

Evaluation of SIU – Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education

Agnete Vabø, Rebecca Allinson, Lars Geschwind, Gøran Melin and Per Olaf Aamodt



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Preface

This report has been carried out by NIFU STEP and Technopolis in response to an invitation from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to tender for an evaluation of SIU – The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education. The evaluation was supported by an independent resource group which helped shape the recommendations.

NIFU STEP was given the contract for the evaluation which was performed by a team of five researchers; Rebecca Allinson (Technopolis Group UK), Lars Geschwind and Gøran Melin (Technopolis Group/Faugert) Agnete Vabø and Per Olaf Aamodt (NIFU STEP) Two NIFU STEP researchers assisted the evaluation team: Jannecke Wiers-Jenssen in conducting the interviews with the stakeholders and Erica Waagene in conducting the survey to the international coordinators at universities and university colleges. Åse Gornitzka, researcher at ARENA University of Oslo provided a literature study on the advisory role of agencies as well as serving as member of the resource group of the evaluation in addition to Director Technopolis Erik Arnold, and researchers Nicoline Frølich and Bjørn Stensaker from NIFU STEP.

Researcher Karl Erik Brofoss has contributed to the quality assurance of the report. We are grateful to the staff at SIU, as well as the many stakeholders and visited institutions who took the time to share their experiences and insight with us.

Oslo, October 2010

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Sammendrag

Senter for internasjonalisering av høyere utdanning (SIU) er et forvaltningsorgan underlagt Kunnskapsdepartementet. Senteret ligger i Bergen og har i prinsippet hovedansvaret for all nasjonal koordinering av internasjonale programmer innen utdanning og opplæring.

På oppdrag av Kunnskapsdepartementet har NIFU STEP i samarbeid med Technopolis Group evaluert SIU. Evalueringen omfatter perioden 2004-2009 og har blitt gjennomført i løpet av 2010. Ifølge oppdraget skal evalueringen vurdere SIU's formål, mandat og strategi, senterets organisering og ledelse, kvalifikasjoner, aktiviteter og resultater. Evalueringen skal gi anbefalinger om SIUs fremtidige utvikling, og da særlig med henblikk på senterets rolle som kompetansesenter for skoler, skoleledelse- og eiere.

Metodisk bygger evalueringen på en rekke ulike datakilder, herunder sammenligninger med tilsvarende organisasjoner i Danmark, Finland, Nederland og Sverige, kvalitative intervjuer, dokumentanalyser, samt vurderinger av aktiviteter og resultater.

En viktig konklusjon i evalueringen er at SIU har ivaretatt sitt ansvar som nasjonal programadministrator på en svært god måte. SIU skal ivareta ulike mål; noen programmer er forskningsorientert mens andre har vekt på fag- og yrkesopplæring. Noen programmer er bistandsorientert, andre legger opp til kulturutveksling, eller til mobilitet ut fra samfunnsøkonomiske hensyn. SIU har i stor grad klart å balansere disse målene, verdier og praktiske systemer i en svært kompleks portefølje. Interne reorganiseringer har også bidratt til en mer profesjonell drift av programmene, blant annet som følge av ny organisasjonsstruktur, nye administrative rutiner innenfor økonomi, IT og kvalitetssikring. SIU har imidlertid fått tildelt mange nye oppdrag de seinere år, og arbeider for å nå ut til og videreutvikle sin relasjon til brukergrupper, som skolesektoren og fag- og yrkesopplæringsfeltet.

Brukerne er stort sett svært fornøyd med kvaliteten på de tjenester SIU tilbyr som programadministrator i form av kompetanse og serviceinnstilling hos personalet, kvaliteten på informasjon om programmene og rutiner for oppfølging av internasjonale koordinatore. Et konkret eksempel på det siste er det årlige Erasmus seminaret for internasjonale koordinatore ved universiteter og høyskoler.

En mer kompleks og utfordrende side ved SIUs mandat er rollen som et nasjonalt kompetansesenter. Hva denne rollen som kompetansesenter (eksempelvis overfor skolesektoren) i praksis skal innebære er ikke fullstendig avklart, men en sentral dimensjon er SIUs rolle som kunnskapsprodusent og rådgiver overfor Kunnskapsdepartementet, en oppgave som blant annet må sees i lys av at kunnskapsgrunnlag er stadig viktigere for å legitimere politikk i et kompleks samfunn. Utvikling av dette kunnskapsgrunnlaget krever en langsiktighet og en profesjonell kompetanse som ikke kan ivaretas i et departement som

ofte må håndtere et mangfold av saker med et stadig skiftende fokus. Kunnskapsdepartementet har så langt vært fornøyd med SIUs leveranser og bistand, ikke minst i forbindelse med utarbeiding av stortingsmelding og i forbindelse med besøk til samarbeidsland gjennomført av politisk ledelse. Denne formen for bistand synes ønskes videreutviklet. I den sammenheng gir evalueringen noen konkrete råd hva gjelder formen på samarbeidet. Spesielt pekes det på behovet for flere uformelle kommunikasjonskanaler mellom Kunnskapsdepartementet og SIU. Samtidig peker evalueringen på fordeler og ulemper knyttet til å delegere ansvar for politisk analyse og rådgiving, aspekter som er typisk for den arbeidsdeling som finner sted mellom departement og direktorat og direktoratslignende organ som SIU. Det er for eksempel viktig at departementene ikke tømmes for politisk og analytisk kompetanse ettersom de skal fungere som kompetente bestillere av råd og informasjon. Men et organ som SIU kan heller ikke fungere isolert som programadministrator, men trenger politisk og analytisk kompetanse for å kunne levere de tjenester som etterspørres fra oppdragsgivere og brukere. På denne bakgrunn kan følgende temaer sies å oppsummere evalueringen, og danne utgangspunkt for konkrete anbefalinger:

- Styringsstrukturen i SIU må forenkles
- Ledelse og kompetanseutvikling må styrkes
- De eksterne relasjoner er fragmenterte, og bør få en klarere prioritering
- Identiteten og rollen som kompetansesenter må tydeliggjøres
- SIUs rolle som koordinerende organ må avklares på nasjonalt nivå gitt det økte omfanget av internasjonalisering av norsk utdanning og forskning

Disse konklusjonene og mer detaljerte anbefalinger utdypes kort i det etterfølgende. For fullstendig uttømmende anbefalinger vises det til den engelske versjonen av evalueringsrapporten.

Styringsstrukturen i SIU må forenkles

SIU har i dag et vidt mandat, og en aktivitet kjennetegnet av en rekke samarbeidspartnere og finansieringsstrukturer. De komplekse omgivelsene har på mange måter blitt reflektert i SIUs organisasjonsstruktur og bidratt til å skape en styringsstruktur som er både ressurskrevende og lite hensiktsmessig i forhold til prioritering og strategisk arbeid. På denne bakgrunn anbefaler evalueringen at styrets sammensetning og kompetanse gjennomgås der dagens interesserepresentasjon og driftskompetanse kanskje reduseres noe til fordel for kompetanse som kan løfte SIUs profil og betydning nasjonalt og internasjonalt. Styret bør som en konsekvens arbeide mer med strategisk profilering og posisjonering av SIU.

Tilsvarende bør dagens komitèstruktur forenkles der nærmest identiske, alternativt programmer med sammenfallende målsettinger og kjennetegn, kommer under en felles styringsstruktur. En slik koordinering vil gjøre det enklere å se og iverksette programoverskridende initiativ knyttet til profilering og prioritering, og vil også kunne øke

effektivitet og transparens ved at aktivitetene lettere kan sammenholdes over dagens programgrenser.

Ledelse og kompetanseutvikling må styrkes

På mange måter kan SIUs historie sies å være relativt identisk med tilsvarende organ i andre land. Gitt utviklingen på internasjoniseringsfeltet har mange organisasjoner med et nasjonalt ansvar vært gjennom en markant ekspansjonsfase til en fase hvor behovet for profesjonalisering og mer koordinert drift melder seg. Ledelsen kan ofte sies å avspeile disse organisatoriske kjennetegnene, der mer entreprenøregenskaper gjerne avløses av en ledelse som kan sørge for intern konsolidering. Gitt at ny direktør skal ansettes, synes tidspunktet å være inne for å sørge for at SIU får en toppledelse som kan bidra til i sterkere grad å posisjonere SIU ut fra de mange forventninger, den økte konkurranse og det sterkere behovet for profilering som internasjoniseringsfeltet møter. I tråd med de foreslåtte endringene i komitèstrukturen trenger SIU å styrke handlingsorienteringen i organisasjonen der både toppledelsen og avdelingsledelsen i større grad må opptre mer koordinert og handlingsrettet for å gjennomføre de planer og oppnå de mål SIU har satt seg. En slik koordinering betinger både tydelige forventninger knyttet til den enkelte leder, men også at ledelsen som gruppe tar et felles ansvar for å iverksette beslutninger og ulike initiativ.

Skal SIU klare å utvikle seg videre i lys av de økte forventningene til organisasjonen må imidlertid styringskapasiteten i organisasjonen økes utover ledergruppen. I kunnskapsorganisasjoner av SIUs type spiller den enkelte ansatt en stor rolle i virkeliggjøringen av organisasjonens mål, og en fortsatt utvikling av kompetansen til de ansatte er en viktig betingelse for å få dette til. Ikke minst som kontaktpunkt for omverden og iverksettere av SIUs aktiviteter er den enkelte ansatt viktig for omdømmet til organisasjonen.

