

# Experience of Reviews: The Agency View

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# Aim of presentation

- To see what a real agency experienced during a review
  - **Focus not on agency itself but generic observations, practical considerations**
- Preparing for the site visit
  - Organization
  - Preparing the agency staff and members
  - Additional documents requested by the panel
    - Language of documents
- Developments at the agency after the review

Without proper self-evaluation,  
failure is inevitable.

— John Wooden —

## A few words about the SAR

- The more thorough the SAR and the more it is backed by evidence, documents or links to them, the smoother the panel visit will go!
- **Important to deal extensively with issues raised in previous review** (separate chapter in ENQA SAR template)
- The SAR is written with the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible
  - An agency staff member does the actual writing but consults with most other staff for information and opinions
  - Feedback from external stakeholders from annual questionnaires
  - Meetings with staff to discuss drafts
    - **Issue: not all staff speak English** – summarize main points for discussions
  - Meetings with agency working group for the SAR – staff and Board members
  - Feedback and final approval by Board
- The final SAR is sent to all stakeholders expected to participate in the interviews, who are briefly informed what to expect there

The natural response to evaluation is to feel judged. We have to mature to a place where we respond to it with gratitude, and love feedback.



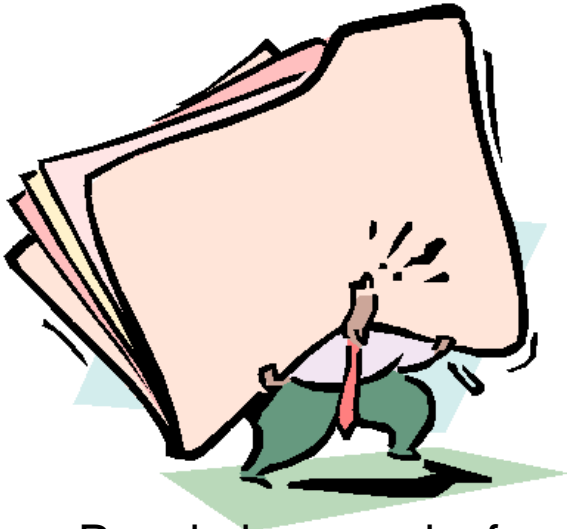
## Organization of site visit

- Panel contacts agency several weeks before site visit to indicate what groups they wish to interview
  - Agency drafts a proposed visit schedule based on panel's requests
  - **Agency may offer a list of recommended persons to interview to panel**
    - Here we are **pressed for time**, since e.g. the minister or some stakeholders have to know well in advance to keep their calendars open
    - Even so, **not all invited stakeholders show up**
      - Therefore we **contact all of them a few days prior** to visit to check



# Preparing staff and Board members

- Staff:
  - When talking through SAR with staff the experienced staff members **describe what to expect** in the interview
    - Need interpreter
      - Should be external to agency, ENQA must approve
      - Panel should be informed ahead of time (slows discussions)
    - May be asked on general agency practices and specific work of individual
    - Answer questions readily and openly
    - Everyone is encouraged to speak
      - **Cultural context, language barrier!**
- Board:
  - Board members are informed at their last regular meeting what to expect in the interview
  - Are emphatically asked to read SAR or Hungarian summary



## Panel requests additional documents

- Panel always asks for additional documents, especially when not all documents on website are **in English**
- Panel is asked to **identify additional documents** after it reads the SAR – **prior to visit** – so that these can be translated into English
  - Crucial to have at **least one panel member who speaks the local language** (impossible to translate all documents) so that the panel knows the whole range of documents the agency works with
- **Staff or Board member may identify additional documents** to present to panel based on panel's questions during an interview – these may need to be translated or summarized in English quickly

# During the site visit

- Most interviews are **conducted at the agency offices**
  - Panel has spacious room at its disposal for the whole site visit
  - We put out several folders with regulations, evaluation documents, etc. that we thought the panel might find useful
  - In our case, the panel visited State Secretary for Education at the ministry
- Level of **excitement is high** during the visit
  - Agency staff and interviewed stakeholders discuss what took place in the interview after they come out of a session
    - Good chance to identify for ourselves what may need clarification, possibly to compile additional documents



# After the site visit

- Staff and Board discuss impressions, perceived strengths and weaknesses based on questions and final-day oral presentation by panel
- Wait for panel report!
- Wait for ENQA Board decision!



- Identify follow-up actions based on own experiences from site visit and in the panel report to prepare for follow-up report for ENQA
- Publish SAR and panel report together with ENQA decision on website
- Decide on what to ask for in progress visit in two years





Thank you!

