



MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2006 BOARD TELECONFERENCE

Date: 14th November, 2006

Time: 8:00 p.m. GMT

Present:

Board Members:

Dr. Berit Morland (Norway) President
Dr. Reiner Banken (Canada) Vice President
Dr. Guy Maddern (Australia), Secretary
Mr. Mitchell Sugarman (United States), Treasurer
Dr. Chris Henshall (United Kingdom) Past-President
Dr. Karen Facey (United Kingdom)
Jean Francois Baladi, (United States)
Americo Cicchetti (Italy)
Helena Dahlgren (Sweden)
Krzysztof Landa (Poland)
Marjukka Makela (Finland)

Observers:

Alric R  ther (Germany)
Sivalal Sadasivan (Malaysia)
Elaine Alligood (United States – Infomrtaion Resources Group)
Dr. Laura Sampietro-Colom (Spain – Barcelona 2007 LOC)

Christine Batdorf, HTAi Secretariat
Paul Childs, HTAi Secretariat

Regrets:

Dr. Jill Sanders (Canada)

1.0 Welcome/Apologies

Berit Morland

2.0 Approval of agenda

Berit Morland

3.0 Previous Minutes

Board Minutes:

- a. Approval of revised minutes of 2006 Mid Winter Board Meeting
- b. Approval of 2006 Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Berit Morland
Guy Maddern

Executive Committee Minutes (for information)

- a. Executive Committee Teleconference August 29, 2006
- b. Executive Committee Teleconference September 26, 2006
- c. Executive Committee Teleconference October 24, 2006

d. Executive Committee Teleconference, November 7, 2006

All of the minutes submitted were approved.

Action: Board minutes from July 2006 and amended minutes from February 2006 will be posted to the HTAi web site. All future Executive Committee minutes will be provided to the Board. By: Secretariat

4.0 Business arising

4.1 Annual Meetings

a. 2007

Barcelona LOC

A report from Laura Sampietro-Colom of the Barcelona Local Organizing Committee (LOC) providing an update on progress on the Barcelona meeting was accepted for information by the Board and no significant concerns with its content were raised.

Krzysztof Landa, chair of the Annual Meeting Committee (AMC), expressed concern regarding some of the sponsorship material for the Barcelona Annual Conference and the role played by the Annual Meeting Committee in reviewing that material. It was agreed that these issues would be addressed and resolved through ongoing dialogue between the Barcelona LOC and the AMC, as well as through a comprehensive review and redrafting of the Society's Annual Meeting Guidelines document.

Action:
The concerns raised by the AMC will be communicated to the Barcelona LOC.

By: Secretariat,
Barcelona
LOC,
AMC/SPPC

The nature of Annual Conference sponsorship material and its potential impact on perceptions of the Society's relationship with industry will be discussed by the Executive Committee and Board at a later date.

Executive
Committee,
Board, AMC

b. 2008

Reiner Banken

Reiner Banken reported that progress was being made on the preparation of material for the Society's web site for the Montreal meeting. Dr. Banken also noted that the International, Scientific Program Committee (ISPC) will be holding its first teleconference early in December 2006, and that the ISPC was hoping to add to its membership with an additional member from Africa.

Action: None, information item.

c. 2009

Krzysztof Landa

Krzysztof Landa reported that a notice requesting proposals for the location of the 2009 Annual Conference had been posted on the Society's web site and that a number of individual and groups of countries had expressed interest in submitting a proposal for the 2009 conference. It was also reported that a Boarder audience for the notice for proposals was being sought to encourage a Board range of submissions for 2009.

Action: None, information item.

4.2 Secretariat Report

Paul Childs

a. Managing Directors' work plan

The draft work plan developed by the Managing Director and the Executive Committee was discussed and approved in its draft form by the members of the Board. It was agreed that accountability for communications to the Society's membership and maintaining currency of the Society's web page should be clear and distinct parts of the work plan document.

Action: Details on accountability for communications with the Society's membership and maintenance of the Society's web page will be added. By: Managing Director

The Managing Director's work plan will be linked to the review of the Managing Director and Secretariat functions. Managing Director, Evaluation Committee, Executive Committee.

b Board *in-camera* discussions guidelines

The proposed guidelines document was reviewed and approved.