De eksterne relasjoner er fragmenterte, og uten en klar prioritering

Nettopp fordi SIU har en mangfoldig kontaktflate, og fordi omverden har mange inngangspunkter til SIU synes dagens situasjon å være preget av fragmentering og en manglende prioritering av hvilke eksterne relasjoner som kan være av større viktighet enn andre. I forhold til de eksterne relasjonene er forholdet til universitets- og høyskolesektoren, og til Kunnskapsdepartementet spesielt viktige. I dag synes kontakten med begge å bære et visst preg av ad-hoc tenkning, og selv om en slik pragmatisk innstilling uten tvil har positive sider er en potensiell uheldig side at man ikke får etablert et mer systematisk og langsiktig arbeidsfelleskap med de nevnte aktører.

Universiteter og høyskoler er sentrale samarbeidspartnere for SIU, men dagens samarbeid er preget av et stort mangfold når det gjelder den opplevde nytten av SIU som partner – sett fra universitetene og høyskolenes side. Fordi institusjonenes egen kompetanse – spesielt de største - til dels overlapper med SIUs egen oppstår det også unødige spenninger

i internasjonaliseringsarbeidet. Samtidig er SIU svært viktig for mange av de mindre lærestedene.

Behovet for å utvikle strategiske prioriteringer er ikke minst viktig i forhold til SIU's nye oppgave som kompetansesenter for skoler og skoleeiere. SIU kan ikke ha kontakt med alle skoler, men må trekke veksler på eksisterende arenaer og nettverk i sektoren og samarbeid med andre aktører med ansvar for implementering av internasjonalisering i skole og opplæring. Rapporten gir en rekke anbefalinger i så henseende, som at SIU i samarbeid med Kunnskapsdepartementet må utvikle satsningsområder i forhold til hvilke tema, program og geografiske regioner det skal satses på.

Både SIU og Kunnskapsdepartementet er enige i at samarbeidet på mange måter fungerer godt i praksis, og at man over tid også har klart å styrke dette samarbeidet. En sterkere grad av formalisering og profesjonalisering av kontaktpunktene mellom de to organisasjonene har uten tvil bidratt til dette. En slik rolleavklaring betyr likevel ikke at alt ansvar og myndighet hos partene er tydeliggjort. I praksis trenger man både en tydelig formell oppgavefordeling, men og en kontinuerlig og mer uformell dialog om hvordan man kan få dette i praksis. Mange av SIUs oppgaver involverer i praksis også en rekke andre organisasjoner og myndighetsområder, og det synes å være behov for en systematisk kontakt med samtlige av disse aktørene for bedre å koordinere den nasjonale innsatsen på internasjonaliseringsfeltet (se også under).

Identiteten og rollen som kompetansesenter må tydeliggjøres

Både SIU og mange av de aktører som har vært rådspurt i evalueringen synes enige om at SIUs identitet og rolle som kompetansesenter må tydeliggjøres. I dette ligger en dobbel oppgave: at den kompetansen som allerede finnes ved SIU må formidles tydeligere ut, samt at man også må bygge ut den analytiske kapasiteten omkring internasjonaliseringsspørsmål – en kompetanse som SIU i begrenset grad besitter i dag. Rollen som kompetansesenter innebærer imidlertid klassiske dilemma i forhold til at det ikke alltid er sammenfallende interesser og behov hos sentrale myndigheter og universiteter og høyskoler. I tillegg til de føringer som kommer fra sentralt hold har institusjonene sine egne strategier i internasjonaliseringsarbeidet. Hvordan SIU skal balansere ulike hensyn må være et viktig spørsmål i det videre arbeidet med å utvikle sin rolle som kompetansesenter.

Det er ikke uvanlig i forvaltningssammenheng at direktorater og direktoratslignende organ har ”doble oppgaver”: kontroll vs utvikling, drift vs analyse, etc. Som vist i evalueringsrapporten er dette trekk som også kjennetegner SIU som organisasjon. I dag synes drift og iverksetting både å ta mye tid, og være en oppgave som man har stor kompetanse knyttet til i SIU. Skal man bygge opp økt analytisk kompetanse vil nyrekruttering høyst sannsynlig også være nødvendig. Av profileringsgrunner og i forhold til at man bør sikre at analysearbeidet ikke blir nedprioritert i forhold til løpende oppgaver. SIU's enhet for analyse bør i sterkere grad enn hva som i dag er tilfelle både analysere

resultatene knyttet til internasjonalisering, men og ha et fremtidsrettet blikk på utviklingstendenser i feltet. Det må kunne forventes at en slik enhet både kan ivareta mer ad-hoc pregede analyseoppdrag og –behov både fra SIU internt og fra eksternt hold, samtidig som man har et selvstendig ansvar for en systematisk rapportering internt og utad.

SIUs rolle som koordinerende organ må avklares på nasjonalt nivå gitt det økte omfanget av internasjonalisering av norsk utdanning og forskning

Evalueringen har vist at SIU håndterer et stort og økende mangfold av oppgaver, initiativer og program knyttet til internasjonalisering i utdanningssektoren. Samtidig er det mange indikasjoner som viser at internasjonaliseringen ikke lenger bare kan betraktes som en ”spesiell oppgave” som integreres i svært mange av de aktivitetene som utdanningssektoren er involvert i. Internasjonalisering blir stadig viktigere i forskning, har økende betydning i grunnutdanningen, og i organisering og i styringen av sektoren mer generelt. Selv om dette i utgangspunktet peker på relevansen av SIU som organisasjon, kan man imidlertid også stille spørsmål om ikke den samme utviklingen også bør avstedkomme en refleksjon over grensene for SIUs ansvars- og myndighetsområde. Som referert til over er SIUs eksterne relasjoner og oppgaver mange og tildels fragmenterte, og håndteringen av denne situasjonen er ikke et ansvar for SIU alene. Selv om SIU bør prioritere sterkere hva man brukt tid og ressurser på, er grenseoppgaven av SIUs ansvarsområde først og fremst et ansvar for Kunnskapsdepartementet. En bedre nasjonal koordinering av ansvar og myndighet på internasjonaliseringsfeltet og de mange aktørene som både har et formelt ansvar men også en interesse for å gjøre en innsats her, vil ikke minst gjøre det enklere for SIU å definere sitt eget arbeidsområde og sin videre utvikling.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the evaluation

This evaluation analyses the activities of SIU, (Senter for internasjonalisering av høyere utdanning - Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education) over the past six years, from 01.01.2004–31.12.2009. It assesses the extent to which SIU has complied with its mandate, how it views its tasks and responsibilities in relation to relevant interested parties, and first and foremost to the Ministry of Education and Research. Of particular importance is the investigation of how SIU balances the administration of programmes with its broader responsibility for internationalisation. Do SIU's activities yield additionality with regard to the internationalisation of education in general? How does SIU's performance compare with that of similar national offices in other countries?

Furthermore the evaluation provides advice on SIU's future development. What tasks should SIU's ambit include in the coming years, and should eventual changes affect the content of the regulatory framework under which SIU operates? In this regard it is important for the evaluation to assess how SIU can perform its function as a service and competence centre for schools, school proprietors and school authorities.

Initially, in the early 1990s SIU was organised under the auspices of the National Association of Universities, engaged in coordinating the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU). In 1992, with the launch of the Erasmus programme by the European Commission, came the requirement that participating countries use a separate national agency for administering the programme. In Norway, this task was assigned to SIU, then to be formally run by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR). SIU, located in Bergen with some 65 permanent employees, was granted its current status in 2004.

In this international and national context, SIU has five main areas of responsibility: programme management; profiling of Norwegian higher education, Norwegian universities, and university colleges abroad; information and communication; competence building to promote international cooperation in the sector; and consultancy and reporting. Of these, programme management accounts for most of SIU's activities.

Norway's political ambitions to internationalise education and research are high (Report No. 14 to the Storting (2008–2009); Gornitzka & Langfeldt 2008). International cooperation on research, education and training has become the object of increasingly intense political and institutional focus. Work on internationalisation has grown steadily in complexity and scope, developing from concerns of student mobility and foreign visits for academic staff to concerns with quality, competitiveness, and standardisation of national systems (for degrees and grades). Formalised cooperation across national borders and supranational processes, such as investment in the common European Research Area

(ERA) function as catalysts to these internationalisation efforts. Cooperation is also being promoted on a north-south axis, not least, where Norway is concerned, as an aspect of foreign aid policy. Internationalisation is no longer a goal in itself so much as a means to improved quality and greater relevance in education and research. In addition, development in many parts of the education and research sector, not least in primary and secondary education and occupational training, is now oriented towards internationalisation more than it was in the past.

It is in this context that SIU operates as an agency. As such, it is a complex and changing environment in which the definition of internationalisation is rebalancing itself along national and European priorities. SIU itself has a wide mission with respect to its definition of internationalisation where it defines a need to contribute both to participation in general as well as to the specific goals set by the various programmes it manages and implements.

1.2 Data sources and methods

The various questions and issues for the evaluation of SIU required information to be collected from diverse sources, the application of a range of methodologies and consultation with a wide group of stakeholders.

The mandate for the evaluation implies the use of both formative and summative evaluation techniques; formative insofar as the evaluation seeks to produce new insights and recommendations for further development, summative insofar as it also aims to present analysis and the results obtained.

In addition, the analysis of how SIU administers its mandate requires the use of a balanced approach that accords due weight to both internal and external sources. The composition of the evaluation team and the way tasks are distributed internally has also been carefully considered from a methodological perspective in order to ensure an independent result.

