



Health Technology Assessment International

An International Society for the Promotion of Health Technology Assessment

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Monday, June 22, 2009

Time: 18:00 to 19:00 SGT

Location: Suntec Convention centre, Room 209, Singapore

1. Welcome

The meeting began on time; approximately 65 members of the Society were present. Vice President Laura Sampietro-Colom reported that President Reiner Banken sends his regrets for missing this meeting and that in his absence she would be acting as chair of this meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was approved as submitted with no business added or deleted.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting

The minutes for the Annual General Meeting in 2008 were approved as submitted.

4. President's Report

Laura Sampietro-Colom provided a report that focused on four areas:

- The success of the 2009 meeting in Singapore

Laura reported that the initial attendance figures for the Singapore meeting were higher than had been projected; well over the target of 600 delegates have registered for the meeting. Final numbers of delegates at the meeting will not be available until later in the year but attendance at the meeting will exceed projections. Laura also reported that the pre-conference workshops held on Sunday, June 21 had also been well attended, with several of the workshops being fully subscribed. Comments on the plenary, panel, and poster sessions held today, the first day of the meeting, were also very positive. Laura offered congratulations to the meeting organizers for what was shaping up to be a very successful meeting.

- Outcomes from the 2008 meeting held in Montreal, Canada

Laura reported that the meeting in Montréal was a financial and attendance success; approximately 850 delegates from 48 countries attended the meeting and the net revenue for the Society from the meeting was just over \$66,000. The membership numbers for 2008 – 2009 following the Montreal meeting built on the members who had joined in Barcelona, the Society now had just over 1,000 members.

- Activities of the Board and Executive Committee over the 2008 – 2009 Board year

Laura reported that the Board in 2008 – 2009 was beginning to focus on the Asia – Pacific region in order to capitalize on the new partnerships and opportunities for growth promised by having the Annual Meeting in Singapore. She also reported that the lessons from the 2006 election investigation were implemented by:

- Developing election guidelines for use with the 2009 and future Board elections;
- Engaging an independent contractor to administer the Society's voting process; and,
- Planning for by-law change to make the Society's governance structure responsive and accountable.

Laura also reported that the Society had implemented a new policy for member subscriptions to the Society's official journal; *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, changes that have had a positive financial and environmental impact.

Laura reported that in consultation with members the Board had developed a Business Plan for 2009 - 2011. This plan is focused on six strategic objectives:

1. Membership growth and stability;
2. Maintaining high quality scientific and professional standards;
3. To grow the awareness and influence of HTAi around the world;
4. To create a long term strategy for the HTAi Policy Forum;
5. To achieve financial sustainability; and,
6. To improve communications.

- Activities of the Interest Sub-Groups

Laura closed this section of her report by reporting that there are six Interest Sub-Groups (ISG's) active in the Society, five of them operating work areas and e-mail lists on the Society's web site. Some of the ISG's have over 100 members, and all are planning meetings in Singapore. Laura also reported that the ISG's were included in the development of the new Business Plan and they will play a larger role in the development of the scientific programmes for future Annual Meetings.

5. Proposed by-law changes

Two by-law changes are proposed in order to bring the Society's by-laws into compliance with the regulations governing the Society where it is incorporated; the province of Alberta, Canada. By-law changes require a Special Resolution of the Society and the process defined in the by-laws for voting on a special resolution was followed in regard to the two proposed changes.

The first proposed change is to by-law 11.5:

11.5 Meetings of the Society may be called at any time by the Secretary upon the instruction of the President or the Board. Notice in writing of such meetings shall be delivered to each Member recorded on the books of the Society, 14 days prior to the date of such meeting. A special meeting shall be called by the President or Secretary upon receipt by him or her of a petition signed by 1/3 of the Members setting forth the reasons for calling such meeting. Such petition shall be delivered to each Member recorded on the books of the Society, 10 days prior to the meeting. The notice required in this paragraph shall state the time and the place of the proposed meeting. Five Members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Members, and in the event that a quorum is not present within thirty minutes after the time called for the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a time and place determined by the Chairman.

The information period of 14 days and the petition delivery period of 10 days must be amended to read 21 days.

A motion to approve this change was made by Wija Oortwijn and seconded by Brian Richards. The motion was approved unanimously.