Action: These guidelines will be signed and become effective as official Society policy documents. Managing Director, President.

c. Board conflict of interest guidelines

The draft guidelines document was reviewed by the members of the Board and concern was expressed with several aspects of the document. The two key concerns were that the guidelines should be driven by the Society's status as a not for profit charity operating in Canada and Alberta; and that anyone acting in the name of the Board must be accountable to the membership of the Society, consequently all potential conflicts should be stated and addressed. Given these issues Board members felt that a stricter policy was required.

Action: Secretariat staff is to redraft the policy to insure compatibility with laws and regulations governing the Society and the need for openness on the part of Board members. By: Secretariat.

d. 5 Year Strategic Plan discussion document

The paper reviewed by the Board was felt to be a good starting point for the development of a new strategic plan for the Society. Developing a strategic plan requires a balance between the need for continuity and stability in the Society if and the need for change and flexibility to respond to an always evolving environment. This requires that a new strategic plan will need to be both prospective and retrospective in approach so that things the Society has done in the past that have been successful are identified and retained as well as developing new approaches. The potential need for a dedicated strategic planning session involving the entire Board was identified to increase the level of commitment by the Board to a new strategic plan. This would also allow the strategic planning process to draw on the Society's institutional memory in the retrospective/prospective analysis. Reiner Banken agreed that he would coordinate a working group that would develop additional material to start the strategic planning process for the next meeting of the Board. Americo Cichetti, Karen Facey, and Chris Henshall also agreed to participate in this working group.

Action: a teleconference of this strategic planning working group will be held before the next meeting of the Board. A more action oriented document will be prepared by this group for the next meeting of the Board. By: Working Group members and Secretariat.

e. Evaluation of the Managing Director and Secretariat

Berit Morland

The Board agreed to appoint a sub-committee to draft Terms of Reference for this evaluation process: Berit Morland, Reiner Banken, Guy Maddern, and Marjukka Makela agreed to participate in this drafting process.

Action: Terms of Reference for a committee to undertake an evaluation process for the Managing Director and the Secretariat will be drafted for the February Board meeting. By: Working Group and Secretariat where appropriate.

4.3 Finance and Audit Committee

Mitchell Sugarman

a. Proposed 2006-2007 budget

The Society's approved budget to date was presented to the Board by Mitch Sugarman, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee. It was reported that a deficit of approximately \$35,000 (U.S.) was forecast for the current budget year. The deficit was a result of several factors including unexpected one-off expenses, increased expenditures on the Policy Forum, and a decline in membership revenue, which had been expected after the Annual Meeting was held in Adelaide.

Action: None required, Finance and Audit Committee to report regularly to the Board

b. 2005 – 2006 Financial Statements

The final draft of the Society's audited financial statements was presented to the Board for review. The auditor reported no outstanding concerns or issues with the Society's financial statements; the Society is in fairly robust financial shape in terms of management of its current operating budget and financial reserves.

Action: Society audited statements were approved and are to be made available to the Society's membership through the Society's web site. By: Secretariat

c. HTAi reserve policy

The draft reserve policy for the Society was presented and discussed by the Board. The intent of this reserve fund is to ensure that in a worse case scenario the Society is able to wind down its affairs in a fair, orderly and business like manner. The Board also discussed the need for a financial plan to address the potential need for the Society to fund an annual meeting either by choice or in the case of a Local Organizing Committee being unable to fulfill that duty. This was identified as being a separate reserve issues, and one with a higher degree of complexity that the reserves needed for winding up Society business.

Action: The Finance and Audit Committee is charged with implementation of the approved Reserve Policy and to develop approaches for the self-financing of Society Annual Meetings. By: Finance and Audit Committee and Secretariat.

d. HTAi secretariat credit card policy

Concern was expressed by some members of the Board that because of the status of the Secretariat being employees of the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) and not employees of the Society obtaining a credit card for the Secretariat was potentially risky. Approval of the credit card policy was deferred to the Executive Committee pending discussion with IHE to resolve these concerns.

Action: The potential risks of a credit card being issued in the name of Secretariat staff is to be reviewed with IHE and reported to the Executive Committee. By: Managing Director and Executive Committee.

