CAST – Centre for Applied
Health Services Research and
Technology Assessment

University of Southern
Denmark
Campusvej 55
DK-5230 Odense M

Telephone: +45 6550 3081
Fax: +45 6550 3880

The role of the planned and ongoing projects database (POP Database) in reducing duplication of effort and promotion of collaboration between HTA Agencies in the European Union

An assessment of EUnetHTA JA1 WP 7B

Marianne Sandvei, Consultant, CAST

Hindrik Vondeling, Associate Professor, CAST

Jens Olsen, Head of CAST

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Foreword

As part of the EUnetHTA Joint Action 1 (2010-2012) it was envisaged to develop and test tools to avoid duplication of work and to promote collaboration between HTA agencies. The tool that was specifically created for this purpose is a database, more specifically the planned and ongoing projects (POP) database. The tool was created and managed by LBI-HTA, Austria. LBI-HTA was WP7 Co-Lead Partner, responsible for WP7 Strand B. The database was developed and maintained by DIMDI, Germany, WP 6 Co-Lead Partner. This report tries to assess whether the POP Database has served its purpose. To facilitate assessment of the POP Database LBI-HTA has provided us with an impressive amount of highly detailed documentation and information, for which we would like to thank Claudia Wild (Head of LBI-HTA), Judit Erdös (Assistant to the Director at LBI-HTA) and Gerda Hinterreiter, who was leading the work on the POP Database until the Autumn of 2011. We also thank Patrice Chalon (KCE) who provided us with information on the creation and structure of the POP Database. To complete the picture we have carried out a survey aimed at all agencies who were involved in the POP Database. We thank all the respondents for their valuable information.

We hope that this report gives a full and transparent view on the potential and limitations of the POP Database and that it may serve as an input to decision making with regard to its future in the upcoming Joint Action 2.

Odense, December 2012

Marianne Sandvei, Hindrik Vondeling and Jens Olsen

Centre for Applied Health Services Research and Technology Assessment (CAST)

University of Southern Denmark

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Abstract

Objectives: In the context of the EUnetHTA project, EUnetHTA JA 1 Strand B was aimed at facilitating collaboration between HTA agencies in order to avoid duplication of assessment efforts. The specific task was to collect information on planned and ongoing (POP) projects from EUnetHTA agencies and to synthesize this information in a POP Database. The main research question is whether the POP Database has served its purpose.

Methods: Content analysis of highly detailed documentation on the activities of WP 7B provided by WP 7B Lead Partner, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of HTA in Austria (LBI-HTA). Additionally, telephone interviews with personnel at LBI-HTA were carried out, complemented by a survey examining stimulating and impeding factors in detail.

Results: In December 2012 there were 1259 projects in the POP Database, including 143 alert topics identifying specific fields with potential for collaboration between agencies. 47 agencies from 24 European countries were represented in the database. The average response rate in the 10 requests for information to the database was 74%. All in all, 23 collaborations facilitated by the POP Database were reported, 12 of which were initiated by LBI-HTA. The scope of collaboration was usually limited. A slight reduction of duplication of effort was documented.

Conclusion: While the POP Database represents an enormous potential to reduce duplication of effort, this has not been realized during the EUnetHTA JA 1 given the relatively small number of agencies involved in collaborations and the limited scope of collaborative efforts. The study indicates that collaboration between agencies is less straightforward that initially thought. It is recommended to agencies to continue using the POP Database and to intensify research on factors influencing efficient use of the information in the database.

1 Introduction

Resources are scarce. Not only in health care but also in health technology assessment (HTA). Unfortunately, some health care resources and analytical resources are wasted. One cause of the latter that has been widely recognized in the field of HTA is duplication of assessment efforts. This report reviews a tool that has been developed to reduce duplication of efforts and to promote collaboration in HTA at the level of the European Union.

Reduction of duplication of efforts can at best result in additional HTA reports being produced. Reduction of duplication would also be helpful in justifying the resources spent on HTA at a global level. It might result in more flexible use of HTA too, in terms of which technologies to assess at which stage in their life-cycle. For example, with some technologies, the conclusion after an initial assessment is that 'once is not enough', referring to rapid technological change. With mechanisms to avoid duplication in place, decision making on a re-assessment would become easier. Another option could be to put more emphasis on the assessment of obsolete technologies. Many other benefits can be identified and the relevance of the subject cannot be underestimated. Therefore, what is central in this report is the creation and application of a tool to avoid duplication of efforts in HTA at the level of the European Union. Although several HTA studies have been performed at this level, practical measures to reduce duplication of effort were not put on the research agenda until the EUnetHTA Joint Action (JA) 1, covering the period between 2010 and 2012.

The overarching objective of EUnetHTA JA 1 was to develop and put into practice an effective and sustainable collaboration in the area of HTA in Europe.[1] The EUnetHTA JA collaboration strategy consisted of three closely connected activities: i) development of a business model for collaboration addressing HTA agencies within the European Union; ii) development of HTA methods and practical tools that may strengthen the effectiveness of European HTA collaboration, and iii) testing and implementation of tools and methods developed by EUnetHTA. The goal of these interrelated activities was to create a sustainable mechanism for storage and exchange of information on HTA in the EU.

Within the EUnetHTA framework, the official aim of Work Package 7 strand B (WP 7B) was to find practical ways to facilitate collaboration on new technologies among European HTA agencies with a view to reduce unnecessary duplication of work. The specific task was to collect information on planned and ongoing projects from EUnetHTA agencies and to synthesize this information in a database (POP Database). The POP Database should allow EUnetHTA agencies to identify similar projects before starting a new project, to contact other agencies and asking them to exchange information on relevant projects. The work of WP7 B was coordinated by WP 7 Co-Lead Partner, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Health Technology Assessment (LBI-HTA) in Austria and co-lead by WP 7 Lead Partner, Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS) in France.

Collection of information for the POP Database started in 2009 when LBI-HTA made a first request asking EUnetHTA agencies to complete a list of their ongoing and planned assessments on new technologies. The result of this first round was a spreadsheet with more than 700 projects from 20 EUnetHTA agencies. From the beginning of the project, LBI-HTA issued quarterly POP requests for

[1] http://www.eunethta.eu/Public/Work_Packages/EUnetHTA-Joint-Action-2010-12/

input to the POP Database as well as regular POP updates synthesizing the main results of the requests. The POP results' update included a list of "alert topics" and "similar projects" identifying specific fields with potential for collaboration between agencies. The list of alert topics is compiled on the basis of the POP Database category system (MeSH) and specific matches against project titles within each category. As a general rule, an alert topic was triggered when there were two or more similar projects within a category dealing with the same pathology and technology. The list of alert topics and similar projects represented a central tool for agencies' opportunities for information exchange.

Until August 2011, the results of the POP requests were provided in an interim tool – an excel sheet in a web-based repository as part of the EUnetHTA information management system. By the end of August 2011, LBI-HTA together with the Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre (KCE) and the German Institute of Medical Documentation and Information (DIMDI) in WP 6 released an easy to use, web-based database.

Besides developing and managing the information flow for the POP Database, several other steps were taken by LBI-HTA during the project with a view to reaching the aim of WP 7B. Other important tasks in the LBI-HTA 3-year work plan were to develop a checklist as support for forms of different collaboration within WP 7B (Annex 1), to develop a category system for categorising projects in the POP Database, as well as in various ways to support collaboration between EUnetHTA agencies.

With this background the research questions are:

1. How was the POP Database created and structured?
2. What was the content and how were the structured communication activities by LBI-HTA to obtain input for a POP Database ('POP requests') presented to the HTA Agencies in WP 7B?
3. Have the HTA agencies responded to the requests? If so, to what extent?
4. What has been the actual use of the POP Database in terms of generating collaboration between agencies and, if so, how can these collaborations be characterised?
5. Can a reduction of duplication of effort be documented?

Section 2 introduces the methods of data collection and data analysis. Section 3 presents the results. In the final section the findings are discussed and a number of recommendations are formulated.

2 Methods

2.1 Data collection

The principal source of data was LBI-HTA. The documentation included 10 communication protocols elaborated by this agency following each request for information to the POP Database as well as all material that was produced in 4 face-to-face meeting organised during the project. Also three surveys were carried out. The results of the surveys were included in power point presentations.

This combination of data was supplemented in two ways. Firstly, by telephone interviews with selected employees of LBI-HTA, including Judit Erdös, assistant to the director of LBI-HTA, and Claudia Wild, director of LBI-HTA. Secondly, by developing a survey, specifically aiming at relevant issues as part of the present evaluation by CAST. These sources are described in more detail below.

Data from LBI-HTA

1 Communication protocols
Following each request for information to the POP Database, LBI-HTA completed a communication protocol providing information on i) communication statistics (e.g. number of agencies responding to a request email and number of agencies responding to subsequent reminding emails), ii) email correspondence to agencies during a request procedure (e.g. request email, reminder email(s), results email), iii) a list of alert topics and similar projects indicating possible fields of collaboration, and iv) an updated list of EUnetHTA agencies and persons with access to the database.

2 Face-to-face meeting and subject-specific material
This includes documentation of four face-to-face meetings with the entire WP 7 (so 7A and 7B). The first of the meetings was located in Dublin, June 10th 2010. The second meeting was organised on Malta, March 3rd and 4th 2011. A third meeting took place in Rome, September 29th-30th 2011. A fourth meeting took place in Vienna, May 10th-11th 2012. All documentation of these meetings, including the agenda, the minutes and all presentations, were provided to us. These meetings covered the entire project. Subject-specific material, e.g. on the development of the POP Database, the associated communication patterns and the development of a training programme was also included.

3 Surveys carried out by LBI-HTA and KCE
LBI-HTA and KCE (database developers; KCE is the Belgian HTA Agency) conducted three surveys during the project. In January 2011, LBI-HTA and KCE issued an online survey to 36 agencies that had regularly provided information to the database. The survey contained 56 items and focused on users' requirements to the database and prioritisation of database developments. A second survey was carried out in September 2011 during the Rome face-to-face meeting addressing 30 participating agencies. The aim of this second survey was to evaluate users' impression of the first online version of the POP Database. In February 2012, LBI-HTA and KCE issued a third survey to 42 POP info providing agencies. The focus of this final survey was prioritisation of database development requirements as well as on collaborating activities between agencies facilitated by the database. While the first and the second surveys had high response rates (both 80%), the response rate in final survey was only 40%.

Data from CAST

The data provided by LBI-HTA gave us detailed information on the content and structure of communication activities, on agencies' responses to the 10 POP requests as well as some information on the creation and structure of the database. Agencies' actual use or non-use of the database as well as resulting collaborations was not as well documented in the material. While the February 2012 survey did in fact focus on collaboration between agencies, it only addressed previous request responders and, as indicated above, the response rate was quite low with only 17 responding agencies out of a total of 42 (40%). To give a qualified answer to the research questions on agencies use of the database and resulting collaboration as well as reduction of duplication of efforts, additional data needed to be collected.

4 Telephone interviews by CAST with LBI-HTA personnel
The questions mainly concerned the level of detail on specific issues that could not be directly inferred from the documentation material provided by LBI-HTA.

5 Survey carried out by CAST
We carried out an online survey in December 2012. The survey addressed 57 agencies, including both responders and non-responders to previous requests. The only agency that was not addressed in the survey was WP 7B Lead Partner, LBI-HTA. The survey contained 17 items and collected information on three overall themes: i) non-responders reasons for not providing information to the database, ii) responders' use of the database, and iii) collaborating activities developed in response to information in the database (Annex 2). 42 agencies responded to the survey (74%).

2.2 Data analysis
The documentation and reporting of activities provided by LBI-HTA were combined with our own data from the telephone interviews and the survey. The data were systematically examined by means of content analysis with the 5 research questions in mind.

3 Results

3.1 Creation and structure of POP Database
The technical development of the POP Database is the result of a collaboration between three JA1 partners: WP 7B Co-Lead Partner LBI-HTA, WP 6 Lead Partner KCE (Belgium) and WP 6 Co-Lead Partner DIMDI (Germany). The database was initiated and managed by LBI-HTA. DIMDI was responsible for the database code development and maintenance. With the release of the online version of the database in August 2011, KCE coordinated these activities.

The specific aim was to create an online database that could host the descriptions of POP projects of EUnetHTA partners and to provide an automatic matching system that could help database users to identify similar projects.

The POP Database was initiated already in June/July 2009 when an active request by LBI-HTA for information on ongoing and planned projects was sent to all partners by email. The request specifically focused on new (non-pharmaceutical) technologies waiting for a reimbursement decision. Following this initial request, a search at partner websites was carried out, followed by the development of a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel) with 1 partner sheet/founding partner (N= 20) and 1 sheet with "clusters of topics". The overview sheet of identical or similar projects was created by manual clustering by Claudia Wild. As a result of the request, a list of ongoing/planned projects (731 incl. NETSCC projects) from 20 HTA institutions/EUnetHTA partners was created.