The second proposed change is to by-law 15.1:

15.1 The Board of Directors may propose amendments to the present Objects and by-laws of the Society. Amendments may also be proposed by any grouping of ten (10) or more Members of the Society. Such amendments must be circulated in writing to Members at least 2 weeks in advance of a meeting of the Members and discussed at that meeting. The Board must then put in writing to the full membership any proposed amendments that are supported by at least one-third (1/3) of those attending the meeting, together with a paper summarising the views expressed at the meeting, and conduct a ballot of the total membership. The by-laws and Objects of the Society may only be rescinded, altered or added to by a Special Resolution of the Members.

The notification period of '2 weeks' must be amended to read '21 days'.

A motion to approve this change was made by Karen Facey and seconded by Jill Sanders. The motion was approved unanimously.

Action: The Secretariat will ensure that the necessary steps are taken to ensure that the Alberta Corporate Registry is informed that the Society's by-laws have been amended to comply with legislation.

By: Secretariat

6. Treasurers Report

Mitchell Sugarman, Treasurer, provided his report of the 2008 – 2009 financial year. He indicated that revenue for the year had been better than anticipated in the budget. He reported that most expenses were in line with budget, that the Secretariat and all Committees worked to reduce costs wherever possible; one of the major causes of the cost overruns on specific items was the fluctuating exchange rate for the Canadian and US dollars. Steps are being taken this year to reduce that impact. Mitch reported that the Society would likely finish the year with a surplus.

Mitch reported that the budget for 2009 – 2010 was still being developed and would be approved once funding proposed for strategic activities and changes in the organization of the Secretariat and the hosting organization (the Institute of Health Economics) were completed. He closed his report by reporting that the Society was in healthy financial shape with just over \$720,000 (Canadian) in current accounts and investments.

A motion to approve the appointment of Allan Welsh and Company as the Society's auditors was moved by Clifford Goodman and seconded by Janet Hiller. The motion was approved.

Action:
Allan Welsh and Company to be appointed as the Society's auditors for 2009 - 2010.

By:
Secretariat

A final budget will be prepared for the Board.

Finance and Audit

7. Membership Fee Changes

Janet Hiller reported as chair of the Society's Membership and Communications Committee on two issues related to changes in the Society membership dues;

1. New Fee Categories for Members in Middle Income Countries

Janet reported that while HTAi has one category of fees for members from middle income countries the World Bank (whose classification of countries HTAi uses to determine membership fees for members from low, middle and high income countries) has two categories of middle income countries; Upper Middle Income Countries and Lower Middle Income Countries. The committee is proposing that current fees for middle income country members (\$100 new member, \$83 renewal) be split into two groups, using the World Bank classification as referents. The proposed fees are as follows:

Lower Middle Income Country: \$35 new member / \$30 renewal

Upper middle income country fees would stay at the current levels of \$100 new members and \$83 membership renewal.

Rates for print subscription of the Journal would not be changed.

Janet reported that this change will have an impact on approximately 30 members, but may encourage more people to become members from Lower Income Countries, any impact will also be affected by the number of members who renew after joining HTAi to attend the 2009 meeting. The financial impact on the Society is estimated to be a loss of \$2,000 assuming current membership numbers.

A motion to approve these changes was moved by Brian Richards and seconded by Wija Oortwijn. The motion was unanimously approved, with a request that the financial impact of this change in fees is reported to the 2010 Annual Meeting.

2. Two Year High Income Country Memberships

Janet brought forward a proposal to create a two year membership category. Janet reported that it was hard to model the financial impact of this fee change as it was unclear how many members would take advantage of it, however the Board believes that it is an option that should be offered to members. If implemented the changed fee structure will be applied to high income countries first and its impact assessed before it is considered for middle and low income members.

Janet brought forward a motion to create a category of two year members with membership fees of \$250 for new members and \$220 for current member renewal. After discussion the motion was split into two motions; two year fees for new members and two year fees for member renewal.

A motion to set the two year fee for new members at \$240 was passed with 2 members voting against the motion.

After discussion of process it was agreed that the original motion for two year memberships should be withdrawn and an amended motion with agreed on two year membership fees should be brought forward

for a vote. This was agreed and a motion by Janet Hiller, seconded by Paulo Picon, that the two year membership fee for new members be set at \$240 and the two year fee for current member renewal be set at \$220, was passed with one member voting against the motion.

