



MINUTES OF THE FALL TELECONFERENCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date: 11 October 2004

Time: 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm (GMT)

Board of Directors

Chris Henshall, President (United Kingdom)
Berit Morland, Vice-President (Norway)
Diane Benner, Treasurer (Canada)
Helena Dahlgren, Incoming Director, (Sweden)
Andrew Dillon, Director (United Kingdom)
John Gabbay, Director (United Kingdom)
Cliff Goodman, Director (United States)
Krzysztof Landa, Incoming Director, (Poland)
Marjukka Makela, Director (Finland)

Observers

Alicia Granados, Past-President of CNSHTA (Spain)
Finn Borlum Kristensen, Chair of INAHTA (Denmark)

Secretariat

Dev Menon (Canada)
Eva Munro (Canada)
Tania Stafinski (Canada)

Regrets

Laura Sampietro-Colom, Secretary (Spain)
Susan Bidwell, Director (New Zealand)
Jill Sanders, Director (Canada)

1.0 Welcome and apologies

Chris Henshall welcomed everyone and offered apologies on behalf of Laura Sampietro-Colom, Susan Bidwell, and Jill Sanders, who were unable to participate in the call.

2.0 Approval of agenda

The Agenda was approved as circulated prior to the meeting.

3.0 Approval of minutes of the Annual Board Meeting

Chris Henshall invited comments and questions from Board members regarding the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting, which was held on 29 May 2004, in Krakow, Poland. Since none were raised, he moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Diane Benner and carried, with none against. *Action:* The Secretariat will replace the draft version of the Annual Board Meeting minutes on the HTAi web site with the final version.

4.0 Business arising

4.1 Charitable status registration

Dev Menon updated the Board on the status of the Society's application to become a registered charitable organization in Canada. He indicated that, last week, the Secretariat received written notification of

Revenue Canada's approval of the application, which grants HTAi charitable status as of 27 February 2004, the official date of HTAi's incorporation under the Societies Act in Alberta. The Secretariat, with advice from Deloitte & Touche, is now in the process of completing HTAi's first Annual Return. This must be filed with Revenue Canada no later than 6 months following the Society's year end (31 May 2004) in order for it to retain its charitable status. Chris Henshall thanked the Secretariat for all of its work in preparing a successful application. He then summarized the implications of HTAi's charitable registration on the Policy Forum and its members. He explained that a teleconference involving himself, the Secretariat, and HTAi's legal and tax advisors was held in mid-September to discuss several issues including how best to handle funds given to HTAi by Forum members. According to the information obtained, such funds fall within the category of donations for which tax deductible receipts can be issued. Therefore, Chris Henshall plans to contact potential Forum members and arrange for receipts to be sent to those wishing to receive them.

Action: Chris Henshall will ensure that tax deductible receipts are made available to Forum members.

4.2 Secretariat location, staffing, and operations

Chris Henshall reminded the Board that it had decided to create a sub-committee, comprising Berit Morland (Chair), Marjukka Makela, and himself, to explore possible locations for the Secretariat. He reported that, in late June, proposals were sought from Canadian organizations who had expressed an interest in hosting the HTAi Secretariat at the Annual Meeting. However, during follow-up discussions with each of them, it became clear that none were in a position to be able offer such services anytime soon. Chris Henshall then asked Dev Menon to provide a brief update on the recruitment of the new Executive Director & CEO for the Institute of Health Economics (IHE). Dev Menon indicated that interviews are expected to be completed by the end of the month, with the Search Committee recommending a candidate to the Board shortly thereafter. Further, he expressed his confidence in IHE wishing to retain the Secretariat, explaining that all of the candidates short-listed for his position have been involved in the international HTA community. He also mentioned discussing the future of the Secretariat with the newly appointed Chair of IHE, who has, subsequently, articulated his support of IHE continuing to house the HTAi Secretariat. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon and Tania Stafinski for managing the Secretariat in the interim, and stated that, in light of these circumstances, the sub-committee has decided to refrain from identifying other potential locations until it can approach IHE's new Executive Director & CEO. *Action:* Dev Menon will contact Berit Morland when his replacement at IHE has been announced.

4.3 Contract with Cambridge University Press

John Gabbay, Chair of the Scientific and Professional Programmes Committee (SPPC), stated that he and Tania Stafinski have been trying to contact Ed Barnas from Cambridge University Press (CUP) since the 2004 Annual Board Meeting to finalize the "package" of additional benefits CUP will offer organizational members of HTAi, but neither he nor she has received a response. Last week, he wrote an e-mail to Ed Barnas expressing the Board's views on the length of time it has taken CUP to respond to concerns raised by the Board over the past year. John Gabbay asked the Board to consider possible alternative arrangements for the Society's Journal. The Board agreed to discuss this in detail at the Mid-Winter Board Meeting. Chris Henshall thanked John Gabbay for his continued efforts to resolve outstanding issues with CUP.

