



Health Technology Assessment International

An International Society for the Promotion of Health Technology Assessment

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2008 BOARD TELECONFERENCE

Tuesday, November 26, 2008
13: 00 GMT

Present on the call:

Reiner Banken - President
Laura Sampietro-Colom – Vice President
Mitchell Sugarman – Treasurer
Guy Maddern – Secretary

Berit Mørland – Past President
Karen Facey
Clifford Goodman
Sun Hae Lee-Robin
Wija Oortwijn

Regrets:

Tammy Clifford
Janet Hiller
Ken Stein
Alric Reuther – Observer, INAHTA
Dr. R M Padney – Observer, INCLEN

Observers:

John Sproule- IHE
Paul Childs – Secretariat
Christine Batdorf - Secretariat

The call began on the hour.

Approval of agenda

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

1. Critical Strategic Areas

1 a. Welcome and Apologies

Reiner Banken welcomed all Board members to the call and thanked them for taking time to participate. No conflicts of interest in agenda items were declared and no items were added to or deleted from the agenda.

1b: Business Arising

Some concern was expressed with the ordering of documents for the meeting on the on Board webpage, not all

documents were posted in the correct agenda order.

Action: Board documents to be posted on the web site in the order they appear on the agenda. By: Secretariat

1c: Interest Sub-Groups (ISG's)

Reiner Banken recommended that based on the reports from the Interest Sub – Groups as well as informal reports from ISG chairs and members, that the Public Agencies, Clinicians, and Decision Makers ISG's would be placed on hold for the time being. It was clarified that this decision was just placing groups 'on-hold' and that in the future if interest was expressed by members in reactivating these groups the Board would gladly consider doing so in accordance with the Board policies on ISG's. This will be communicated to the membership.

The Board then reviewed the funding applications from ISG's. The application to fund an internship position by the Information Resources Group (IRG) was approved as was the application from the Patient/Providers ISG.

The Board felt that the applications submitted from the ISG on Hospital Based HTA and HTA in Developing Countries needed further details before funding could be approved. It was felt that in some instances (i.e. funding for travel to the HTAi Annual Meeting) funding would be in conflict with current HTA policies. It was also not clear what activities where funding was sought, support could be provided by the Secretariat (i.e. teleconferences, web page support). The chairs of these ISG will be contacted and asked to provide further detail on the specific questions of concern to the Board. The Board support for ISG activities will be reiterated; however the concern is that further details on these funding requests are needed.

Action: Clinician, Decision Makers and Public Agencies ISG's are to be placed on hold. HTAi members to informed of the decision and that the groups can be recreated if a new mandate and leadership are identified. By; Secretariat

Funding requests for the IRG and Patients / Providers ISG's approved chairs to be contacted. Secretariat

Requests from the Hospital Based HTA and Developing Counties ISG to be clarified, specifically in regard to; work that will be done by the Secretariat (and not in need of additional funding), support for travel grants, and that funding for HTAi members to attend the Annual Meeting is not available. Secretariat

1d: Committee Updates

Paul Childs provided an update on behalf of the chairs of Membership and Communications Committee and Scientific and Professional Programs Committee. He reported that the Membership and Communications Committee had met by teleconference in early November and that perceived gaps in Committee membership were being filled and activities on the part of the Committee and the Secretariat were underway. Based on the direction taken in the new hosting agreement with HTAi and the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) it was agreed that a representative from the IHE should be asked to join the Committee.

Paul Childs then reported that membership of the Scientific and Professional Programs Committee was complete and the a teleconference of the Committee was being organized as soon as possible to address application for scholarships that had been received, planning for travel grants for the 2009 Annual Meeting, and other issues related to the Committee's mandate.

Action: Ongoing items. IHE rep to be added to Membership and Communications Committee. By: Secretariat, IHE

1e: Finance and Audit Committee

Mitchell Sugarman provided a report from this Committee. He reported that the draft auditors report was late in being provided because of delays at the auditors' office. Along with the financial statements the auditor has made two recommendations: 1) that the Secretariat develop a Policies and Procedure manual; and 2) as part of that manual more specific guidelines on funding for travel grants and scholarships also be developed. Board members were asked to review the draft auditor's report and provide any comments or concerns to the Secretariat as soon as possible so the report can be finalized. Finally, it was noted that the Society's auditor is raising their fees significantly and recommending that the Society engage a new auditing firm.

In reporting on the Society's current financial situation Mitchell Sugarman indicated that to date revenue and expenses were in line with expectations and that while there are two areas of concern no significant issues have been identified. The two identified areas of concern will be monitored by the Secretariat and the Committee. Overall there is an expectation that expenditures and revenue will be close to the budget forecast and the projected operating deficit will be smaller than expected.

