

**ENQA/UNESCO-GIQAC Project**  
***Capacity building activities for quality assurance networks in the field of higher education***

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**IQA PROCEDURES FOR AGENCIES AND THE IQA PROJECT**

**Nathalie Lugano – Deputy Director, ENQA**

## Definition of IQA

- No official definition

IQA of agencies refers to the **procedures within the agencies to evaluate and ensure the quality of the processes and services provided**



### Components of IQA

- assurance of equal treatment of HEIs in different evaluations .. But degree of quality varies!
- IQA systems should be fit for purpose: check if agency's objectives are fulfilled
- INTERNAL processes and activities at the core of the system

## Importance of IQA for agencies

- IQA and External QA form the integral part of quality assessment. This unit within the agency will prepare the base for the external review.

Some other reasons:

- National QA is a chain: quality at all educational and institutional level is important
- Agencies are an example for HEIs
- Enables systematic improvement of activities, maintains standards -> stakeholders' satisfaction
- Supports a culture of quality in the agency, improve staff motivation and commitment
- Fosters the credibility of the whole national and European quality assurance system



## IQA and the ESG

The ESG suggest a systematic approach:

- A (written) policy for IQA
- Feed-back mechanisms / documentation
- A (formalised) reflection mechanism (follow-up)
- External cyclical reviews

Detailed requirements to specific processes:

- The use of subcontractors
- The work of external experts



## Results from the 2nd ENQA survey on Quality Procedures (1)

89% of respondents (41/46) claim to have procedures for their own accountability. The top five accountability measures are (table 43):

- A **no-conflict-of-interest mechanism** in the work of the agency's external experts is established and enforced;
- Mechanisms for collection and analysis of, and reflection on, **feedback from experts and reviewed institutions** for the purpose of informing and supporting the agency's improvement and development;
- **Processes and results which reflect the agency's mission and goals** of QA;
- An **appeals system**;
- IQA procedures which include an **internal feedback mechanism** and an **internal reflection mechanism**.

## Results from the 2nd ENQA survey on Quality Procedures (2)

- In four of the top five accountability procedures the average effectiveness is between “moderately effective” and “effective”.
- Potential for improvement in many areas: only 18% of the respondents which have established internal quality assurance procedures report them as being very effective.

# The ENQA IQA Project

## Background

Created in 2007  
by EVA

## Objectives

- ensuring lean, effective and development oriented IQA system
- mutual learning and inspiration among agencies.
- Capacity building in terms of IQA
- Sharing of experiences, good practices
- "Practice what we preach" and ensure the implementation of the ESG

## Organisation

Steering group/IQA Group  
Annual seminar  
Financially supported by the  
LLL programme of the EC

## Outcome/topics addressed

- IQA and the ESG (2008)
- IQA: facing common challenges (2009)
- IQA: enhancing quality culture (2010)
  - Learning from each other – using benchmarking to develop IQA (2011)
  - Impact of evaluations (2012)

## In conclusion

- Establishing IQA within an agency takes time

No single, standardised model,  
once again ... **Fitness for purpose!**

What is important to bear in mind from the beginning:

- **Leadership commitment** (extremely important!)
- As a first step, listen to and collect carefully **feedback**
- find the **right balance** and focus on the most useful practices
- Nourish a **quality culture** where staff is inherently interested in continuously improving processes and activities



## Discussion

- How could IQA be organised in your agency/QA system?
- The main challenges that you see in relation to IQA at your agency/national context