4.4 Membership update

Berit Morland

Berit Morland reported that the total number of members in the Society as of November 7, 2006, was 585. Some concern was expressed that the number of members from middle income countries was low, and that the number of members in the Society in total seemed decline after each annual meeting. Linking HTAi membership to membership in regional HTA society's and organizations was proposed, for example linking HTAi membership to INAHTA membership.

It was felt that that these were issues that had been discussed in brief before, however a more structured discussion with some options for action was needed.

Action: The Membership Committee was asked to develop a discussion paper for the next meeting of the Board addressing the questions of membership loss and retention and the potential for linkages with regional HTA societies. By: Membership Committee

4.5 2007 Policy Forum

Berit Morland and Chris Henshall

Chris Henshall provided an update on the planning and preparations for the 2007 meeting of the Policy Forum. He indicated that the agenda being planned was an ambitious one however the results of that agenda would be of use to all Society members.

Action: None required, ongoing issue. The location of the Forum to be provided to the Board when confirmed.

4.6 Board Sub-Committees and Interest Groups: Written Reports

Because of time concerns and the complexities of the information in the reports, with the exception of the report from the Publications Sub-Committee, reports from Interest Sub-Groups were deferred until the next meeting of the Board. This will allow the information in the reports to be organized and reviewed by Board members so that they would be able to make informed decisions on the proposals submitted.

Action: Secretariat to collate information for proposals from the ISG's into a form that will allow comparison of the cost of the proposals. By: Managing Director.

4.6 e Publications Sub-Committee

Susan Bidwell joined the teleconference for this portion of the agenda to provide an update on discussions that had taken place by the Sub-Committee to address the issue of the Society's journal; the International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care (IJTAHC). The Board discussed the issue extensively addressing a number of issues; some members of the Board felt the proposal submitted was too general and the mandate of the consultant would overlap with the mandate of the Communications Committee. It was noted that at the Board meeting in Adelaide a clear distinction was drawn between the communications functions of the Society and journal in that the Journal was felt to be available for scientific communications by the Society. It was also noted a more strategic approach to communications would help to clarify this distinction and would help to identify what the membership wanted from the Journal. A survey of the membership would address this latter issue. It was proposed that a new approach to the issue of the Journal was needed; one that would provide some on how the Society could proceed to address these issues was needed. It was felt that clarity around the members needs for a Journal was an important first step in addressing the development of those options.

Action: a survey of the membership to determine the member wants and needs for a scientific journal will be drafted. By: Executive Committee

4.6 g i Information Resources Group (IRG) Interest Sub-Group

The Board reviewed a proposal from the IRG for further development of the HTAi Vortal on the Society's web page. Some concern was expressed that key information around the Vortal was missing, such as the number of users. It was also suggested that other issues related to the web page would require financial resources and that upgrading the Vortal should take place at the same time. Elaine Alligood noted that the IRG was looking for a volunteer editor for the Vortal and that concerns about time required for searching in the Vortal would be addressed by an application using Google custom searching was being developed. Members of the Board indicated that they supported the development of improved search capacity of the Vortal as a way of improving its utility as an information source for the Society's members and others.

Action: The proposal for development of the Society's web page is to be resubmitted to the Board for its February meeting. By: IRG

5.0 New business

a. HTAi Linkages with developing countries.

Berit Morland

A draft work plan for improving linkages with HTAi and developing countries was reviewed by the Board. Several suggestions for external organizations and individuals for developing these links were proposed, including the World Bank and the World Health Organization. The draft work plan was approved.

Action: Initial work proposed in the work plan to proceed and a proposal for an Interest Sub-group on HTA in developing countries will be presented to the next meeting of the Board. By: Secretariat.

b. Advertising the HTAi Annual Conferences with other organizations.

Paul Childs

Paul Childs provided an update on the activities taking place in regard to advertising the 2007 Annual Conference and Scientific Sessions of the Society. Opportunities to advertise the meeting an upcoming meeting of the National Institutes of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and opportunities to advertise the meeting on the web page of organizations with an interest in HTA were reported.

Action: Ongoing issue.

By: Secretariat

6.0 Other business

No other business was brought forward for discussion.

7.0 Next Meeting

Sunday, February 11, 2007, location TBD.

8.0 Adjournment

The call adjourned after approximately one hour and fifty minutes.