

Welcome to a discussion on: The ENQA external review process

ENQA General Assembly, Zagreb 16th October 2014

Tove Blytt Holmen, ENQA Board

The team behind an agency review:

The Agency

- Honest
- Responsive
- Independent

The Reviewers

- Competent
- Committed
- Clear

ENQA

- Facilitating
- Controlling
- Contributing

ESG: the basic framework for any agency review

A common reference point for quality assurance in the EHEA

A source of assistance and guidance to both HEIs and agencies

A prerequisite for membership in ENQA and registration in EQAR

- Part I: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance
- Part II: Standards and guidelines for external quality assurance
- Part III: Standards and guidelines for quality assurance agencies

Ambitions for the ENQA external reviews

- Clear, structured and efficient
- Consistent, predictable and fair
- Flexible / customised approach
 - Supportive for the agency to develop QA further
 - Acknowledge the diversity within external QA
- Improving communication by presenting analysis of results across the reviews once a year
- The ENQA touch is value added

A customised approach / review

It is suggested to introduce ...

- differentiation between the 1., 2., and 3. (or more) review
- the agency's topic

The quality of QA agencies

ENQA GA

Zagreb, October 2014

Josep Grifoll

Knowledge in part 3 of ESG

How agencies are aligned with the ESG part 3?
and how they could improve their current position?

Advise on:

- Matters related to QA of QA agencies.
- Possible ways to assess QA agencies according ESG
- Recommendations for the future of ENQA reviews

Pathfinders in KP3:

Els Van Sele (VLUHR QAU) chair; Maiki Udam (EKKA); Olé Espen Rakkestad (NOKUT); Sandra Marcos (ACSUCYL); Núria Comet (AQU Catalunya).

Additional views from:

Viveka Persson and Karin Järplid Linde (Swedish Higher Education Authority)
Douglas Blackstock (QAA)
Paul Mitchell (MM)

First analysis

Standards analysed (considering SER and Peer Review reports 2010-2013):

