

Minutes of the Nordic Network Meeting in Reykjavík 3. – 4. May 2001

Participants:

Denmark	Finland	Norway	Sweden	Iceland
Dorte Kristoffersen	Kauko Hämäläinen	Oddvar Haugland	Aija Sadurskis	Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir
Signe Ploug Hansen	Jouni Kangasniemi	Jon Haakstad	Maivor Sjölund	Hellen M. Gunnarsdóttir
Tobias Lindeberg	Kimmo Hämäläinen	Turid Hegerstrøm	Staffan Wahlén	
		Sverre Redtrøen		

1. Opening of the meeting

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir from the division of evaluation and supervision welcomed the participants.

2. Presentation of Higher Education in Iceland

Hellen M. Gunnarsdóttir, the head of the Division of Higher Education and Research introduced the higher education system in Iceland and the latest developments and future implications in that field.

3. Presentation of Evaluation of Higher Education in Iceland

Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir introduced the main tasks and projects of the division of evaluation and supervision, the legal and regulatory framework of evaluations, the latest external evaluations of higher education and the experience achieved from them.

4. “Sidan sidst”

Participants from each country told about the current situation in their agencies and what they have been working on since the last meeting.

5. Presentation of International Comparative Evaluation of Programmes in Agricultural Science.

Signe Ploug Hansen, Evaluation Officer at EVA presented a project of International Comparative Evaluation of Programmes in Agricultural Science. The project aims to compare agricultural education in three European countries. It was decided to look away from the Nordic countries this time, the aim is to have more comparison with non-Nordic countries. There will be a common framework and the same method will be used to evaluate all the programmes. The main purpose of the project is to test the methodology and the common framework. The method consists of preliminary study, terms of reference (approved by the Board of EVA in June), the self-evaluation will start in the autumn 2001, the visits will take place in the spring 2002 and reports should be ready in September 2002. The management of evaluations will be in the hands of a team of evaluation officers and a panel of international experts. There will be three focus points: Core competence, learning and quality assurance mechanisms and internationalisation.

6. Presentation of the report Quality Assurance in the Nordic Higher Education – accreditation-like practices.

Kauko Hämäläinen, General Secretary of FINHEEC and Jon Haakstad, Senior Adviser of the Network Norway Council presented the report *Quality Assurance in the Nordic Higher Education – accreditation-like practices*. A group of five writers from the Nordic countries has been working on the report since last year's Copenhagen meeting took the initiative to have the status of accreditation in the Nordic countries reviewed and analysed. The co-operation was a positive experience.

After the presentation a discussion about the report took place and members of the meeting were very pleased with the report.

- Dorte Kristoffersen made a proposal of a mutual recognition of the Nordic Evaluation agencies.
– It was discussed how to arrange the publishing of the report. It was decided to try to get ENQA to publish it and distribute the report at the ENQA meeting 22. - 23. May. If ENQA will not publish it EVA will take care of the publishing.

7. Presentation of The new Swedish review model

Staffan Wahlen and Aija Sadurskis presented the new Swedish review model that was introduced in January 2001. The new model is a six-year review programme of subjects and/or programmes (General, Professional, Post-graduate degrees). Short programmes will not be evaluated. In the plan for 2001 a number of institutions will be evaluated. The main aims of the new model are: Development; Diversity; Information; Comparison (aim of international comparison) and Control.

8. Presentation of the Experience of benchmarking in Finland

Kauko Hämäläinen, General Secretary of FINHEEC presented the experience of benchmarking in Finland. Benchmarking is a method for organizational learning based on systematic comparison. In Finland an emphasis is put on process benchmarking rather than performance benchmarking. In the benchmarking process in Finland the faculties visit each other (“Benchlearning”). There are no external visits. Benchmarking projects in Finland have been carried out with international partners.

9. Conclusion

Next meeting will take place in Stockholm, Sweden early May next year. The meeting will start at midday and close at midday the following day. On the first day Sweden will be in focus and on the second day we will hear what has happened during the year in the other countries. The Swedish representatives came up with the idea to visit Uppsala University.

Dorte reminded everyone of the discussion that took place in the last meeting in Denmark to use evaluation experts from each other’s evaluation institutions on evaluation projects. Dorte also told the meeting that EVA has had a positive experience with an “exchange work project” where an employee from Sweden came to work for EVA for a short period of time.

The idea about having a broader meeting with about 30 participants every three or four year came up.

Dorte will send a written proposal on recognition before the ENQA meeting 22. - 23. May 2001.

Kauko will send a proposal about a seminar among the Nordic countries on benchmarking projects.