



INAHTA

*The International Network of Agencies for
Health Technology Assessment*

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2024**

APPROVED BY MEMBERS AT INAHTA CONGRESS 2021

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About INAHTA

Connecting evidence and policy for better health



~ Photo of INAHTA members, Cologne, Germany 2019

The International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA) is a non-profit global network of publicly-funded health technology assessment (HTA) agencies. INAHTA was founded in 1993 with just a handful of members, and it has grown to become the largest independent HTA network in the world.

INAHTA members serve an important role in health systems by providing evidence to support decision making about health technologies including their reimbursement, implementation, optimization, and/or divestment. In this context, providing the right evidence at the right time is essential as was clearly seen during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period decision makers turned to HTA agencies with emergency evidence requests to inform a range of decisions including personal protective equipment and vaccine purchasing, public health directives, and cross-border travel restrictions. Into the future, as the costs and complexity of health technologies continue to advance, there will be greater need for HTA to support evidence-informed policy making for creating high quality and sustainable health systems.

Collectively, INAHTA member agencies support health system decision-making in 31 countries, impacting some 1.4 billion people. With more than 2,300 staff and consultants working in the INAHTA network, there are clear benefits to connecting these agencies together to cooperate, collaborate, and share information about the production and dissemination of evidence-based information, advice, recommendations, and tools. INAHTA serves this purpose.

The uniqueness of INAHTA can be best described by understanding its role, its relevance to INAHTA members, and its importance in the broader HTA ecosystem. Read more about this in the [INAHTA Position Statement on the Uniqueness of INAHTA](#).

INAHTA has deep roots in the international HTA community stretching back to 1993 when the network was founded by 14 HTA agencies that recognized the value of collaboration and information sharing. In 2021, INAHTA has grown to 49 member agencies from 31 countries across North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. All members are non-profit organizations that are part of or directly support regional or national governments. [More about the history of INAHTA](#).

About Health Technology Assessment

INAHTA founded and co-led with [HTAi](#) the international joint taskgroup to develop the new definition of health technology assessment (HTA). The definition of HTA is provided below, with important clarifying information provided in four accompanying Notes:

HTA is a multidisciplinary process that uses explicit methods to determine the value of a health technology at different points in its lifecycle. The purpose is to inform decision-making in order to promote an equitable, efficient, and high-quality health system.

Note 1: A health technology is an intervention developed to prevent, diagnose or treat medical conditions; promote health; provide rehabilitation; or organize healthcare delivery. The intervention can be a test, device, medicine, vaccine, procedure, program or system. (Definition from the HTA Glossary)

Note 2: The process is formal, systematic and transparent, and uses state-of-the-art methods to consider the best available evidence.

Note 3: The dimensions of value for a health technology may be assessed by examining the intended and unintended consequences of using a health technology compared to existing alternatives. These dimensions often include clinical effectiveness, safety, costs and economic implications, ethical, social, cultural and legal issues, organisational and environmental aspects, as well as wider implications for the patient, relatives, caregivers, and the population. The overall value may vary depending on the perspective taken, the stakeholders involved, and the decision context.

Note 4: HTA can be applied at different points in the lifecycle of a health technology, i.e., pre-market, during market approval, post-market, through to the disinvestment of a health technology.

The definition is available on [the HTA Glossary](#) in English, French, Spanish, German and Russian. More information about the international joint taskgroup and the development of the definition is available in [this published paper](#). INAHTA recognizes that the remit of a number of member agencies extends beyond HTA, e.g., into the assessment of social care services.

About the Development of the Strategic Plan

The development of the strategic plan followed a stepwise and collaborative process that involved many INAHTA members. In November 2020, the INAHTA Board administered a survey of members and conducted interviews with MOU partners to inform the development of the draft strategic plan. In January 2021, a Board strategic planning retreat was held over three days where the Board reviewed the results of the member survey and MOU partner interviews, the previous strategic plan, a SWOT analysis, and a list of strategic directions from other key organizations in the HTA community. The Board produced a list of top priorities and a draft version of the strategic plan was prepared. The preliminary draft of the strategic plan underwent two rounds of review and input by members prior to the 2021 INAHTA Congress where the final draft was reviewed for approval by members. Further details of the strategic plan development process and background materials are available on the INAHTA website.

INAHTA is a lean organization with modest revenues generated through membership fees. The achievement of the objectives identified in this strategic plan will depend on member engagement and resource availability. Additional funding sources will be explored, where feasible and according to INAHTA's core values, to enhance the products and services that INAHTA can deliver to members and to support member involvement in the network.

Vision

Connecting and empowering HTA agencies to inform better health policy around the globe.

Mission

INAHTA's mission is to:

- Bring leadership and expertise to advance the science, practice, and impact of HTA
- Enable exchange of knowledge and learning among member agencies
- Support best practice within HTA agencies
- Represent the public HTA agency viewpoint on matters of scientific, strategic, and policy importance

Core Values

A network 'of' members 'for' members

The strength of INAHTA comes from the diverse expertise and knowledge of our members, and the different health systems in which they work. This strategic plan is tailored to maximize opportunities for members to connect with each other.



