



# Health Technology Assessment International

An International Society for the Promotion of Health Technology Assessment

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## MINUTES OF THE MAY 2007 BOARD TELECONFERENCE

Date: Thursday, May 3, 2007

Time: 13:00 GMT

### **Present on the call:**

Berit Mørland, President  
Reiner Banken – Vice President  
Mitch Sugarman – Treasurer  
Guy Maddern – Secretary  
Helena Dahlgren  
Americo Cicchetti  
Chris Henshall  
Don Schopflocher – Observer  
Sivalal Sadasivan – Observer  
Alric Reuther – Observer

Paul Childs – Secretariat  
Christine Batdorf - Secretariat

### **Regrets:**

Jean Francois Baladi  
Karen Facey  
Krzysztof Landa  
Marjukka Makela  
Jill Sanders  
Egon Jonsson - Observer

### **Welcome/Regrets**

Berit Mørland

The meeting began on time with a welcome from Berit Mørland to all participants and regrets from those who were unavailable. She also reminded the Board that the purpose of the call was to prepare for the Board's day long meeting in Barcelona in June to ensure that it would be a productive one.

### **Approval of agenda**

Berit Mørland

Berit Mørland explained that the new agenda structure was a result of the Board evaluation survey following the February meeting. Members of the Board generally felt that the new structure was an improvement and a step forward.

The agenda as submitted was approved with no amendments or deletions.

## **1.0 Significant Current Strategic Issues**

### **1.1 Evaluation of the Secretariat**

This discussion was held as an in-camera discussion at the end of the Board's call.

Action:

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By:

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## 1.2 Annual Conference – Barcelona 2007

The report from the Barcelona Local Organizing Committee was received for information and no issues or concerns were identified with its content or with the preparations for the Barcelona meeting. It was noted that registration for the Barcelona conference at the close of early registration was comparable to the registration at the Rome 2005 Annual Conference.

Action: None required – information item.

## 1.3 Annual Conference – Montreal 2008

Reiner Banken provided an update on the planning for the Annual Conference in Montréal in 2008. He reported that work on a logo for the Conference was almost complete and that the first announcement material for Barcelona was being prepared. He indicated that he would be seeking the approval of the Annual Meeting Committee and the Scientific and Professional Programs Committee (SPPC) for all promotional material that was being prepared and that he hoped this approval would be provided in the time frame described in the Annual Meeting Guidelines document (within two weeks). He also reported that work with the International Scientific Program Committee (ISPC) was progressing, a meeting of that Committee would be held shortly, and that major parts of the scientific program were being developed including plenary sessions and speakers.

Action: None required, information item.

## 1.4 Annual Conference – 2009 and Annual Meeting Committee Report

Berit Mørland provided an overview of the report from the Annual Meeting Committee on the issues addressed in the Committee's report. Members of the Board discussed changing the time frame for the submission, review and acceptance of hosting proposals. Making this change would allow a decision on hosting to be made earlier and provide successful applicants with more time to prepare for the Annual Conference and to meet with the Board at the Annual Conference. This issue will be discussed at the June Board meeting in Barcelona.

Berit Mørland indicated that comments on the Committee's draft Annual Conference evaluation survey should be sent to the Committee Chair.

Action: Timing of the Annual Meeting submission and review process to be added to the agenda for the Board's June meeting in Barcelona.

By: Executive Committee,  
Secretariat.

## 1.5 International Journal of Health Technology Assessment in Health Care (IJHTAC) survey – Communications Committee

Helena Dahlgren reported that the Committee was hoping for approval for the direction of the questions in the draft survey. The committee still sees the questionnaire as a work in progress and will make the necessary edits and refinements needed to make it a functional survey, however they are hoping for Board approval with the direction being taken so they can proceed. It was noted that along with editing, the questionnaire needed to be better organized with clearer headings of the subject areas being addressed. Marjukka Makela had submitted suggestions for survey questions regarding the cost aspects of an Open Access journal. These suggestions for more questions about Open Access were echoed by other members of the Board and it was agreed that the questionnaire needs questions specifically the financial implications of Open Access for the Society. Paul Childs noted that Egon Jonsson had specifically indicated that he felt the Open Access questions were not appropriate for this questionnaire. The Board noted his concern but felt that the question must be addressed now rather than resurveying the membership later in the year. The Board agreed that the primary intent of this survey was to assess members' views about the Journal so that its quality could be improved and in doing so also set a baseline for membership views on the Journal, allowing the Society to explore options for the future.