Attention is paid to the conflicts of interest that exist between financing bodies and recipients of financial support, as the latter may have an incentive to give a positive assessment of existing schemes and arrangements.. This means there is risk of recommendations inclining to uphold the status quo rather than emphasising learning, improvement and further development, for example through the inclusion of new user groups. An independent resource group consisting of people with no attachment to the field as interested parties or client organisations is also of crucial significance for the evaluation. The group's members will play a particularly important role in the development of recommendations for SIU's future activities. Like the rest of the evaluation team, the members of the resource group are distinguished by their expertise in the internalisation of research and education; such expertise, acquired from experience in the broader field of

international research and relevant policy, is a prerequisite for making recommendations of adequate quality when dealing with a complex organisation like SIU.

The following methods have been applied in this evaluation

- Self evaluation
- Document analysis
- Interviews
- Site visits
- Survey
- Comparative analysis

Self-evaluation report from SIU

A self-evaluation report was requested from SIU as part of developing empirical means for assessing how SIU views its own mandate and the ways that mandate is embodied in SIU's own management, organisation and routines.. SIU was also asked to reflect upon the challenges they might conceivably face in the foreseeable future.

Document analysis

A number of written and electronic documents have been relevant with regard to the questions the evaluation poses. These include formal documents describing various aspects of SIU's purpose, mandate and activities, documents produced in the steering and dialogue between the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU, reports from SIU's activities, including statistical and other numerical material, which also contain indicators of importance to the analysis of SIU's results. Internal evaluations of organisational aspects of SIU's activities were also relevant, and were provided to the evaluation team by SIU in the course of the self-evaluation. External evaluations of programme activities are frequently used, not least those undertaken by NUFU and NOMA, submitted in December 2009: we also participated in the seminar held in connection with the launching of the report. In addition we reviewed electronic material that SIU presents on its website, as well as research literature.

1.2.1 Interviews and site visits

Interviews conducted were an important source of information for the evaluation, providing detailed information of SIU's organisation, activities, and results, as well as critical assessments of these aspects as viewed by administrators, interested parties, client organisations as well as SIU staff. The interviews also served as a source of ideas for the recommendations on SIU's future development.

Six main groups of informants were interviewed:

- a) Representatives of SIU's board, management, and other administrative staff including the former director;
- b) Representatives of central authorities the Ministry of Education and Research;

- c) Representatives of commissioners, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the European Commission, and the Nordic Council of Ministers;
- d) Representatives of users of SIU's services, first and foremost people responsible for internationalisation at universities and colleges, students;
- e) Other stakeholders, such as the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS);
- f) Similar agencies in other countries as well as Academic Cooperation Association (ACA).

All interviews followed an interview guide and spontaneous follow-up questions could be added whenever appropriate. All interviews but one were made face to face. The interview responses were transcribed and subsequently analysed.

Site visits and interviews with contractors

The Ministry of Education and Research holds a special position as contracting body for both the evaluation and for SIU, and as policy developer. Several interviews and meetings were held with all in all 13 representatives from the different departments of the Ministry of Education and Research. The meetings had the character of group interviews, but relevant information were also provided during two mid-term presentations that took place. The team also visited other contractors; one visit to the National Directorate of Education and Training, three visits and interviews with The Ministry of Foreign Affairs/NORAD, one visit to the The Nordic Council in Copenhagen and two interviews with advisors in the European Commission in Brussels.

Site visits and interviews with users and national organisations

Site visits were undertaken and interviews conducted with various user groups: international offices at universities and colleges; the University of Bergen; the University of Oslo; the University of Trondheim and the University of Tromsø; the University College Oslo and Narvik University college; the National Association of Universities and Colleges; the Research Council of Norway; the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities; the Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions; the students' associations and ANSA.

Site visit to SIU and interview with SIU leadership and staff

We conducted interviews with the chair of the board and the former director of SIU, and with over twenty members of staff.

56 interviews were conducted altogether. The interviews typically took about one hour; a handful of key interviews lasted for one and a half hours, sometime even more.

Survey

The adequacy of SIU's structures for cooperation and dialogue with relevant interested parties and client institutions is a question that a representative selection of informants should be allowed to respond to anonymously. A survey was distributed among all 60 LLP/Erasmus coordinators at universities and colleges of which 88% responded. This survey focused on questions concerning SIU's activities in spreading information, its role in competence building, and as supervisor in internationalisation work with main emphasis on the national management of the European Commissions Lifelong Learning Programme. The survey also provided blank fields for comments of a more qualitative nature, of which many are referred to in the report.

Comparative analyses

In order to contextualise SIU within the international landscape and further to support the evaluation, the team looked at three different internationalisation agencies (in Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands), as well as the Swedish more dispersed approach. The objective of this part of the study is not to benchmark these organisations against one another but to provide insights into different approaches and management methods which could help SIU in its next phase of development.

In addition, the European Commission and ACA (the umbrella organisation for international programme offices) were interviewed for further insight into what other approaches are taken.

In the case of the national agencies (Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands), each organisation was visited in order to interview management and other staff, collect publications and to understand the working environment. In addition, annual reports and strategies were compiled and assessed.

Figure 1.1 The organisation visits covered the following issues

Issue	Detail
History and development	History of organisation Development over time Current status Future challenges
Internal organisation	The steering structure Organisational structure Strategy development Priority setting Human resources Skills and Training needs Quality assurance and accountability Evaluation Project management vs policy making research
External organisation	Central authorities: mandate;regulations. Interaction/communication Clients and stakeholders Communication strategy

Throughout the report, references are made to the other agencies where they shed insight into evaluation findings. A brief overview of the international comparison can be found in the appendices.

2 Analyses and assessments

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter findings relating to the six main topics in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) for the evaluation are discussed. SIU's (1) purpose, mandate and strategy, (2) organisation and management, (3) qualifications (4) performance (5) results and future development

2.2 SIU's purpose, mandate and strategy

Currently, SIU's activities include five different areas of work: (1) programme management, (2) marketing Norway as study and research country abroad, (3) information and communication, (4) competence building to promote international collaboration in the sector, and (5) advice, analysis and service.

The balance between these tasks is not even. The programme management comprises the lion's share of the total work at SIU. All in all, 29 programmes of various size and geographical focus are up and running. The programmes cover the whole spectrum of education from primary and secondary education, to research, including vocational education and training, continuing education and adult learning. Programmes with an orientation towards higher education are however the most frequent type. For a complete list and details about each programme, we also refer to the SIU website (www.siu.no).

As noted in the introduction above, SIU started life under the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR). At the time of its inception, the national landscape for internationalisation in higher education and research was fragmented, characterised by a number of different actors with unclear and overlapping responsibilities. When SIU was given the status of an administrative agency in 2004, the creation of a central entity was part of the authorities' strategy to develop a more comprehensive and targeted approach to the national strategy for internationalisation of education and research.

Although the creation of a central agency was not the only option for dealing with the internationalisation agenda, we will argue that the concentration of nationally relevant and formalised activities into one structure offered clear advantages:

There is always a certain level of vulnerability to corruption in international programme-related activity of the kind SIU administers: recipient countries and their administrators need to be accountable to donors. The centralisation of functions in one agency creates efficiencies and standards in administering aid to the many user groups. It also helps to deal fairly and equitably with different national systems and the cultures of beneficiaries. Secondly, SIU provided the necessary expertise and know-how (in-house competence) to

be able to deliver the varied aspects of internationalisation. The tasks of internationalisation encompassed under the mandate for the state agency meant that the agency needed solid experience and an existing reputation for tackling the issues of internationalisation of higher education.

The potential disadvantages of the centralisation of these types of activities include the bureaucratisation of professional administration and the potential for inflexibility in adding new tasks and structures when necessary. Additionally, there is the fact that some aspects of internationalisation may best (for efficiency and effectiveness) be undertaken close to source, such as in the universities. The approach SIU has taken appears to minimise these types of disadvantages associated with centralisation. The relationship with the universities and university colleges is discussed below.

SIU's mandate, strategies and goals are relatively clearly formulated. At the same time, they are very ambitious and potentially conflicting in their objectives and interests. The internationalisation of higher education covers, amongst other things, development aid, cultural promotion, quality in higher education and research, and inward and outward mobility. SIU is also taking on wider roles, for example in becoming a strategic actor and service centre for schools. These multiple roles have been coordinated to give a balanced overall understanding and delivery of SIU for both internal and external audiences.

The evaluation findings show that SIU does manage to balance the wide ranging and potentially conflicting goals set out in its mandate and strategy. This is achieved in the main through a comprehensive internal approach (division of labour and synergy) and through the equitable external promotion of all aspects of its work.

SIU has succeeded in being a national node for internationalisation in higher education: it is embedded in both national and international networks and administers a large portfolio of international programmes. The majority of international coordinators at the universities and university colleges in Norway are complimentary about the way that SIU administers the programmes on which they jointly work.

According to our interviews with representatives from the universities and the UHR one potential disadvantage in the change in formal status in 2004, bringing SIU closer to the Ministry of Education and Research, was the distancing of SIU from the universities. As a consequence of its position, an unconstructive relationship developed between SIU and some of the larger universities, as SIU no longer pursues their interests vs. the central authorities as previously. The unconstructive relationship is less related to its major function of administering international programmes and initiatives however, and more related to the growing need of individual universities to take charge of their own internationalisation agendas. As responsibility for internationalisation overlaps the universities may regard funding allocated to SIU as better used if distributed directly to the institutions. Many institutions would do well to use the expertise built up within SIU to

help with their internationalisation strategies. The same issue is highlighted by NUFFIC, the Dutch Agency for Internationalisation which is embarking upon a programme of re-engagement with the major Dutch universities. A similar strategy for SIU for reconnecting, and improving their cooperation, with the universities needs to be developed in order to contribute efficiently to the overall national policy goals.