Strategic Goals

The Board decided to keep the goals and objectives focused to ensure greater likelihood that they would be achievable in the next three years. The overall objective is to enhance the value to members belonging to the INAHTA network.

1. Delivering value to members

- 1.1 Create an environment to enhance networking among INAHTA members.
- 1.2 Understand and meet the needs of INAHTA's diverse membership.

2. Cultivating awareness of INAHTA

- 2.1 All members are aware of and access the benefits of INAHTA membership.
- 2.2 Seek opportunities for greater INAHTA leadership and participation in HTA activities around the globe.

3. Building a strong, sustainable network

- 3.1 Fostering strategic connections to achieve growth in membership numbers.
- 3.2 Strengthen the network by ensuring appropriate management of financial resources.

Strategic Goals

1. Delivering value to members

1.1 *Create an environment to enhance networking among INAHTA members*

INAHTA members have repeatedly indicated what they value most highly in INAHTA are opportunities for networking and building professional connections. INAHTA will therefore continue to find ways that engage members and deliver the networking opportunities they value.

The cornerstone of INAHTA's value proposition for members is the annual INAHTA Congress, and this will continue to be delivered.

While the value of the in-person Congress cannot be underestimated, the online delivery of networking opportunities is becoming an increasingly important mechanism to make INAHTA accessible to members. 'Virtual' networking allows a broad mix of staff at member agencies to benefit from INAHTA membership and enhances the value of the Network. One of the upsides of the Covid-19 pandemic was that INAHTA implemented additional ways of networking, including temporarily moving the Congress and Annual Business Meeting to virtual format.

INAHTA will continue to develop additional opportunities for members to engage in web-delivered content and interactive activities throughout the next three years.

To achieve the outcomes of this strategic goal, INAHTA will develop a work plan that includes the in-person Congress (when the pandemic is ended) along with other events throughout the year delivered in online format, such as time-limited learning groups on specific topics, webinars, fireside chat, world café, etc.

1.2 *Understand and meet the needs of INAHTA's diverse membership*

INAHTA is a global network and member agencies are positioned within different political, economic, and cultural contexts. While there are areas of similar interest across member agencies, it is recognized that agencies in high income countries and those in low- and middle-income countries, for example, can face very different challenges. INAHTA will take steps to understand the needs of the diverse membership so that programs and services can be developed to effectively meet these needs. Member agencies also operate in different languages, and INAHTA will consider ways to provide products and services in languages other than English.

To achieve this goal, INAHTA will develop a work plan that includes more opportunities for learning and exchange among members in areas of identified need, for example: offering training and knowledge exchange opportunities in high priority areas (HTA impact and its evaluation, approaches to assessing highly innovative technologies, methodological best practices, addressing challenges in conducting rapid assessments, etc.); or, offering webinars for developing agencies to ask questions and discuss issues with leadership from established agencies. The work plan will also include activities supporting the diversity of languages such as the [HTA Glossary](#), webinars and activities in languages other than English, seeking translation of key materials such as position statements or other products into other languages (e.g., Mandarin, Spanish, French).



INAHTA will also take steps to ensure the Congress and other current programs continue to meet member needs, such as:

- Online activities (learning groups, hot topics, etc.)
- [INAHTA Listserv](#)
- International [HTA Database](#)
- [HTA Glossary](#)
- [INAHTA Product Types](#)
- [INAHTA Briefs, Checklists & Impact Reports](#)

INAHTA will continue to administer post-Congress evaluations to ensure the Congress meets their needs and to identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, an evaluation will be conducted of the pilot process to develop and ratify INAHTA position statements to inform the INAHTA Board's decision about whether it will become a permanent program of activity. As INAHTA has limited resources, if an activity is not of value to members, the resources will be dedicated to other activities that are of greater benefit to members.

2. Cultivating awareness of INAHTA

2.1 All staff at INAHTA member agencies are aware of and access the benefits of INAHTA membership

INAHTA was created by members to serve their needs. Through delivery of various virtual and in-person programs and services, INAHTA provides opportunities for member agency leadership and other staff members to network with colleagues at other public HTA agencies. Within INAHTA, members can share challenges and identify opportunities to advance the science and practice of HTA in ways that align with the public agency perspective. Read more about the [uniqueness of INAHTA](#).

To realize the full benefits of INAHTA membership, member agencies must be aware of what services and opportunities are offered by INAHTA. Membership benefits include participation in the annual INAHTA Congress, access to the INAHTA Listserv, and access to learning groups, webinars and opportunities to collaborate with INAHTA's MOU partners. Members have a voice in the INAHTA position statements that provide the public agency perspective on key issues in the international HTA community. Staff at member agencies can contribute to the leadership and governance of INAHTA through participation on the Board of Directors. The INAHTA Board has heard from members in the strategic planning survey (November 2020) that many are not familiar with INAHTA programs such as the HTA Database, Glossary and IPT marks, and so there is a need to ensure that members are aware of these benefits and how they can be accessed.

