

General principles of good cooperation in the field of health technology assessment

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On 29 September 2021, the Heads of 20 HTA agencies from EU/EEA Member Statesⁱ formed the Heads of HTA Agencies Group (HAG) to have a strong and united voice in favour of European Health Technology Assessment (HTA) cooperation.

The HAG is a collaborative network of EU/EEA-based HTA bodies, whose main objective is to support joint HTA work and cooperation at EU level within the framework set up by the Regulation (EU) 2021/2282 of the European Parliament and the Council on Health Technology Assessment adopted on December 15, 2021 (also called the HTA Regulation – HTAR).

The HAG is a high-level forum, which raises, highlights, and discusses matters of strategic character that are of relevance for HTA bodies across Europe. It provides for strategic directions and recommendations relating to EU HTA cooperation, observes and closely guides the work performed at the technical and scientific level, as well as provides input on the organisation and administration of future HTA cooperation.

In undertaking these functions, the HAG agrees to follow a set of common principles on HTA collaboration and HTA conduct.

The implementation of the HTA Regulation on Health Technology Assessment will require intense collaboration at European level to carry out joint clinical assessments and joint scientific consultations for prioritised health technologies in a timely and high-quality manner. This new integrated approach implies a fruitful and efficient cooperation of national HTA agencies from EU/EEA Member States in line with the Coordination Group established by the Regulation, its subgroups and all stakeholders. The success of this collaboration will ensure that the principles, values, and methods that we uphold and defend are respected.

Therefore, together we affirm the following principles of good HTA collaboration:

- i. European HTA is carried out with the aim of supporting health policy makers in identifying new health technologies with proven, patient-relevant added value. It contributes to their universal and affordable access as well as to the sustainability of healthcare systems in the public interest.
- ii. European HTA relies on mutual collaboration, trust and on agreed and explicit methods and procedures.
- iii. Cooperation between European HTA bodies is conducted in good faith, with fairness, transparency and with respect for all stakeholders.
- iv. European HTA cooperation is primarily scientific; it aims to achieve greater alignment of HTA methodology and higher consistency of relative effects of HTAs in the European region, as necessary.
- v. European HTA cooperation is responsive. Its methods anticipate change and evolve with new health technologies as required.

- vi. Cooperation on HTA does not interfere with national decision making (e.g. reimbursement decisions).
- vii. European HTA cooperation is based on common principles of good HTA practices, in particular:
 - a) European HTA is carried out in the best interest of patients and with a public health objective.
 - b) It aims at achieving the best quality level of expertise; it is based on the principles of evidence-based medicine, applies state of the art methods and considers the best available scientific evidence.
 - c) It respects the standards of medical, scientific and professional ethics.
 - d) It is conducted in a transparent, efficient, and timely manner.
 - e) European HTA is inclusive. It transparently involves all stakeholders.
 - f) It is pursued in accordance with the principle of independence. It shall be guarded against interference from vested interests and conflicts of interest.
 - g) European HTA is developed in a way that allows further elaboration and adaptation at the national level.

ⁱ Current EU Members as of February 2022 can be found at https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en

Current EEA Members (or countries with whom the EU has similar bilateral agreements with) as of February 2022 can be found at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/169/the-european-economic-area-eea-switzerland-and-the-north>