



MINUTES OF THE 2005 FALL BOARD TELECONFERENCE

Date: 18 November 2005

Time: 4:00 pm GMT

Present:

Board of Directors

Berit Morland, President (Norway)

Dev Menon, Vice-President (Canada)

Diane Benner, Treasurer (Canada)

Americo Cicchetti, Director (Italy)

Cliff Goodman, Director (United States)

Krzysztof Landa, Director (Poland)

Jill Sanders, Director (Canada)

Secretariat

Christine Batdorf, Administrative Officer, HTAi Secretariat (Canada)

Tania Stafinski, Acting Manager, HTAi Secretariat (Canada)

Egon Jonsson, Executive Director & CEO, Institute of Health Economics (Canada)

Regrets:

Laura Sampietro-Colom, Secretary (Spain)

Jean-Francois Baladi, Director (United States)

Helena Dahlgren, Director (Sweden)

John Gabbay, Director (United Kingdom)

Marjukka Makela, Director (Finland)

Chris Henshall, Past President (United Kingdom)

Finn Borlum Kristensen, Observer, Chair of INAHTA (Denmark)

Sadasivan Sivalal, Observer (Malaysia)

1.0 Welcome and apologies

Berit Morland welcomed everyone and offered apologies on behalf of Jean-Francois Baladi, Helena Dahlgren, John Gabbay, Marjukka Makela, Chris Henshall, and Finn Borlum Kristensen, who were unable to participate in the call. She indicated that Sivalal Sadasivan was expected to be connected as soon as he was able to provide a phone number to the Secretariat.

2.0 Approval of agenda

Berit Morland briefly outlined the agenda for the teleconference, which was approved as circulated prior to the meeting. She suggested that discussions around item 4.1 of the agenda (Status of the Secretariat) be held "in camera". The Board agreed.

3.0 Approval of minutes of the 2005 Annual Board Meeting

Berit Morland invited questions and/or comments from the Board regarding the minutes of the 2005 Annual Board Meeting, which was held on 18 June 2005 in Rome, Italy. Since none were raised, she moved that the minutes be approved as circulated. The motion was seconded by Diane Benner and carried, with none against.

4.0 Business arising

4.1 Status of the Secretariat

Berit Morland reminded the Board that two issues required discussion: 1) the contract with the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) and 2) recruitment of a Director for the Secretariat. She then asked Dev Menon to provide an update on the status of each one.

Contract with IHE

Dev Menon indicated that the contract, which had been approved by the Board at its Mid-Winter Board Meeting, was sent to Egon Jonsson, Executive Director and CEO of the IHE, for his review in late June. Shortly after inquiring about its status in early October to Wanda Draginda, Senior Director of the IHE and the person to whom Egon Jonsson had forwarded the contract, he received a printed version of a new contract, which did not resemble the structure or format of the original one. Dev Menon and Diane Benner subsequently agreed to review this new contract in detail, and, after doing so, concluded that there were primarily two differences in content between it and the original one. It included: 1) an “annual fee” that HTAi would need to pay to IHE for hosting the Secretariat had been added and 2) a liability clause that removes all liability from IHE for the Secretariat’s activities, including any contracts entered into by IHE employees on behalf of HTAi. The Executive Committee gave careful consideration to the potential implications of both additions and, in the end, decided that it was not prepared to accept either one. However, it was willing to produce a counterproposal that reflected the language and structure of the IHE-produced contract. Therefore, the Executive Committee produced and approved a “blended” version identical in content to IHE’s contract, with the exception of the annual fee and liability clause. This version was presented to Egon Jonsson in early November as HTAi’s final offer. Berit Morland thanked Dev Menon for the update and asked Egon Jonsson for his comments. He indicated that he had not yet been able to review the contract himself, but had forwarded it to Wanda Draginda, who was in the process of reviewing its contents. Berit Morland thanked Egon Jonsson and suggested that Dev Menon summarize recent efforts to recruit a Director for the Secretariat before the Board began its “in camera” discussions.