Action: Board members will consider options for the Journal over the next 4 months.

5.0 Membership update

Dev Menon provided an update on the status of memberships for 2004-2005. As of 10 October, the Secretariat has received 473 individual memberships (new, current, and student) and 14 organizational memberships (each of which includes up to 5 individual memberships). He pointed out that 278 of the individual members had joined the Society through their registrations for the 2004 Annual Meeting in Krakow, Poland. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon and suggested that the Board engage in an in-depth

discussion of possible ways to expand the Society's membership base during the mid-winter Board meeting, to which it, subsequently, agreed.

Action: The Secretariat will ensure that the agenda for the mid-winter Board meeting includes an item which addresses the Society's membership drive.

6.0 HTAi Policy Forum

Chris Henshall reviewed the contents of the latest version of the Policy Forum paper, circulated to Board members by e-mail in late August, and outlined plans for the inaugural meeting of the Forum, which will be hosted by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the United Kingdom on 6 and 7 February 2005. He then listed the organizations from which he has received firm commitments to join this year's Forum. It is anticipated that 6 to 8 private sector organizations, each contributing US \$25,000.00, and 3 to 4 public sector organizations, each contributing US \$3,500.00, will comprise the membership. A discussion followed, at the end of which Chris Henshall reminded the Board of the Forum's purpose as a mechanism for bringing groups who use HTA to make health care policy decisions and industry together to discuss mutually-important issues in a "neutral" place (i.e., HTAi). Therefore, HTA-producing organizations had not been approached to join the Forum. Chris Henshall then summarized progress made to date by the Policy Forum Committee and NICE on the organizational aspects of the first meeting. He indicated that the Committee intends to focus on the expertise of Forum members for any presentations, thereby minimizing the need to involve "outside" speakers. Also, such presentations will be short (5 to 10 minutes) to ensure that there is adequate time for a thorough discussion of points raised by participants. Marjukka Makela suggested that Board members send e-mails listing any relevant positions they hold within their organizations to Chris Henshall. The information collected could be used to help define the role of each Board member during the Forum. The Board agreed to do this. Subsequently, Chris Henshall indicated that he and Andrew Dillon have identified and placed a hold on a potential venue located on the outskirts of London. He described its facilities, pointing out that the cost of all meeting rooms, meals, and accommodations for Forum participants could be covered by one private sector Forum membership, and reviewed its cancellation policy. If NICE releases the booking after 6 November, it (and, in turn, HTAi) becomes responsible for the full cost of the venue over the time period for which it was reserved, regardless of whether or not the Forum takes place. Chris Henshall stated that, while such a commitment exposes the Society to some financial risk, the likelihood of the Forum not taking place as planned is small. He invited comments from the Board and then sought its approval on the venue selected. The Board supported Chris Henshall's recommendation and asked that he proceed with confirming the booking.

Action: Board members will send e-mails describing their roles and responsibilities within their organizations to Chris Henshall. Chris Henshall will ask NICE to confirm its booking of the venue for the Forum.

Chris Henshall then discussed plans for the mid-winter Board meeting, which will take place at the offices of NICE in London, United Kingdom. The Board agreed to schedule the meeting for the Saturday preceding the Forum, and to hold the Board dinner later that evening.

7.0 Financial report

Diane Benner reported that an external audit of HTAi has been completed. Last week, Dev Menon and the Secretariat met with the auditors to review a draft of the audited statements. Dev Menon indicated that copies will be sent to all Board members next week. Chris Henshall thanked Diane Benner and the Secretariat for their work in preparing the statements, and indicated that, once the Executive Committee has had an opportunity to review them, it plans to make a formal recommendation for their acceptance to the Board. Dev Menon also notified the Board of the funds donated to HTAi by the 2005 Local Organizing Committee. Chris Henshall thanked Krzysztof Landa and his colleagues for both an excellent meeting and the Committee's generous donation.

8.0 Annual Meetings

8.1 2005 – Rome

Dev Menon updated the Board on recent progress made by the 2005 LOC. He stated that the Secretariat has been working closely with Marco Marchetti (from the 2005 LOC) and Vanessa Poloni (who directs the professional conference organizing firm contracted to run the Annual Meeting) over the past few months. Today, the Secretariat received its first progress report from the 2005 LOC, which Dev Menon agreed to circulate to the Board following the teleconference. He highlighted its main points, indicating that the Call for Abstracts, as well as the Annual Meeting web site, will be launched by the end of October. The LOC has also issued a call for parallel panel session proposals, which will be posted on the Annual Meeting section of the HTAi web site, and plans to finalize the list of workshops by the end of October. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon and indicated that the Board is looking forward to an excellent meeting next June.

Action: Dev Menon will e-mail a copy of the progress report prepared by the 2005 LOC to Board members.