During the first 18 months of the EUnetHTA JA1, the POP spreadsheet was stored in a shared online database folder and updated by LBI-HTA every three months following the regular requests for information to the database. The spreadsheet allowed initiation of the process of information sharing between agencies. The experience gained during the 18 months pilot, complemented by surveys of POP Database users, identified specifications and functionalities for the online database. This included database characteristics (fields to be described, indexation), workflow (provision of information by a contact person in each participating agency) and monitoring procedures (quality

check and quarterly reminders). Several database category systems were considered (MeSH, ICD-10, ICE, NLM). In order to reach to a decision partners had been asked about their implemented category systems. Eventually, during the 2nd WP6 face-to-face meeting in Brussels in 2010, it was decided to use MeSH (Medical Subject Heading, from the National Library of Medicine, USA) as the common classification system for the entire EUnetHTA JA 1.

The first release of the online database was in August 2011. With this first release with basic database functionalities, contact persons from individual agencies could create and edit descriptions of their agencies projects and use the database to identify projects in various ways (search by keywords, browse by metadata, automatic list of potential collaborations based on MeSH indexation). A second database release was produced at the end of 2012. The new release included improvements like automatic email notification, further facilitating the tasks of users.

The POP Database is interoperable with other EUnetHTA tools (single login and password) and the possibilities of collaboration with information systems outside EUnetHTA are being investigated.

3.2 Communication activities

During the EUnetHTA JA 1, LBI-HTA issued regular email requests for information to the POP Database to EUnetHTA agencies. The present report concerns the first 10 POP requests that were issued between January 2010 and August 2012. Following each request, LBI-HTA completed a communication protocol including information on the timeline of communication activities, the specific content of each communication, the target group and the number of responding agencies to each communication. Annex 3 presents a 1 page standard description per request summing up the main content of the communication protocols.

Content of communication activities

A request procedure consisted of four different types of email communications: request email, reminder email, blocked access email and results email.

The procedure was initiated by a *request email* inviting agencies to update the POP Database within a period of two or three weeks. From the beginning of project until August 2011 (requests 1-6), agencies provided the information in a excel list. With the release of the POP Database, in August 2011, agencies updated information in the online database (requests 7-10). A request email included guidance on how to update and add information to the POP Database. In the majority of requests, specifications on which projects to enter and which projects not to enter into the database were provided to agencies. In the latter requests (7-10), agencies were requested to give brief feedback to LBI-HTA in case no changes in their work programme had occurred and thus no updates in the database were made. LBI-HTA required this information as this is the only way to control whether an agency was still actively contributing or not. In all requests, LBI-HTA reminded agencies that access to the database was limited to regularly information providing agencies.

The request email was followed by one or two *reminder emails*. The reminder email invited non-responding agencies to update their database information within an extended deadline. Again, agencies were reminded that access to the database was given only to actively contributing agencies. The number of reminder emails varied. In five requests (2-3, 5-7), LBI-HTA issued one reminder, in four requests (1, 8-10) two reminders were issued, and in a single request (4) no reminder email was issued due to holiday seasons.

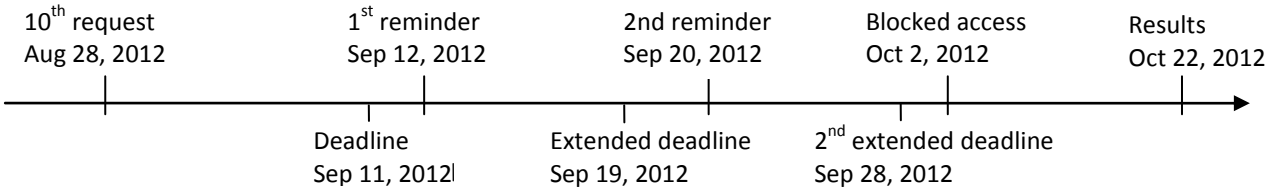
In five request procedures (1, 7-10), LBI-HTA issued a *blocked access email* informing non-responders of the request and reminder emails that access to the database was blocked due to non response. Recipients of the blocked access email were invited to contact LBI-HTA in case they would like to contribute to future requests.

The final communication by LBI-HTA was the *results email*. The results email presented the main results of POP request. This included information on number of responding agencies, total number of projects in the database as well as the number of alert topics and similar projects. While the information on alert topics and similar projects was central in all 10 results emails, the way in which this information was presented varied over time. In requests 1 and 2, LBI-HTA issued alert emails to agencies involved in alert topics. From request 3 onwards, the information on alert topics and similar projects was provided in an excel list that was uploaded to the EUnetHTA information management system following a results email. With the release of an online database (7-10), the results email moreover directed attention to the so-called "Show potential collaborations for my agency" function in the POP Database allowing agencies to look for potential collaborations themselves. Typically, the results email was issued 1.5-2 months after the initial request email

Target groups of LBI-HTA communication
The communications by LBI-HTA focused primarily on active responding agencies. While the request email addressed all EUnetHTA agencies, subsequent reminders involved only previous request responders that had not responded to the request email in question. The results email addressed all agencies in requests 1-7. By request 8, only responding agencies received the results email.

Development of a standard request procedure
Annex 3 presents a 1 page standard description of communication activities in request 1-10. In the initial requests (1-7), various structures of the request procedure seem to have been tested (e.g. the number of reminders varied; one request procedure included a blocked access email while other procedures did not; in some requests the communication was differentiated, while in other requests no distinction between responders and non-responders was made). By request 8, a standardised content and routine structure of the request procedure seem to have been established, as illustrated in Figure 1. According to LBI-HTA, these changes in communication from request 1 to 10 were not by intention, but rather due to a change in personnel in the autumn of 2011.

Figure 1: Standard description of the 10th POP request.



Purpose	10th POP request	1st reminder	2nd reminder	Blocked access	Results
Content	- Thanks for previous contributions - Reminder that access to database is dependent on at least quarterly updates - Request to update POP - Contact LBI-HTA in case no changes occurred in the status of projects since last request - Guidance on how to access POP Database (+ POP Database user manual or email) - Specification on which projects to enter into database (projects published no longer than 3 months ago, no primary research studies)	- General reminder to update POP Database - Extension of deadline - Reminder that access to database is dependent on update of database - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contact LBI-HTA.	- Personal email due to no news from agency - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA - Access to database will be denied on September 28 in case agency fail to complete requirements - Contact LBI-HTA concerning future intent with POP access og in case of problems	- Due to non-update of database and non-response to reminder, access to database has been blocked - Invitation to contact LBI-HTA if agencies would like to update database	- Presentation of results to POP creators and readers - Short guidance in how to use the "show potential collaborations for my agency"-function in the POP Database - Thanks for your contributions
Target group	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56	Responders of previous request, not responding to 10th POP request N=18	Non responders of request and reminder N=14	Non responders of request, 1st reminder and blocked access email N=2	Responding agencies (N=43)
Responses	N=23	N=10	N=9	N=1	

Figure 1: POP request 10 represents the routine request procedure that LBI-HTA established after request 8.

The routine POP request procedure from request 8 onwards comprised a request email thanking for previous contributions, inviting all agencies to update their database information. The request email was followed by two reminders. The first reminder extended the deadline with a couple of days. Once again, agencies were reminded that access to the database was dependent on regular updates and they were moreover requested to contact LBI-HTA in case no changes had occurred in the work programme since the last request. The 2nd reminder extended the deadline with another couple of days and warned non-responding agencies that access would be denied if the requirements were not met. Once this extended deadline was exceeded, non-responding agencies received the blocked access email and an invitation to contact LBI-HTA if they would like to provide information to the database as part of future requests. The final results email was sent to responding agencies only.

3.3 Responses by the agencies

The communication statistic included in the communication protocols provides detailed information on agencies responses in each of the 10 POP requests (cf. Annex 4). On average, 55 [53-56] agencies received a request email in the 10 POP requests. The number of request receivers fluctuated slightly during the project due to different organisational changes (some agencies merged, one agency ceased being a partner, other agencies entered into EUnetHTA JA 1 during the project).

On average, 41 [35-43] agencies responded to a POP request. For various reasons, not all responding agencies provided information to the database (e.g. due to time constraints, no changes in work programme, confidentiality reasons). Thirty-five [32-39] agencies on average provided information in a request, while on average 6 [2-12] agencies responded to a request without updating or adding new information. There was on average 14 [12-19] non-responding agencies per POP request (Figure 2). The response rate varied from 65-79% and the average response rate was 74% (cf. Annex 4). As illustrated in Figure 2, there was a slight upward trend in the response rate from the first to the last request.

Figure 2: Share of responders and non-responders in requests 1-10.

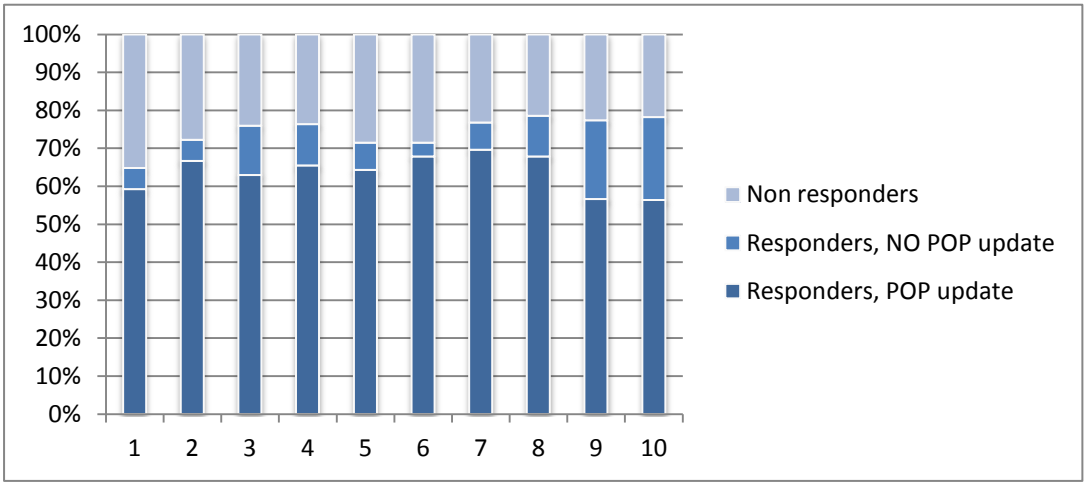


Figure 2: Between 65-79% of agencies responded to POP requests 1-10. The average response rate was 74%.

Forty-seven per cent of agencies responded to all requests they received, 32% of agencies responded to 50-99% of the requests they received, 16% agencies responded to less than half of the requests and 5% of agencies did not respond to any of the requests by LBI-HTA (Table 1).[2]

Table 1: Agencies entry history

Agencies	Number	Share
Responding to 100% of requests	28	47%
Responding to 50-99% of requests	19	32%
Responding to 1-49% of requests	8	13%
Responding to 0% of requests	5	8%
Total	60	100%

[2] According to LBI-HTA, the 5% of agencies who did not respond to the requests were not really "agencies", but representatives of ministries of "young" countries (LBI-HTA called them "non-producers"). This was caused by the JA 1 construction determining that ministries should nominate 1-3 candidates per country. For this reason many decentralized, highly productive and established agencies, e.g. in Spain, are not included in EUnetHTA.

The number of projects in the POP Database varied between 896 and 1294 during the project, and, as illustrated in figure 3, there was an increase in the number from the first to the last POP request. The number of alert topics indicating possible fields of collaboration between agencies also increased over time, starting with 28 alert topics in request 1 and ending with 142 alert topics in request 10. Likewise there was an increase in the number of similar projects within alert topics.

Figure 3: Total number of projects, similar project and alert topics in POP requests 1-10

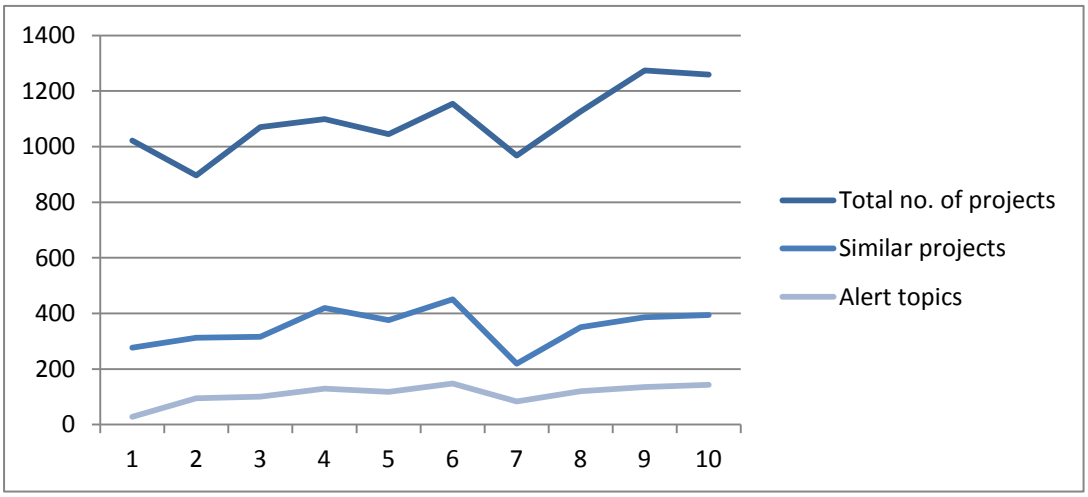


Figure 3: Following the 10th POP request, there were 1259 projects in the database, including 143 alert topics and 394 similar projects.