Action: The Board approved the general approach of the survey with direction  
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By: Communications Committee

that questions about an Open Access journal for the Society must be included.  
The Committee is to proceed with the survey in a timely way.

#### 1.6 Finance and Audit Committee

The Society's Treasurer Mitch Sugarman provided detail on the report from the Finance and Audit Committee submitted to the Board.

Board members suggested that the Reserve Fund could be funded to the level proposed on an incremental basis over several years, rather than in one lump sum in the 2007 -2008 budget year. This would cause less of a strain on the Society's savings.

The Board accepted the Committee's findings on Euro and Pound Sterling accounts but felt that the issue should still be pursued as having a Euro account would provide two possible advantages; 1) it would allow the Society to accept payments from members and others in Euros, thus lowering net exchange costs; and, 2) it would offer some hedging of the risk inherent in holding large US and Canadian dollar accounts. The Committee will investigate this option further and report to the Board in June.

The draft budget format was reviewed by the Board and was felt to be useful. Some concerns were expressed with some of figures reported in the draft document, specifically that the for-profit membership numbers, and that increases in wages and benefits were too high. Concern was also noted with the item labeled 'Strategic Travel Budget'. It was pointed out that this item should be relabeled to allay members concerns about how the fund would be used. The name of the fund should indicate a close connection to the Society's strategic aims and strategy, and there should be strict rules about how the fund will be used.

Concern was also expressed that the draft budget was showing a deficit for the next 3 fiscal years, Paul Childs noted that this was an artifact of how the draft summary budget was prepared, earlier drafts had shown a surplus. Mitch Sugarman indicated that Committee would not be submitting a budget that ran an operating deficit.

Action: The Committee will investigate opening a Euro based account in a bank based outside of Canada. By: Finance and Audit Committee, Secretariat.

A revised budget will be submitted to the Board for 2007 – 2008 for approval at the June meeting that it will incorporate the direction given by the Board.

#### 1.7 Development of the 2007 – 2008 Operational Plan

Reiner Banken provided an update on the work done by the Strategy Committee to develop an Operational Plan in response to the Board direction at the February meeting. He noted that it was challenging to find a way to organize the aims and objectives with clear outcomes into a succinct form. The Committee was hoping to be able to generate a document with a number of clear priorities for the coming year. Incorporating the activities and priorities of the Committees and the Interest Sub-Groups (ISG's) was seen as being especially challenging. The work of the Communications Committee in developing a work plan that identified two clear priority areas (web site and the Journal) was seen a good example of the type of focus needed for an operational plan.

The Board discussed the most effective way of incorporating the Committees into the plan development process, it was agreed that the best way to do this was to challenge each Committee and ISG to identify two or three priority areas for 2007 -2008 and develop proposals for addressing those priorities.

Linking these priorities to the Society's budget was also seen as being crucial, as was the idea of developing an annual planning cycle for the Society. This would provide an annual timeline for Committee and ISG's to develop their plans, link them to the budget and the Society's priorities. The concept of a planning cycle will be incorporated into the work of the strategy committee.

Action: A draft Operational Plan for 2007 -2008 will be submitted to the Board By: Strategy Committee,

for the June meeting.

Secretariat.

## 1.8 Policy Forum

Chris Henshall provided an overview of the report from the Policy Forum Committee on the follow up activities from the February 2007 meeting of the Forum. He asked that the Board approve inclusion of discussion items for the Board agenda in June, and that the Committee will be providing proposals relevant to those items for that discussion.

Action:

A strategic discussion of the Policy Forum to be included on the June Board agenda.

By:

Secretariat

A paper to support that discussion to be prepared.

