

**STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (SIG)
OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS**

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Overview

1. Since the last Strategic Implementation Group meeting in November 2005, industry and Government have made steady progress on all of the Healthcare Industries Task Force (HITF) outputs, achieving some key milestones whilst also continuing to develop implementation mechanisms. The following paragraphs outline the main developments.

Summary of key achievements

Development of the new Centre for Evidence-based Purchasing (CEP)

2. Achievements The new Centre for Evidence-based Purchasing (CEP) is operating and continuing to develop its service, with industry well engaged in the business planning process. The first prioritisation board meeting was held in March 2006 and has so far considered some 70 proposals. Fifty new projects have been commissioned, including four pilots to embed the consideration of value into the evaluation protocols. Deliberations on this key issue have included industry and have also been supported by the University of Bath. In addition, a dedicated economic adviser has been appointed to cover value assessments and the new NHS PASA website will ensure CEP outputs are readily accessible to all.

Innovation

3. Achievements The National Innovation Centre (NIC), established as part of NHSIII in September 2005, continues to develop and funding of £10m has been agreed. The NIC will help to accelerate the diffusion and adoption of innovation within the NHS. The funding will be used to progress projects on the Innovation Landscape, to manage operations in Intellectual property (IP) policy, brokerage and advice, and to build the NIC Innovation Network. The network includes the nine Innovation Hubs and two new hubs - for training (Chairman, Sir Ara Darzi who leads on implementation of the HITF output on training and education) and for Adoption of Technology. The DTI-funded Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) was successfully launched in February 2006. NIC continues to play a major role in co-ordinating the development of the Innovation Landscape project and proposals for future projects are under discussion. The electronic navigation tool is currently in trial and will be available at a key innovation event to be held in mid-September 2006 at which the NIC website and Training and Adoption Hubs are to be launched.

Procurement processes

4. Achievements A single procurement process has been designed to aid consistency and transparency. A series of sub-groups has also been created to address clinical engagement, procurement, supply chain and corporate issues. The programme for introduction of Collaborative Procurement Hubs will continue until 2008 when all NHS Trusts will have access to a Hub. (A discussion on the Commercial Landscape will take place under item 6 of the agenda.)

Building R&D capacity

5. **Achievements** The Government's new R&D strategy for the NHS in England *Best Research for Best Health* was published in January 2006 and one of the strategy's major outputs, development of the National Institute for Health Research, was launched in April 2006. Implementation of the strategy is key to ensuring that the UKCRC objectives are delivered, including HITF goals. The UK Clinical Research Networks (UKCRN) continue to be set up, with the Industry Leads recruited into the Co-ordinating Centres joining representatives of industry in meetings of the UKCRC Industry Road Map Group to identify the services which UKCRC can offer to industry. The Invention for Innovation Funding Programme has been established, bringing together increased funding for the NEAT programme for the financial year April 2007-8, marking the successful delivery of this part of the HITF output. New academic training schemes for integrated training for academic clinicians, nurses and other research professionals are being developed. Discussions have also been initiated on options for Government co-funding of clinical trials for SMEs.

Healthcare Technology Co-operatives (HTCs)

6. **Achievements** The final proposals for pilot HTCS were submitted to SIG members in a detailed report in May, including the definition of an HTC and its outputs, the scope of the pilot initiative, the draft Call and draft corporate governance arrangements, the proposed membership of the Bid Evaluation Panel and HTC Programme Board, and the proposed process for the selection of pilots. Funding from DH, DTI, EPSRC and MRC has been agreed for the development of the pilot HTCs. Following incorporation of comments from SIG members, the Call was published on 12 June.

Regulatory issues

7. **Achievements** MHRA and industry have continued to build on their good relationship. In particular, working groups meet at regular intervals to discuss and inform the UK negotiating position on EU regulatory proposals in two key areas - the regulation of tissue engineered products and amendments to the Medical Devices Directives - and to receive feedback on progress. Meetings with SMEs have been held with a view to agreeing a range of measures which will improve the MHRA service to SMEs. Both Government and industry are committed to maintain appropriate communication mechanisms to support an ongoing productive dialogue on regulatory issues.

International trade

Achievements India and Japan market strategies have been finalised. USA market analysis completed and circulated. Other HITF recommendations installed.

Communications with patients/public

9. Achievements The consultation phase has been successfully completed and the feedback analysed. The feedback suggested that the core need was for a short and simple description of the way in which medical devices are regulated, and their benefits and risks managed. A set of core messages has therefore been agreed which will be published and widely promulgated.

Training and education

10. Achievements Proposals on the way forward have been formulated and will be discussed under item 4 of the agenda.

Industry metrics

11. Achievements: Four tables of industry data have been updated, and a new table on 'numbers of companies' has been added. All tables will be updated for the November SIG meeting for publication before the end of the year.

Communication strategy

12. Officials and industry representatives continue to take part in conferences, seminars and other events aimed at the NHS and other interested parties, eg the NHS Confederation event *Accelerating Clinical Performance through Technology* held on 7 February 2006, to raise awareness of the aims of HITF outputs. As part of the communication strategy, officials have also met with colleagues and other stakeholders in the Devolved Administrations and in the regions to discuss HITF generally as well as specific outputs. These meetings have been received very positively and there is considerable interest in HITF implementation. An event in November to launch the SIG report and communicate its findings is currently under consideration.