Following the 10th POP request, 47 agencies from 24 European countries were represented in the POP Database. Forty-four agencies had access to the database. Three agencies had projects registered in the database, but no access due to non-response in previous requests.

Four agencies had no projects registered in the database after request 10. Thirty-five agencies had 1-25 projects, 8 agencies had between 50-100 projects, and 2 agencies had more than 200 projects registered in the database. Agencies with 1-25 projects accounted for 26% of projects in the database, agencies with 50-100 projects accounted for 34% of projects, and the two agencies with most projects registered in the database accounted for 40% of projects.

Figure 4: Example of alert topics following the 10th POP request

Alert topic	**Agencies with similar projects within alert topic**				
Hip and knee replacements	NICE	AETSA	DIMDI	CAHIAQ	HAS
Hospital acquired/health care associated infections	NETSCC	UHAGemelli	IPH-RE	NOKC	
HPV test screening for cervical cancer	HAS	ASPLazio	SSD-MHEC		

Figure 4 illustrates three out of a total of 143 alert topics following the 10th POP request. E.g. within alert topic "Hip and knee replacements" 5 agencies (NICE, AETSA, DIMDI, CHIAQ and HAS) have one or more projects registered. The list of alert topics and similar projects within alert topics identifies specific fields with potential for collaboration between agencies. Agencies' contact data are presented in Annex 5.

Figure 5: Number of projects by agencies after the 10th POP request.

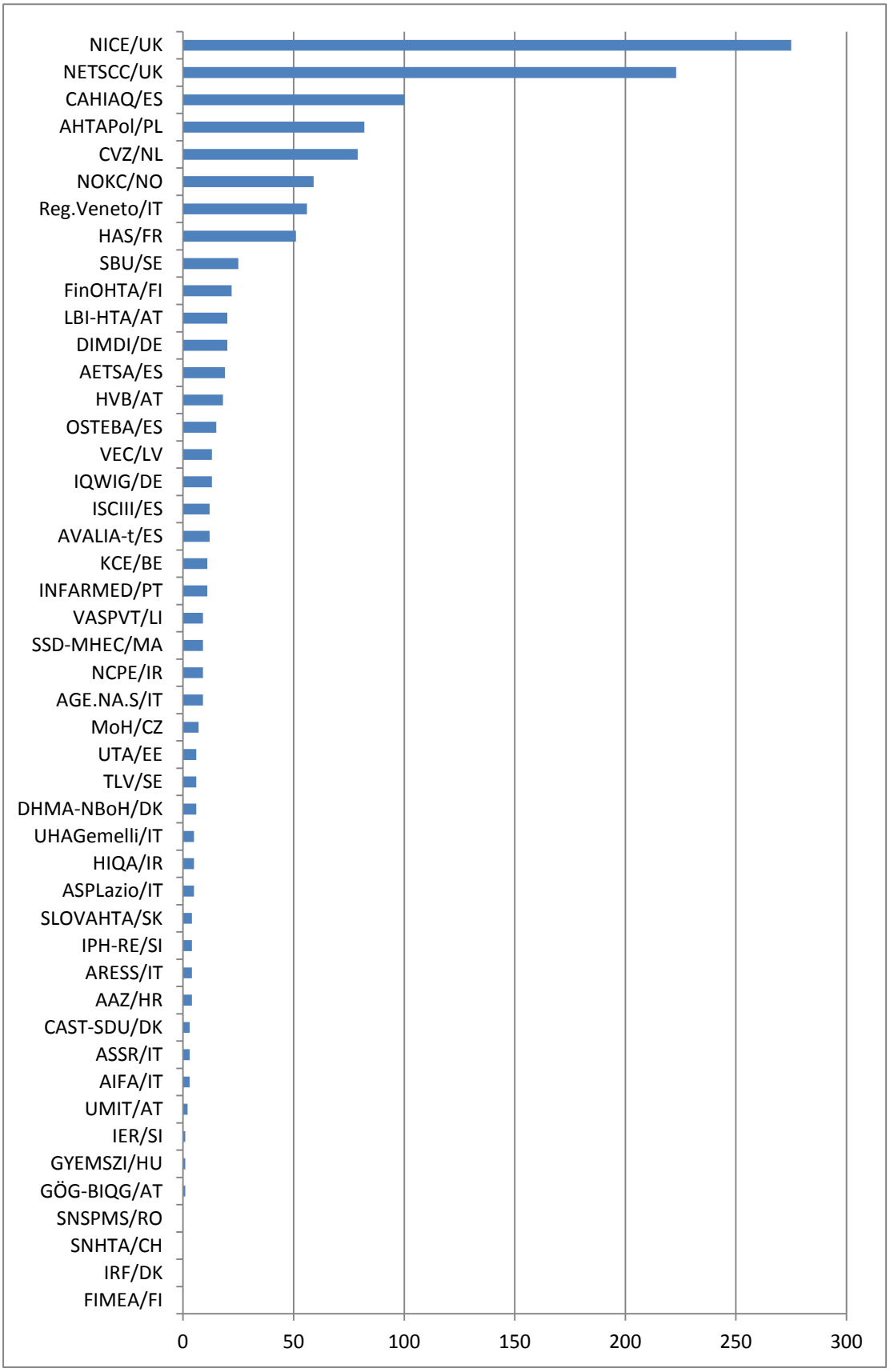


Figure 5: The majority of agencies had 1-25 projects registered in the POP Database after the 10th POP request. An overview of agencies' full names is presented in Annex 5.

3.4 Agencies use of the POP Database and resulting collaboration

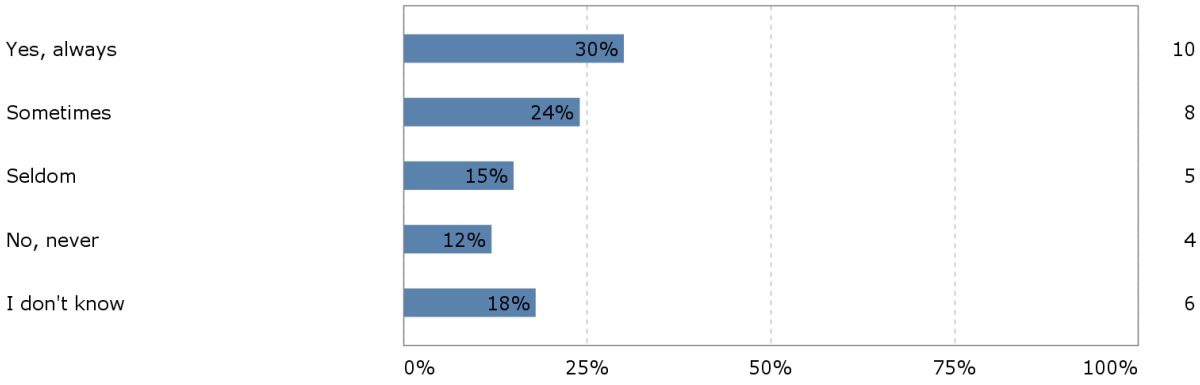
This section focuses on agencies awareness and use of the POP Database and on collaboration between agencies that occurred both with and without the involvement of LBI-HTA.

Agencies' awareness and use of the database

The December 2012 survey carried out by CAST focused on three main themes: agencies awareness of the POP Database, agencies use of the database and any resulting collaboration between agencies. Forty-two out of 57 agencies (74%) responded to the survey. Forty agencies (95%) responded that they knew the POP Database, while 2 agencies (5%) responded that they were not aware of its existence. Among the 40 agencies that knew the POP Database, 30 agencies (75%) replied that they provided information to the database, 7 agencies (18%) replied that they did not provide any information, and 3 agencies (8%) said that they did not know whether they provided information or not. Various reasons for not providing information to the POP Database were given by the 7 agencies in question, including no or only very few HTA activities, lack of resources, confidentiality in HTA procedures, insufficient awareness of the database, changing contact persons, or no access to the POP Database.

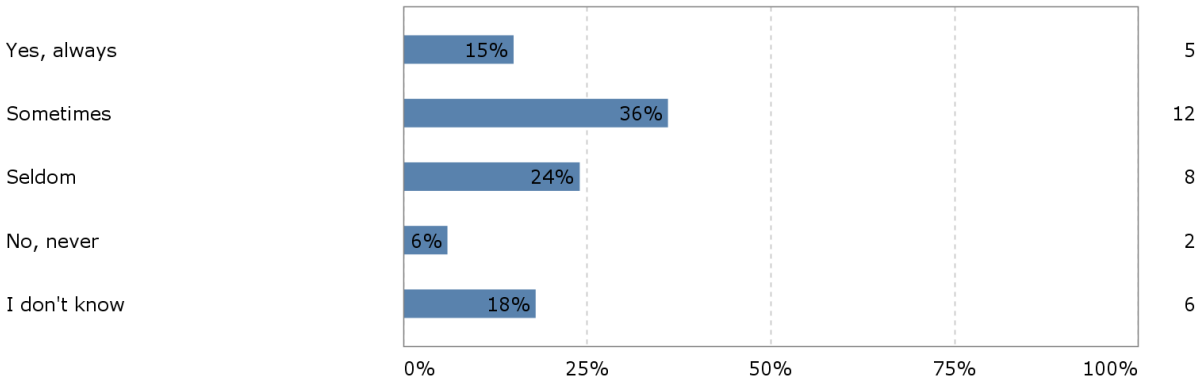
Three questions in the survey concerned agencies use of the POP Database. Firstly, agencies were asked whether they searched the database prior to starting a new project. Ten agencies (30%) responded that they always searched the POP Database, 8 agencies (24%) sometimes searched the database, and 5 agencies (15%) responded that they only seldom used the database when initiating new projects. Four agencies (12%) responded that they never used the database and 6 (18%) agencies replied that they didn't know (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Agencies' searching the POP Database before starting a new project (N=33)



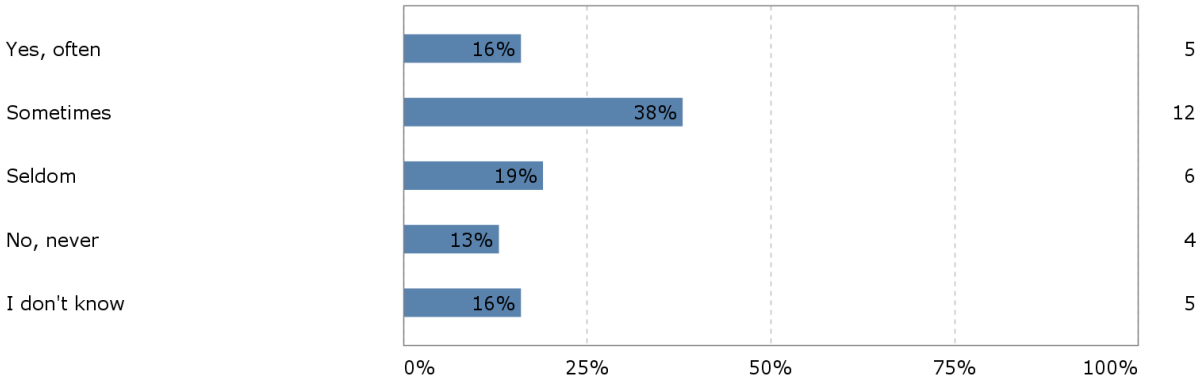
In the second question on the use of the POP Database, agencies were asked whether they usually searched the POP Database following the POP results update from LBI-HTA. Five agencies (15%) responded that they always searched the database, 12 agencies (36%) replied that they sometimes searched the database, and 8 agencies (24%) responded that they only seldom did so. Two agencies (6%) replied that they never searched the database following the LBI-HTA update and 6 agencies (18%) replied that they didn't know (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Agencies searching the POP Database following the regular updates from LBI-HTA (N=33)



The third question referred to agencies' searches in the database with a view to staying updated on ongoing assessments. Twenty-three agencies (73%) responded that they searched the database: Five agencies (16%) often searched the database, 12 agencies (38%) sometimes searched the database, and 6 agencies (19%) responded that they seldom searched the database. Four agencies (13%) didn't search the database at all and 5 agencies (16%) didn't know (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Agencies searching the POP Database to keep updated on ongoing assessments (N=32)

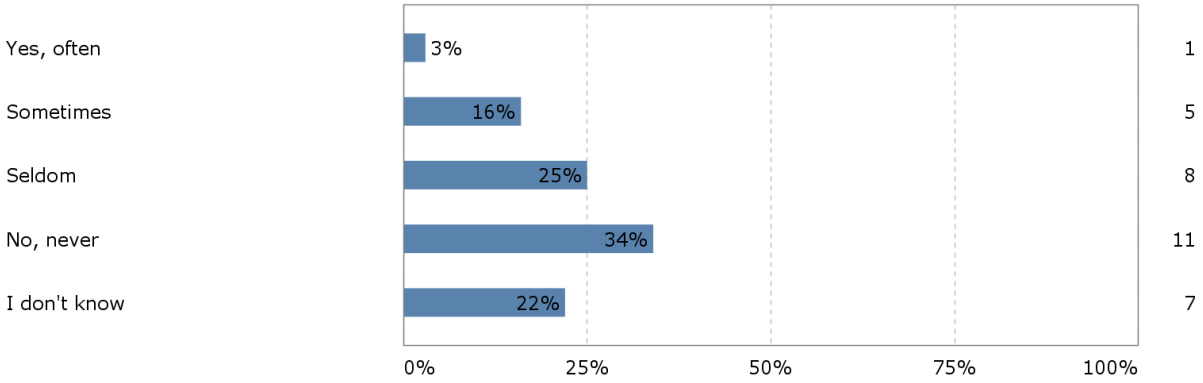


Collaboration between agencies

While agencies were in fact encouraged to inform LBI-HTA about the collaborative activities they were involved in facilitated by the POP Database, LBI-HTA only received very little feedback from agencies on this issue during the project. Three questions in the December 2012 survey concerned collaboration between agencies that had occurred without the involvement of WP 7B lead-partner, LBI-HTA.