In spite of this concentrated and coordinated approach to the internationalisation of education and research, there are still many other actors that claim aspects of internationalisation as their own priority or objective. The Ministry cannot expect SIU single-handedly to reconcile all the potential tensions, tribes and territories through adopting a collaborative approach, and thus solve the problems of a fragmented national structure for internationalisation.

Any response needs to have the support of the Ministry and any other involved structures over which the Ministry has some influence. Therefore collaboration and cooperation needs to be reflected in the mandates of other significant agencies for collaborative arenas to be created.

Nevertheless, alternative modes for organising international programme and initiatives within higher education should always be open for discussion. Some universities are very keen to manage their own internationalisation strategies in full. This may of course cause inefficiencies, lack of standards, duplication and a lack of common communication of the internationalisation agenda. SIU is facing competition from universities and colleges which can run programmes with lower administrative costs as part of their internal activities and budgets. This is particularly the case with some of the programmes and initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This in turn leads to market distortion as the finance for the universities' and colleges' core budgets will be coming from the Ministry of Education, which is then effectively cross subsidising another Ministry's activities. This type of situation should not be allowed to occur. Building administrative capacity in this field might also risk the withdrawing of resources from the core activities of the universities and colleges. Furthermore, SIU has more competence than universities and colleges as regard administration of programmes and can therefore contribute with a more professional administration. It can also be argued that concentration of programme administration will contribute to added value since it is then possible to coordinate programmes from a comprehensive perspective as well as to achieve synergy as regards systems of information and coordination. Furthermore conflict of interests may occur when programmes are administered by organisations which also make bids for funding from the same source.

Alternatively, at the other extreme, a national directorate of higher education could be considered, though a disadvantage of this may be its lack of independence and therefore ability to function, for example, as a competence centre. All approaches will have advantages and disadvantages, but they should be open to discussion.

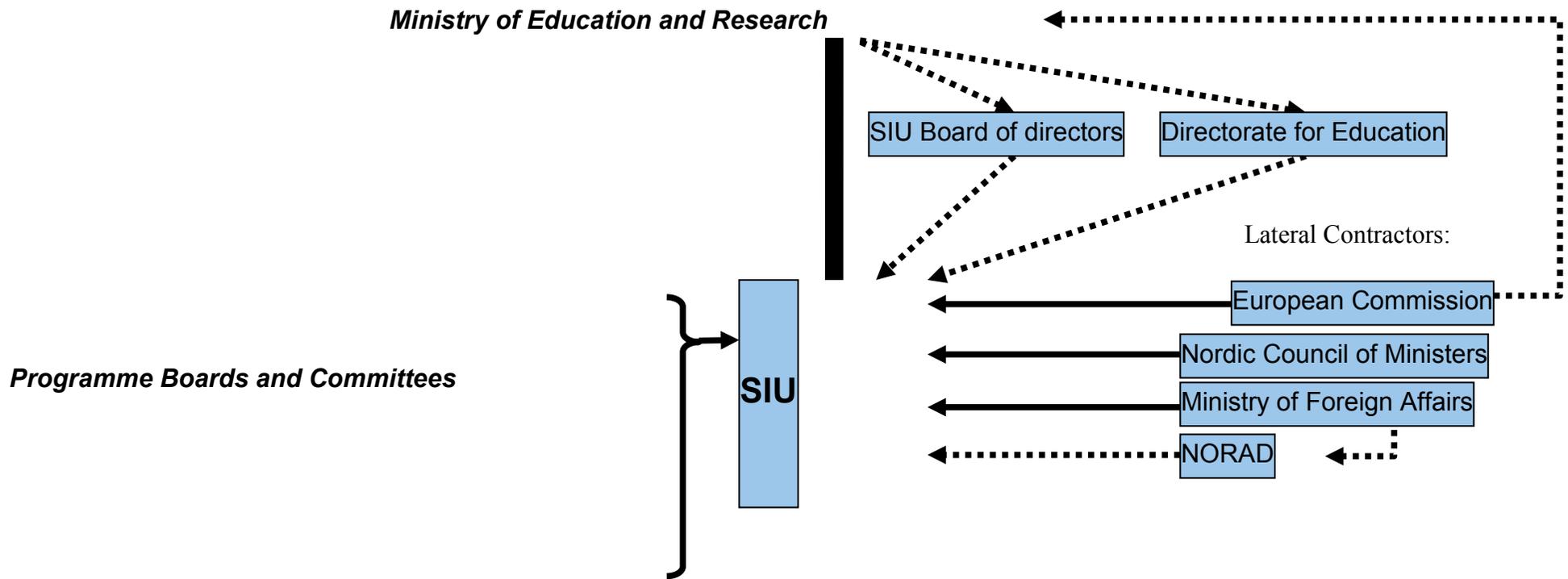
Whatever organisational model is chosen, there will always be a blurring of boundaries between the elements of internationalisation and a need to reconcile the different facets into a coordinated vision. Within the current system, the Ministry should signal more clearly that SIU is the national authority for internationalisation programmes within education and research and improve their dialogue and coordination of activities with other Ministries to avoid overlap or misunderstanding. At national level, SIU want to have national responsibility but on the other hand acknowledge positive effects from competition. Still, according to the self evaluation SIU wishes that the ministry would signal more clearly that SIU is the national authority for internationalisation programmes within education and research.

SIU's strategies from 2004 seem clearly formulated and relevant. Nevertheless they reflect the evolving ambitious mandate of SIU, such as when it comes to international branding of Norway as an attractive destination for research. Some of the goals and strategies have not yet been fully accomplished (see below). The strategies evidence the need to develop new operational approaches based on realistic expectations of the extent to which SIU is capable of accomplish these goals. The evaluation team sees no need to reformulate the main goals and strategies presented in the strategic plan, although one could wish for a more moderate language as regards SIU's role in the profiling of Norway as an attractive destination for research. This also goes for the mandate of SIU. As SIU is assigned a permanent responsibility as a competence centre for schools and school owners the Ministry should include this in the text.

2.2.1 Organisation and management

SIU is a "two-headed" national organ that has to respond to the policy ambitions of both the European Commission and central national authorities, and in this regard its position is similar to that of other lower level government departments, inspectorates and directorates operating in a multi-tiered system (Egeberg & Trondal 2009).

Figure 2.1 SIU – an agency with many masters



2.2.2 SIU: a node for complex external relationships

As an administrative unit, the office serves as a node for many complex relationships. The administration of international programmes is the most extensive element in SIU's remit, with the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme forming a particularly important part of SIU's portfolio. Support is given to cooperation between institutions in all parts of the world. The programmes are aimed at various sections of society and, consequently, different client groups and interested parties.

SIU has responsibility for internationalisation at various level of the system for education, training and research. As a consequence of SIU's growth the organisation has to relate to users, contractors and partners in different parts of society, fields which in themselves usually are quite heterogeneous. The various regional municipalities for instance adopt quite different approach to internationalisation. Some invest in large international offices and competence centres and others very little.

As regards users, higher education covers large traditional universities, specialised universities and smaller university colleges. In recent years also the sector for private colleges has become a partner of SIU. Whereas the large universities might have their own large offices and units for international affairs in education and research, the smaller colleges, not least the private ones, usually have scarce resources.

The UHR, as well as the Erasmus network consisting of coordinators from the international officers at the universities and university colleges, are examples of important arenas for SIU to link up with in this sector. The students' organisations are represented on the board of SIU. Furthermore SIU collaborates with partners such as the Research Council of Norway and the State Educational Loan Fund in implementing their programme activities, while as regards lifelong learning, there is VOX – the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning. Traditionally the international offices, and the network of international coordinators at the level of regional municipalities which are responsible for secondary education and training, have been important for SIU in linking up with users within the field education and training. They are currently working on developing networks with eight different Centres organised under the National Directorate for Education and Training as well as the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

As illustrated in the figure SIU is an agency with many masters. At the national level the Ministry of Education and Research is the owner and main contractor. However SIU also administers a large portfolio on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD) and NORAD, which is mostly aid related. These activities involve linking up with various institutions, universities and embassies on the African and the Asian continents.

SIU administers a large portolio on behalf of the The Nordic Council of Ministers, and in that regards needs to link up with agencies and institutions in other Nordic as well as Baltic countries. The various offices, organisations and networks of the EU commission in

Brussels and elsewhere, like CEDEFOP in Greece, are also important for SIU given its role as a national agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). As will be further elaborated below SIU also cooperates with various social organisations, such as trade unions amongst others, through being represented on the various programme committees.

2.2.3 The role of the board

Given SIU's formal status as a public agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research, there is, formally speaking, no need for a board. An obvious disadvantage of equipping public agencies with a board might be a lack of clarity in the conditions of steering, and the blurring of responsibility between the board and ministry.¹ For several reasons, however, the Ministry of Education and Research decided to keep up the tradition of having a SIU board. Given that SIU can take on contracts for other ministries and agencies carrying out projects within international higher education and research cooperation, a board could serve the needs of external clients and relations other than the Norwegian higher education system. The Ministry of Education and Research's expectations and priorities are stipulated in the SIU's statutes. One point that receives particular emphasis is that SIU should be a national office for international programmes and initiatives in the field of higher education established by the Ministry of Education and Research and other government organs, or in which Norwegian authorities decide to participate. SIU should also be able to function as a programme administrator for other ministries and client institutions that wish to delegate assignments in the field of higher education and research cooperation, including development work. Supported by general advice from central authorities as regard the use of board in public agencies, a board might be adequate for agencies needing to have a certain room for manoeuvre in terms of professional independence, as is the case with SIU now also due to its new role as a competence centre.

