

Interest Group Funding Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

It is the strategic intent of HTAi to support the work of the HTAi Interest Groups (IGs). One mechanism for doing this is to provide core infrastructure funding, and project-based funding that the IGs can apply for, to be used to support a range of IG activities.

The HTAi Board of Directors approved the annual funding envelope for the Interest Groups in October of the prior year. Two calls for funding proposals are issued in the first and third financial periods.

SCOPE

The overall intent of the funding of the IGs is to align with furthering the aims and objectives outlined in the HTAi strategic plan. Additionally, funding should further the presence of HTAi within the global HTA community. It is the intent that this increased standing would lead to increased membership and engagement within the IG Communities.

This policy and procedure relates to funding provided by HTAi to the IGs and details what this funding can be used for and the process by which it will be announced and allocated. It details the roles and responsibilities of the HTAi Secretariat and IGs regarding timelines.

POLICY

Funding proposals can relate to one time projects or for activities. Examples of items/things that will be considered for funding include

- preparation of educational courses;
- support for research projects (such as development of new tools, methods and materials);
- open-access fees for publications written by IG members and published in IJTAHC;
- events, meetings or workshops of IG members

Items that will **not** be considered for funding include:

- conduct of administrative tasks for the IG;
- support for attendance at the HTAi annual meeting and;
- salaries or wages to IG members or external consultants; an exception may be made for specific business development activity where IG member efforts are directly contributing to revenue generating activities. These exceptions require specific approval of the Executive Committee and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Should funds allocated not be used within 12 months, the IG may apply to carry forward the funds. Decisions about transitioning funding into the HTAi budget will be made on a case-by-case basis and will require Board-level endorsement. Annual reporting will be required, and a case can be made to stop funding, as appropriate.

Funding from external (third-party) sources for IG activities is acceptable; however, the process

by which funds are requested, the transparency of the funding and the involvement of the HTAi Secretariat in requesting and administering the funding is subject to an additional policy that is currently being drafted.

Calls for funding:

- The calls for funding proposals and associated timelines will be sent to the IGs. An estimate of the total funding amount available and the evaluation criteria by which the proposals will be assessed will be communicated through the IG Chairs and Co-chairs.
- Once the call has been issued, Interest Groups (IGs) will have **one month** to submit a proposal using the template provided by HTAi.
- One funding proposal per IG can be submitted during each funding round to a maximum of two funding proposals per IG, per year. The requests for funding within the two rounds could go towards the same goal (for example, two parts of the same project) or be for separate activities.
- Any proposals received after the published closing date will not be accepted.
- Once the proposals have been submitted to interestgroups@htai.org, they will be reviewed by an established taskforce, which includes the Director, Scientific Initiatives, the HTAi Executive Director, Chair of the IGSC, Chair of the SDCB Committee.
- The proposals will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria detailed in Attachment 1.
- The taskforce will make recommendations as to how the available IG budget should be allocated each funding round. The intent will be for IGs to submit an application that details what the activity will cost, and the task force will determine if the project should be funded in full, partially or not at all. This will focus resources in the most appropriate way to ensure that the HTAi money is spent most effectively in accordance with HTAi strategic planning.
- Recommendations from the taskforce will go to the HTAi Executive Committee for ratification.

HTAi will issue calls for funding proposals twice a year. It is expected that good strategic planning by the IGs will result in all requests being made within the published timelines. However, in exceptional circumstances, IGs can approach the HTAi secretariat for funding outside of the published timelines (for example, for paying for open access publication fees). This is to a maximum allowed amount of \$5,000 CAD. For funding requests outside of the published timelines, the following process will be applied:

- The HTAi Secretariat (with the assistance of the Executive Committee, if required) will ascertain whether the request is valid and, if so, whether the taskforce should be convened outside of session to approve or reject the request.
- If a funding request is approved outside of the published timelines, then the IG cannot apply for funding in the following round and must wait until the subsequent round (and, so, still have applied for funding a maximum of twice per year).
- Funding requests approved outside of the published timelines will typically be funded from the annual IG funds that are available and, thus reduce the total amount available for that fiscal year. However, this will be assessed on a case-by-

case basis depending on the nature of the request.