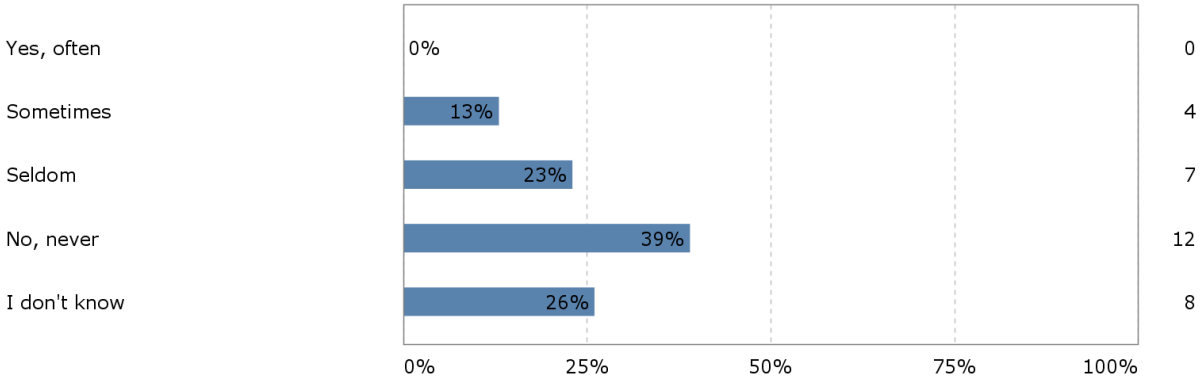
Firstly, agencies were asked whether they had ever contacted other EUnetHTA agencies because of information in the database. Fourteen agencies (44%) responded that they had contacted other agencies, 11 agencies (34%) had never had contact with another agency, and 7 agencies (22%) responded that they didn't know (Figure 9). Six out of 13 agencies (46%) that had contacted other agencies replied that collaboration had been started or that collaboration had sometimes been started as a result of these contacts. Seven agencies (54%) responded that collaboration was never started.

Figure 9: Agencies contacting a EUnetHTA partner (other than LBI-HTA) facilitated by information the POP Database (N=32)



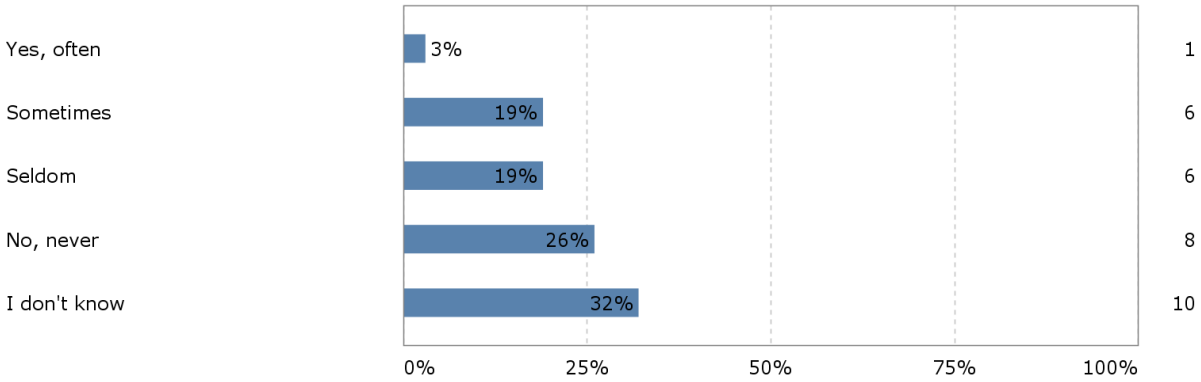
Secondly, agencies were asked if they had been contacted by other agencies because of the information they had provided to the POP Database. Eleven agencies (36%) responded that they had been contacted a few times or only seldom, 12 agencies (39%) had never been contacted by another agency, and 8 agencies (26%) responded that they did not know (Figure 10). Five out of the 11 agencies (45%) that had been contacted by other agencies responded that collaboration had been started or that collaboration had sometimes been started as a result of these contacts. Six agencies (55%) responded that collaboration was never started.

Figure 10: Agencies being contacted by a EUnetHTA agency (other than LBI-HTA) facilitated by the POP Database (N=31)



The third question on collaboration concerned collaboration between agencies that was not related to information in the POP Database. One agency (3%) responded that this often was the case, 6 agencies (19%) said that this was sometimes the case, and 6 agencies (19%) responded that collaboration not related to the database only seldom occurred. Eight agencies (26%) had no experience with such collaboration and 10 agencies (32%) responded that they didn't know (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Collaboration between agencies not related to the POP Database (N=31)



Collaboration supported and initiated by LBI-HTA

LBI-HTA supported and initiated collaboration between agencies throughout the project. A specific objective of the 4 face-to-face meetings organised during the project was to bring agencies to together with a view to identifying and stipulating concrete fields and projects for collaboration. For instance, a central element at the first two meetings in Dublin and on Malta were working group discussions on specific topics with high potential for collaboration using the check list for possible collaborations developed in WP 7B early in the project (Annex 1). Central to the meetings were also general discussions on agencies experiences with collaboration, focusing on positive collaboration experiences and factors facilitating collaboration as well as barriers to collaboration and potential solutions to overcome these barriers (Figure 12 & 13).

Figure 12: Summary of agencies collaboration experiences

PROS	CONS
- Increased confidence in collaborating partners and their methods - Lower workload for collaborating agency - In case of 1 language: lower workload for „leading agency“ (out-sourcing of internal review/2nd author) - Shared formulation of sometimes difficult recommendations increases confidence - Increased „power“ of assessments if 2 agencies derive recommendations	- Trust (expertise of collaborating agency, deadlines) - Higher workload for 1st author (explanation of methods, writing of bilingual assessments) - In case of 2 languages (English and respective national language): INCREASED workload

Malta face-to-face meeting

Figure 13: Factors facilitating collaboration based agencies experiences

FACILITATORS OF COLLABORATION

- Variable time frame
- Methodological less challenging mini-assessments
- Report language: English
- Same mother tongue of collaborating partners *(explanation of methods easier, fewer misunderstandings)*
- New technologies *(lower work-lead due to fewer hits identified by literature search, corresponding to fewer studies for data extraction)*
- Flexible structures of reports *(allows incorporation of facts relevant for collaborating agency)*
- Quick replies to e-mails increase confidence, reassure that tasks are well-understood and that deadlines will be kept
- Familiarity with collaborating partner/some prior knowledge about their methodology
- Share methods *(e.g. checklist for study quality, GRADE)*

Malta face-to-face meeting

During the EUnetHTA JA 1, LBI-HTA made calls for collaboration based on the results of the POP requests and also organised a couple of workshops on topics with high potential for collaboration. Based on these calls for collaboration, LBI-HTA succeeded in coordinating a total of 12 joint assessments (Figure 14).

Figure 14: EUnetHTA JA 1 joint assessments

Title	Agencies involved
Vascular-Endothelial-Growth-Factor-Inhibitors (anti-VEGF) for Diabetic Macular Oedema, March 2011	LBI-HTA + AAZ
Selective internal radiotherapy using yttrium-90 microspheres for primary and secondary liver malignancies, March 2011	LBI-HTA + Reg Veneto + AGENAS
Dasatinib (Sprycel®) for the 1st-line treatment of Philadelphia-chromosome positive chronic myeloid leukaemia in the chronic phase; April 2011	LBI-HTA + AHTAPol
Second-line chemotherapy with Cabazitaxel (Jevtana®) for the treatment of castration-resistant metastatic prostate cancer; May 2011	LBI-HTA + HTA Centre Bremen
Eribulin (Halaven®) as third- or late-line monotherapy for advanced/metastatic breast cancer, July 2011	LBI-HTA + AHTAPol + UVEF (Reg. Veneto)
Abiraterone acetate (ZytigaTM) as 2nd-line therapy for the treatment of metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer after docetaxel therapy; December 2011	LBI-HTA + HTA Centre Bremen
Vemurafenib for patients with BRAF V600E mutation positive advanced/metastatic melanoma; January 2012	LBI-HTA + ULSS20
Axitinib (AG 013736, Inlyta ®) for the 2nd-line treatment of metastatic renal cell carcinoma; February 2012	LBI-HTA + ULSS20
Lenalidomide (Revlimid®) for the treatment of low /intermediate-1 risk myelodysplastic syndrome with chromosome 5q deletion; May 2012	LBI-HTA + UVEF (Reg. Veneto) + AHTAPol
Ipilimumab for the first line therapy of advanced/metastatic melanoma; July 2012	LBI-HTA + ULSS20
Lenalidomide (Revlimid®) for the first-line therapy of transplant-ineligible patients with multiple myeloma, Sept 2012	LBI-HTA + ULSS20
Trametinib for advanced or metastatic BRAF V600 mutation-positive melanoma Dec 2012	LBI-HTA + ULSS20

While there were no formal processes for collaboration during the first two years of the project, two models of collaboration and two ways to proceed based on past experiences were presented and discussed at the Vienna meeting in May 2012 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Models for collaboration

TWO MODELS OF COLLABORATION – TWO WAYS TO PROCEED

1. Call for collaboration (active brokering) to find a partner OR
2. Individually contact partners based on the POP results

Work load division:

1. strict project management: 1st author has the main workload, 2nd author controls/quality assurance
2. chapter-wise work-division

Vienna face-to-face meeting

Pros and cons of collaboration

Supplementing agencies discussions on pros and cons of collaboration at face-to-face-meetings during the project, the December 2012 survey asked agencies that had collaborated with other agencies (N=12), to list the three most important facilitators and the three most important barriers to collaboration based on their own experiences.

Most agencies expressed that the POP Database was a useful tool for information exchange (e.g. on literature reviews, conclusions/summaries/recommendations or methodology) and for sharing knowledge, experiences and expertise with other agencies. For instance one agency wrote that "it is good that there is a possibility to contact people directly even just for some information", while another agency expressed that they had received "moral and intellectual support" in a specific HTA process. Several agencies expressed that the POP Database provided an important first hand overview on ongoing HTA activities at a European level and that it represented an easy access to other agencies working on similar topics. A few agencies indicated that collaboration increased the quality of work and that shared formulations increased both the power of and confidence in recommendations. Finally, a few agencies expressed that division of work between agencies had increased the efficiency in the evaluation process: "We reached the outcome very fast", as one agency wrote.

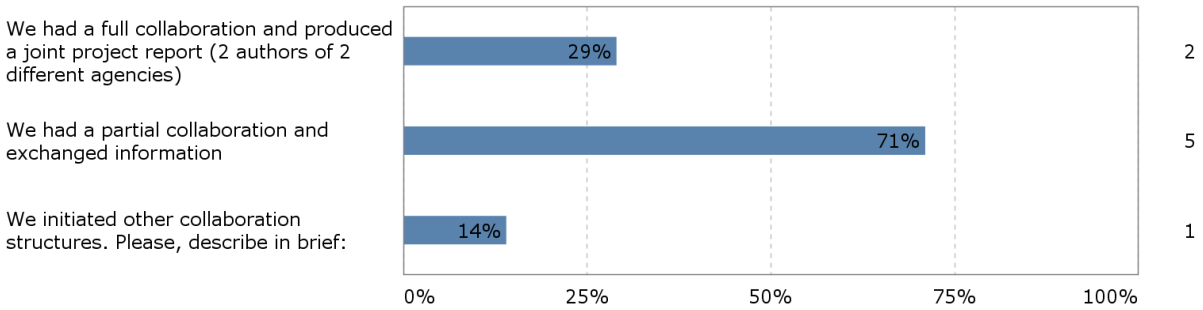
On the negative side, several agencies expressed that different time-windows, different scopes and different working languages often limited opportunities for collaboration. As one agency for instance wrote "timeline is often different and internal deadlines can't be moved". Another agency expressed that due to time and staff constraints it was not possible to provide reports or recommendations in other languages than their native. A few agencies mentioned that collaboration sometimes increased the workload, e.g. due to extra communication with an additional partner. And, finally, one agency mentioned that opportunities for collaboration had been limited as the research topics that this agency had been involved in so far had been quite specific to their own health system.

Annex 6 presents the full range of responses by agencies to the survey questions on facilitators of and barriers to collaboration.