Mainly positive opinions were expressed from SIU's staff about the board in principle and the very existence of a board. However, some voiced the opinion that the current board was not as active and as strong as desired. It seems to be of great importance to have an active and supportive board which has some ambitions for SIU and seeks to develop the centre. This seems especially important regarding the chair of the board. Most importantly, the outreach functions of the board were stressed in this respect.

The board is involved in the development of SIU and takes an active role, at least regarding questions related to the ministry and to SIU's overall orientation. For instance, when the current board was new, it worked with the strategy of SIU, which resulted in a document which is valid until 2011. A new board would now need to start its work with revising this strategy.

¹ Bruk av styrer i staten. 2006 Fornyings- og administrasjonsdepartementet/ Ministry of government administration, reform and church affairs

The reason for having a board was explained by the chair:

There is a point in having a board due to the complexity of the operations. If it had only been a matter of managing programmes, it would perhaps not been necessary, but now it is more complex. There are many players. (Author's translation)

Indeed, as SIU no longer was under the auspices of the universities a continuation of the board was believed to be of utmost importance for sustaining and further developing the relation between SIU and the colleges and universities; both public and private. In line with such thinking today's board consist of four members from the sector of universities and colleges of which three are nominated by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education institutions, and one represents the private sector (The Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions). In addition there is one student representative, one SIU employee and one member appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research. In this case the Ministry of Education and Research appointed a representative from the private sector economy, from the company Canal Digital.

The SIU's board, as typical in Norway, has the overarching responsibility for activities and operations including the administrative tasks at the agency. It has the responsibility for formulating a strategy for the centre as well as plans for implementation, for the use of financial resources, and for the appointment of the director.

Nevertheless, for many reasons there seem to be certain limitations to the realisation of the strategic capacity of the board. The fact that the Ministry of Education and Research is the central authority and has the final word is a reasonable explanation for this. But as regards the board members from the institutions in higher education it is, according to some informants, not always clear whether they represent their home institutions or the sector as a whole. Furthermore, they tend to operate as stakeholders rather than strategic planners. According to most of the informants of the evaluation, today the board first and foremost plays an important role in keeping up the legitimacy of SIU in the estimation of the sector of higher education institutions.

SIU and the board also have to use the room for maneuver actually assigned to them by the Ministry of Education and Research- by adopting a more pro-active approach to engaging the significant national and international actors involved in internationalisation of education, training and research.

SIU is now has to contend with the replacement of almost all its board members, and this presents a good opportunity for some innovative thinking about the role of the board. What qualities should board members possess and what roles should they perform in addition to those needed to ensure SIU's legitimacy and to devise the strategy that will enable SIU to carry out its mandate in the coming years? This is a particularly challenging issue since the central authorities have exceptionally ambitious aims. Internationalisation should apply

right across the education and training sector, and this implies highly complex activities with sometimes contradictory goals, which have now also been added to SIU's mandate for further development. It could be said that the centre and its board are in a setting-up phase as a competence centre and an advisory organ. And this is happening at a time when SIU's relations to the major universities have become troubled to some extent by a counterproductive competitiveness due to the change in SIU's formal status.

2.2.4 Composition of the board

In this situation it is important that the board is composed of people with exceptionally good knowledge and understanding of internationalisation in the education sector, both as a field of activity in general and as a political tool in particular. Obviously, the basis here will consist largely of experience in the relevant sectors, meaning that universities, university colleges and the school sector etc. will also be represented. But it is important to emphasise that, in contrast to the earlier arrangements, the representatives will be there in their full personal capacity, not as "deputies" from the sectors / interested parties appointed by the UHR, as they were in the past.² People drawn directly from the relevant sectors in this way will also bring with them networks that will be useful when it comes to SIU's new need to build relationships. The Ministry of Education and Research must conduct a functional analysis as part of the task of staffing a new board, and it is important for the legitimacy of such a process that the UHR is consulted. Given SIU's new mandate as a competence centre for the internationalisation of school education, the new SIU board should include representatives with significant expertise and strategic capacity also in this part of the sector. Moreover, they need not necessarily be Norwegian. It is quite conceivable that the board would benefit from the inclusion of representatives with personal capacities from other countries. On the other hand, there is nothing self-evident about the idea that commerce and business should sit on the board, although it is perfectly conceivable that people from this sector with high levels of relevant expertise, not least from major companies could be invited to do so. It is hard to ignore the idea that students and possibly also school pupils should also have a function on SIU's board, although we see no reason why the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA) should be represented as they are mainly representing the interests of Norwegian students aiming at full degrees abroad.

SIU and the student organisations share a common goal of facilitating student mobility and other forms of internationalisation of higher education.

NSO represents students in Norway, and sees themselves as an important stakeholder regarding facilitating for student exchanges and promoting 'internationalisation at home'. They work closely with other student organisations home and abroad.

² See also Bruk av styrer i staten. 2006 Fornyings- og administrasjonsdepartementet./ Ministry of government administration, reform and church affairs

ANSA has different roles/task. In addition to being an organisation promoting the interests of Norwegian students abroad, they are also housing an information centre with the main responsibility for providing information about full degree studies abroad. They have a high level of competence regarding studying abroad, and very relevant networks including student members all over the world.

However, the student organisations suggested that their role in the SIU board was different from other boards in which they are represented (such as the State Educational Loan Fund and NOKUT). In their experience, they were treated more like full and “serious” members in other boards. The student organisations expressed a worry that SIU did not always take advantage of their expertise. Relevant information was not always exchanged, though the climate for cooperation seemed to be good.

There seem to be a potential for more contact, cooperation and information sharing between the student organisations and SIU.

The relations between the organisations and SIU seemed to be on a positive track, and the organisations expressed no open conflict of interest with SIU. But there were some topics where the organisations did not fully approve SIU’s strategies to reach certain goals. Examples of this is this are the way Norway is promoted to foreign students as a study destination, SIUs work regarding implementation of ‘internationalisation at home’ and the management of certain programmes. The borders between SIUs and ANSAs responsibilities regarding information to students also seemed a bit blurred.

As was also agreed upon in our discussion with the board, the board’s way of working should reflect the fact that SIU is in a setting-up phase with regard to its role as a service and competence centre, while at the same time needing to reconnect so as to revive its relations with the universities, and in particular the major four. Given that SIU’s revised mandate imposes on it a new role as support institution for the universities, SIU’s board must familiarise itself with the universities’ needs, not least when we consider that the universities themselves have large and competent international offices. It should adopt a “what can we do for you?” strategy that would involve the board meeting with SIU’s more important client groups in order to listen and plan accordingly. This purpose would be served, for example, by scheduling board meetings during institutional visits, as has been the practice of the board of NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education). Such a bottom-up strategy would help SIU not only to rebuild its relations with the universities, but also to develop its relations to the school education sector, to which end it should also involve relevant players and institutions from the latter.

The board will also have to pass through a setting-up phase before it can commence more strategic operations. The adoption by the board of a strategy that seeks to revive SIU’s relations with the major universities will in itself probably not be enough to initiate better and more coordinated cooperation on internationalisation. When the authorities and/or SIU

launch important new initiatives, such as a new geographical area of commitment, new expert groups should be appointed on an ad hoc basis, with representatives from relevant institutions, in order to clarify the strategy.

Remuneration (over and above normal civil service rates) need not be essential to attract competent people from institutions and companies onto SIU's board, although it could be useful, within reasonable limits, as a means of indicating that members and leaders of the board are expected to assume a considerable workload.

2.2.5 Programme committees

Given its role as a principal, The Ministry of Education and Research seeks to achieve its goals by contracting out and delegating resources to SIU. In principle, this approach can give rise to three problems. First, conflicts and disagreements can arise between the contracting body and the contracted institution concerning aims, objectives and the relevance of contextual circumstances. Second, problems can arise in connection with, for instance, inappropriate selection of projects for funding, whereby the most deserving projects fail to be chosen because the contracted institution has not collected enough information or has inadequate procedures for assessing applications. Third, delegating responsibility may give the contracting institution an opportunity and an incentive to do something other than agreed by pursuing its own objectives. The problem of goal displacement is typical and there is no fully adequate way to avoid it. In most cases, a compromise has to be found between blind faith and stringent and restrictive control mechanisms. A special feature of the Norwegian model for the steering of international programmes in education and training is the large number of programme committees (see chart). The committees of each of the LLP sub-programmes monitor the application process and distribution of grants at SIU. But these committees also have a wider mandate as they shall contribute to the improvement of participation dissemination of results and experiences from Norwegian participation in the programmes, as well as to advise the national agency within their respective areas of responsibility. Within the LLP for instance four committees are operating according to this mandate; the Comenius-, Erasmus-, Grundtvig – and Leonardo committees. These national committees include representatives of many of the relevant national social organisations; the Norwegian Confederation of Trade unions (LO), the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO), the Confederation of Unions for Professional (Unio), The Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne), The Confederation of Vocational Unions, the Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL), the Norwegian Association of Local and regional Authorities (KS), the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) and the student organisations. These committees are said to constitute an important element SIU's strategy for reaching out to client groups and ensuring solid and broad participation in the programmes. The committees are used actively as channels of access to the organisations they represent and their networks. They are also meant to be important as a means for SIU to establish contact and become familiar with the relevant milieus. The national education policy perspective is assumed to be taken care of insofar as the Ministry of Education and

Research has an observer in each of the committees.. In a previous evaluation of the LLP worries were expressed however that such national committees were “talking shops”, lacking a clear mandate and possibility for influence (Vabø 2007), something which was also confirmed by informants from SIU and members from program committees. According to the Ministry since then the committees have become more proactive, and they see a potential to widen their activity, for instance in the evaluation of projects supported. For example the Erasmus committee is supporting SIU activities to reach wider audiences by developing a strategic plan for increasing student awareness and the possibility for European mobility and use of the programme (LLP Ministry of Education and Research). As we will turn to below, SIU in collaboration with the programme committee has achieved significant results in raising the number of applicants to the Leonardo da Vinci sub programme.