Recruitment of a Director for the Secretariat

Dev Menon stated that in July, the Executive Committee and Egon Jonsson had been optimistic that Don Juzwishin, who heads the Health Technology Assessment Unit at the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, would be willing to take on the position of Director of the HTAi Secretariat part-time, since they had held several discussions with him during which he expressed a keen interest in such a position. As a result, arrangements were made for Berit Morland to travel to Edmonton in mid-September to finalize the position with Don Juzwishin and the individuals to whom he reports. However, a few days prior to Berit Morland’s visit, Don Juzwishin contacted Dev Menon to let him know that he had decided to decline the offer. During “next step” discussions that took place at the following Executive Committee teleconference, Egon Jonsson suggested that HTAi refrain from independently actively recruiting a Director until the IHE Board Meeting in mid-October, after which he would have a better idea of IHE’s future. He also indicated that he had interviewed several candidates for potential positions at IHE whom he felt could take on the role of Director of the HTAi Secretariat as part of their IHE responsibilities. The Executive Committee agreed. Thus, by the end of October, the Secretariat was asked to proceed with posting the position in the local and national papers. By November 15th, 6 applications had been collected and reviewed by Berit Morland, Dev Menon, and Egon Jonsson. The Secretariat is now in the process of scheduling interviews. Berit Morland thanked Dev Menon.

The Board held a detailed “in camera” discussion around the contract. Frustrations and concerns over the length of time it has taken to finalize it were expressed. Nonetheless, it was agreed that the Executive Committee would remain responsible for resolving any outstanding issues regarding specific terms in the contract with Egon Jonsson. It was, however, suggested that Berit Morland and Jill Sanders meet with Egon Jonsson and the Chair of the Board of IHE in person to clarify HTAi’s expectations of its Secretariat and what it sees as the Secretariat’s relationship with the IHE. In the meantime, the Executive would begin to revisit other possible options for the Secretariat (e.g., moving it to a different organization, establishing a free-standing organization, etc.), thus presenting all information to the Board and allowing it to be able to make a final decision on the Secretariat at its Mid-Winter Board Meeting in February.

4.2 Annual Meetings

2005

Jill Sanders, Chair of the Annual Meetings Committee (AMC), stated that, according to the contract between HTAi and the 2005 Local Organizing Committee (LOC), the deadline for transferring membership fees paid through conference registrations and other funds from the 2005 Annual Meeting to HTAi is 28 November 2005. The Secretariat has been communicating with Vanessa Poloni, the professional conference organizer for the Meeting, regarding discrepancies between the final list of registrants it received a couple of weeks ago and the one that was provided to it for election purposes approximately 2 weeks prior to the meeting. It hopes to resolve these discrepancies soon. Nonetheless, under the profit-sharing arrangement stated in the contract, the Society can expect to

receive at least \$58,000 US from the 2005 Annual Meeting. Berit Morland thanked Jill Sanders for the update and invited questions and comments from the Board. None were raised.

2006

Jill Sanders indicated that the AMC and the Secretariat have had discussions with Brendon Kearney, Chair of the 2006 LOC, regarding the Sponsorship Prospectus that was prepared by SAPMEA, the professional conference management firm hired to organize the 2006 Annual Meeting in Adelaide, Australia, as several items were not in compliance with the Annual Meeting Guidelines. These items have now been amended to the AMC's satisfaction. With respect to the Scientific Programme, a detailed, preliminary list of potential panel sessions and workshops has been sent to the International Scientific Programme Committee for its review and the call of abstracts has been circulated electronically, as well as by post. The deadline for submitting abstracts on-line through the HTAi web site is 13 February. Berit Morland thanked Jill Sanders for the update.

2007

Jill Sanders announced that the proposal from the Catalan Ministry of Health to host the 2007 Annual Meeting in Barcelona under Option 1 of the Annual Meeting Guidelines (where the LOC assumes all of the financial risk) has been reviewed and approved by the AMC. Therefore, it was formally recommending that the Board grant the Catalan Ministry of Health the right to host the 2007 Annual Meeting. The Board agreed, and asked the Secretariat to contact Laura Sampietro-Colom, Chair of the 2007 LOC, and inform her of the Board's decision.

Action: The Secretariat will prepare a letter on behalf of the HTAi Board congratulating Laura Sampietro-Colom on her successful proposal to host the 2007 Annual Meeting.

2008

Jill Sanders stated that an open call for proposals to host the 2008 Annual Meeting was carried out through the HTAi web site over the summer and early fall. While the Secretariat received several informal expressions of interest, only AETMIS in Quebec submitted a full proposal. This proposal, which complies with Option 2 (where HTAi assumes the financial risk) has been reviewed by the AMC. AETMIS and the Secretariat have now been asked to jointly develop a budget for the LOC operating costs. However, the AMC would like to proceed with making a formal recommendation to the Board to accept the proposal from AETMIS, pending approval of the budget by the HTAi Board of Directors by e-mail in mid-December. The Board agreed, and asked the Secretariat to notify AETMIS of its decision.

