



International Federation for Systems Research

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Dear IFSR Member Organizations and Fellow Systems Colleagues:

On behalf of the IFSR's leadership, I am writing to you to clarify our stance on a joint project focused on professionalization of systems thinking that was introduced at the 61st Meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) this past July in Vienna. During that conference, a project was proposed to develop competencies related to systems thinking. Many of the conference participants affiliated with IFSR's member organizations expressed interest in the project. At that time, it appeared that there was sufficient convergence around development of a systems thinking project focused on professionalization and an announcement was distributed to our member organizations.

Shortly thereafter, the IFSR's Executive Committee was advised that the ISSS and IASCYS had concerns about the definition and scope of the project specifically that the project had substantially changed from what was described at the ISSS meeting. Due to this divergence in understanding, a request was sent to project manager on August 23rd to pause action until an agreement could be made about the following critical aspects of the project:

- 1.) the distinction between systems thinking and systems science,
- 2.) the distinction between competencies and curriculum, and
- 3.) involvement of the three organizations as stakeholders in guiding decisions and development of the project.

Regrettably, we were unable to reach an agreement to return to the original definition and scope of the project. As a result, the IFSR has withdrawn its endorsement. We cannot take the position that this project as currently conceived supplants the last 60 + years of systems research and represents the sum total of the field. IFSR recognises the importance of progressing the issues that were fruitfully discussed at ISSS in Vienna under a rubric that is agreeable to all stakeholders. Consistent with its mandate, the IFSR will attempt to facilitate such initiatives whenever possible.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at maredson.s3@gmail.com.

Truly,

Mary

Mary C. Edson, Ph.D.
President