Chris Henshall, Karen Facey and the Policy Forum Committee

## 2 Policy and Operational Issues

### 2.1 Board Evaluation Survey

Berit Mørland gave an overview of the key results of the Board survey that was conducted after the February, 2007, meeting. The main findings were in four areas; 1) Board members asked for more meetings however these should be teleconferences, not face to face meetings; meeting dates for Board meetings should be set well in advance of meetings being held; 2) the material provided as background for Board meetings needs to be better prepared and organized, creating a Board only download site on the Society's web site was suggested and will be implemented; 3) there was a preference for a strategic agenda with time allocation and expected outcomes. It was pointed out that the agenda used for this teleconference was based on the findings of this survey; and finally 4) the follow up from the meetings needs to be more timely.

The Board felt that while this survey had been a useful exercise with positive results not every Board meeting required such detailed survey. Shorter surveys when needed after future Board meetings as well as an annual survey like the one just completed were suggested.

Action: Directions from the survey have already been implemented in regard to the agenda structure; others will be implemented in time for the Board meeting in June.

By: Secretariat and Board as appropriate.

### 2.2 Web Site Rebuild Project

Reiner Banken and Paul Childs provided an overview of the report on the web site submitted to the Board. It was noted that the site was still under construction in some areas but areas of key importance to members were functioning as expected.

Action: None, information and an ongoing item

### 2.3 Nominating Committee

Chris Henshall provided a report on the work of the Nominating Committee to develop a slate of candidates for the Society's Board of Directors and Executive Committee elections. He reported that Laura Sampietro Colom was acclaimed as the Society's new Vice-President and that nine members of the Society were nominated for the three Board of Directors positions that were up for election. Of the nine candidates six (Dr. John Bridges, Dr. Clifford Goodman, Dr. Janet Hiller, , Dr. Alric Ruether, Dr. Donald Schopflocher, and Dr. Ken Stein) were nominated from the Society's membership and three (Dr. Sun-Hae Lee-Robin, Dr. Wija Ortwijn, and Dr. Magda Wladysiuk) were recommended for nomination by the Committee.

The Board approved the slate of candidates. Paul Childs reported that the web site and email systems to support the election had been tested, were in place and that voting could likely begin on Friday May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Action: Voting for the Society's Board of Directors to proceed with the approved list of candidates.

By: Secretariat.

### **3. Routine Business**

#### **3.1 Approval of Previous Board Minutes – February 11, 2007**

Helena Dahlgren requested that item 4.7 c regarding the Journal be clarified to indicate two clear decisions were taken; that responsibility for the Journal had been assigned to the Communications Committee and the consultants report provided to the Board was felt to be too vague and did not clearly meet the Society's needs for a review of the Journal.

The Board agreed that once these changes had been made to the minutes and that Helena Dahlgren was satisfied that they reflect the discussions and outcomes of that subject the minutes could be considered approved.

Action: Changes as derived to be made to the minutes.

By: Secretariat and Helena Dahlgren

#### **3.2 Executive Committee Minutes – April 12, 2007**

These minutes were provided for information. There were no questions or comments about either set of minutes.

Action: None, information item.

#### **3.3 Next Meeting – dates and agenda topics for Barcelona**

The next meeting of the Board will be at the Society's Annual Conference on Saturday, June 16, 2007, in Barcelona Spain, at the King Juan Carlos Hotel. The Policy Forum meeting will follow the Board meeting.

The Board agreed to retain the new agenda structure for the Barcelona meeting and that the following items will appear on that agenda: an update on planning for Montréal 2008; the AMC with a recommendation for the location of the 2009 Annual Conference and revised Annual Meeting Guidelines; the Finance and Audit Committee with a proposed 2007 -2008 budget; a draft Operational Plan for 2007 – 2008; the Policy Forum; election results; and reports and plans from Committees and ISG's. The agenda will be structured to allow time for discussion of the Committees and ISG's materials.

The deadline for submission of materials for the June Board meeting is Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Action: Agenda and meeting material to be prepared as required.

By: As required by the demands of agenda items.

### **4. Adjournment**

The call adjourned after approximately one hour and thirty minutes.