

# **Learning from agency reviews (2005-2009)**

Fiona Crozier (member of the project team)

---

## **Introduction**

- Purpose of the project
  - The project team and the methodology
  - Main outcome
  - Some general observations
  - Specific observations about the ESG
-

## The project

- Formed part of ENQA's workplan (2009-10)
  - Purpose:
    - To evaluate and analyse the outcomes of reviews of agencies to date
    - To use the lessons learned to shape the second round of reviews of agencies
    - To provide information on the use and applicability of the ESG in the context of agency reviews, with a view to feeding in to any review of the ESG (MAP-ESG project)
  - Project team: 3 ENQA board members, 2 external experts, 2 agency experts
  - Methodology
  - Main outcome: By and large, everything is good! (Of course, there are always a few 'buts...')
-

## General observations

- Consistency
    - The need for fair and comparable information
    - The issue of compliance
    - The idea of the intention or spirit of a standard v. the letter of the law
  - Enhancement
    - As yet nothing specific in the ESG but...
-

## General observations on the standards

- Some standards cause agencies more problems than others (e.g. 3.2 (Official Status) and 3.3 (Activities) relatively problem-free whereas 3.6 (Independence) and 3.8 (Accountability) tend to be cause for more debate amongst panels)
  - Variation in provision of guidelines (e.g. 3.4 (Resources) has no guidance attached)
  - Overlap between some of the standards, in particular 3.2 and 3.5 (Mission Statement). Also between 3.3 and 3.5
  - The sub-headings within some of the standards, in particular 3.6 (Independence)
-

## Observations on individual standards

- Structure of the report:
  - Legitimacy
    - 3.2 Official status
    - 3.5 Mission statement
    - 3.6 Independence
  - Activities
    - 3.1 Use of external QA procedures – part 2
    - 3.3 Activities
    - 3.7 External QA – the processes & criteria used
    - 3.8 Accountability procedures
  - Sustainability
    - 3.4 Resources
    - 3.8 Accountability procedures

## Legitimacy

- Further emphasis on the overlap between 3.2 and 3.5 (Official Status and Mission Statement). Also possible overlap with 3.6 (Independence)
  - 3.6: bear in mind the difference kinds of independence that might be considered:
    - Legal, operational, financial, prevention of conflicts of interest
-

## Activities

- 3.3 (Activities) Bear in mind the huge variation in agencies (size, scope, remit etc.) For example, the range of HEIs that an agency might be responsible for reviewing is from 5 – 1,500!
- 3.7 (External QA criteria and processes used) There were various reasons for not achieving full compliance (these could be structural, developmental or size-related). Remember that many agencies are also constrained by the legal context in which they work.
- 3.8 (Accountability procedures) Again, several reasons for not receiving full compliance. Some variation of interpretation of this standard – does it refer to internal accountability or analysis of the impact the agency is making externally? Certainly, for the purpose of review, the former should be expected.



## **Sustainability**

- 3.4 (Resources) bear in mind the impact of the evolution of mission statements
  - 3.8 (Accountability) Remember the age of the agency – this will have a bearing on how developed any internal QA policy might be.
-

## For further information...

...please read the report!

Not yet published but will be found at:

[www.enqa.eu/publications](http://www.enqa.eu/publications)

THANK YOU!

---