3.5 Reduction of duplication of work

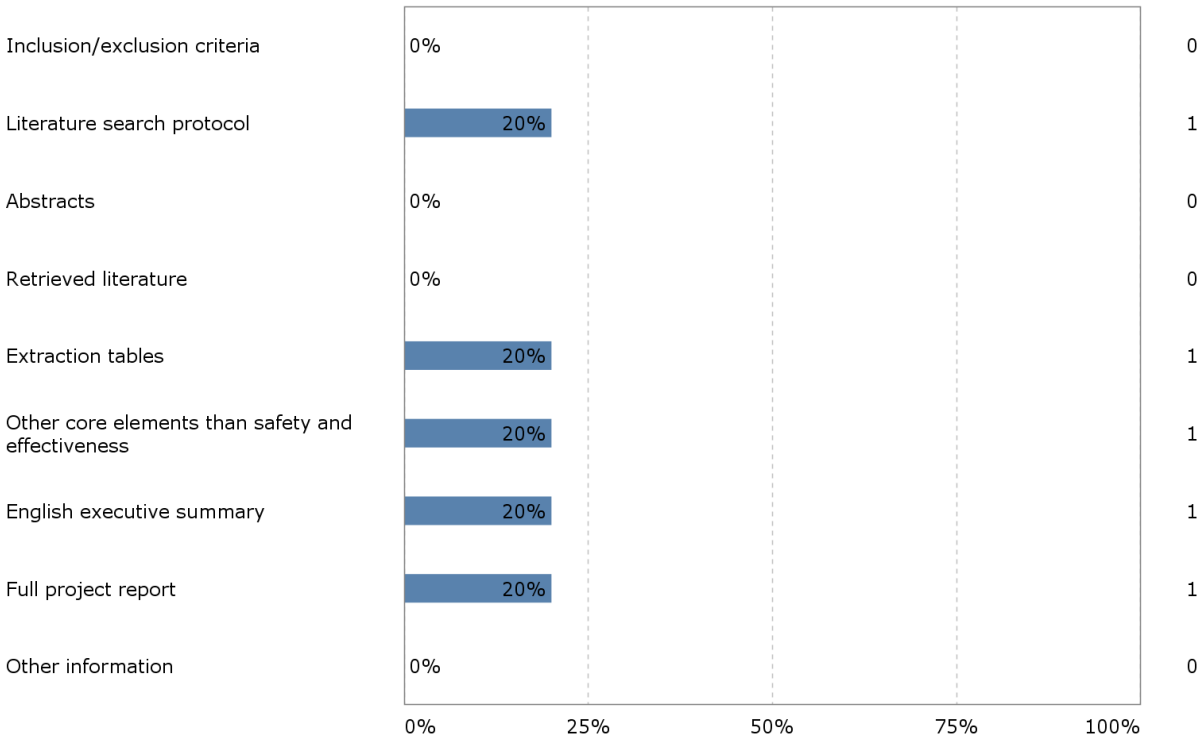
A straightforward reduction of duplication at the report-level was reported twice (Figure 16). What is much more commonly reported is what has been described as partial collaboration with exchange of information. One respondent actually answered (in response to the final answering option) that one collaboration was cancelled because of an information exchange documenting similar plans.

Figure 16: The specifics of agencies collaboration



What agencies actually share in terms of information exchange is the literature search protocol, extraction tables, info on other core elements than safety and effectiveness, the English executive summary and the full project report (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Agencies' information exchange



4 Conclusion and recommendations

First the research questions are answered, followed by a discussion and the formulation of recommendations.

Research questions

1. How was the POP Database created and structured?

   The technical development of the POP Database is the result of collaboration between three JA1 partners: WP 7B Co-Lead Partner LBI-HTA, WP 6 Lead Partner KCE (Belgium) and WP 6 Co-Lead Partner DIMDI (Germany). The database was initiated and managed by LBI-HTA. DIMDI was responsible for the database code development and maintenance. With the release of the online version of the database in August 2011, KCE coordinated these activities.

   The database was piloted in a spreadsheet stored in an online folder in the first 18 months of the JA1. The first release of the online POP Database was in August 2011 and, at the end of 2012, a second and improved version of the database was released. The POP Database is interoperable with other EUnetHTA tools and the possibilities of collaboration with information systems outside EUnetHTA are being investigated.

2. What is the content and how were the structured communication activities by LBI-HTA to obtain input for a POP Database ('POP requests') presented to the HTA agencies in WP 7B?

   Content of communication activities

   A request procedure consisted of four different types of email communications: **request email, reminder email, blocked access email and results email.**

   The procedure was initiated by a request email inviting agencies to update the POP Database within a period of two or three weeks. A request email included guidance on how to update and add information to the POP Database. In the majority of requests, specifications on which projects to enter and which projects not to enter into the database were provided to agencies. The request email was followed by one or two reminder emails. The reminder email invited non-responding agencies to update their database information within an extended deadline. Agencies were reminded that access to the database would be given only to actively contributing agencies. The number of reminder emails varied. In five request procedures LBI-HTA issued a blocked access email informing non-responders of the request and reminder emails that access to the database had been blocked due to non-response. Recipients of the blocked access email were invited to contact LBI-HTA in case they would like to contribute in future requests. The blocked access email eventually increased the response rate because some non-responders apologized and contacted LBI-HTA right afterwards to ask for access again. The final communication by LBI-HTA was the results email. The results email presented the main results of a POP request. This included information on number of responding agencies, total number of projects in the database as well as the number of alert topics and similar projects. While the information on alert topics and similar projects was central in all 10 results emails, the way in

which this information was presented varied over time. With the release of an online database (POP requests 7-10), the results email directed attention to the "Show potential collaborations for my agency" function in the POP Database allowing agencies to look for potential collaborations themselves. The results email was issued 1.5-2 months after the initial request email.

Target groups of LBI-HTA communication

The communications by LBI-HTA focused on actively responding agencies. While the request email was addressed to all EUnetHTA agencies, subsequent reminders involved only previous request responders that did not respond to the request email in question. The results email addressed all agencies in requests 1-7. By request 8, only responding agencies received the results email.

3. Have the HTA agencies responded to the requests? If so, to what extent?

   Yes. To a considerable extent (74%).

   Forty-seven per cent of agencies responded to all requests they received, 32% of agencies responded to 50-99% of the requests they received, 16% agencies responded to less than half of the requests and 5% of agencies did not respond to any of the requests by LBI-HTA. According to LBI-HTA, the 5% of agencies which did not respond to the requests were not really "agencies", but representatives of ministries of "young" countries (LBI-HTA called them "non-producers").

   Following the 10th POP-request, 47 agencies from 24 European countries were represented in the POP Database. Forty-four agencies had access to the database. Three agencies had projects registered in the database, but had no access to the database due to non-response in previous requests. On average, 55 [53-56] agencies received a request email in the 10 POP requests. The number of request receivers fluctuated slightly during the project due to organisational changes. On average, 41 [35-43] agencies responded to a POP request. For various reasons, not all responding agencies provided information to the database (e.g. due to time constraints, no changes in work programme, confidentiality reasons). Thirty-five [32-39] agencies on average provided information in a request, while on average 6 [2-12] agencies responded to a request without updating or adding new information. There were on average 14 [12-19] non-responding agencies per POP request. The response rate varied from 65-79% and the average response rate was 74%. There was a slight upward trend in the response rate from the first to the last request.

4. What has been the actual use of the POP Database in terms of generating collaborations between agencies, and if so, how can these collaborations be characterised?

   Two questions in the December 2012 survey concerned collaboration between agencies that had occurred without the involvement of WP 7B lead-partner, LBI-HTA. Fourteen agencies (44%) responded that they had contacted other agencies because of information in the database. Six out of the 13 agencies (46%) that had contacted other agencies replied that collaboration had been started or that collaboration had sometimes been started as a result of these contacts.

Agencies were also asked if they had been contacted by other agencies because of the information they had provided to the POP Database. Eleven agencies (36%) responded that they had been contacted a few times or only seldom. Five out of the 11 agencies (45%) that had been contacted by other agencies responded that collaboration had been started or that collaboration had sometimes been started as a result of these contacts.

All in all, 23 collaborations can be reported, of which 12 were self-initiated by LBA-HTA.

Considering the contents of collaborations, the survey by CAST showed that collaboration at the full report level is rare (n=2). Based on information from a single case it may be that reduction of duplication is primarily oriented towards specific elements in the assessment process, e.g. copying a search protocol.

Following the 10th POP-request, there were 1259 projects in the database, including 143 alert topics and 394 similar projects within alert topics. This documents an enormous potential to reduce duplication of effort, which has not been realized in the current project given the relatively small number of agencies involved and the limited contents of collaborative efforts.

5. Can a reduction of duplication of effort be documented?

   A slight reduction of duplication of effort has been documented (see ad 4).

General discussion and recommendations

The provision of information and communication material in the POP Database has not been designed for the purpose of research. By necessity, the analysis is explorative. The study indicates that collaboration between agencies is less straightforward than initially thought. Apparently, the barriers for (substantial) collaboration are more important than the (potential) benefits. Collaboration is an exception rather than the rule. One explanation for this, suggested by LBI-HTA, might be that 40% of all HTA production in the EU is located in the UK. With clear procedures and a well-organized flow of activities, the POP database cannot be expected to have substantial influence on the NICE agenda. Perhaps the POP database is more suitable for small countries with more flexibility with regard to their choice of technologies to assess.

Recommendation 1 (for assessors)

Prospective research is needed to identify and address the stimulating and impeding factors for substantial collaboration between HTA Agencies in the EU.

The 'intervention', each POP request and the contents and presentation of the request, were based on practical considerations, that is, lacked a theoretical foundation.

Recommendation 2 (for assessors)

Select a suitable theoretical framework to promote the development of high-quality interventions that have the potential to overcome some of the barriers identified in the present study.

The POP Database is perhaps the only or one of the few tools developed to date to reduce duplication and promote collaboration. The experience gained so far deserves to be extended and

optimized. One way might be to include scanning of the POP database as a standard compulsory routine before project start, that is, it could become part of the SOP of agencies. In JA 2 the number and scope of assessments not produced twice due to the POP database should be well-documented.

Recommendation 3 (for agencies)

It is recommended to agencies to continue using the POP Database and intensify efforts to receive most benefit of the information.

One of the identified barriers towards full exploitation of the POP Database is that assessments have to be written in the local language. With increasing globalization perhaps gradually a shift to English may become an option.

Recommendation 4 (for agencies)

It is recommended that agencies write assessments in English, in addition to or replacing the local language.

Denmark has contributed modestly to the project. Three out of 5 Danish agencies (CAST, IRF and DHMA-NBoH) had few entries in the POP Database. The reason for this is related to the central health reform in 2007 decentralising decision making in HTA to the 5 Danish regions. Of these, only one region, Central Denmark Region, has actually allocated resources to HTA. One may speculate in how far Denmark is representative for other countries with regional HTA Agencies.

Recommendation 5 (for the HTA Community and regional politicians in Denmark)

The Central Denmark Region should take the lead in coordinating collaborative efforts in the Danish regions aimed at the POP Database and other initiatives.

Reduction of duplication of efforts and stimulation of collaboration between Agencies is not only relevant at the level of the EU but also at the global level (HTAi and INAHTA)

Recommendation 6 (to the international HTA Community)

Notwithstanding the progress made in the EU, at some point the international HTA community should become more involved in initiatives like the POP database. Perhaps after JA2 has finished, coordination of its further development should take place not only in the EU but also at the level of HTAi and INAHTA.

Annexes

Annex 1: Checklist for possible collaboration within EUnetHTA Joint Action 1

During the first months of the project, a check list for possible collaboration within the EUnetHTA Joint Action 1 was developed by WP 7B:

- Always take a look into the POP Database/list before starting a new project wait with starting a new project until the similar project of another agency is published;
- Contact other agencies with similar project(s) and directly ask them to exchange…..
    - inclusion/ exclusion criteria and/or
    - the literature search protocol and/or
    - findings/abstracts and/or
    - literature/studies and/or
    - extraction table(s) and/or
    - other core elements and/or
    - an English executive summary and/or
    - the full project report/text (1 language)
- Collaborate in the production of a project report (2 authors of 2 different agencies)

Annex 2: December 2012 survey

Invitation to 57 agencies to participate in WP 7B evaluation survey

Dear NAME OF PARTNER

The EUnetHTA POP Database for planned and ongoing projects (POP Database) is in the process of being evaluated. The evaluation, which is part of the Work Plan of WP 7B, is carried out by the Centre for Applied Health Services Research and Technology Assessment (CAST) at the University of Southern Denmark.

During the three years of the Joint Action regular email requests for information to the POP Database have been issued by the WP 7B lead partner, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Health Technology Assessment (LBI-HTA). 43 out of 56 EUnetHTA partners – or almost 80 % of partners – provided information to the database following the latest request and, presently, a total of 1256 planned, ongoing or recently published projects are available in the database. The aim of the POP Database is to support collaboration between EUnetHTA partners with a view to reduce unnecessary duplication of work. Our knowledge about the actual use of this huge amount of information is limited. This goes too for the establishment of collaborations between EUnetHTA partners. We therefore invite you to participate in a survey focusing on your agency's use of the POP Database and the collaborations between your agency and other EUnetHTA agencies that have developed in response to information in the POP Database.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ACCESS THE LINK BELOW EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT A USER OF THE POP DATABASE

Please go to the survey via: LINK TO SURVEY

We would appreciate to receive your reply by November 27 2012.

Thank you very much in advance for using 10-15 minutes of your time to answer our maximum 17 questions.

