

Dear ISVO Members,

Two years ago a band of the faithful met in Jeju Island and pondered the future of the ISVO. It was a turning point. Should we let it gently “wither on the vine” or was it time to reinvigorate it? As they say, the rest is history. Under first Peter Bedford’s (UK) and, as of this month, Bruce Robertson’s (Aust) presidencies, the ISVO has undergone quite a rejuvenation. An important part of this revitalization has been the increased internet presence led ably by Gil Ben Shlomo (USA). In the background, another important transformation has been taking place. It was clear to those of us meeting in Jeju in 2011 that the ISVO’s business structure required modernization so as to ensure that we could accept donations from sponsors, and suitably indemnify our members. I want to bring the whole membership up to date with progress in this goal.

So that we can receive donations from industry, we needed to establish ourselves as a registered and incorporated non-profit organization. The first task was to incorporate the Society since the IRS (US tax office) requires this before assigning non-profit status. This is now done and we are incorporated in the State of California. The second step required for non-profit status was the writing of bylaws that are acceptable to the State of CA and the tax office as appropriate for non-profit organizations. This turned out to be very challenging since there is a lot of language that is non-negotiable for non-profit organizations so that every company in the state cannot set up as such. However, much of that language was not applicable to our small band of enthusiasts who meet every 2nd year and had little activity between meetings. After much negotiation with a very helpful attorney in Davis, CA, we have come up with a set of bylaws that both satisfies the government and suits our Society.

The major issues were

- Reducing the quorum to the lowest possible (10%). However, this brought with it the requirement that we vote only on items on a pre-advertised agenda (unless we happen to get 1/3 of the membership in attendance). Note that we can achieve a quorum by proxies. It is cumbersome, unavoidable by law, but achievable.
- Ensuring that we could communicate with our international membership only by email. This brought with it the requirement that all members provide permission for this and may opt out if they choose. We have woven a statement acknowledging this into our membership document which all new members must sign. Existing members should look for a request to renew their membership (and accept a similar requirement) shortly.

There were lots of other more minor issues but your Board believes that the final document we have arrived at is a very good one and should serve the society well into the future. We are now placing these bylaws on this public website and providing all members a chance to comment. Please send those to me at djmaggsatucdavis.edu

Following adoption of these bylaws, the final step is the submission of an application for tax exempt status, which I am in the process of making.

Kind regards
David Maggs
Treasurer, ISVO
Davis, CA. USA