Board members expressed some concern with the financial impacts of the meeting in Singapore, in particular if attendance at the meeting falls below expectations resulting in a serious impact on Society's membership dues revenue, and potentially, the Annual Meeting hosting fee. It was agreed that as the meeting date draws closer developments in relation to planning and indicators for attendance (i.e. number of early registrations) should be monitored and if it appears that if a less than optimal situation is emerging planning should be undertaken to compensate for that contingency. This will require that different budget and membership scenarios will need to be explored and action taken if the scenarios with a negative impact emerge.

Action: Models of 1-2 year impact on HTAi finances to be developed for different scenarios for the 2009 Annual Meeting.

By: Secretariat, Finance and Audit Committee.

Policies and Procedures manual for HTAi is to be developed using a Wiki based system and an initial information for a manual to be available at the February Board meeting. Secretariat

If: Policy Forum Committee

Karen Facey provided an update on the activities of the Policy Forum Committee since the last meeting of the Board. She reported that the paper on Harmonization from the February 2008 meeting of the Forum had been published in the Fall 2008 issue of the *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*; that the Committee has been working with the scientific secretariat at NOKC since October to develop the programme for the February 2009 Forum meeting and that work on an agenda for that meeting was well underway. She confirmed that there were four new members of the Forum, and that while the new members were a valuable addition to the Forum there was a need for a strategic discussion to address questions around the size of the Forum, and balancing membership size with the ability to support meaningful discussion around the Forum table. She indicated Board advice on this issue is welcome. She closed her report by saying that she would be stepping down as Forum chair after the June 2009 meeting.

Laura Sampietro-Colom offered congratulations and appreciation to Karen on behalf of the Board for the work she had done for the Forum.

The Board discussed the question of how to conduct the necessary strategic discussion for the Forum, specifically how to incorporate the diverse interests of the Forum's membership as well as support activities like the Working Group on Surrogates that was starting up under the auspices of the Forum. It was agreed that Board members need to be a part of that discussion. It was noted that membership in the Forum was seen as valuable and that the Forum was clearly past the 'inflection point' in its life cycle; managing its growth and development from now on was crucial.

A process for a new chair for the Forum was agreed; a working group consisting of Board members will be formed to issue a call for a new chair in time for a new chair to be in place for the June meeting of the Forum. It was also agreed that the process of finding a new chair needs to be open and transparent.

Action: Search Committee for a new PF Chair to be created consisting of:
Karen Facey, Laura Sampietro-Colom, and Guy Maddern.

By: Laura Sampietro-Colom

1g. Annual Meeting Committee

2008

Speaking as the chair of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the 2008 meeting Reiner Banken reported that the Montréal meeting was a financial success and that the comments he has received since the meeting have been favorable. A final report for the Board on the meeting is being prepared.

2009

Board members reviewed the progress report submitted by the 2009 LOC. Most of the issues of concern related to budget and attendance were discussed under agenda item 1e, Finance and Audit Committee; Board members did ask that deadline for submission of abstracts and proposals for panel sessions to be extended by the LOC.

The importance of the report to the Board in February by the 2009 LOC, especially as that report relates to questions of revenue and expenditure, was emphasized and that message will be communicated to the LOC.

2010

The 2010 Annual Meeting LOC has officially nominated Dr. Michael Barry and Professor Mike Drummond as co-chairs for the 2010 meeting International Scientific and Professional Programme Committee (ISPC). Their nomination was accepted unanimously by the Board.

2011

Wija Oortwijn provided an update on the developments in relation to the joint proposal for the 2001 meeting being prepared by Johns Hopkins – Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Ministry of Health in Brazil. She indicated that the Annual Meeting Committee is expecting to receive a submission on December 5th and that indications so far are that it will be a promising proposal. Several Board members familiar with the HTA environment in Brazil and South America indicated that they felt a meeting in Brazil would attract a large number of participants.

Revised Draft Annual Meeting Guidelines

Wija Oortwijn provided an overview of the amendments that had been made to the newest draft of the Guidelines document. Board members requested that information on the Society's strategic plan and the significance of the Annual Meeting in that plan be added to this draft before it is released.

Action:

2008: Final report from the 2008 LOC to be provided to the Board.

By:

Reiner Banken as Chair HTAi
2008 LOC.

2009: LOC to be asked if the deadline for abstract submission will be extended as the deadline for panel sessions has been extended.

