,7%	16,4%	30,9%
Analysis	7	64,9%	11,7%	23,4%
Quality of IA	2	31,8%	9,1%	59,1%
Communication & Public Participation	5	47,3%	18,2%	34,5%
Authorization, monitoring, and follow-up	3	48,5%	12,1%	39,4%
Technical & Digital Competencies	1	27,3%	18,2%	54,5%
Management	9	18,2%	22,2%	59,6%

Main findings



Competencies relatively well covered by university programs

- ✓ Analysis
- ✓ Methodology and Assessment
- ✓ Authorization, monitoring and Follow-up
- ✓ Communication and Public Participation

Gaps :

- Management
- Technical and Digital Skills
- Quality of ESIA



2. Operationalization

Key elements examined for PRS development

- Possible forms that the PRS could take
- Organization responsible for managing the PRS
- Structure required to operate the PRS
 - operational modalities
 - governance structure
 - criteria for members
 - fees
 - examination requirements



What we explored

1. Professional order
2. Personnel certification body (PCB)
3. University training program
4. In-house recognition system

Personnel certification body - ISO 17024

Professional order

- **Difficulty in establishing new professional orders in Québec**
- Challenges due to the multidisciplinary nature of IA

University training program

- Rigorous approach
- **Well suited for part-time study**
- **Recognition granted by a university**
- Internships and mentoring opportunities
- **Limited financial viability** (target group <600)
- **High time commitment for busy professionals**



In-house recognition system

- **Low-cost approach**
- **Flexible system**
- Voluntary participation
- Modular training offered on demand
- **No independent oversight**
- Greater administrative complexity for AQÉI

Certification body (CB)

- Recognized by the Standards Council of Canada
- May include multiple levels
- Potential for international recognition
- Protected title if certification is mandatory
- 12–24 months of preparation + documentation
- High initial costs
- Annual operational costs to be funded



Titles and levels	Evaluation criteria			
	Minimum education	Seniority	Minimum experience	Competencies
Junior IA Integrator	Bachelor's degree	1 year of practice in ESIA	Participation in 2 IA	Successful completion of the exam associated with the title and level, based on defined competencies
Senior IA Integrator	Bachelor's degree	> than 5 years of practice in ESIA (3 + master's degree)	Participation in 10 IA	
Junior Discipline Specialist	Bachelor's degree	1 year of practice	Participation in 2 IA	
Senior Discipline Specialist	Bachelor's degree	> than 5 years of practice (3+ master's degree)	Participation in 10 IA	

Proposed certification titles and recognition levels



Key Risks

Financial viability



High implementation and operating costs
Uncertain profitability (limited pool of professionals)