Best regards,

Marianne Sandvei, Hindrik Vondeling and Jens Olsen
CAST, University of Southern Denmark

1. Are you aware of the existence of the EUnetHTA database for planned and ongoing projects (POP Database)?

❑ Yes

❑ No (→Exit information & End of survey)

Exit information

The POP Database is the database for planned and ongoing assessments on new health technologies with currently more than 1200 projects from 43 EUnetHTA partners.

The database was launched in 2009 and will continue under the EUnetHTA Joint Action 2.

Please contact Judit Erdös at LBI-HTA (Judit.Erdos@hta.lbg.ac.at) if your agency would like to provide information to the POP Database in future requests.

---

2. Regular email requests for information to the POP Database have been issued by LBI-HTA in the three years of the EUnetHTA Joint Action 1. Did your agency provide information to the POP Database following any of these requests?

❑ Yes (→ Question 4)

❑ No

❑ I don't know (→ Question 4)

3. Why did your agency not provide information to the POP Database?

(Tick more than one box if relevant)

❑ My agency does not have any HTA activities

❑ My agency does not have the resources required to provide information to the POP Database

❑ My agency provides the information exclusively to other databases

❑ Other reasons. Please describe in brief:_____

(→ End of survey)

Use of POP Database

4. Does your agency search the POP Database before starting a new project?

❑ Yes, always

❑ Sometimes

❑ Seldom

❑ No, newer

❑ I don't know

5. Does your agency search the POP Database following the regular updates from LBI-HTA on the results of the POP request?

❑ Yes, always
❑ Sometimes
❑ Seldom
❑ No, newer
❑ I don't know

6. Does your agency make regular searches in the POP Database to keep updated on ongoing assessments?

❑ Yes, always
❑ Sometimes
❑ Seldom
❑ No, newer
❑ I don't know

Collaboration

The purpose of WP 7B is to facilitate collaboration between EUnetHTA partners on ongoing assessments of new health technologies. WP 7B lead partner, LBI-HTA, supported collaboration between EUnetHTA partners and coordinated a total of 9 collaborations during the EUnetHTA Joint Action 1.

The questions below deal with the collaborations that were initiated by your agency or by other EUnetHTA partners than LBI-HTA facilitated by the information in the POP Database.

7. Did your agency contact a EUnetHTA partner (other than LBI-HTA) facilitated by information in the POP Database?

❑ Yes, often
❑ Sometimes
❑ Seldom
❑ No, newer
❑ I don't know

8. Did these contacts result in collaboration between your agency and other EUnetHTA agencies?

❑ Yes, collaboration was started (→ Question 9)
❑ Yes, sometimes collaboration was started, sometimes no collaboration was started (→ Question 9)
❑ No, no collaboration was started (→ Question 10)

9. Please explain in brief why collaboration was started:_____

10. Please explain in brief why no collaboration was started:_____

11. Was your agency contacted by a EUnetHTA partner (other than LBI-HTA) facilitated by information in the POP Database?

❑ Yes, often
❑ Sometimes
❑ Seldom
❑ No, newer
❑ I don't know

12. Did these contacts result in collaboration between your agency and other EUnetHTA agencies?

❑ Yes, collaboration was started (→ Question 13)
❑ Yes, sometimes collaborations was started, sometimes no collaboration was started (→ Question 12)
❑ No, no collaboration was started (→ Question 14)

13. Please explain in brief why collaboration was started:_____

14. Please explain in brief why no collaboration was started:_____

15. Did collaboration between your agency and other EUnetHTA agencies not related to the POP Database occur?

❑ Yes, often
❑ Sometimes
❑ Seldom
❑ No, newer
❑ I don't know

16. EUnetHTA partners expressed pros and cons of collaboration experiences during the Malta face-to-face meeting in March 2011.

On the positive side, partners mentioned that collaboration increased confidence in collaborating partners, reduced the workload in case of one common assessment language and that shared formulations increased the power of and confidence in recommendations.

On the negative side, partners mentioned that collaboration sometimes increased the workload (in case of two assessment languages) and that lack of trust between collaborating partners, language barriers, different time-windows, and different scopes of assessments constituted other barriers to collaboration.

Please list the 3 most important benefits of collaboration that your agency experienced collaborating and sharing information with other EUnetHTA partners facilitated by the POP Database.

1._____

2._____

3._____

Please list the 3 most important barriers to collaboration based on the experiences of your agency:

1._____

2._____

3._____

17. WP 7B developed a checklist for possible collaborations within the EUnetHTA Joint Action 1. Please describe the nature of your agency's collaboration(s) on the basis of the checklist.

❑ We had a full collaboration and produced a joint project report (2 authors of 2 different agencies)

❑ We had a partial collaboration and exchanged information on:
(Tick more than one box if relevant)

- ❑ Inclusion exclusion criteria
- ❑ Literature search protocol
- ❑ Abstracts
- ❑ Retrieved literature
- ❑ Extraction tables
- ❑ Other core elements than safety and effectiveness
- ❑ English Executive summary
- ❑ The full project report

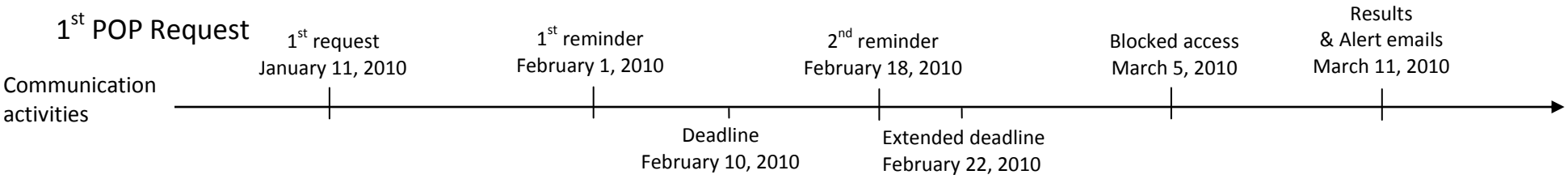
❑ We initiated other collaboration structures. Describe in brief:_____

End of survey text

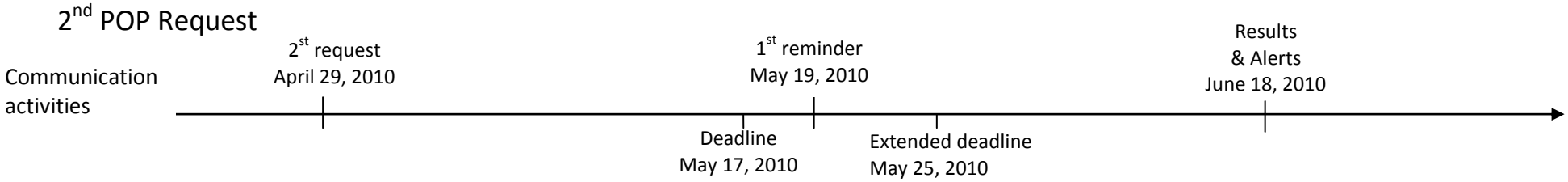
Thank you for your time and cooperation.

The evaluation of WP 7B, including the results of the survey, will be available through the EUnetHTA Secretariat and CAST in January 2013.

Annex 3: Standard description of information in LBI-HTA communication protocols

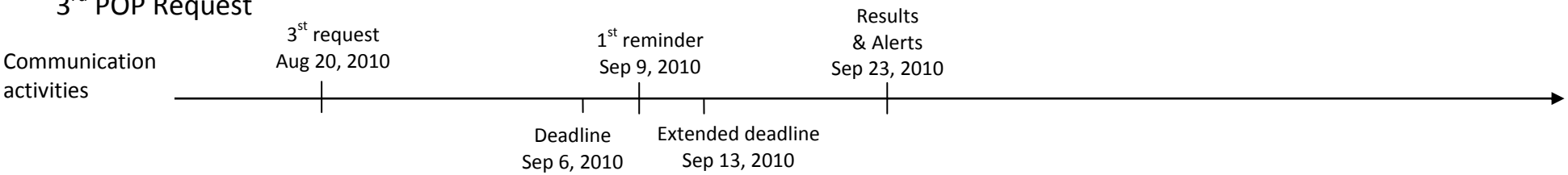


Purpose	1st POP Request	1st reminder	2nd reminder	Blocked access	Results	Alerts
Content	- Aim of POP Database - Results of 2009 pilot POP request - Request to all agencies to fill in POP template - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) email alerts to agencies working on similar projects, 4) update on results of POP request in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Access rights to the POP work room: a) agencies providing a list of POP, or at least b) agencies sending a web address with POP in English.	Content of "1st POP request" email or "2nd reminder" email?	- Last reminder - 28 agencies did not respond to 1st POP request - Extension of deadline - Only agencies providing information to POP Database will get access to POP results	- Aim of EUnetHTA: to reduce duplication - WP7 Bs deals with sharing information on POP on the basis of POP Database - Non responders or agencies that did not send information in English, were not given access to POP work room (so far) - Invitation to share information on POP during next call	- Presentation of results of 1st request: collection POP list from 32 out of 54 agencies and a total of 1022 POP - Invitation to responders of request to login to POP work room to see the results - Guidance on how to access POP work room - Guidance on the 3 different POP excel files: i) total list of POP, ii) ongoing projects on new technologies iii) checklist for collaboration - Request to inform LBI-HTA if action is taken in any of the proposed collaborations - Invitation to send updated POP list in future requests - Alert to agencies involved in new technology projects	- email alerts addressing agencies with similar POP 1) Onco drugs 2) Chronic wounds 3) Biomarkers 4) Urinary catheter 5) Proton therapy 6) Pneum. vaccines 7) Kyphoplasty 8) IORT 9) HIFU 10) Diagnostics 11) Cardio new tech - Listing of relevant projects within alert topics - Request to inform LBI-HTA if any action is taken on collaboration - Aim: increase collaboration and reduce redundancy
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54	Non responders to request: N=51	Non responders to reminder: N=30	Non responders to 2nd reminder: N=?	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54	Agencies involved in alert projects
Responses	N=3	N=21	N=11			



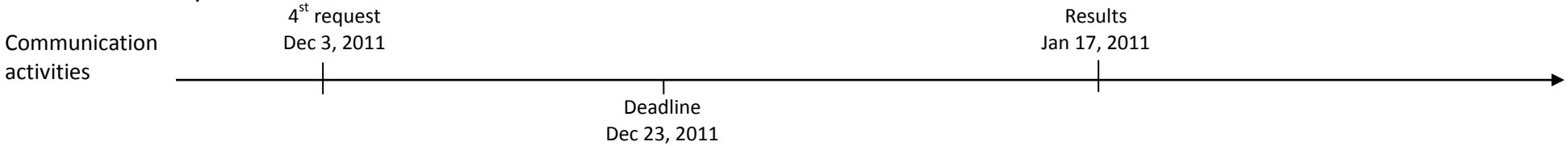
Purpose	2st POP Request	1st reminder	Results	Alerts/Collaboration
Content	General email to NON RESPONDERS of 1st request: - Invitation to contribute to 2nd request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) email alerts to agencies working on similar projects, 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Access rights to the POP work room: a) agencies providing a list of POP, or at least b) agencies sending a web address with POP in English.	General email to NON RESPONDERS to 1st request: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline	- Some facts on the results of the 2nd request - Reference to Dublin meeting where participants agreed on exchanging information on special alert topics - Guidance on how to access POP work room, (+ power point instruction) - Guidance on 2 different POP excel files (+ power point instructions on how to search projects in POP Database): i) total list of POP, ii) check list for collaboration - Request to inform LBI-HTA if action is taken in any of the proposed collaborations - Thanks for contributions	1) HIFU: LBI-HTA distributes information on HIFU (response from HAS) 2) CT coloscopy: HAS distributes information (response from LBI-HTA, FinOTHA THL, HAS, HIQA) 3) Cervical and lumbal spine implants: LBI-HTA asks CVZ for information (response from CVZ) 4) MEL process: LBI-HTA distributes information to SNHTA (response from SNHTA) 5) Kypho and vertebroplasty: LBI-HTA distributes information 6) ESWT: Request to LBI-HTA: Any information on ESWT in database (response from LBI-HTA and HVB)
	Personal email to RESPONDERS of 1st request: - Guidance on how to update POP list from 1st request: i) delete ceased projects, ii) keep recently published projects in POP list, iii) add new projects, iv) categorise if possible) - Next steps by LBI-HTA (1-4 above) - Information on access rights	Personal email was sent <u>preferably</u> to RESPONDERS of 1st request: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline		
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54	Non responders to request N=25	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54	Agencies involved in alert projects N=8
Responses	Non responders 1st request: N=4 Responders 1st request: N=25	N=10		