Action: The Secretariat and AETMIS will work together to prepare an operating budget for the 2008 LOC. The Secretariat will contact AETMIS and let them know that Board has approved its proposal, pending approval of the budget.

Policy paper

Jill Sanders reminded the Board that, at its Annual Board Meeting in Rome last June, it had asked the AMC to develop a brief Annual Meetings Policy Paper that clearly describes the 2 options for hosting Annual Meetings and provides terms of reference for each one. She indicated that, over the summer, the Secretariat and the AMC prepared such a paper, which was circulated to the Board for its review and approval. She then summarized the contents of the paper, highlighting key points, and invited questions and comments from the Board. A discussion followed. Jill Sanders pointed out that the AMC gave considerable thought to the profit-sharing categories proposed under Option 2, and explained that feedback from previous Chairs of LOCs had been sought. She also stated that the AMC had asked the Secretariat to refrain from investing efforts into developing an Annual Meetings Procedures Manual until the Board approved the Policy Paper. With no concerns raised, Berit Morland proposed that it be approved as is. The Board agreed.

Action: The Secretariat will begin preparing an Annual Meetings Procedures Manual, based upon the terms of the Annual Meetings Policy Paper.

4.3 Scholarship/grants programme

Berit Morland reminded the Board that it had allocated \$20,000 Cdn in this year's budget to educational scholarships and travel grants. She then reviewed the proposed submission requirements and selection criteria, which had been outlined in a paper prepared by Laura Sampietro-Colom and circulated to Board members prior to the teleconference. A discussion around for whom the grants and scholarships were meant, whether or not points should be assigned to each criterion, if previous training or education in health technology assessment should be required, and how the funds ought to be divided followed. The Board agreed that special consideration should be given to individuals from developing countries, and that while they did not need to have a background in HTA, they should have had some

training or experience in health services research. It was decided that the points, which had been assigned to each criterion, should only be used as a guide; recipients would need to secure match funding from their home organizations; and the amount of each scholarship should not be fixed in advance, and, instead, determined upon review of the applications. Berit Morland suggested that the proposed scholarship submission requirements and selection criteria be approved, pending completion of the revisions indicated above. The Board then discussed the proposed criteria for selecting travel grant recipients. Once again, it was agreed that, while such grants should be made available to both applicants from developing countries and students, those from developing countries ought to be given priority. Berit Morland asked the Secretariat to add a statement to the paper which clarifies this position. All other criteria were approved. Dev Menon proposed that the Secretariat post an announcement regarding the availability of travel grants on the HTAi web site in December so that individuals wishing to apply for them in order to participate in the 2006 Annual Meeting will have sufficient time to prepare their abstracts. The Board agreed.

Action: The Secretariat will revise the scholarship and travel grants submission requirements and selection criteria to reflect the Board's discussions. It will also ensure that a travel grants/scholarship section describing the availability of such funds and the application process is added to the HTAi web site as soon as possible.

4.4 Policy Forum Structure

Berit Morland briefly reviewed the Policy Forum paper prepared by Chris Henshall and circulated to Board members prior to the teleconference, which described arrangements made to date on the 2006 Winter Meeting, and indicated that two items required discussion and approval by the Board: 1) Establishment of gold and silver level Policy Forum membership categories and 2) a process for establishing which Board members needed to participate in the Forum meeting. Berit Morland and Cliff Goodman summarized the rationale for the two categories. The Forum had agreed that efforts should be made to try and balance the current private sector membership with a few organizations from the device and diagnostics sectors. This raised the issue of how best to include members from companies with less ability or willingness to pay than large pharmaceutical companies. Over the summer, the Secretariat compiled information on the value of current and potential Forum member organizations, at the end of which it became clear that while many device companies are significantly smaller than most pharmaceutical companies, overlaps do exist. Consequently, Chris Henshall proposed that HTAi offer companies which focus solely on devices and/or diagnostics the option of becoming Silver Members at an annual fee of \$10,000 US. In return, such Members would be able to send 1 individual to the Forum meetings. All current For-Profit Forum Members would automatically become Gold Members. The Board engaged in a detailed discussion around the potential implications of introducing the 2 categories. Despite some concerns over the potential views of current Forum Members, the Board agreed to approve the idea, along with Chris Henshall's request to approach Medtronic, GE Healthcare, and Roche under the new membership structure. The Board then discussed its own attendance at Forum meetings. It was agreed that the Chair of the Forum Committee, in consultation with the President of HTAi, should decide which HTAi Board Members to invite to Forum Meetings, following the general principles outlined in the Policy Forum Paper and the Board's discussions.

