


Methodology - Report Writing

## Methodology - Report writing

Tibor Szanto  
CARDS 2003

In-house seminar for AZVO, Zagreb, 25 October 2007



### In this seminar


- I. Relevance of the theme (activity scheme, ESG)
- II. Report writing – logistics
- III. Report writing – substance and results
- IV. Examples
  - ENQA TEEP 2
  - NCHE + ASHE

Questions, comments at any time!

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 2

### Overview of evaluation steps (recapitulation)

1. Criteria and procedures
2. Self evaluation
3. Expert tasks
4. Selection of experts
5. Training of experts
6. Site visit
7. Evaluation report
8. The results of evaluation
9. Feedback
10. Monitoring and follow-up
11. Closing the quality loop




25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 3

### Note on terminology

“Report”

“S” Document presenting the findings of an Evaluation exercise based on site visit.  
detailed, structured (background, context, etc.), more than one expert involved

“D” Document presenting a judgement and its reasoning based on a desk exercise.  
brief, focussed (criteria!) expert opinion



25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 4

### I. Recapitulation: activity scheme – relevance of report writing

	evaluation	Accreditation	Audit
Institution new / operating	D or S / S	D or S / S	(?) / S
Programme new / operating	D / S	D / S	(-) / S
Theme	(D) S	X	X

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 5

### I. ESG: Reference to reports?

2.4.4 Processes fit for purpose [G]

- *the use of the self-evaluation / site visit / draft report / published report / follow-up model of review;*

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 6

Methodology - Report Writing

I.

### ESG reference<sub>2</sub>

2.4.5 Reporting [S]

*Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.*

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 7

I.

### ESG reference<sub>2+</sub>

2.4.5 Reporting [G]

- *meet the identified needs of the intended readership*
- *structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations*
- *purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions*
- *key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers*
- *opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness*

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 8

I.

### ESG reference<sub>3</sub>

2.6.6 Independence [S]

*Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.*

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 9

I.

### ESG reference<sub>4</sub>

2.6.7 Criteria and processes used by agencies [S]

*These processes will normally be expected to include:*

- *publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;*

(see slide 6)

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 10

II.

### Report writing - logistics

Elements of report writing:

- template, form (← criteria!)
- content, substance (incl. analysis and judgement)
- drafting (wording, writing)
- final form including factual correctness

overall responsibility

Actors:

- decision making body (board/council / agency?)
- implementing body (expert panel)
- administrative body (secretariat / agency)

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 11

II.

### Report writing - responsibilities

template content drafting final form overall resp.

A.	Council	experts	<b>experts</b>	Agency	Council
B.	Council	experts	<b>Agency</b>	Agency	Council
C.	<b>Agency</b>	experts	experts	Agency	<b>Agency</b>

A: evaluations by NCHE as planned  
B: evaluations by NCHE, possible option  
C: audits by ASHE as planned

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 12

Methodology - Report Writing

II. **Report writing – logistics, cont.**

Characteristics following from ESG:

- draft report → HEI → final report
- publication
- opportunities to comment

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 13

III. **Report writing - substance**

Essential features:

- style (intended readership)
- language (polite but to the point)
- clear structure (see example)
- description + analysis (← evidence!)
- conclusions, judgements (← criteria, evidence!)
- recommendations

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 14

III. **Report writing - results**

evaluation:  
 judgements and recommendations

Accreditation:  
 decision (on HEI / progs) and recommendations

Audit:  
 decision (on QA) and recommendations

**Independence**  
 in conclusions and recommendations


25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 15

III. **Execution of report writing<sub>1</sub>**

Things to possibly avoid

- Clapping on the back
- Beating around the bush (not getting to the point)
- Being descriptive only (lacking analysis)
- Disregarding the evidence collected
- Being biased in judgements / decisions
- Not keeping the deadline

Thinking that you know everything better...




25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 16

III. **Execution of report writing<sub>2</sub>**

Rules to possibly follow

- Be balanced as to description and analysis
- Be concise and focussed (to the point)
- Show respect to HEI in writing too, be a real partner!
- Try to be objective

**Be a critical friend!**



25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 17

IV. **Report writing - examples**

evaluation Accreditation Audit

Institution	NCHE		
Exist. progr.	TEEP 2		
New progr.			
Theme			

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
 Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 18

## Methodology - Report Writing

IV.

### Example<sub>1</sub> – ENQA TEEP 2 project

Subject: 3 Joint Masters Programmes offered by international consortia in Europe

Type: evaluation

Panel: disciplinary experts, QA experts, students secretary: one of the QA experts (agency repr.)

Focus: organisation and management  
programme content and delivery  
quality assurance

Visits: ~ 5 partners (locations) / programme

Report: next slide (see handout)

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 19

IV.

### Example<sub>1</sub> – TEEP 2 cont.

Report structure

- a) description of the project
- b) description of the programme
- c) evaluation (analysis)
  - criteria
  - positive features
  - developmental opportunities (= weaknesses and recommendations)
- d) conclusion
- e) annexes

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 20

IV.

### Example<sub>2</sub> – inst. evaluation / accr. by NCHE

Subject: institution + programme

Type: evaluation + accreditation (licence by Minister)

Panel: 3+1 discipl. experts (1 “unrelated” disc., being also a QA expert at the same time), 1 student (+ options)  
Agency representative: co-ordinator

Focus: operation of HEI and programmes (incl. organisation, content, research, resources)  
quality assurance (appraisal of relevant documents)

Criteria: documents + quantitative + qualitative criteria

Report: see handout?

25 October 2007 AZVO in-house seminar, Zagreb  
Tibor Szanto, CARDS 2003 21

Thank you for your attention!