- 3.6 Independence
- 3.4 Resources
- 2.8 System-wide analysis

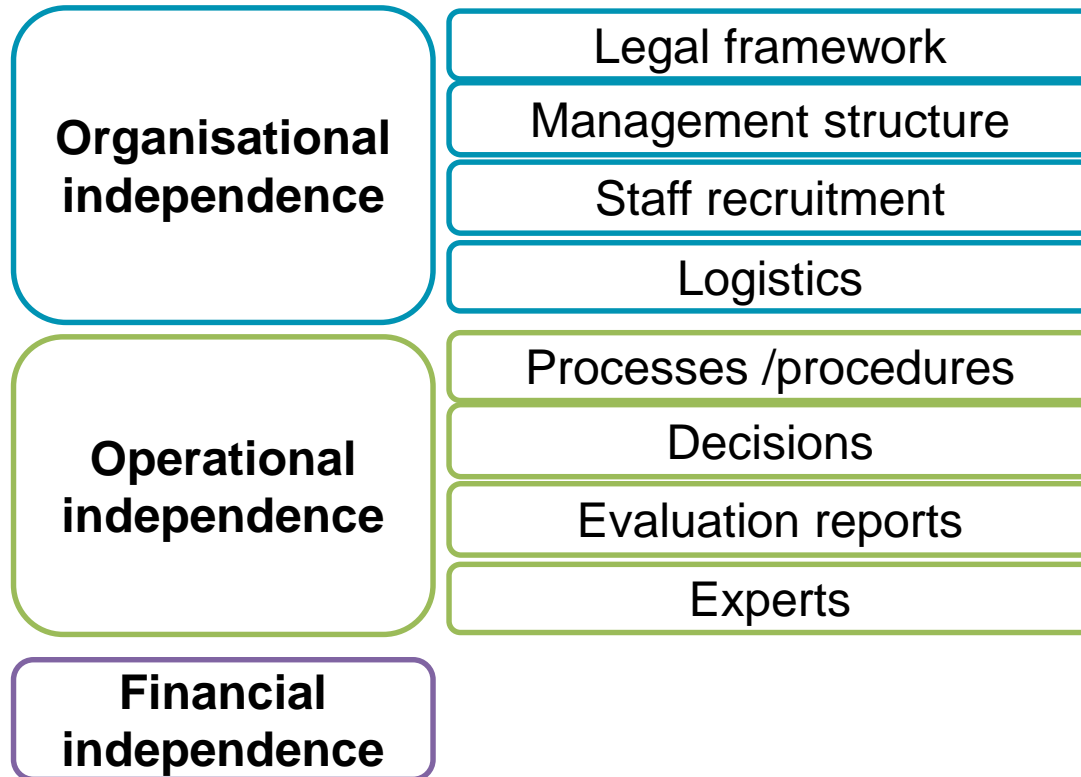
23 QA agencies in this analysis

5 in first evaluation

18 in renewal processes

Std.	Fully	Substantially	Partially	N.C	Absent
3.6 Independence	12	11			
3.4 Resources	17	4	2		
2.8 System-wide analysis	12	5	4	1	1

Mapping independence



Independence (business models, leadership and Photoshop)

ESG promote independence of QA agencies but...

1. Independence is a multidimensional criterion. Do we need better indicators in that std.? Or recommended **formulas according the business model** implemented by each agency?
2. **The appeals procedures:** How they work? and who should deal with it? The position of ENQA in that respect? How to detect fraud? or absence of independence?
3. If we all agree that independence is an asset, **who is encouraging independence?** and who is paying for that asset? Is it clear?
4. The independence in the European model for QA: “agencies and society in QA?”. **The value of independence in a world of interdependencies?**

Independence (additional questions)

- How to **balance the different demands** from the various stakeholders?
- The agency is independent in its operations and decision according to the constitution. Could **too much influence from HEIs** pose a threat to this?
- Key features of independence are facts in law, but public (and even sector) **perception holds that QA agencies are ‘government inspectors’**
- Mixed funding, means no single stakeholder can dictate (**who represents students in this funding scheme?**)
- Pros and cons of letting the HEIs **nominate experts**
- Income generation allows **product development** and allows greater independence
- Can **too much legal regulation** actually limit effectiveness and the dynamics of change, particularly on second cycles?

Relevant national law: is it restrictive or permissive about:

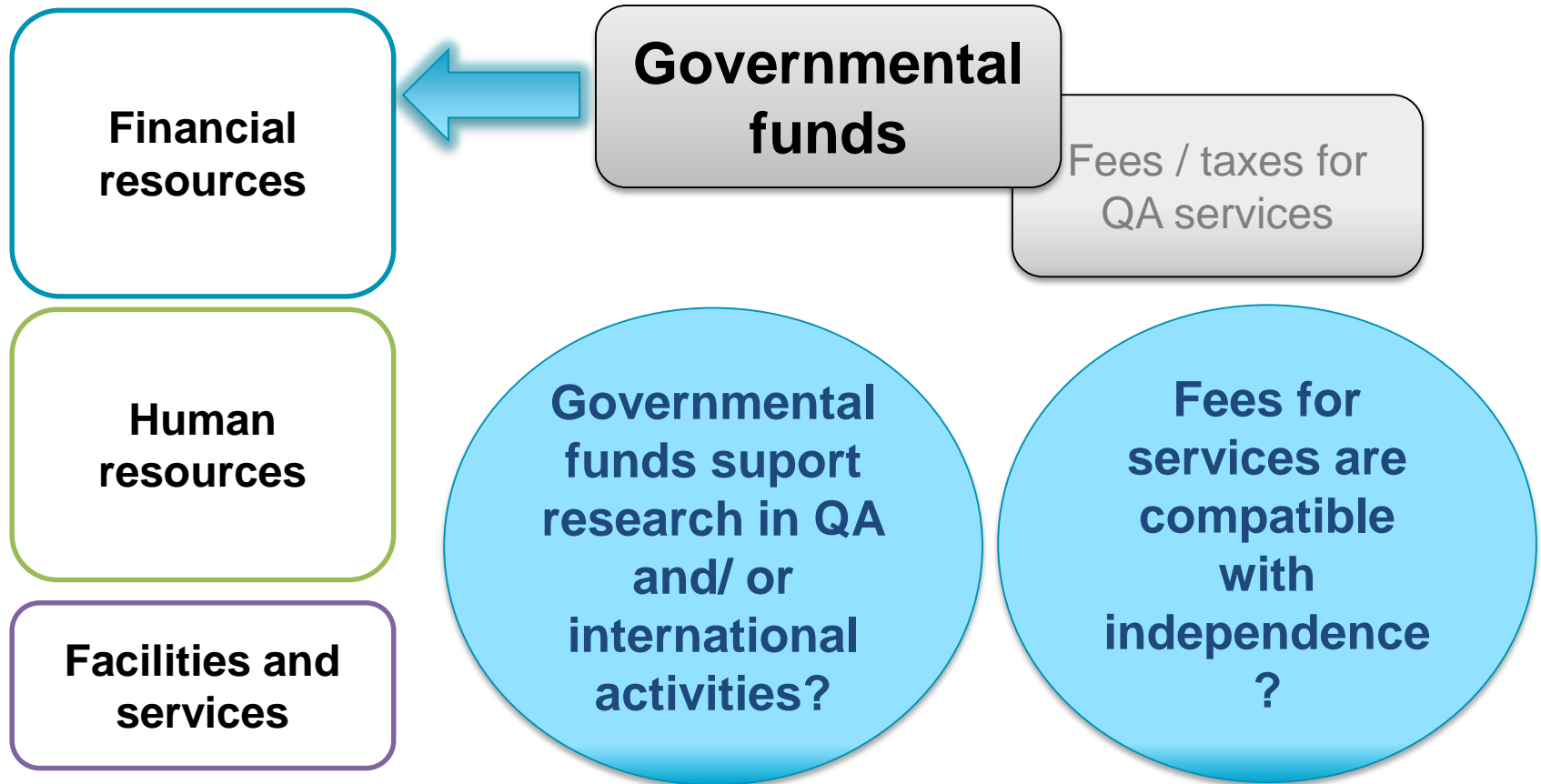
- The Agency's corporate status
- Its longer-term planning and financial horizons
- Its operational independence from Government and Ministers in developing procedures and decision-making
- The Agency's operating procedures, including recruitment, selection and training of experts
- Clear separation of powers on decision making
- The freedom to publish reports
- The integrity of the Appeals process
- Capacity of the Agency to influence

Additional issues for a sustainable QA agencies

- Meeting legal requirements/delivering procedures versus the Agency's broader purpose and impact
- Is there an appropriate balance of input from Government/funders, HEIs, students, professional bodies/civil society?