According to SIU, the European Commission has praised SIU’s use of programme committees as a positive example that deserves to be emulated.

Nevertheless, SIU is characterised by a rather complex organisational structure and with support from some informants, we find reason to question the extensive use of, and overlap between, the many programme committees, both regarding their functions as well as concerning the representation. As also remarked in interviews particularly this goes for Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig on the one hand and the two committees for NUFU and NOMA on the other. In the recent evaluation report by COWI the latter two were also suggested to be merged.

Figure 2.2 LLP committees

Comenius	Erasmus	Grundtvig	Leonardo
Unio (2 rep.)	UHR (3 rep.)	Voksenopplæringsforb.	LO
LO	Unio	LO	NHO
NHO	Akademikerne	NHO	YS
KS	LO	UHR	Unio
UHR	NHO	ABM-Utvikling	KS
Elevorganisasjonen	StL	Unio	UHR
	NSU	Interesseorg. for kommunal voksenoppl.	Voksenopplæringsforb.
		Senter for seniorpolitikk	Elevorganisasjonen

As also subject to discussion within SIU, we recommend a considerable rationalisation of the programme committee structure. It should be possible to solve the needs of the LLP by one committee: as a minimum one should merge the Leonardo and Grundtvig committees and, in line with the recommendations of the recent NUFU/NOMA evaluation (COWI 2010), merge the NUFU and NOMA committees, which since last year actually function as one interim committee.

Hopefully such a rationalisation will serve the needs of the social partners and others, as they can spend less human resources and time on meetings and so forth, however still be able to pursue their interest and take part in this policy area. The central authority and SIU will also benefit, we believe, from a lighter steering structure, in line with other European countries as revealed in our comparative analysis, serving as a better precondition for implementing a targeted strategic approach to achieve a comprehensive perspective on internationalisation. One LLP committee instead of four will contribute to better use of resources as well as to a more comprehensive approach to internationalisation. In line with this recommendation the criteria of representation in the programme committees should also be addressed. Although many of the social organisations undoubtedly contribute constructively to the internationalisation of education and training in Norway, for SIUs board the work of these committees may also benefit from the inclusion of members who contribute field competence in a personal capacity.

2.3 SIU and the Ministry

The formal administrative dialogue between the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU takes place in the form of annual departmental administrative meetings and an annual contact meeting. At the departmental administrative meetings, the Ministry of Education and Research gives SIU feedback relating to the objectives and steering indicators to which SIU has to adhere.

Since SIU's transformation to a civil service organ answerable to the Ministry of Education and Research, formal relations between the two appear to be in a setting-up and test phase, during which certain measures have been taken to optimise contacts. Firstly, it was decided that SIU should have a contact person with responsibility for coordinating SIU's activities with regard to the Ministry of Education and Research. SIU already had channels of contact to all departments in the Ministry of Education and Research, but these needed to be streamlined. Secondly, a template was devised for the Ministry of Education and Research's issuing of assignments to SIU. SIU receives a fair number of assignments from the Ministry of Education and Research each year; matters about which the Ministry of Education and Research wishes to be informed, the collecting of factual information in connection with visits by cabinet ministers and the like, and assignments of larger scope, in which the centre is asked to contribute to policy development. As part of the work of producing good foundations for the national authorities to base decisions on, SIU has, at the behest of the Ministry of Education and Research, made various contributions and statements to hearings.

According to information gained in the interviews there is considerable agreement that communications between the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU have since improved. In all essentials, the Ministry of Education and Research is highly satisfied with the way SIU handles and responds to its assignments. But SIU finds it problematic that the

Ministry of Education and Research's expectations are not always clearly expressed in the assignments, especially in those of broader scope. In combination with short deadlines, this can make it difficult to respond well to such assignments. This makes it reasonable to recommend that, in its future interactions with SIU, the Ministry of Education and Research should pay greater attention to precision in its assignments and should be somewhat more generous in setting deadlines. It is important to remember that SIU still has to deal with its routine administrative tasks and is therefore, in contrast to the Ministry of Education and Research staff, sometimes unprepared with regard to central political needs. At the same time there is an obvious need to develop informal relations between the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU. As mentioned, the Ministry of Education and Research has high ambitions for SIU, hoping to put it to greater and more effective use in the task of internationalising education – also in order to increase its own capacity in this area. For this reason the Ministry of Education and Research feels it necessary to strengthen informal contacts, both by making it easier to talk on the phone and by making it possible to meet more frequently. In the Ministry of Education and Research's experience, contacts with SIU are somewhat "cramped", informal, and asymmetrical (which may be due in part to the fact that the two institutions sit on either side of Norway's mountains, the one in Bergen, the other in Oslo). According to interviews the Ministry of Education and Research feels it would be beneficial to meet more SIU staff members, preferably informally, to discuss relevant issues. With this in mind, we recommend that, when planning its work schedule, SIU should, in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Research, make provision for a greater number of informal meetings (e.g. an annual meeting at a location somewhere between Bergen and Oslo) to be attended by more SIU representatives than have attended past meetings with the Ministry of Education and Research. We also recommend more frequent use of video conferences. In the everyday relationship with the ministry there is a need to supplement the interaction between agency and ministry that takes place in the formal governance. Several agencies report that they need a site where ministry and agency officials can interact as expert (Difi 2008: page 23). The formal governance meetings have become so formalised and concerned primarily with the details of budget and plans that they fail as venues of professional interaction between parent ministry and agency.

SIU's overall mandate and operational routines are laid out in the regulatory framework. Still, SIU's room for manoeuvre in relation to the ministry and other relevant organisations could be clearer and better defined. SIU has a double relationship to the Ministry of Education and Research on the one hand and other clients on the other. One aspect has to do with organising a clear and efficient communication between the ministry and SIU. Two diametrically opposed points may illustrate the problem. At one end of a possible spectrum, individual officials at the ministry call up individual programme officers at SIU and get information and advice from them, over the phone or as soon as they can provide it. The communication is mostly informal. At the other end is a highly formalised way of communicating, where the ministry officials always must go through a 'SIU officer' at the

ministry who forward questions to a contact point at SIU, who in turn distribute the question to the right person at SIU – and back again.

If previously communication was mostly informal, it is now more on the formal side. Both ways seem to be inefficient and lead to dissatisfaction.

How the ministry should request information and policy advice from SIU must be an issue for further discussions. Perhaps a handful of contact points at SIU can be appointed, for different geographical sets of programmes, for schools, for research collaboration, for aid-oriented programmes, and so on. They can receive requests from the ministry and can engage the colleagues who are most qualified for the respective question.

There are agencies or offices of a similar kind in many other countries, which could serve as suitable comparisons and as sources of inspiration. SIU has not had any foreign organisation as role model when developing its activities. There have in fact only been limited contacts with similar organisations in other countries. Some contacts have occurred with NUFFIC in the Netherlands and with offices in the Nordic countries, in a few cases with DAAD in Germany as well. Visits have occasionally been made. SIU is a member of Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), the umbrella organisation for these types of agencies. Many of the staff have never had any contacts with any similar organisation abroad. The director however, has at least annual contacts with the abovementioned organisations, to share information and experience. SIU has recently taken the initiative to cooperate with similar agencies in Europe on “Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation (IMPI).

SIU could benefit from having more contacts with other similar organisations. Challenges, critical tasks or issues, and ideas and experiences of ways of organising programmes may be shared between SIU and others. Given what SIU is working towards as such – intensified internationalisation for increased quality – having international contacts may also be a matter of legitimacy for SIU itself. Such connections could very well be further developed.