Wija Oortwijn

Ongoing contact with LOC to be maintained, focusing on concerns related to meeting attendance and viability. LOC report to the February Board meeting will be critical; LOC will be asked to review reports from Montreal and Barcelona as examples of what that report should look like. A balance sheet with a clear explanation of revenue and expenses must be provided.

Annual Meeting Committee,
Secretariat

2010: LOC Nomination of Dr. Michael Barry and Professor Mike Drummond for the 2010 ISPC accepted. LOC to be contacted. Secretariat

2011: Information item

Revised Annual Conference Guidelines: Added material from Board members to be included in a revised draft. Guidelines to receive final review by AMC then released. Annual Meeting Committee, Secretariat

1h. 2006 Election investigation

Reiner Banken provided an update on the activities of the 2006 Nominating Committee and the investigation into the 2006 elections. A final report is expected for the February meeting of the Board.

The Committee also recommends to the Board that Electoral Reform Services (ERS) in the United Kingdom be contracted to manage the voting process for the Society's upcoming Board elections.

Action: Approval of recommendation for Electoral Reform Services to be contracted to manage HTAi election processes, beginning with the 2009 Board elections. By: Berit Mørland, Secretariat

1i. Nominating Committee

Berit Mørland reported that the draft election guidelines document submitted to the Board is in response to the request made at the July Board meeting. These guidelines are in the final stage of review and a final draft will be provided to the Board meeting in February, pending any advice or direction arising from the report on the 2006 election.

As chair of the Nominating Committee Berit Mørland has nominated Liz Adams from the United States and Marjukka Makela from Finland as members of the Nominating Committee for 2009. Liz Adams has asked if the Board feels that her serving on the Nominating Committee for INAHTA simultaneous with serving on the HTAi Nominating Committee was a conflict of interest. The Board did not feel that this was a conflict and the nominees for the Committee were accepted unanimously.

Action: Election Guidelines: By: Nominating Committee, Secretariat

Edits indicated by the Board to be made, final draft of the Guidelines to be prepared after 2006 election investigation report is complete and any other recommendations are accepted by the Board.

Nominating Committee Membership: Committee membership approved. Berit Mørland

1j. Business Plan/Strategic Discussion

Laura Sampietro-Colom reviewed the draft two year Business Plan that had been provided to the Board. She indicated that the goal in the next two months was to identify strategic priorities for the Board to focus Society activities and provide direction to the Society as an international leader in HTA. The document will be revised to provide a clear direction on 3-4 key strategic areas such as building membership. The revised plan will be brought to the February meeting for discussion, confirmation of strategic priorities, and approval for action over the next two years.

Action: Business Plan to be redrafted to clearly identify priorities, actions and outcomes and presented to the February Board meeting. By: Working group to redraft the plan be formed: Reiner Banken,

1k. European Commission: Call for Proposals for a Collaborative Project

Information item, response from the European Commission pending.

1l. Secretariat hosting agreement

Information item, a new hosting agreement has been signed and will come into effect on January 1, 2009.

2. Policy and Operational Issues

2a. Journal

Paul Childs provided an overview of the information from Egon Jonsson and Cambridge University Press on a proposed international history of HTA and the request that HTAi provide financial support for this project. Board members were supportive of the concept of a history however they felt that more detail on the funding and the role that HTAi would play in the project are needed before financial support from the Society can be considered.

Action: Funding support for a special issue of the Journal on the history of HTAi pending further details on the level of support expected and more information on the special issue of the Journal under consideration. By: Ken Stein

2b. Board observers

Reiner Banken proposed that Dr. Joseph Matthew join the Board as an Observer from Developing Countries. Dr. Matthew is the current chair of the ISG on HTA in Developing Countries.

Action: Dr. Padney to be thanked for his term as Board observer, Dr. Joseph Mathew to be asked to serve as a Board observer. By: Reiner Banken

2c Secretariat Update

Information item.

3. Routine Business

3a. Minutes: Board of Directors: July 5, 2008

The latest draft of the Board meeting minutes were reviewed by the Board.

Action: Board members to contact the Secretariat with any revisions or corrections to draft minutes. By: Board, Secretariat

3b Executive Committee Minutes – August 13, October 16, and November 17, 2008

Information items.

3c Next Meetings

In light of the problems in scheduling this teleconference of the Committee and its proximity to the February Board meeting the April teleconference of the Board will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Action: Doodle poll to be setup to poll Board members for April 2009 teleconference weeks of April 13th and 20th.

By: Secretariat

4. Adjournment

The call adjourned after approximately one hour and forty five minutes.