



MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2008 BOARD MEETING

Date: February 10, 2008

08:30 GMT

Present:

Board Members:

Reiner Banken, President

Laura Sampietro-Colom, Vice President

Guy Maddern, Secretary

Mitchell Sugarman, Treasurer

Berit Mørland, Past-President

Karen Facey

Jean-Francois Baladi

Americo Cicchetti

Clifford Goodman

Wija Oortwijn

Ken Stein

Invited Guests:

Chris Henshall

Alicia Granados

Observers:

Ravindra Mohan Pandey, INCLEN

Alric Reuter, INAHTA

John Sproule, IHE

Paul Childs- HTAi Secretariat

Regrets:

Jill Sanders

Meeting Preliminaries

Reiner Banken began the meeting by welcoming all Board members and observers to Rome for the meeting of the Board and the HTAi Policy Forum. In regard to conflicts of interest Reiner Banken reported that as well as serving as the current President of HTAi he is also the chair of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the 2008 Annual Meeting. No other conflicts were identified.

Board members agreed that when meetings of the Board are held by teleconference they could be recorded for minute keeping purposes only and that after minutes were approved recordings of meetings would be erased.

It was agreed that the Board would handle the issues identified in the agenda as being for in camera discussion first.

1. Significant Current Strategic Issues

1 a. Policy Forum Committee

Karen Facey provided an update on the plans for the Policy Forum meeting on February 11th and 12th, as well as ongoing efforts to recruit new members to the Forum. She reported some difficulties in the preparation for the meeting as this was her first meeting working with the Scientific Secretariat and they were only appointed in November. She reported that there will be a review of the meeting with the members and Secretariat and that these would be considered by the Policy Forum Committee to improve the processes for next year.

Board members reiterated the importance of the Policy Forum to HTAi and the unique opportunity it gives for interaction among stakeholders and health policy decision makers.

Karen Facey closed discussion by noting that the Committee is looking for ways to improve the management of Forum meetings, as well as addressing membership issues.

Action: The Policy Forum Committee will review issues of Forum membership and management of Forum meetings and report back to the Board. By: Policy Forum Committee

1 b. 2008 – 2013 Strategic Plan

Laura Sampietro-Colom provided an update on the work done by the members of the Strategic Plan working group on developing a Strategic Plan for the Society for 2008 – 2013. The two key assumptions for the Group were ;

1. the current plan is a good one that helped to build the Society; and,
2. a new plan needs to look ahead and build on the Society's successes.

The key changes that had been made were; the inclusion of consumers as an audience for HTAi outputs, and clearly identifying the Policy Forum as a body for the exchange of HTA information.

Board members were pleased with the quality of the document, the fact that it was more inclusive in whom the Society would interact with, and that it allowed flexibility in how the Society would achieve its goals. The need for an annual operational plan was noted in order to make the strategic goals operational, and that Board Committees must play a role

in developing and implementing an operational plan.

It was agreed that a draft of the plan must be provided to the membership at least once for comment before the final draft was reported to the Annual General Meeting in July. The need to place the plan 'in context' was also noted so that the membership would be aware of what the Policy Forum was, what role it played, and its relationship to HTAi. It was agreed that there was a need for transparency in describing the role of the Forum and that there needed to be better integration between the Forum and the Society; the 2009 Annual Meeting was cited as the first opportunity for doing this. The need for the plan to be respond to the challenges offered from ISPOR was also noted.

Discussion closed with Laura Sampietro-Colom confirming that the Society's members would have an opportunity to comment on the plan through the web site and how the Society's goals could be achieved after the Board's comments had been incorporated into a revised draft of the plan.

Action: A revised draft of the 2008 – 2013 Strategic Plan will be posted to the Society's web site and will allow members of the Society to comment on the document. Comments from members will be incorporated into a revised document and submitted to the Board for the May teleconference.

By: Strategic Plan
Working Group,
Secretariat

1 c. ISPOR HTA Council

Reiner Banken reported the proposed HTA Council was an attempt by ISPOR to play a larger role in the field of HTA; the question for the Board was determining how HTAi should respond to that challenge. Board members confirmed that ISPOR was interested in playing a role in international HTA; however it had to be careful not to bring itself into conflict with industry, and that as result was still trying to determine what its role would be. Berit Mørland also reported that ISPOR has stated that in its mission to 2020, playing a role in HTA has been defined as a strategic goal. The challenge for HTAi would be how to work in the same field as ISPOR and ensure that it was offering unique value. ISPOR is clear about what they want to be and who they want to participate; HTAi needs to identify itself as clearly with a strong role. ISPOR's clear interest in networks of agencies such as INAHTA and EUnetHTA was also noted. In response to this it is essential that the already strong connections between INAHTA and HTAi be further developed and reinforced. There are strong linkages between the organizations but these need to be made stronger.