2.4 SIU’s internal organisation

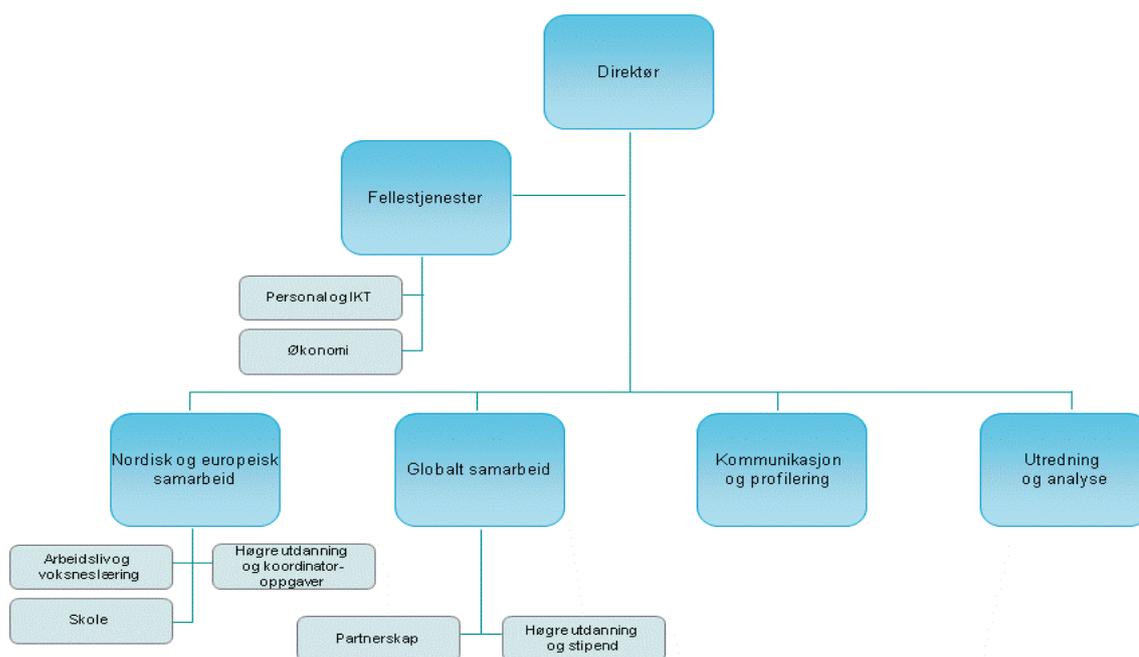
SIU has grown significantly during recent years. The number of staff has approximately doubled in the last 3-5 years with around 65 people working at SIU today. The reason for the growth is SIU’s responsibility for the management of an increasing number of internationalisation programmes. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Research has stated that SIU also should develop its analytical capacity and serve the ministry with policy advice and analyses of the higher education sector, with respect to internationalisation and mobility.

Our overall impression is that the past years' growth has been stimulating although in part demanding for the staff. Old work structures and routines at SIU have become insufficient as the organisation has doubled in size. As a consequence, this period of organisational growth has been supported by new administrative routines and the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms. The new director as well as the chair of the board has clearly stated that "it is now time for consolidation". The members of staff we have spoken to agree, almost without exception. Essentially all interviewees have expressed enthusiasm with the past years' growth; indeed, many of them have been employed as a result of the growth. They generally elaborate on the growth in terms of a positive upward spiral, quite naturally a state in which it is positive to work. Although stimulating, growth has also been a challenge for staff and many have told us about long working hours related to the implementation of change. Still, some further growth is foreseen: as mentioned in the self evaluation, the ICT-function needs to develop as well as the section for analysis.

One particular area of criticism has been the quality of the submitted accounts. The annual meetings between the Ministry and SIU (which have been an important forum for dialogue and feedback) highlighted this as a recurrent issue. Although initially progress in improving the quality of accounts (letter 2007) was remarked upon, subsequent filing (2008) was criticised for its lateness in delivery and also the failure to submit them to the board of SIU. Another critical comment was that SIU had not taken full account of the advice given to correct the underlying problems with presentation and that the accounts had not been sufficiently "fine tuned" to ensure clarity on income and expenditure.

A reorganisation was undertaken in 2009. In the new organisation, an additional management level has been introduced with a narrower span of control. The first line manager (enhetsleder; department head) is responsible for fewer than 10 people. There are generally two to three departments under each section, although not all sections are divided in departments. There is also a management group consisting of all section heads and the director. As the day-to-day management is undertaken by department heads, strategic issues are within the purview of the management group.

Figure 2.3 SIU's organisation



The changes seem to have been implemented well. Adopting new procedures and a new organisation have been demanding for the SIU staff, but overall, very few critical remarks have been noticed during the interviews; on the contrary, many are positive and understand that the changes were necessary. For some of the members of staff, new career opportunities emerged as the organisation grew. The new layer of line managers was mainly recruited internally.

In the longer term, the growth has obviously been important for the character of SIU. Many interviewees have mentioned that organisational growth has been accompanied by professionalisation and more strict financial reporting procedures. The quality assurance system KVASS, introduced some time ago, appears to a varying degree, to be useful for different categories of staff. There has been a considerable investment in the development of the system (working hours). Our impression is that this time might be a good investment for the future. The ICT department has been further strengthened, e.g. with the recruitment of a new head of department in 2010.

Investment and organisation of IT in SIU has been a focus of debate within its recent period of growth. The challenges remain those highlighted by the organisation in 2007³. There is recognition of the need for SIU to create a separate unit for IT, a new strategy, and through this clearer roles and responsibilities for those involved in IT. This includes a system of nominated “super-users” embedded across the organisation's departments/sections. This requires, we argue, capable people with a certain degree of training, both administrative and IT experience to ensure that IT is effectively implemented across the whole of SIU.

³ Oppdatering av rapporten “Gjennomgang av IT i SIU”, Statskonsult 2007, Oslo: CIBER 2010.

As we will return to, in the recent year there have been problems of cooperation in the management group of SIU. Regarding the staff and their overall situation however, SIU's staff surveys and our interviews show that with some exceptions, SIU is an attractive workplace, that has the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Most interviewees have stressed the high competence among colleagues and a professional yet friendly working environment. Strikingly, the building in which SIU is situated, with many floors physically separating staff from each other, was the issue most frequently mentioned as far as working conditions were concerned. Nevertheless, in common with the public sector in general SIU has faced certain difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff as regards ICT and finance.

Another feature of the organisational growth however has been an increasing hierarchy at SIU. This introduction of a new management level is positive in the sense of creating roles and responsibility for certain fields. But, as we will turn to below, certain efforts need to be made in order to improve collaboration across sections and levels. There have been more junior staff employed recently who could assist advisors and senior advisors. This might change the roles of some of the most qualified and experienced senior advisors, who could take on more advanced and more demanding duties and leave some of the less challenging work to junior colleagues.

SIU is not the only agency in its field which has in recent years reorganised itself. NUFFIC underwent the most significant change in 2006 when it moved all of its scholarships and capacity building, no matter what the study destination, into one department which separates out the function of the administration of large numbers of applications from its other activities. One of the main reasons for this was that it would be more efficient to put together all the capacity building and scholarship work. The staff were then more professionally organised and it also worked to remove the more "missionary" feeling of the organisation. NUFFIC, in spite of its size in comparison to other agencies has a very streamlined structure and four directorates. This raises some interesting questions about how best to organise an agency to allow for both streamlining of processes and at the same time respecting the link that individuals have to their job and professional expertise. How do you reconcile job satisfaction and task organisation? Does this also remove the link to customers that programme organised agencies tend to have?

2.4.1 The role of the director and the agency leadership

SIU's organisational history to date appears to have followed a trajectory that is common among new organisations. It began with an expansionist, entrepreneurial phase, which culminated in SIU out-growing its simple managerial structures and having difficulties in stretching its accounting, reporting and IT resources to fit a set of tasks that were growing in number and complexity. In appointing the current director, SIU's board intended to choose someone with a strong administrative background, with the intention that he should strengthen the administrative processes and structures needed by a growing organisation.

As a result, SIU management's earlier outward-facing style has to an extent been replaced by an inward-facing posture.

Most organisations going into this second stage find that some members of staff hanker for the old entrepreneurial style while others strongly appreciate the increased order that the consolidation process brings. Interviews with staff show that this is also the case at SIU. A cost of the organisational focus however, appears to have been some loss of strategic momentum. With the consolidation phase now well under way, it is appropriate for SIU to readdress its strategy: undertaking a strategic review, to establish its new path; and empowering the line managers and other staff to act in an entrepreneurial way further to develop the content of what SIU does.

The role of the agency leadership we can assume is important in the interaction between agency and ministry. The role of the agency leadership is a key condition for how the advisory role of the agency and the ministry can be fulfilled and at the same time cater for the independent voice of the agency. A basis for giving professional advice of an independent nature requires an agency leadership that is professionally competent. However, the evidence is inconclusive as to whether the advisory role of the ministry becomes easier to fulfill if agency leadership has a background from the ministry or it makes it more difficult to keep a clear, independent voice in its advice.

During the last year there have been problems of cooperation within the management group of SIU. In the late phase of this evaluation the new director (app. Autumn 2009) as well as three section heads resigned. An acting director has taken over the directors role. We recommend that the board hires a new director with solid field competence as well as strategic and administrative capacity. This is necessary for SIU in order to gain legitimacy and become more visible in the sectors they are serving.

The problems that have been raised may naturally resolve themselves over time but highlight the need for further development of the strategic capacity of the organisation. The organisation currently needs strong administrative leadership as it is going through (and has not finished) a period of growth and reorganisation. If there are longer term concerns about sector knowledge and vision as the organisational development phase moves from one of transition management to future direction, this need to be planned for in the strategy. There is already capacity in the sectoral knowledge of the second tier of management in SIU to address any concerns in balancing the needs of vision and expertise with administrative excellence. In line also with the ambitions of the organisational reform undertaken in 2009, it could be considered as the organisation matures further, the managers at section level should be assigned a stronger strategic role and their "deputies" take a clearer administrative responsibility. These roles can then extend from the internal environment to the external environment with a more devolved approach to contacts with the Ministry, stakeholders and other agents.

Such an approach could lead to a clearer differentiation of roles, better use of knowledge and expertise within the organisation and a more supportive environment for administrative and strategic decision making.