Action: As per the Society's by-laws the approved changes in member fees will be announced to the membership and will come into effect in the 2010 – 2011 membership year.

By: Secretariat

8. HTAi Policy Forum Report

Karen Facey chair of the HTAi Policy Forum provided a report of the activities of the Policy Forum in 2008 – 2009. Karen reminded members that the Forum was an opportunity for leaders from public and private organizations with a strategic interest in HTA to meet in a closed session over two days to discuss issues of critical interest. The nature and structure of the Forum meeting encourages an open exchange of ideas about the challenges facing health care providers, decision makers industry, as well as clinicians and patients.

Forum Membership: Geographic and Industry Representation

Karen reported that the Forum had members from North America representing HTA agencies and health services providers, as well as members from Europe and Australia also representing HTA agencies, regulatory agencies and health service providers. As well, the Forum has members representing the pharmaceutical and medical devices industry.

Policy Forum Topics

Since 2005 the Forum has addressed the following topics:

2005 - Promote clinically relevant innovation and managing uncertainty: the role of the HTA process;
2006: - Rethinking regulation and HTA;
2007 - Conditional reimbursement/Coverage with evidence;
2008 – Harmonizing evidence requirements for HTA decision making;
2009 – HTA for optimization of technology utilization.

The results of Forum deliberations in 2007 and 2008 have been published in the *Journal* on an open access basis, and the outcomes for the 2009 meeting will also be submitted for publication.

Outcomes and Connection to HTAi Members

Karen also reported that an ongoing outcome from Forum discussions was the creation of a working group on surrogate outcomes in decision making and that other forms of outreach to HTAi members were being pursued. This includes membership of the Forum chair on the International Scientific Programme Committee for Annual Meetings and regular updates to members on Forum activities.

The Policy Forum Committee

Karen closed her report by thanking the members of the Policy Forum Committee for their support and indicated that this will be her last year as Committee chair, a process for selection of a new chair is in development.

9. 2009 Board Election

Berit Mørland provided a report from the Nominating Committee on the process and results of the 2009 Board elections. Berit reported that the Committee consisted of three people; Liz Adams (United States), Marjukka Mäkelä (Finland) and herself. There were four Board and Executive Committee positions open for election in 2009; Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and a Board Director. A total of 12 candidates ran for these positions, and no alternative candidates were nominated for the position of President. Voting opened on March 19th and closed May 1st. A total of 1,109 members were eligible to vote and between 32% and 34% of members voted for each position.

Berit reported that this election was conducted in accordance with the guidelines developed for Society elections; these guidelines are available on the Society's website. Berit also reported that unless significant concerns with the conduct of the 2009 election are reported with 120 days of this meeting the voting and ballot information from this election and all previous elections will be destroyed on December 31, 2009.

The results of the election are as follows:

President: Dr. Laura Sampietro-Colom (Spain)
Vice-President: Dr. Jill Sanders (Canada)
Secretary: Dr. Guy Maddern (Australia)
Treasurer: Dr. Americo Cicchetti (Italy)
Director: Flavia Elias (Brazil)

On behalf of the Board and the members present at the meeting a unanimous vote of thanks was offered to Board members who had completed their terms of office:

Berit Mørland - Past President
Karen Facey - Director
Guy Maddern - Secretary
Mitchell Sugarman – Treasurer

Action: The results of the election will be provided to all members by e-mail and the results will be posted to the Society's web site. Members will also be informed that they have 120 days to report concerns with the election results to Berit Mørland.

By: Secretariat

10. 2011 Annual Meeting Location

Laura announced that the 2011 Annual Meeting will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

11. Annual Meeting Journal Prize – The Egon Jonsson Award

Laura reported that Egon Jonsson is stepping down as the Editor in Chief of the Society's official journal the *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*. Laura reported that Egon has been the editor since Volume 1, Issue 1 of the *Journal* in January 1985, to the present. Laura reported that in recognition of Egon's outstanding contributions to the creation of the Journal and the development of HTA internationally the Society's Board of Directors voted to change the name of the Society's Annual Meeting Journal Prize to 'The Egon Jonsson Award', effective with the award presented at this Annual Meeting.

12. Adjournment

As no other business was brought forward Laura thanked all of the members present for attending and the meeting adjourned at 19:00 local time.