The ISPOR HTA Council was seen as being part of the ongoing interest by ISPOR in HTA; however it was also linked to comparative effectiveness studies that have been done by ISPOR sub-committees and are seen as being valuable by the pharmaceutical industry. ISPOR was also investing substantial manpower to support its members to be active in sub-committees on methodological issues and there was discussion about how this compared to the work of HTAi interest groups.

The need for differentiation between HTAi and ISPOR was repeated and the perception that ISPOR was associated with methodology and sources for HTA while HTAi was associated with how HTA was use should be encouraged. It agreed that the two organizations need to seen as being distinct

Discussion closed with an agreement that broadening of the discussion of the appeal of HTAi membership is necessary in order to attract and retain members and this needed to be linked into the 2008 – 2013 Strategic Plan.

Action: Issues of member recruitment and retention will be incorporated into the revised strategic plan, as well as being an ongoing current issue for the Society.

By: Strategic Plan Working Group, Membership Committee, Board

Ongoing action will be taken to build and strengthen connections between HTAi, INAHTA and EUnetHTA.

Id. Nominating Committee – Elections Working Group Report

Berit Mørland and Reiner Banken reported that this group was established in response to a motion approved at the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the Society when ‘strategic voting’ having a negative impact on the current voting results was identified as a possibility. The report provided to this meeting of the Board responded to that motion and the need to provide some options for the Society on other voting systems. Berit Mørland provided an overview of how each of the system described in the report could work.

Board members felt that the most reasonable course of action was to describe each of the systems to the membership and the offer members a poll to indicate a preference for one of those systems, or staying with the current system.

The Board passed a motion that members would be provided with descriptions of three systems:

1. an unweighted system where all or no candidates could be voted for (current system);
2. an unweighted system where all candidates have to be voted for; or,
3. a weighted system that ranked candidates, similar to the system used by the Cochrane Collaboration.

It was agreed that the discussion of all three systems should be as transparent as possible, and that because of the high quality of the report submitted by the Working Group it should be made available to members for review and comment.

Action: A summary of the three systems described in the Working Group report will be posted to the Society’s web site and members will have the opportunity to comment on the systems and indicate a preference. A final report with recommendations will provided to the Board for the July

By: Election Working Group, Secretariat

meeting and for the Society's Annual General Meeting on July 7, 2008.

1 e. Negotiations with Cambridge University Press (CUP)

Ken Stein provided an overview for the Board of the negotiations positions and preferred outcomes sought in negotiations with CUP for the Journal. The key underlying issues were felt to be; immediate open access to the Journal and the term of the contract allowing the Society to explore other options for a journal.

Action: progress on negotiations and achievement of Society objectives will be reported to the May Board teleconference. By: Ken Stein, Executive Committee

1 f. Finance and Audit Committee

Mitchell Sugarman provided a report on the Society's finances and related issues. Members of the Board asked for some changes in reporting of financial information; specifically it was felt that a pie chart of income and expenses would be useful, as well as more clear reporting of assets such as reserve funds, and a full listing of all ISG's would be helpful in providing more transparency in how financial information was being reported to the Board.

Action: The clarity of reporting of Society financial information will be improved. By: Finance and Audit Committee, Secretariat

1 g. 2008 -2009 Asia – Pacific Outreach Initiative

Reiner Banken provided background on this issue and how it tied in with the Society's Annual Meeting in 2009 in Singapore. This meeting was seen as opportunity for the Society to build links with other international agencies such as WHO, INCLIN, and the World Bank who were active in the Pacific Rim and Asia.

This initiative will be supported up to \$25,000; however the immediate issue was leadership, as action needed to be taken in the next 6 months to take advantage of the meeting in June 2009. Four desired for HTAi from this initiative were identified;

1. an increased profile for HTAi in the Asia-Pacific area;
2. increased contact between decision makers and HTAi;
3. increased attendance at the 2009 meeting; and,
4. increase the profile of HTA in supporting decision making.

Possible leaders for this initiative include; Sivalal Sadasivan (Malaysia and former HTAi Board observer), Brendon Kearney (Australia) and David Banta (France). It was noted that it is critical for this person to be closely tied to HTAi, linked to the 2009 annual meeting, and be credible in their knowledge of HTA. It was also noted that this is an issue that could have been handled by the External Relations Committee.