For INAHTA members, two 'levels' of communication have been identified as important to ensure such awareness: 1) the level of the CEO/Director so that they are aware of the value of their membership and the importance of INAHTA and its role in promoting HTA; and, 2) the level of the staff at member agencies so they are aware of opportunities to engage in network activities and to access the services offered for the benefit of their work.

To achieve this goal, INAHTA will include in the work plan a review of the communications processes with members to ensure they are efficient and effective. This could include the development of a handbook for members, modernizing the listserv service, and allowing greater participation of staff at member



agencies in virtual events and activities. Tailored communications materials will be developed for the agency CEO/Directors to clearly describe the value of INAHTA and of HTA.

2.2 Seek opportunities for greater INAHTA leadership and participation in HTA activities around the globe

As the global network of HTA agencies, INAHTA has an important leadership role in the international HTA community. INAHTA will seek to become more active in the advancement of global and regional HTA initiatives by identifying opportunities to lead, convene, facilitate, or coordinate activities alone or jointly with our international and regional partners or other organizations working in the field of HTA (e.g., World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank). The Coronavirus pandemic showed the value of HTA in providing robust support to decision making, and INAHTA can use this case as a powerful example to promote the value of HTA in health system decision making to other stakeholder groups in the health sector

To achieve this goal, the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) INAHTA holds with [partner organizations](#) will be efficiently leveraged to avoid duplication of effort and to achieve common goals in areas of strategic value to INAHTA.

In the coming three years, INAHTA will endeavour to meet these goals by initiating and leading roundtables or other events on topics of operational or strategic importance (often called “hot topics”) to our members. For example:

- sharing INAHTA products in open webinars, such as the position statements, the [international HTA database](#), and publications;
- promoting the uniqueness of INAHTA as described in [this INAHTA Position Statement](#), and the value of publicly-funded HTA agencies in health systems in general; and/or
- offering innovative training opportunities such as the development of soft skills in communicating with stakeholders or how to set up an HTA agency.

An external communications plan will be developed and implemented, along with clear and manageable shared work plans with MOU partners, where feasible, such as co-leading events or committees, and the endorsement of position statements produced by each others’ organization, where appropriate.

3. Building a strong, sustainable network

3.1 Fostering strategic connections to achieve growth in membership numbers

INAHTA was founded in 1993 with just a handful of members, and it has grown to become the largest independent HTA network in the world. As of 2021, there are 49 INAHTA member agencies across the globe and the growth of the network is a clear indicator of INAHTA’s relevance and importance. The Board will continue to seek ways to strengthen and grow the network in the 2021-2024 period.

This goal will be achieved in several ways including expanded use of social media and improved external promotion of INAHTA to build awareness of the network and of the importance of HTA. Key target audiences will include publicly-funded agencies in the United States of America, Africa, Asia, and the



Middle East to facilitate an interest in membership in INAHTA. This will enable the network to have more global representation. The INAHTA Board will also consider opportunities to reach out to hospital-based HTA units that satisfy the INAHTA membership criteria.

3.2 Strengthen the network by ensuring appropriate management of financial resources

INAHTA is funded solely by membership fees, which is a strength as it allows the network to be completely independent of outside interests, but these modest revenues can also limit the scope of work and activities that can be undertaken. INAHTA will continue to optimize the use of current resources through responsible fiscal administration, particularly for programs with significant budget impact such as the INAHTA Congress.

To allow for a greater scope of program delivery, INAHTA will identify new revenue opportunities, which could include seeking funding from grant programs or philanthropic organizations and/or selling INAHTA products and services to other organizations. This will always be in a manner that is consistent with the core values of INAHTA. Furthermore, INAHTA will determine strategic objectives to fund using the surplus in working capital reserve (to retain it, spend some funds on key projects, supporting activities for members, etc.).

Achieving Objectives & Measuring Progress

INAHTA has outlined an ambitious strategic plan that reflects the scope of interests of our members and the importance of INAHTA in the international community.

To achieve the objectives in this strategic plan, a work plan will be developed for the INAHTA Board and the Secretariat for the next three years. The achievement of the strategic objectives will be greatly accelerated through the involvement of INAHTA members, and so members are asked to watch out for and respond to the communications from the secretariat for expressions of interest to join various committees or taskgroups, and to provide survey responses or other inputs requested by the Board for the achievement of the strategic goals.

Members will be updated on progress on the achievement of strategic plan objectives at the annual business meeting. When the new Board terms commence (after the ABM), the Board will review progress on each of the strategic goals and make recommendations for modifications or changes in priorities, as required, to the work plan.