

# Developing professional communities

## BOB CLAY, TOPRA PRESIDENT

*In a global regulatory environment, the value of local networks and communities cannot be underestimated and our TOPRA In groups are a key part of developing our professional body*

As a professional membership organisation, TOPRA is dedicated to building capabilities and enhancing the recognition of regulatory roles. The diversity of our roles and contributions, as well as the global distribution of our membership, means that we have created a range of networking and communication tools.

TOPRA is a largely volunteer-led organisation, including the Board of Directors, Special Interest Networks (SPINs) and working parties that develop our training courses and conferences. This is coordinated by a small but outstanding office team – who are currently located just across the dock from the EMA (more about that in a future editorial)! In my view, some of the most important networking opportunities offered by TOPRA are the local sub-groups in multiple countries organised under the “TOPRA In...” banner.

In this issue of *InTouch* we celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the TOPRA In Sweden group (see page 2), as well as the recent TOPRA India conference (see page 3). It is my hope that

a “TOPRA In India” group may sprout from the seeds planted, but in any case, I look forward to future meetings held here.

Next month there are meetings planned in Dublin and California, organised by the local respective groups. Last year, I was fortunate to be in Barcelona when the team there held a meeting on clinical trial transparency – a meeting which highlighted for me the importance of the local networks. Across Europe there are very different settings for our profession: in Barcelona there is a biotech focus with local and smaller companies dominating the scene, whereas the larger, global organisations have offices in Madrid. In Switzerland, the cities of Zug, Basel and Geneva have different environments for regulatory professionals, with Geneva being the hub for international organisations. TOPRA’s recent visit to India indicates that the same observation can be made from Mumbai to Bangalore, from Hyderabad to New Delhi; the industries and opportunities vary as much as between Berlin,



Budapest, Milan, Edinburgh and Paris.

I trust you will forgive me for pointing out the obvious, but my intent is to highlight the importance of local networking and the common interests we will find to support our professional development. It is critical that we build our membership base at a local level and that we use the resources of the wider organisation to build a stronger profession across the globe. If you have ideas for developing local events in your area – check to see if there is already a TOPRA In group located near you. If there isn’t, why not start one?

On a final note, nominations for the TOPRA Board Elections will soon be open, and the position of President for 2019 along with four Director vacancies will be available. The current Board is keen to encourage nominations from across the organisation – so make sure you are prepared!