Discussion closed with agreement that the Outreach Program needed to be sensitive to specific regional needs and context; this initiative must not be perceived as being a Western model of HTA being imposed, and that contacts with agencies in the region such as the Korean HTA agency, that can help support the development of HTA, will be developed.

Action: A member of the Society from the Asia and Pacific area will be asked to lead the Outreach Program and that this person will develop regional contacts for the 2009 meeting. By: Executive Committee

1 h. Web Site Update

Paul Childs provided an update on recent developments on the Society's web page, including activation of a discussion forum and download area for ISG's in a test mode for one ISG.

Karen Facey asked that a definition of HTA should be available on the site, and John Sproule suggested that 'What is HTA?' presentation could also be made available on the site for download.

Action: Information item, ongoing issue.

2. Policy and Operational Issues

2 a. Board Committees

External Relations Committee

The proposed terms of reference for the External Relations Committee were approved and the Committee asked to proceed with its work.

Membership Committee

Jean Francois Baladi reported that the Committee had held a teleconference and had identified two issues of concern to be addressed;

1. member recruitment and retention; and,
2. exploring a regional/chapter structure for HTAi membership.

An update on the successful negotiation of a joint membership agreement with SIHTA was reported and it was noted that other regional organizations in the Netherlands and Norway were interested in joint membership. Karen Facey indicated that there is a need to explore gaps in Society membership and benchmark that against other, similar organizations.

A membership survey was seen as an important tool for collecting information from members on what they want from HTAi membership and how the gaps in membership could be addressed.

Action: A membership survey is to be developed and carried out in the Spring of 2008.

By: Membership Committee, Secretariat

The membership committee is to develop recommendations for addressing the membership gap based on member survey results.

Membership Committee

2 b. Nominating Committee 2008

The Board reviewed the proposed timelines for the 2008 Board elections and felt that given the date of the Easter holiday in 2008 these dates should be revised and resubmitted.

Action: The timelines for the 2008 elections will be revised to accommodate the Easter holidays. Proposed members of the Nominating Committee for 2008 will be submitted to the Board for approval.

By: Secretariat, Berit Mørland.

2 c. Policy on HTAi endorsements

Paul Childs presented a draft policy on HTAi endorsement of meetings held by agencies and other societies.

The policy was approved as submitted.

Action: The approved policy will be posted to the Society's web site.

By: Secretariat

2 d. Board Policy on Observers

A draft policy on Observers to the Board was presented. It was clarified that this was a clarification to timing of observer terms and other issues related to Board observers, not a change to the roles or representation of observers noted in the Society's constitution.

The policy and the status and timing of current Board observers were approved.

Action: The approved policy will be posted to the Society's web site.

By: Secretariat

*2 e. Annual Meeting Committee
2007 Annual Meeting*

A final report from the Barcelona LOC was provided for information. It reported that the 2007 Annual Meeting was a financial and attendance success for both the LOC and the Society.

Laura Sampietro Colom asked that the total payments to the Society be reflected in the financial reports as it did not appear that all payments were being reported. It was noted that payments from the LOC were made in two fiscal years and thus reported separately, but this will be confirmed and reported to the Board

2008 Annual Meeting

Reiner Banken reported as LOC chair for the 2008 annual meeting for this portion of the meeting; he reported that 32 proposals for parallel sessions had been submitted and that due to the large number of proposals the number of sessions held might increase from the 15 currently planned. Financial support is being provided to some session leaders. An e-newsletter about the annual meeting is planned for release every two weeks, and there are approximately 3,000 names on the mailing list for the meeting.

The next steps to be taken are; approval of abstracts submitted for the scientific program; 130 people had agreed to serve as abstract reviewers, the deadline for abstract submission was extended to February 15th, and a meeting of the International Scientific and Programme Committee (ISPC) was planned for March 17-18 to complete the scientific program and make a final selection of abstracts.

Some concern was expressed about the capacity of the facility chosen for the meeting; Reiner indicated that a 'no-show' strategy will be considered.

In discussion of the preliminary program document provided to the Board some concern was expressed that two of the sessions seems to focus on issues pertinent primarily to the US and Canada. Reiner indicated that those sessions will address global issues.

The meeting will proceed with over 200 posters on Monday and Tuesday to allow maximum flexibility to improve attendance.

2009 Annual Meeting

Reporting as President of the Society Reiner Banken provided an update on discussions with the Singapore LOC since the October Board teleconference. He reported that Option 1 for meeting organization and financing had been accepted, and that planning for the meeting was progressing. Members of the Annual Meeting Committee and the Secretariat are in regular contact with the organizers of the meeting.

