

**Report of
Meeting of INQAAHE and Representatives of Regional / Special Interest Networks**

30 January, 2008 - Washington DC, USA

Present: David Woodhouse, President INQAAHE
Seamus Puirseil, Secretary INQAAHE
Jean Morse, INQAAHE Board/Middle States Commission/C-RAC
Chita Pijano, APQN
Maria Jose Lemaitre, INQAAHE Board/RIACES
Ethley London, CANQATE
Emmi Helle, ENQA
Olusola Oyewole, AfriQAN
Nadia Badrawi, INQAAHE Board/ANQAHE
Dale Patterson, Canada
Terry Miosi, Canada
Susan Ziottow, ASPA
Bachtibek Ismailov, EAQAN

In attendance: Ann Graves, INQAAHE Secretariat

David Woodhouse, INQAAHE President, welcomed all present, and expressed pleasure that almost all Networks invited had been able to be represented. He noted that C-RAC is a one-country network, which is present in the person of Jean Morse, an INQAAHE Board member. Terry Miosi reported that discussions are under way about a US/Canada network. The President informed the meeting that he had invited ASPA, another one-country network, to participate to see if there are matters of mutual interest. (Also, INQAAHE wishes to strengthen the involvement of professional accreditors in its activities.)

The President stated that the Agenda would be dealt with flexibly, and that similar items could be discussed together. During the discussion, items could be identified for the next meeting of the Networks on 14 May in Buenos Aires at the INQAAHE Members Forum.

Items 1& 2 – Priorities and common issues

The President noted that from the objectives of the individual networks as found on our websites, the four most common objectives are:

- Information Sharing
- Research & Policy Development
- Quality improvement and
- Liaising

(He mentioned in passing that the list of objectives of INQAAHE has become long and duplicative, and the Board will be considering a re-focusing.)

In advance of the meeting, he had asked the network representatives what they see as their current highest priorities. The four most common priorities reported do not overlap with the formal objectives. They are:

- Capacity Building
- Showing External QA is effective
- Dealing with different types of Institutions
- The cost of EQA - efficiency

This gives us a basis for joint action.

Items 3-4 – Inter-network action and communications

The meeting reflected on how to work together and share information without becoming overloaded.

Firstly, it was agreed that the group would meet as regularly as possible, at least at the Annual Conferences and Fora.

Secondly, it was agreed that communication between the networks should be increased.

Thirdly, and in pursuit of this aim, it was agreed to circulate details of the regional contacts and that each network would nominate an 'information contact person', who would provide information on their region/network for inclusion in the INQAAHE Bulletin which is distributed every 2-3 months.

In respect of information, three levels were identified.

1. At the basic level, the information contact person should provide just two or three lines of report on action that has occurred in the region since the last Bulletin, or on forthcoming events (seminars, training, publications, etc). The intent here is to provide a small amount of information so that its provision is not burdensome to the contact person and Bulletin readers are not overwhelmed.
2. At the next level, the networks will provide information on longer-term priorities (such as summarised above) or major projects being undertaken, or desired projects, action plans, etc. The intent here is that if it is widely known that more than one network wishes to address similar tasks, it might be possible either for the several networks to collaborate on the task, or for one network to carry it out on behalf of all.
3. At the highest level, it is interesting for us all to know each others' longer-term strategic plans, and also to know what is being done by other entities that are relevant to our work (eg governments or institutions). This information can most usefully be shared in an annual report.

It was agreed that the network contact people would prepare reports for the Buenos Aires meeting, for circulation to the group in advance, with a deadline date of 30 April.

Later in the meeting Terry Miosi offered to assist the interaction, particularly in relation to Level 2, by establishing a 'networks' blog'. The President thanked him for the offer and mentioned that the INQAAHE website is in an advanced stage of re-building, and will include a 'Members' Services' section in which it is hoped that active interaction will take place. INQAAHE would be grateful for Terry's assistance to facilitate an active interaction between networks through the website.

Items 5-8 – INQAAHE paper on working with other networks

Memoranda of Co-operation

The suggestion that different networks could express their desired mode of interaction with INQAAHE in the form of a Memorandum of Co-operation has been well received, and several networks have indicated that they intend to do this. To allow time for details to be discussed, and to acknowledge the significance of working together, an opportunity will be found in the Forum at Buenos Aires for several MoCs to be signed at the same time.

Subscriptions

The meeting noted that the position paper encourages double membership by agencies of INQAAHE and their regional/special interest network. It endorsed this, and agreed that there should be an incentive of mutual reduction of subscription rates by the pair of networks. This matter, and the amount of reduction, can be agreed between INQAAHE and any other network, and can be included in the MoC.

GIQAC

David Woodhouse updated the group on the World Bank/UNESCO project, and reported that INQAAHE and three other networks (APQN, AfriQAN, ANQAHE) had met members of the WB, UNESCO and the Steering Group at the WB offices that morning. (Input was also received from RIACES, the other network entitled to bid for GIQAC funding in 2008.) The meeting had been able to resolve a lot of the networks concerns and achieved some increase in flexibility in the process, including a deferral in submission date (to 11 February). No network representatives are members of the SC from concern over conflicts of interest, but the President of INQAAHE is included on the GIQAC SC in a special observer capacity because of the necessity of professional QA input. (He will take no part in discussion of bids for funding.)

The President indicated the projects for which INQAAHE will be seeking funding. These include support for attendance at these network meetings by representatives of the other networks. He also stated that INQAAHE is willing to seek funds for specific projects on behalf of the other networks who had not expressed an interest in seeking funds in 2008. (Note: Two networks wanted to take up this offer, but were not able to prepare a proposal in time.)

At the next meeting, a joint approach to GIQAC in 2009 can be discussed.

Sponsors

The meeting noted that the World Bank is always keen for grant recipients to seek alternative sources of funding, and this triggered discussion of other possible sponsors/donors. It was agreed that the networks should share information on possible donors and applications for donations. It was also agreed to discuss this in further detail at the next meeting in Buenos Aires. It was also agreed to discuss the four initial priorities at the next meeting: Capacity Building; Showing EQA effective; Dealing with different types of institution and Efficiency.

The next meeting will take place on 14 May, in Buenos Aires.

Note:

1. Networks are invited to let the INQAAHE Secretariat have items for the Buenos Aires meeting agenda.
2. Subsequent to the meeting, and as further support for other networks, the INQAAHE Board agreed that members of other networks will be admitted to INQAAHE Members' Fora.