3rd POP Request



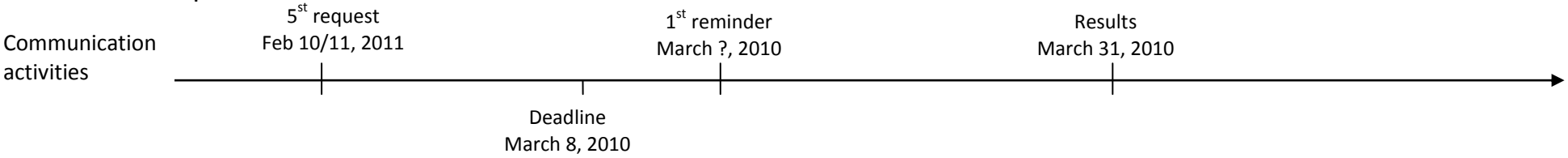
Purpose	3st POP Request	1st reminder	Results
Content	Personal email to RESPONDERS of 2st request: - Request to update POP and guide on how to do it: i) add new data, ii) adjust status if applicable, iii) select MeSH; iv) which projects to include, which not to include. - Contact LBI-HTA in case agency isn't involved in HTA projects.	General email to NON RESPONDERS: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline	- Some facts on the results of 3rd request - Guidance on how to access POP work room and get to the results - Guidance on how to search projects in excel sheet - Guidance in case of log-in problems - Thanks for contributions
	General email to NON RESPONDERS of 2st request: - Invitation to contribute to request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP workroom	Personal email was sent to RESPONDERS previous request: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline	
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54	Non responders to request N=21	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54
Responses	Non responders 1st request N=7 Responders 1st request: N=26	N=8	

4th POP Request



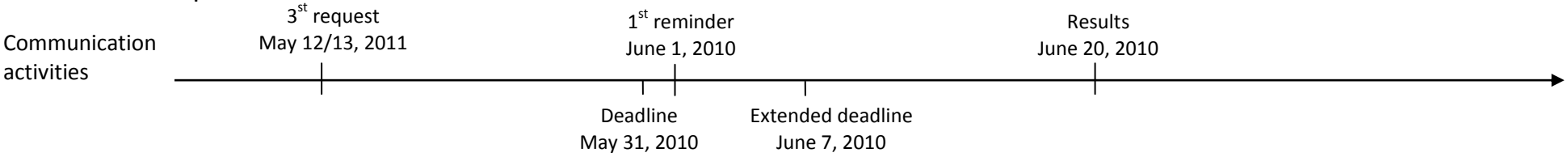
Purpose	4th POP request	Results
Content	Personal email to RESPONDERS of 3rd request: - Request to update POP and guide on how to do it: i) add new projects, ii) adjust status if applicable, iii) select MeSH; iv) which projects to include, which not to include. - No extension of deadline due to holiday seasons	- Some fact on the results of 4rd request - Thanks for contributions - Guidance on how to access POP work room and get to the results - Guidance on how to search projects in excel sheet - Guidance in case of log-in problems
	Personal email to NON RESPONDERS of 3rd request: - Invitation to contribute to request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Contact LBI-HTA in case agency isn't involved in HTA projects. - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP workroom	
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions, N=55	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=55
Responses	N=42	

5th POP Request



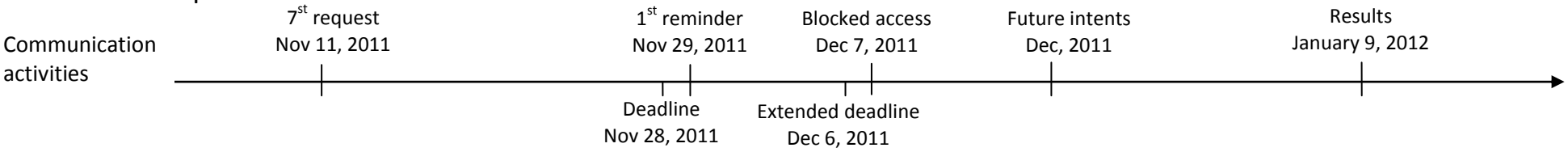
Purpose	5st POP Request	1st reminder	Results
Content	Personal email to POP list providers of 4th request: - Request to update POP and guide on how to do it: i) add new projects, ii) adjust status if applicable, iii) select MeSH	Personal email was sent to RESPONDERS of previous request: - Short reminder to fill in POP list	- Some facts on the results of 5th request - Thanks for contributions - Guidance on how to access POP work room and get to the results - Guidance on how to search projects in excel sheet - Guidance in case of log-in problems
	General email to NON RESPONDERS of 4st request: - Invitation to contribute to 2nd request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP		
	General email to RESPONDERS of 4th request not providing a POP list: - Invitation to contribute to request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP		
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56	Responders of 4th request, but non responders of present request: N=8	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56
Responses	N=34	N=6	

6th POP Request



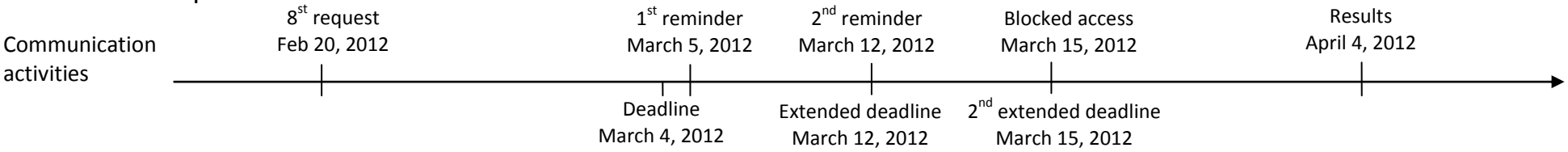
Purpose	6st POP Request	1st reminder	Results
Content	Personal email to RESPONDERS of 5th request: - Request to update POP and guide on how to do it: i) add new projects, ii) adjust status if applicable, iii) select MeSH	General email to NON RESPONDERS: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline	- Some facts on the results of 6th request - Thanks for contributions - Guidance on how to access POP work room and get to the results - Guidance on how to search projects in excel sheet - Guidance in case of log-in problems
	General email to NON RESPONDERS of 4th request: - Invitation to contribute to 2nd request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP	Personal email was sent to RESPONDERS of previous request: - Short reminder to fill in POP list - Extension of deadline	
	General email to RESPONDERS of one of the previous POP requests, but who didn't respond to the 5th request: - Invitation to contribute to request and explanation on which projects to include in database and how to categorise them - Next steps by LBI-HTA: 1) synthesis of POP, 2) categorising of projects, 3) similar projects will be marked as alert projects 4) POP update in POP work room (excel list now – as of June 2011 in POP Database) - Only agencies providing information on POP will have access to POP		
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56	N=25	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56
Responses	N=30	N=10	

7th POP Request



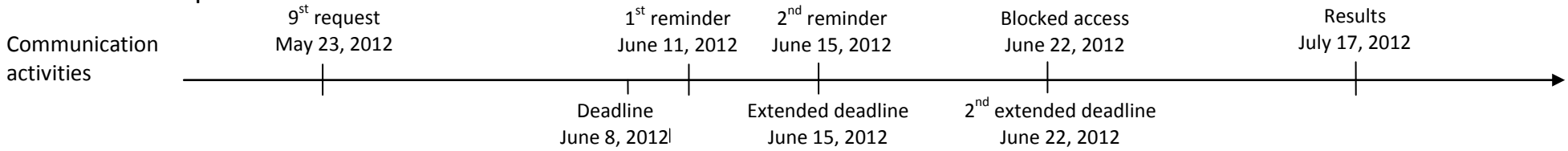
Purpose	7th POP request	1st reminder	Blocked access (reminder)	Future intents (reminder)	Results
Content	- First request in online POP Database - Reminder that access to database is dependent on at least quarterly updates - Introduction of different database roles (users/readers, providers/creators and moderators) - Guidance on how to access POP Database Information to CREATORS: - Request to update POP - Guidance on POP Database (FAQ, POP user manual or email) Information to READERS: - Invitation to have a regular look into database and before initiation of new projects	- General reminder to update POP Database before deadline - Reminder that access to database is dependent on update of database - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA	- Due to non-update of database and non-response to reminder, access to database has been blocked - Invitation to contact LBI-HTA if agencies would like to update database	- Personal email to non responders expressing concerns about future intent with POP access - Reminder that excel sheets have been exchanged by online POP Database - Invitation to update database and contact LBI-HTA in case of problems	- Some facts on the results of the 7th request - Short guidance in how to use the "show potential collaborations for my agency"-function in the POP Database - Thanks for your contributions
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions, N=54 (partners who sent a POP list the last time, other partners in CC for information only)	POP Database creators, not responding to 7th POP request N=25	Non responders of request and reminder N=11	Non responders of request, 1st reminder and blocked access email N=10	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=54
Responses	N=20	N=13	N=2	N=8	

8th POP Request



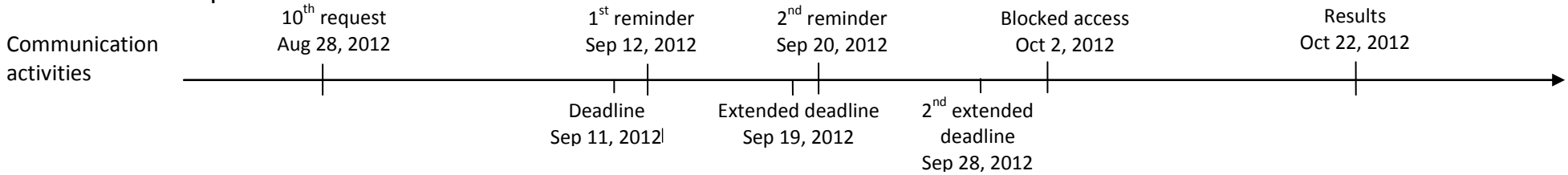
Purpose	8th POP request	1st reminder	2nd reminder	Blocked access (reminder)	Results
Content	- Thanks for previous contributions and for smooth transition from excel sheets to database - Access to database is dependent on at least quarterly updates - Request to update POP - Guidance on how to access POP Database - Information on upcoming online survey evaluating the current version of the database with a view to providing a database suited to users' needs.	- General reminder to update POP Database - Extension of deadline - Reminder that access to database is dependent on update of database - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA	- Personal warning that access to database will be denied on March 15 in case agency fail to complete requirements - Invitation to update database - Contact LBI-HTA concerning future intent with POP access og in case of problems	- Due to non-update of database and non-response to reminder, access to database has been blocked - Invitation to contact LBI-HTA if agencies would like to update database	- Presentation of results to POP creators and readers - Short guidance in how to use the "show potential collaborations for my agency"-function in the POP Database - Thanks for your contributions
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56 (partners who sent a POP ever, other partners in CC for information only)	POP Database creators, not responding to 8th POP request N=23	Non responders of request and reminder N=12	Non responders of request, 1st reminder and blocked access email N=1	All partners with access to database (N=43)
Responses	N=21	N=11	N=12	N=0	

9th POP Request



Purpose	9th POP request	1st reminder	2nd reminder	Blocked access (reminder)	Results
Content	- Thanks for previous contributions - Reminder that access to database is dependent on at least quarterly updates - Request to update POP - Contact LBI-HTA in case no changes occurred in the status of projects since last request - Guidance on how to access POP Database (+ POP Database user manual or email) - Specification on which projects to enter into database (projects published no longer than 3 months ago, no primary research studies)	- General reminder to update POP Database - Extension of deadline - Reminder that access to database is dependent on update of database - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA.	- Personal email due to no news from agency - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA - Warning that access to database will be denied on June 22 in case agency fail to complete requirements - Contact LBI-HTA concerning future intent with POP access og in case of problems	- Due to non-update of database and non-response to reminder, access to database has been blocked - Invitation to contact LBI-HTA if agencies would like to update database	- Presentation of results to POP creators and readers - Short guidance in how to use the “show potential collaborations for my agency”-function in the POP Database - Thanks for your contributions
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=52	POP Database creators, not responding to 9th POP request N=19	Non responders of request and reminder N=14	Non responders of request, 1st reminder and blocked access email N=4	All partners with access to database (N=42)
Responses	N=23	N=6	N=11	N=1	

10th POP Request



Purpose	10th POP request	1st reminder	2nd reminder	Blocked access (reminder)	Results
Content	- Thanks for previous contributions - Reminder that access to database is dependent on at least quarterly updates - Request to update POP - Contact LBI-HTA in case no changes occurred in the status of projects since last request - Guidance on how to access POP Database (+ POP Database user manual or email) - Specification on which projects to enter into database (projects published no longer than 3 months ago, no primary research studies)	- General reminder to update POP Database - Extension of deadline - Reminder that access to database is dependent on update of database - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contact LBI-HTA.	- Personal email due to no news from agency - Database modification dates are used to control the status of database updates. In case no changes occurred, agencies should contacts LBI-HTA - Access to database will be denied on September 28 in case agency fail to complete requirements - Contact LBI-HTA concerning future intent with POP access og in case of problems	- Due to non-update of database and non-response to reminder, access to database has been blocked - Invitation to contact LBI-HTA if agencies would like to update database	- Presentation of results to POP creators and readers - Short guidance in how to use the “show potential collaborations for my agency”-function in the POP Database - Thanks for your contributions
Recipients	EUnetHTA JA institutions N=56	POP Database creators, not responding to 10th POP request N=18	Non responders of request and reminder N=14	Non responders of request, 1st reminder and blocked access email N=2	All partners with access to database (N=43)
Responses	N=24	N=6	N=12	N=1	