Allocation of funding:

- IGs that are not successful within each round will be notified as to why the proposal for funding was not successful. They will be eligible to apply for the subsequent round with the same proposal (if any reasons for being unsuccessful have been addressed) or with an entirely different funding proposal.
- IGs that are successful will be issued a formal notification that will detail exactly how much funding is being provided and what the funds are for, outline the accountability of the IG and funding request process, and outline the evaluation process and key deliverables associated with the funding.
- All spending will be allocated within the fiscal year.
- Invoices should be sent to HTAi within 90 days of the event (if it is a one-time event). In the case of projects that are ongoing through the year, invoices will be sent to HTAi at mutually agreed time points (decided at the point of funding allocation).
- Invoices should be coordinated within the IG and sent to HTAi; it is the responsibility of the IG to do this in a timely manner (as noted above) and with the intent to reduce the administrative burden to the HTAi Secretariat. HTAi will then administer the funding and individual invoices will be paid.
- In the case of additional funding that has been received from a third-party or external source, HTAi will be responsible for holding and administering this funding, with similar responsibilities for the IGs on timely invoicing and reducing administrative burden.
- There will be a requirement to provide status reports within the bi-annual Board reports, plus summaries of any key deliverables identified in the proposal, at the end of the project. These will be shared with the other IGs via the Interest Group Steering Committee and published on the IG webpages as appropriate.

Notes on process:

- Any funds remaining in the overall IG funding budget from the first round will be rolled over and will be available in the second round. Any unallocated funds from the second round will be returned to the HTAi operating budget and will be assigned to activities by the Board in accordance with the HTAi priorities and strategic direction (this *might* include further funding of IG projects that are deemed a particularly good use of HTAi resources).
- Any funds that are not invoiced by the mutually agreed timeline will be forfeited by the IG.

The intent is to distribute the funds according to the stated strategic goals of the IG and HTAi. The aim is to build a solid link between the outputs of the IGs and the success of HTAi

PROCEDURES

| Timeline (Round 1) | Timeline (Round 2) | Activity |
|--|---|---|
| January 31 (funds to be allocated and spent by December 31 of the same year) | July 31 (funds to be allocated and spent by June 30 the following year) | HTAi issues call for funding proposals and the following documentation will be sent to the Chairs/co-chairs of each IG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application form - Evaluation criteria - Timelines - Estimate of total funds available within the round |
| February 28 | August 31 | Deadlines for applications to be sent to interestgroups@htai.org |
| March | September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taskforce convened by HTAi Secretariat - Eligibility of each proposal determined; there will be opportunity for the taskforce to request additional information from an IG if necessary - For eligible proposals, funding allocation decisions are made according to disseminated evaluation criteria - HTAi Secretariat to prepare papers for the Executive Committee |
| April Executive Committee meeting | October Executive Committee meeting | Funding allocations approved |
| April 30 | October 31 | Deadlines for HTAi Secretariat to notify IGs of funding allocation decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full, partial or no funding - Provide reasons as to funding decision if partial or no funding - Provide details of expected reporting requirements, timelines and suggested invoicing arrangements |
| May 14 | November 14 | Deadlines for IGs to convey agreement on the reporting requirements, timelines and invoicing arrangements |
| May 31 | November 30 | Deadlines for project commencement |

Evaluation Criteria (to be used by Taskforce)

Each proposal received will be evaluated against the following criteria to assess whether the proposal is an appropriate use of HTAi resources. Each of the criteria must be met for the proposal to be considered eligible to progress to the funding allocation round.

1. Does the proposal align with the strategic aims or work-plan of the relevant IG?
2. Does the proposal align with the strategic intent or overall vision of the HTAi Society?
3. Is the proposal likely to have international scope (and identifies for which countries or regions)?
4. The funding requested is sensible and justified for the work proposed?
5. Is the proposal SMART?
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Achievable
 - d. Realistic
 - e. Timely
6. Viability of the IG:
 - a. Number of confirmed members (including number of attendees at the annual meeting)
 - b. Executive team in place

For proposals meeting the above criteria, they will progress to the funding allocation round, whereby the taskforce will decide how much funding the project should receive. It will be possible for the taskforce to decide to provide all funds requested, partial funds requested or no funding.

Funding proposals will be given additional weighting if they:

1. Have projected long-term/sustainable benefits of funding
2. Benefit many IGs and/or HTAi members
3. Involve, or benefit, more than one IG
4. Involve or benefit patients or the public
5. Plan for promotion within the media and/or across several social media platforms
6. Attract multiple new members and promote attendance at HTAi annual meetings
7. Increase the profile and standing of HTAi
8. Impact the quality/future of HTA