5. Board sub-committee structure and governance

Board sub-committee structure and governance

Due to time constraints, the Board agreed to postpone discussions around proposed governance policies for sub-committees until the 2006 Mid-Winter Board Meeting in February. In the meantime, Dev Menon agreed to review them for clarity and succinctness.

Action: The Secretariat will ensure that an item addressing Board sub-committee structure and governance appears on the agenda for the 2006 Mid-Winter Board Meeting, which will be held on 5 February at the Lansdowne Resort outside of Washington, DC. Dev Menon will review the corresponding policy paper and prepare a final draft for discussion in February.

Structure and responsibilities

Berit Morland reviewed the contents of the Sub-committee structure and responsibilities paper, which had been prepared by the Executive Committee and Secretariat, and highlighted several key points. They proposed that: 1) Sub-committees be chaired by Board members and comprise at least 2 other individuals with relevant expertise from the HTAi membership, 2) the current Membership, Communications, Fundraising, and Corporate Relations Committee be divided into 2 separate committees, the Communications Committee and the Membership Committee, 3) oversight of the HTAi Vortal and other publications be transferred from the Scientific and Professional Programmes Committee (SPPC) to the proposed Communications Committee, 3) responsibility for selecting scholarship and travel grant award recipients be given to the SPPC, and 4) management of funds to support Interest Sub-Group activities be one of the tasks of the Membership Committee. Lastly, it was proposed that the Policy Forum Committee consist of

one representative from the private sector who is elected by private sector Policy Forum members. The Board agreed to approve the paper, as circulated.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Approval of 2004-2005 Auditors' Report

Diane Benner presented the 2004-2005 auditor's report, stating that HTAi had a very successful year, due, in part, to the HTAi Policy Forum and less-than-expected Secretariat staffing expenses. She then invited comments and questions from the Board. Berit Morland asked the Secretariat to circulate the cover letter, which had accompanied the audited financial statements, to all Board members. The Board agreed to approve the report by e-mail, following receipt of the cover letter. Berit Morland thanked the Secretariat and Diane Benner.

Action: The Secretariat will send an electronic copy of the auditors' report cover letter to Board members.

5.2 Year-end projections for 2005-2006

Diane Benner expressed apologies for not having had an opportunity to complete year-end projections in time for the teleconference. She stated that she plans to complete them, with the support of the Secretariat, next week, after which copies will be sent to Board members by e-mail for comment.

5.3 Web site advertising policies and protocol

Berit Morland asked Tania Stafinski to describe the various types of requests for advertising that the Secretariat has received over the past 2 years. Tania Stafinski explained that they consisted of employment opportunities, grant competitions, and upcoming conferences. She also reiterated the importance of considering 2 points: 1) that one of the stated benefits of organizational membership in HTAi is the right to post advertisements on the HTAi web site and 2) that notification of such opportunities may be viewed as an important service to members of the Society. A discussion followed. It was decided that, in general, posting of advertisements on the HTAi web site should be limited to organizational members of HTAi, but exceptions may be made for individual members. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Executive Committee, will, for the time-being, review these exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

5.4 Support for Interest Sub-Groups

Berit Morland summarized the contents of the paper prepared by Dev Menon, which outlined possible criteria for allocating funds to various Interest Sub-Group activities. She invited questions and comments from the Board. Since several were raised, all requiring careful consideration, the Board opted to postpone discussions until the Mid-Winter Board Meeting.

5.5 2006 Mid-Winter Board Meeting

Berit Morland reminded the Board that the 2006 Mid-Winter Board Meeting and Policy Forum will take place from 5 to 7 February 2006. She indicated that the Secretariat will be contacting the Board to confirm attendance and travel requirements within the next couple of weeks.

6.0 Other business

With no other business, the teleconference was adjourned at 7:30 pm (GMT)