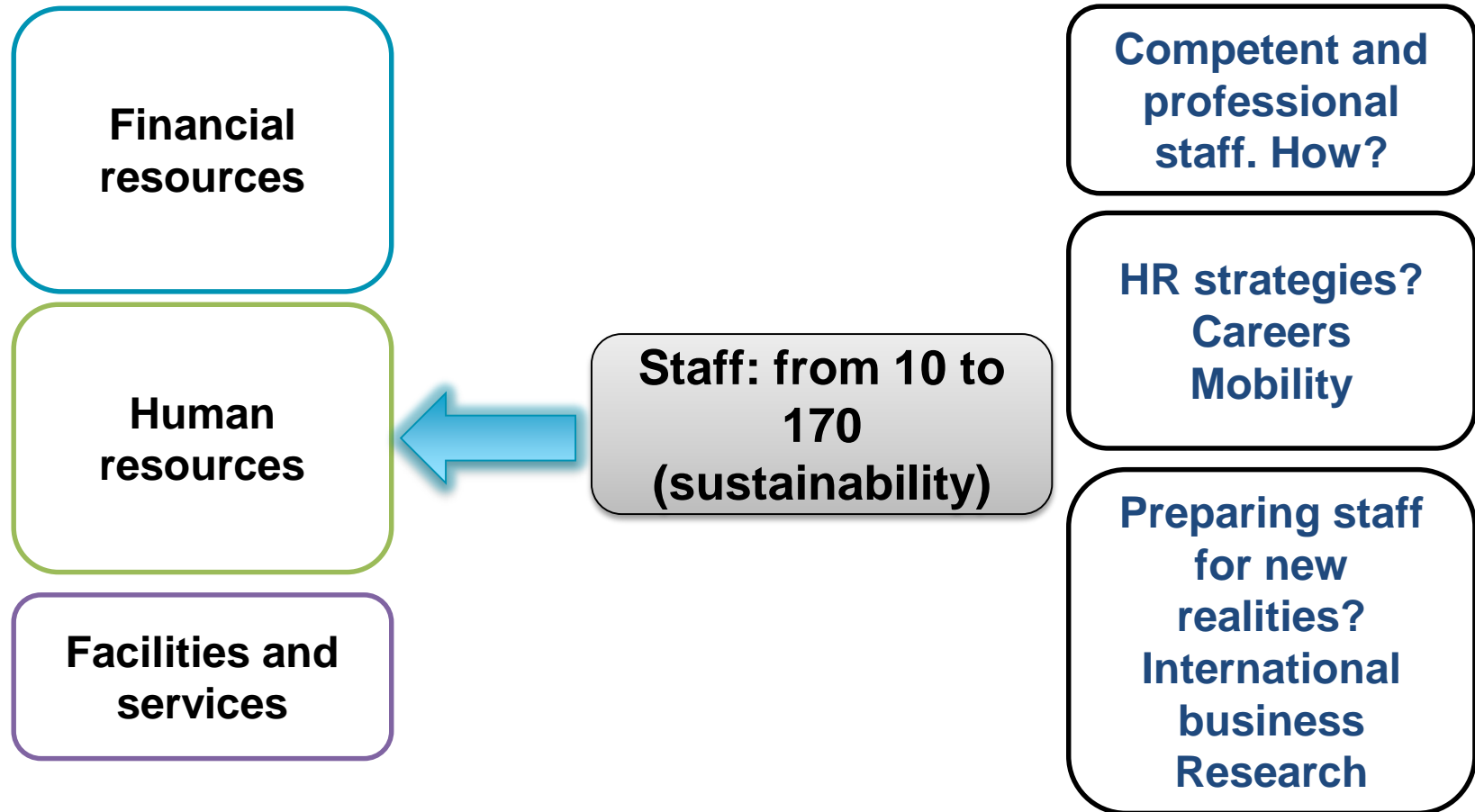
Resources and business models

12 QA agencies full compliant in 3.6 (Independence) 11 are in substantially.

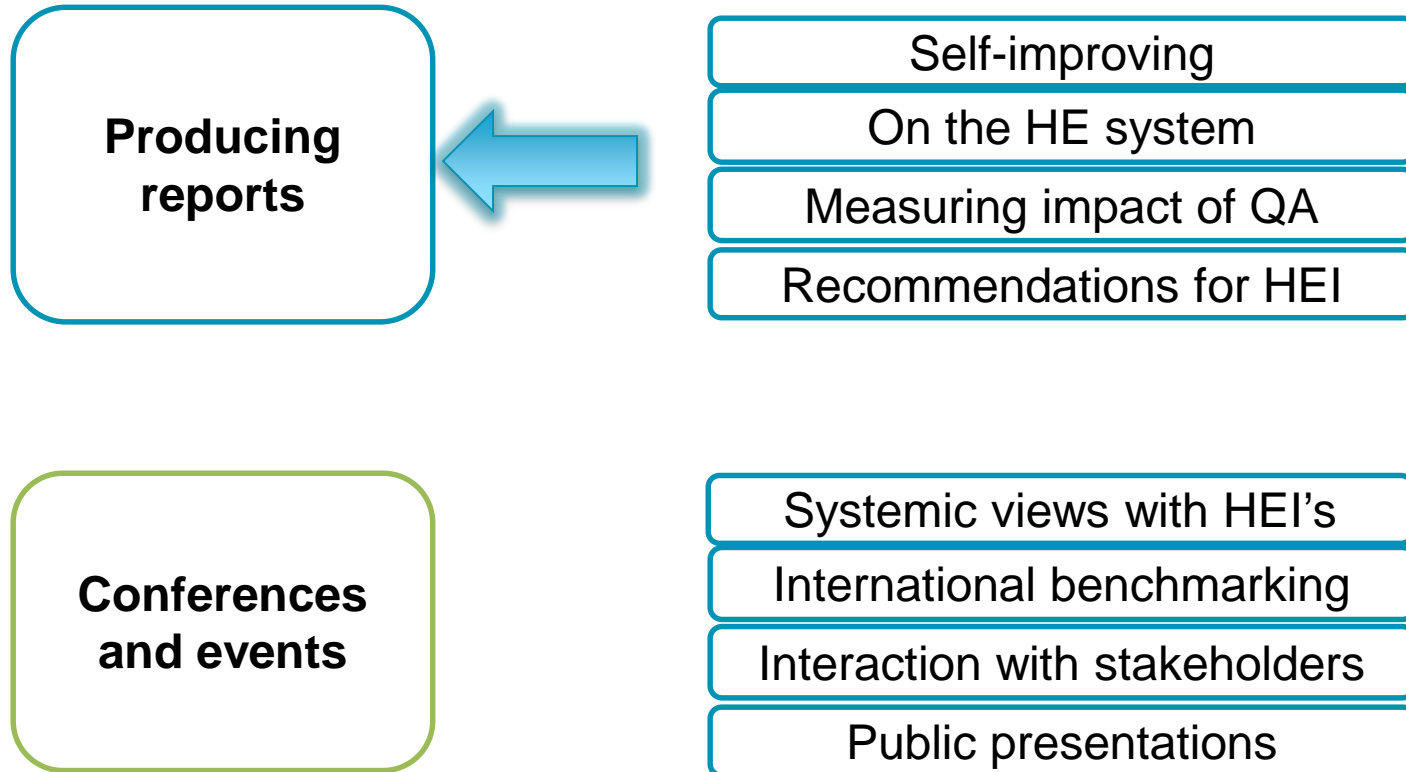


Resources: the staff

12 QA agencies full compliant in 3.6 (Independence) 11 are in substantially.



System-wide analysis



System-wide analysis: observations

- Focused on mechanisms than on results (impact? Use of the reports?)
- Not many recommendations in the reports about improvement opportunities
- Judgments sometimes are not supported by evidence
- Not much information about dissemination.

Should we
provide good
practices in this
area?

How those
reports can be
disseminated
within ENQA?

Final question

Capacity of the Agency to influence national policy and developments in HE?

What is up for renewal?

- Handbooks and templates, Guidance to potential applicants and reviewers
- Scrutiny procedure by the ENQA Secretariat
- An annual presentation of comparative results from analysing SER and ERR
- An opportunity for the agency to present its own topic of interest
- A flexible approach arising from the present situation of the agency
- Criteria for selection of reviewers and for the composition of a panel
- Training of reviewers
- Dialog about the recent results with the involved agencies (and reviewers)

Questions:

- What would you expect as benefits from an agency review?
- ESG is the minimum framework; do you have any suggestions for an extra ENQA criterion?
- What could be a flexible approach to the external agency review within the given framework?
- What could be characteristic for a European Quality Assurance Agency?



The reports



Body and role ...