A motion to approve Keng Ho Pwee and Sivalal Sadasivan as joint chairs of the International Scientific Program Committee (ISPC) was passed unanimously.

2010 – 2011 Annual Meetings

Wija Oortwijn reported to the Board on the Letter of Intent (LOI) process used to select two groups for submission of full proposals for the 2010 meeting. Dublin and a joint

submission from the four Nordic countries will be considered for the 2010 meeting.

Wija also reported that the request for LOI's for the 2011 meeting had been less successful than hoped and that the Committee will restart that process in the spring. Board members suggested that successful LOI's be made available for groups for review by anyone considering submitting an LOI. The Committee will also play a more active role in supporting groups concerning an LOI; however that support must be equitable in order to ensure no group receives an undue advantage in preparation of their LOI.

Revised Annual Meeting Guidelines

Wija reported that the Committee was asking for Board approval of the revised Annual Meeting Guidelines. It was noted that the revised Guidelines incorporate the changes mandated by the Board and also attempted to clarify some areas of the earlier versions of the Guidelines. Board members expressed some concern with specific aspects of the Guidelines such as membership renewal and sponsorship and it was noted that these were a 'work in progress' that while released they would also be revised on an ongoing basis to improve quality and clarity in the document as well as meet the Society's need for high quality annual meetings.

Action:	By:
2007 Annual Meeting: A report summarising the information in the final report from the 2007 LOC will be posted for the membership on the Society's web site.	Secretariat
2009: The Singapore LOC will be informed that their nominations for co-chairs of the ISPC had been approved by the Board.	Secretariat
2010: The AMC will report to the Board on a recommended host for the 2010 annual meeting for the May Board teleconference.	Annual Meeting Committee
The 2010 LOI process will be restarted with active and equitable support for submitters from the Committee.	Annual Meeting Committee
Board members will provide their comments and suggestions for the Guidelines to Wija Oortwijn, and those suggestions will be included in the final draft of the revised Guidelines. The revised Guidelines will be provided to the groups submitting proposals for 2010 to allow them enough time to ensure that their proposals are in compliance with the new Guidelines.	Annual Meeting Committee, Secretariat

2 f. Funding for Interest Sub-Groups (ISG's)

It was reported that proposals for support had been received from three ISG's. Karen Facey indicated that better planning for ISG support was needed and that requests for support should be sought in the fall for the coming budget year.

Action: The Executive Committee will review the proposals for ISG funding submitted and approve proposals up to \$5,000 and up to the total budget allocated for ISG support. By: Executive Committee

3 Routine Business

3 a. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the October 10, 2007, Board of Directors teleconference were approved as submitted.

Action: Approved minutes to be posted to the Society's web site. By: Secretariat

3 b. Next Meeting Dates

The tentative date for a teleconference of the Board is May 1st, 2008, with the date and time to be confirmed as soon as possible.

Efforts will be made by the Secretariat to find a time for the teleconference that is not punitive to any Board members.

Action: Teleconference date and time to be confirmed. By: Secretariat

4 In Camera Discussion

4 a. 2006 Board Election Investigation

Chris Henshall joined the meeting for this discussion and provided a report of the proposal from the Canadian firm Conexsys to conduct a review of the security and integrity of the web based processes used in the 2006 Board of Directors elections, as well as the systems used for the 2007 and 2008 elections. The proposal from Conexsys will cost approximately \$17,000.

The Board agreed to proceed with the investigation as proposed by Conexsys with a limit on the budget for the investigation process of \$30,000.

Action: The investigation into the integrity of the 2006 election web site and the 2007 and 2008 websites will proceed with a planned deadline of the end of April. By: Reconstituted 2006 Nominating Committee

4 b. Secretariat Tender Process

Alicia Granados joined the meeting for this discussion; she has agreed to serve as the liaison to the Board for development of a tender for the hosting for the Secretariat. A

Sub-Committee of the Board was approved to help guide the process the Board members participating have agreed that they and/or the agency they are affiliated with will not submit a proposal for hosting. The following Board members have agreed to serve on this working group; Laura Sampietro-Colom, Karen Facey, Mitchell Sugarman, and Wija Oortwijn.

The timeline for this project is to have a request for tenders issued in March, tenders submitted in April, a review of submitted tenders conducted in May and a report with a recommendation to the Board and the Annual General Meeting of the Society in July 2008.

Action: A tender process is to proceed on the timeline noted above with expenditure to be approved as needed.

By: Alicia Granados
and Committee
members.

5 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 16 :00 local time.