8.2 2006 – Adelaide

Dev Menon reported on current activities of the 2006 LOC. At the request of Brendon Kearney, Chair of the 2006 LOC, the Secretariat has reviewed and provided feedback on four proposals solicited from professional conference organizers. Dev Menon and Tania Stafinski will be meeting with Brendon Kearney in Edmonton at the end of the week to discuss the role of the Secretariat in organizing HTAi 2006. A discussion around potential implications of the proposed dates of the Meeting followed. Chris Henshall indicated that a European health economics conference has been scheduled to take place from 6 to 9 July 2005. In general, the Board agreed that the effect of this conference on attendance at the HTAi meeting would likely be minimal, since it was not directly linked to one of the major health economics organizations. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon for the update.

8.3 2007 – Call for Proposals

Dev Menon stated that the Annual Meeting Committee (AMC), with the support of the Secretariat, will be issuing a call for proposals to host the 2007 Annual Meeting through the HTAi web site by early December. It also plans to contact individuals who had expressed an interest at the 2005 Annual Meeting. The deadlines for submitting letters of intent and full proposals will be 31 January 2005 and 31 March 2005, respectively. The AMC hopes to be able to announce the site selected for HTAi 2007 during the 2005 Annual Meeting in Rome, Italy.

8.4 AMC report and workplans

Dev Menon, as a member of the AMC, stated that the Secretariat has prepared a report that summarizes the work of the AMC since the Annual Board Meeting and outlines its activities for the next couple of months. He agreed to circulate it to Board members following the teleconference. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon for the update.

Action: Dev Menon will e-mail copies of the AMC report to Board members.

9.0 HTA Portal

John Gabbay, Chair of the SPPC, reported that a prototype vortal (virtual portal) has been developed and placed on a temporary web site while the Information Resources Group (IRG) seeks comments on its structure/architecture, content, and functionality from the HTAi membership. He asked Board members to visit the site and provide feedback directly to Susan Bidwell, who is leading this work. Chris Henshall thanked John Gabbay, Susan Bidwell, and the IRG for their efforts, and suggested that the SPPC provide advice to the Board on ways of maintaining the vortal and selecting documents to be placed on it at the Mid-Winter Board Meeting. A discussion followed. Finn Borlum Kristensen, Chair of the International Network of Agencies for HTA (INAHTA), indicated that INAHTA is facing similar issues with its glossary, and proposed that it collaborate with HTAi on developing processes for resolving them. He

agreed to ask INAHTA members for their views on making the glossary available through the HTAi portal and then provide his findings to the Board at the Mid-Winter Meeting.

Action: John Gabbay will ask Susan Bidwell to write a brief proposal, outlining the potential roles of the Secretariat and the IRG in maintaining the vortal, to which the SPPC can respond before the Mid-Winter Board Meeting. Finn Borlum Kristensen will raise the idea of placing the INAHTA glossary on the HTAi vortal with INAHTA members.

10.0 Reports and workplans from other committees

10.1 MCFCRC

Berit Morland, Chair of the Membership, Communications, Fundraising, and Corporate Relations Committee (MCFCRC), reviewed the Committee's progress report and workplan, which had been circulated to the Board by e-mail prior to the teleconference. She indicated that, over the past few months, the Committee has focused on further developing and implementing the Policy Forum. In addition, it has identified activities that they would like to initiate once uncertainties around the future location of the Secretariat are resolved. They include: creating special interest sub-groups of the HTAi membership, collaborating with INAHTA on the production of an HTA newsletter; and strengthening relationships between HTAi and relevant similar societies. Chris Henshall thanked Berit Morland for the update.

10.2 SPPC

John Gabbay, Chair of the SPPC, summarized the Committee's work beyond that related to the vortal and the Journal. He stated that, since June, the SPPC has been in close communication with the 2005 ISPC, and is pleased with progress made to date on finalizing the content of the Scientific Programme for the 2005 Annual Meeting. The SPPC also plans to develop a general guidance document for identifying the types of issues that should be addressed in future Annual Meetings. It hopes to have this document prepared in time for circulation and discussion at the Mid-Winter Board Meeting. Lastly, John Gabbay stated that the Committee is working on establishing an explicit set of criteria for selecting future recipients of the Journal prize, and will be compiling a list of HTA-related educational activities (including a catalogue of HTA courses offered around the world), with the support of Wendy Schneider, one of the members of the Society. Chris Henshall thanked John Gabbay for all of the SPPC's work.

Action: Between now and the Mid-Winter Board Meeting, the SPPC will work on preparing a guidance document for future Annual Meetings and developing criteria for the Journal prize.

11.0 Other business

Dev Menon announced that he will be attending the 3rd Annual Regional HTA conference, which will be held in Manila, Philippines, in late November. Further, the organizers have asked him to formally welcome delegates to the conference, on behalf of HTAi, during the opening ceremonies. Chris Henshall thanked Dev Menon for accepting their invitation.

Marjukka Makela asked that future messages pertaining to the times of teleconferences appear in GMT.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm (GMT).