Organizational capacity

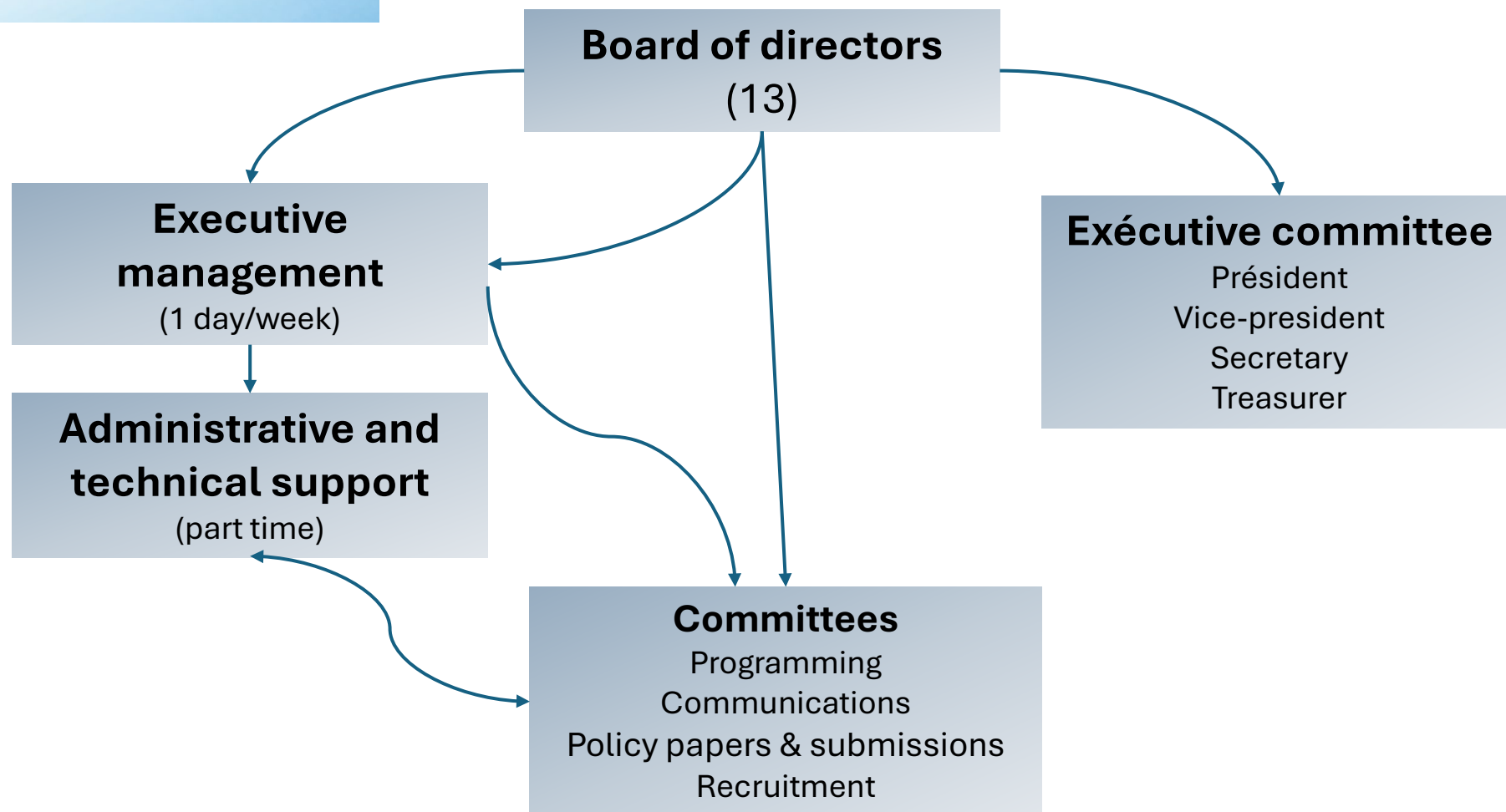


Administrative and documentation burden (ISO 17024)
Dependence on volunteers

Reputation and credibility

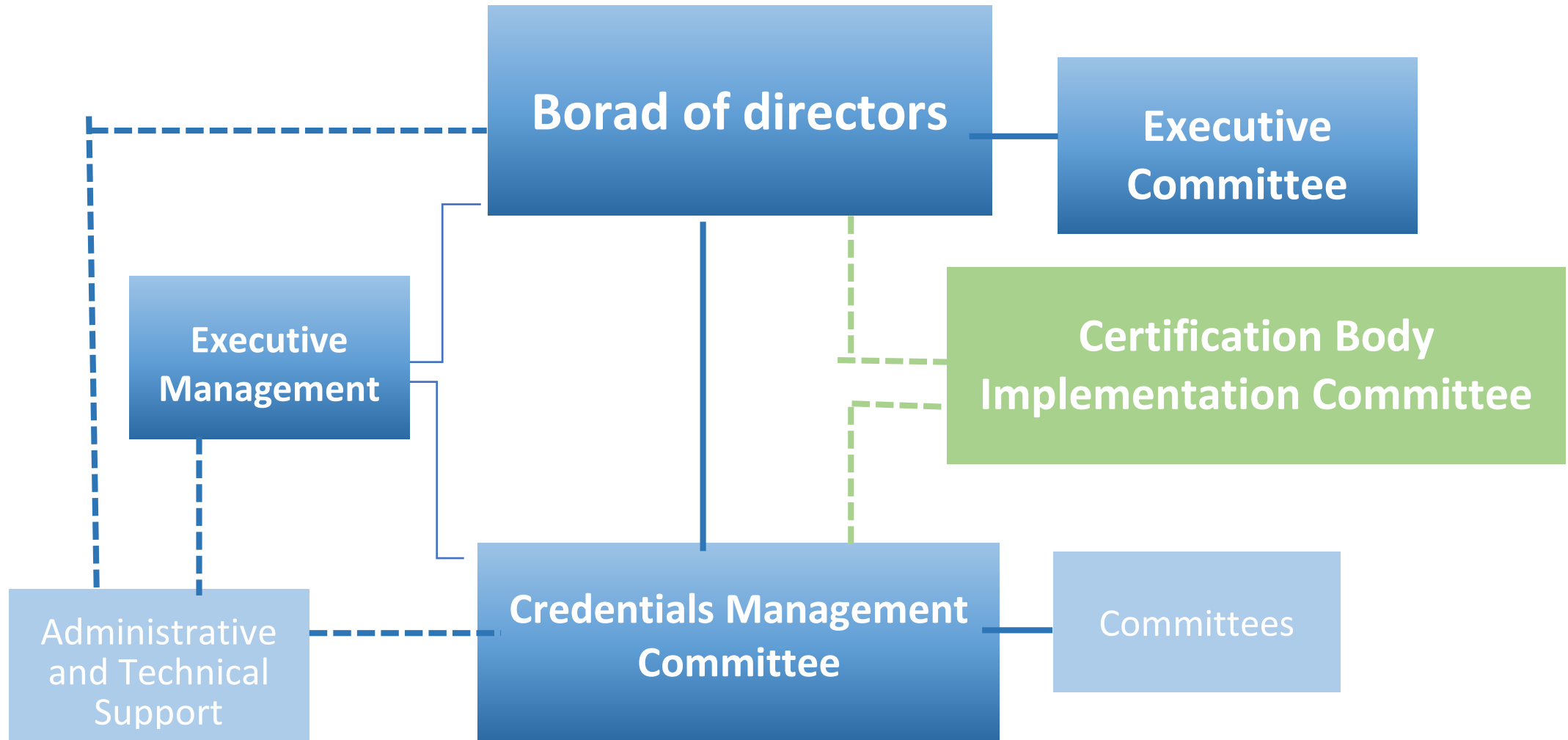
Risk of non-compliance during audits
Sensitive management of refusals, appeals, and withdrawals
Voluntary participation limiting the reach of the PRS
Added value dependent on recognition by authorities

AQÉI Structure





AQÉI Structure modification





Exploration of potential solutions



Phased implementation

Gradual PRS rollout before full ISO 17024 certification



Cost control & funding

External funding and affordable fees



Organizational capacity

Dedicated ISO expertise and clear governance structure



Impartiality & compliance

Strict separation of training and certification, regular internal audits



Market acceptance

Focus on outreach, communication and feedback with stakeholders

3. Outreach and awareness-raising



- **Define awareness needs & key messages**
- **Select awareness approaches & tools:** Choose appropriate approaches to inform, train, engage, and motivate targeted audiences
- **Develop an implementation roadmap,** including a programming plan and timeline



conclusion



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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