Annex 4: Responses by agencies in POP request 1-10

Country	Partners (P) & Associates (A)	1 Jan 2010	2 Apr 2010	3 Aug 2010	4 Dec 2010	5 Feb 2011	6 May 2011	7 Nov 2012	8 Feb 2012	9 May 2012	10 Aug 2012	Resp. fre-quency	Categorising of agencies entry history
Austria	Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG-BIQG) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Hauptverband der Österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger (HVB) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Ludwig Boltzman Institute of HTA (LBI/HTA) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology (UMIT) (A)	√	√	N	N	N	N	√	√	√	√	6/10	2
Belgium	Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre (KCE) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (RIZIV) (A)	N	N	√	√	N	N	N	N	N	N	2/10	3
Bulgaria	National Centre of Public Health Protection (NCPHP) (P)	√	N	N	√	√	N	N	N	N	N	3/10	3
Croatia	Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Health Care (AAZ) (P)				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7/7	1
Czech Republic	Ministry of Health (MoH/CZ) (P) (ceased to be JA partner)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			8/8	1
Denmark	Danish Health and Medicines Authority (DHMA-NOoH) (P) (former DACETHA)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Centre for Applied Health Services Research and Technology Assessment (CAST-SDU) (P)	N	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	8/10	2
	Institute for Rational Pharmacotherapy (IRF) (merged with DHMA) (A)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			8/8	1
	Dept. of Health Services Research and HTA, Central Denmark Region (A)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	None	4
	Danish Institute for Health Services Research (DSI) (A)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	None	4
Estonia	University of Tartu (UTA) (P)	N	N	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7/10	2
Finland	Finnish Office for HTA at THL (FinOHTA) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Finnish Medicines Agency (FIMEA) (A)							N			√	1/2	2
France	Haute Autorité de Santé HAS (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Germany	Deutsches Institut für Medizinishe Dokumentation und Information (DIMDI) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWIG) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Greece	National School of Public Health (NSPH) (P)	√	√	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	2/10	3

Hungary	National Institute for Quality and Organisational Development in Healthcare and Medicines (GYEMSZI) (P) (former ESKI)	√	N	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	8/10	2
	Institute for Healthcare Quality Improvement and Hospital Engineering (EMKI) (merged with GYEMSZI)	√	√	√	√	√	N					5/6	2
Ireland	Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	National Centre for Pharmaeconomics (NCPE) (A)	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
Italy	Agenzia Nazionale per i Servizi Sanitari Regionali (AGE.NA.S) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Agenzia Italiana Del Farmaco (AIFA) (P)	N	√	√	√	√	N	√	√	√	√	8/10	2
	Agenzia Sanitaria e Sociale Regione Emilia Romagna (ASSR) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Regione Veneto, Direzione Piani e Programmi Socio Sanitari (Reg.Veneto) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	University Hospital A. Gemelli (UHAGemelli) (P)	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
	Agenzia Regionale per i Servizi Sanitari (ARESS) (A)	N	N	√	√	N	√	√	√	√	√	7/10	2
	Agenzia di Sanità Pubblica, Regione Lazio (ASP Lazio) (A)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	N		8/9	2
	REgione Lombardia Direzione Generale Sanita (Reglom-DGSAN) (A)	N	√	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1/10	3
Latvia	Centre of Health Economics (VEC) (P)	√	√	√	N	√	√	N	N	√	√	7/10	2
Lithuania	State Health Care Accreditation Agency, Ministry of Health (VASPVT) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Luxembourg	Cellule d'Expertise Médicale (CEM) (A)							N				None	4
Malta	Strategy Sustainability Division, Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care, Ministry for Social Policy, Strategy and Sustainability Division (SSD-MHEC) (P)	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
Netherlands	College voor Zorgverzekeringen (CVZ) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Norway	Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services (NOKC) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Poland	Agency for HTA in Poland (AHTAPol) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Portugal	National Authority of Medicines and Health Products (INFARMED) (P)	N	N	N	N	N	√	N	√	N	N	2/10	3
Romania	National School of Public Health, Management and Professional Development (SNSPMS) (P)										√	1/1	1
Serbia	Quality Unit, Ministry of Health (A)	N	N	N	N	N	N		N		N	None	4
Slovak Republic	Slovak Agency for HTA (SLOVAHTA) (P)					√	√	√	N	N	√	4/6	2
Slovenia	National Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia (IPH-RE) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices (A)	N	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	N	None	4
	The Institute for Economic Research, Ministry of							√	√	√	√	4/4	1

	Health (IER) (A)												
Spain	Agency for HTA, Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) (P)	√	√	√	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
	Andalusian Agency for HTA (AETSA) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Galician Agency for HTA (AVALIA-t) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Catalan Agency for Health Information, Assessment and Quality (CAHIAQ) (former CAHTAR) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Ministry of Health and Social Policy (P)	N	N	√	√	N	N	N	N	N	N	2/10	3
	Basque Office for HTA (OSTEBA) (P)	N	√	√	N	N	N	√	√	√	√	6/10	2
	HTA Unit, Agencia Lain Entralgo (UETS) (P)	N	√	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	1/10	3
Sweden	Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care (SBU) (P)	√	√	√	√	N	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
	Dental and Pharmaceutical Benefits Agency (TLV) (A)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
Switzerland	Swiss Network for HTA (SNHTA) (P)	N	N	√	√	√	N	√	No HTA	No HTA	No HTA	7/10	2
Turkey	Turkish Evidence-Based Medicine Association (KDTD) (A)	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	√	√	N	2/10	3
UK	NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre HTA Programme (NETSCC) (P)	√	N	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	9/10	2
	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (P)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10/10	1
	Request receivers	**54**	**54**	**54**	**55**	**56**	**56**	**56**	**56**	**53**	**55**		
	Responders, total	**35**	**39**	**41**	**42**	**40**	**40**	**43**	**44**	**41**	**43**		
	- Responders, POP list providers	32	36	34	36	36	38	39	38	30	31		
	- Responders, but no POP updates for various reasons	3	3	7	6	4	2	4	6	11	12		
	NON responders	**19**	**15**	**13**	**13**	**16**	**16**	**13**	**12**	**12**	**12**		

√ = responders, POP updates.

√ = responders, but for various reasons no POP updates.

No HTA = "No HTA projects" permanent status = status as responders, but no POP updates.

N = NON responders.

Grey spaces indicate that no request email was sent.

Categorising of agencies entry history: 1 = agencies responding to 100% of requests they received; 2 = agencies responding to 50-99% of requests they received; 3 = agencies responding to less than 50% of requests, but more than one; 4 = agencies not responding to any of the requests.

Annex 5: Acronyms

Cf. Table 4.

Acronym	Organisation
AAZ/HR	Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Health Care, Croatia
AETSA/ES	Andalusian Agency for HTA, Spain
AGE.NA.S/IT	Agenzia Nazionale per i Servizi Sanitari Regioanli, Italy
AHTAPol/PL	Agency for HTA in Poland, Poland
AIFA/IT	Agenzia Italiana Del Farmico, Italy
ARESS/IT	Agenzia Regionala per i Servizi Sanitari, Italy
ASPLazio/IT	Agenzia di Sanità Publica, Rigione Lazio, Italy
ASSR/IT	Agenzia Sanitaria e Sociale Regione Emilia Romagna, Italy
AVALIA-t/ES	Galician Agency for HTA, Spain
CAHIAQ/ES	Catalan Agency for Health Information, Assessment and Quality, Spain
CAST-SDU/DK	Centre for Applied Health Services Research and Technology Assessment, Denmark
CVZ/NL	College voor Zorgverzekeringen, The Netherlands
DHMA-NBoH/DK	Danish Health and Medicines Authority, National Board of Health, Denmark
DIMDI/DE	Deutsches Institut für Medizinishe Dokumentation und Information, Germany
NETSCC/UK	NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre, HTA Programme, United Kingdom
FIMEA/FI	Finnish Medicines Agency, Finland
GYEMSZI/HU	National Institute for Quality and Organisational Development in Healthcare and Medicines, Hungary
GÖG-BIQG	Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, Austria
HAS/FR	Haute Autorité de Santé, France
HIQA/IR	Health Information and Quality Authority, Ireland
HVB/AT	Hauptverband der Österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger, Austria
IER/SI	The Institute for Economic Research, Ministry of Health, Spain
INFARMED/PT	National Authority of Medicines and Health Products, Portugal
IPH-RE/SI	National Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia, Slovenia
IQWIG/DE	Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care, Germany

IRF/DK	Institute for Rational Pharmacotherapy, Denmark
ISCIII/EX	Agency for HTA, Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Spain
KCE/BE	Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre, Belgium
LBI-HTA/AT	Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of HTA, Austria
MoH/CZ	Ministry of Health, Czech Republic
NCPE/IR	National Centre for Pharmaeconomics, Ireland
NICE/UK	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, United Kingdom
NOKC/NO	Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, Norge
OSTEBA/ES	Basque Office for HTA, Spain
Reg.Veneto/IT	Regione Veneto, Direzione Piani e Programmi Socio Sanitari, Italy
SBU/SE	Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care, Sweden
SLOVAHTA/SK	Slovak Agency for HTA, Slovak Republic
SNHTA/CH	Swiss Network for HTA, Switzerland
SNSPMS/RO	National School of Public Health, Management and Professional Development, Romania
SSD-MHEC/MA	Strategy Sustainability Division, Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care, Malta
THL/FI	Finnish Office for HTA at THL, Finland
TLV/SE	Dental and Pharmaceutical Benefits Agency, Sweden
UHAGemelli/IT	University Hospital A. Gemelli, Italy
UMIT/AT	University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology, Austria
UTA/EE	University of Tartu, Estonia
VASPVT/LI	State Health Care Accreditation Agency, Ministry of Health, Lithuania
VEC/LV	Centre of Health Economics, Latvia

Annex 6: Agencies experiences of benefits of and barriers to collaboration (December 2012 survey)

Please list the 3 most important benefits of collaboration that your agency experienced collaborating and sharing information with other EUnetHTA partners facilitated by the POP Database (N=12):

1.	2.	3.
EUnetHTA partner shared their early draft report, and gave us important advices through our assessment phase, so they share their knowledge and expertise with us.	Intellectual and moral support	Awareness of importance on possible collaboration in the case that we had the same time-window, the same starting point of assessment
Knowing what others in Europe are doing from this firsthand source is definitely a bonus.	It is good that there is possibility to contact people directly even just for some information.	
Being able to avoid overlapping.	The assessment was done with larger scope.	Being able to share experiences with other researchers.
shared literature review - increasing the quality		
We have found the POP Database extremely useful in being able to provide us with a broad overview of international activity in HTA, including the types of technology and clinical areas that are gaining widespread attention as well as how questions in relation to individual technologies are being framed in various countries.	Although we have not yet been in a position to initiate a collaboration we think that the main benefit of doing so would be the increased efficiency that would result from being able to divide up the work between two agencies.	Experience gained from working with other HTA agencies will also bring benefits in terms of shared learning, exposure to the methods and processes of other agencies as well as strengthening our connections with the international HTA community.
Avoid duplication of work.		
having access to literature	having agencies commenting on our work	exchanging general thoughts on how to proceed on an evaluation
Easy to get in touch with the agency working on the same topic of ours	It was easy to share contents and methodology due to EUnetHTA project participation	We reached the final outcome very fast
Shared formulations increased the power of and confidence in recommendations		
It is useful to know which projects other agencies are working on	It is interesting to notice other agencies are interested in our work	Questions from possible collaborators makes registering our projects an important task to follow up
exchange of information on available reports and conclusion	exchange of experience - methodology	increased the power of and confidence in recommendations
Sharing data	Not starting a project if it is being done by other agency	

Please list the 3 most important barriers to collaboration based on the experiences of your agency:

1.	2.	3.
not the same question (details)	different perspectives	different timing of upcoming questions at national level (e.g. we already did sometimes ago)
Different starting point of assessment (depends on the request received by national HTA users)	Topics of assessment (already done by different HTA agencies)	Topic of assessment does not exist in POP Database
Different specific goals of reports (in Estonia often connected to specific policy decisions)	Different work-language	Increasing workload because of additional partner and communication needed to carry out
Language.	Different national perspective and approach.	Different research methods.
different timeframes	language barriers	different objectives
So far we have found that although other agencies might also be planning to assess the same technology as us, the opportunities for collaboration might be limited due to differences in the specific aspect of the technology being examined or differences in the population, etc. Although we understand that these collaborations need to be tailored to be as big or small as the areas of overlap will allow, so far the focus of our assessment has been so different from others who are assessing the same technology that no call for collaboration was instigated.	The timing of different HTA projects can also create barriers to collaboration, especially when the project is one that is designed to address a high profile national health policy issue, and there is pressure to complete it as soon as possible. Collaboration involves giving up a certain amount of control over the project and sometimes this may conflict with the need to be able to have certainly about the completion date.	Since we write all our reports in English we benefit from the fact that this is the common language of EUnetHTA. However there may be barriers to collaboration for non English speaking countries as it is likely to put an additional demand of resources (having to get documents translated) or other communication difficulties.
Timeline is often different and internal deadlines can't be moved.		
language if other than English	research questions often do not perfectly overlap	can't think
Time table was very strict	Different kind of organisation (as we are not a HTA agency but a Region, we delegate a lot to our medical professionals and we mainly manage research)	Language
Language	Different local framework	
None yet, but I have not a lot experience concerning this issue so far		
different scopes of assessments	different time-windows	increased the workload while having existing staff constraints without additional tasks