Supporting this argument are the results from the autumn 2009 SIU evaluation of the organisational changes. It concluded that the role of section heads remains unclear. A classic dilemma seems to emerge in terms of the organisation of strategic management: in general section managers at SIU are under great strain, with heavy workloads and problems balancing their distribution of work evenly between administration, human resource management and subject matters. The evaluation concluded that SIU needs to create an arena for the development of better strategies.⁴

It is important that the current period of consolidation is managed effectively and undertaken in as short a time as possible, not least to maintain enthusiasm and drive for the future. This is not at least important in order to keep highly competent staff.

The management of SIU should consider this and launch a long term strategic plan signaling when the consolidation phase might develop into yet another phase, in order to avoid it to become a long-lasting state, sliding over to stagnation.

Consolidation is not yet over, there are still parts of SIU's activities which need to develop. SIU's chair described this well in the interview:

Consolidation means that we should continue to develop the systems we have and keep the enthusiasm, and be active within the frames that we have, but we shall not add on new tasks. Internal cooperation, quality assurance. It must not mean that we become passive. (Author's translation)

Right now, catching breath, getting functional routines in place and stabilising as a professional organisation is of course a reasonable position to take after a long period of change, but this must be managed accordingly.

2.5 SIU's portfolio

The members of the national assembly's Committee for education and research, expressed concerns related to the expansion of SIU. SIU employs approximately 70 people and seems set to continue to expand, prompting concerns that the new role of SIU could lead to too much centralisation and bureaucratisation. As already pointed out in this evaluation report these concerns are shared, to a certain extent, by stakeholders and SIU employees who in the interviews claim that reporting and financial routines are much too demanding.

⁴ Senter for internasjonisering av høgre utdanning. Evaluering. Organisasjonsgjennomgang høsten 2009. Bergen/SIU Egil Eide 2010.

In responding to these concerns, it is important to bear in mind that adequate administrative routines for handling applications, handing out grants to beneficiaries, ordering reports from beneficiaries and communicating results to commissioners are, and should be, a very important aspect of the administration's role. While these routines might seem meaningless or excessive to some users, and while some claim that resources used for administration are too high compared with the size of the grants administered it is important to consider that these types of international programme activities can be vulnerable to corruption and such administrative processes are needed to see that resources are spent in accordance with the organisation's overall mission.

Furthermore, SIU should not be blamed for cumbersome administrative procedures imposed on them by various principals, such as the European Commission. The management at SIU constantly seek simplifications of routines where possible, for instance website tools for easier navigation of application processes, which are also thought to have improved the quality of applications, such efforts at improvement should be taken into account. According to most international programme officers we interviewed SIU should take more responsibility for solving problems related to programme administration that take too much attention at the institutional level. In the Quota Scheme for example there is thought to be a serious need to provide participating students with a contract stating their rights; for example what rights they have if they become ill or pregnant and why it might take a long time to provide personal ID number for this group of students.

The portfolio of SIU has become quite large and complex not only as a result of its responsibility for administrating national initiatives but also due to SIU having many masters such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD, The Nordic Council of Ministers, the European Commission, Higher Education Commission in Pakistan, and the Norwegian Embassy in Dar Es Salaam. Some research and analysis processes have also become part of SIU's portfolio including, amongst others, NUFFIC and Academic Cooperation Association (ACA). In 2010 SIU shall, according to its self evaluation, conduct a study contracted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). According to SIU's former director, Gunn Mangerud, SIU should not minimise further developments of such types of activities, both on request as well as in bids on tenders, a point she argued in a letter to the Ministry that suggested this could help to strengthen the SIU as a competence centre, an outcome both central authorities and the sector as a whole would benefit from (letter from SIU 26.06.2008). The argument of the former director is illustrative for the room for manoeuvre in terms of the professional independence needed for SIU in order to develop as a competence centre.

Overall responsibility for the project for support of the University in Dar es Salaam was transferred to SIU by the embassy in Dar es Salaam because the embassy lacked the necessary resources and found this kind of arrangement appropriate. Several other embassies have signalled their interest in a similar transfer, which would amount to a new role for SIU. This development has prompted a number of critical remarks, not least

because SIU may well turn out to be an expensive intermediary. The PhD programme in Pakistan was described as a risky project, and as with the one in Tanzania, questions have been raised about whether SIU has shown a little too much independent initiative in this case. In the annual steering meeting in 2009 it was remarked that SIU must consult the Ministry when taking on contracts on behalf of other national authorities, as was the case with the agreement made between SIU and the Pakistani Higher Education Council.

According to NORAD, questions have also been raised about SIU's competence in relation to one project in southern Sudan. Some representatives from NORAD are of the opinion that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should have been more supportive in this case, in following up SIU as well as to have carried through a risk analysis of the project.

Another question regarding SIU's portfolio regards the division of labor between SIU and the Research Council of Norway. Today, SIU administers programmes (especially NUFU, perhaps also NOMA) that could in principle be run by the Research Council of Norway, where there are clear points of contact with programmes that come under the Research Council of Norway's development-oriented research. It has been suggested that responsibility for NUFU and similar programmes should be transferred to the Research Council of Norway. Although we make no clear recommendations on this matter, we wish to point out a few relevant considerations.

In order to run programmes such as NUFU, SIU must apply working methods that satisfy standards of scientific rigor in order to ensure quality and legitimacy. Within the framework of the programme, common procedures for research programmes are followed with respect to announcing programmes, academic assessment and selection of applications, and project follow-up. This is managed by means of independent boards with representatives of the research institutions that contribute to a collegiate administrative form, and by means of peer review. It may be asked whether a work structure of this kind is as self-explanatory, given SIU's current foundations, as it was when SIU was affiliated to UHR.

The evaluation of NUFU and NOMA present an overwhelmingly positive impression of these programmes and their significance for developed-developing country cooperation and as contributions to development in developing countries. By and large, SIU also appears to administer its programmes in a satisfactory manner. Continuing these programmes more or less unaltered would therefore be of little benefit and would risk losses through the transfer of responsibility to the Research Council of Norway. SIU has amassed considerable experience and has demonstrated strengths in terms of detailed knowledge, firstly, of the cooperation partners in developing countries in general, and secondly, of the actual projects in particular. Knowledge of this kind cannot simply be transferred to other players.

If, on the other hand, there is a need for more fundamental change in the programmes compared to the role they currently play, then it may be appropriate to discuss a redistribution of responsibilities, although one should bear in mind that the NUFU programme is not comparable to “mainstream” research programmes. One important factor in this regard is the possibility of change on the political level as a consequence of new strategies for internationalisation and development help, e.g. in response to Report to the Storting no. 14 (2008–2009), ”Om internasjonisering av utdanning” (On the Internationalisation of Education), and Report to the Storting no. 13 (2008–2009), ”Klima, konflikt og kapital” (Climate, Conflict and Capital). In the interviews with officers at the international offices at universities as well as in the evaluation of NUFU and NOMA, it was also pointed out that the Quality Reform and the new system of financing for universities and university colleges may make it less attractive for institutions to take part in cooperative endeavours of the NUFU type between developed and developing countries. The financial incentives for Norwegian institutions to take part is assessed as relatively weak, and this is particularly so for NOMA.

Another reason to take a fresh look at organisation may be provided by adjacent programmes run by the Research Council of Norway. Transfer of responsibility from SIU to the Research Council of Norway is not necessarily the most obvious solution.

The field of internationalisation of research and education can be perceived as rather chaotic in the sense that there is a constant stream of new initiatives, involving many other actors than the Ministry of Education and Research. As already elaborated in the report, SIU has many masters.

New contracts and programmes mean taking on new layers of administrative routines and standards, creating more workload for both SIU and for the participating institutions. This point was also emphasised by our informants at the international offices at universities.

In retrospect, it is not obvious either for many of our informants or for the evaluation panel whether all the contracts SIU has taken on during the last years are reasonable prioritisations.

SIU may lack competence (as is said to be the case as regards south Sudan)

Some are too risky, as has turned out to be the case in SIU’s cooperation with the Pakistan Higher Education Council

One could also question whether SIU should be taking the initiative to cooperate with countries which have no strategic importance for Norway as regard the overall goals in the government’s policy for internationalisation in research and education.

But SIU and the boards nevertheless need to be more aware of deliberate prioritisation as to whether and how new programmes will benefit the national policy for internationalisation in education, training and research.

Furthermore attempts should be made to organise programmes more efficiently according to as common standard as possible to avoid to duplication of effort in programme administrative work.

Although certain amount of professional independence is needed, the Ministry and relevant stakeholders should always be consulted when SIU considers entering into new agreements, in line with the new regulation of SIU introduced in 2007(15.8.2007).

However, as evidenced in this evaluation, SIU's ability to take on new tasks and contracts demonstrates that the Ministry should have confidence in their ability to develop international cooperation schemes.

2.6 Qualifications

According to our interview with SIU staff the qualification level of the staff at SIU is generally high; most staff have an education level which corresponds to bachelor or master studies, and normally have significant additional valuable experience from previous work . A few have been within the organisation for a long time; due to the steady growth, most have been there only a few years. There are still rather few individuals with a research background but such qualifications have been sought and the number of PhD recruitments has increased.

As typically goes for national agencies in the field of internationalisation, SIU staff continue to have central functions in the expert groups system of the EU, from which the Ministry of Education and Research also benefits. The key for effective participation in these expert groups and committees for agency representatives is the expertise and technical-administrative competencies of the agency representative.

In 2009 an analysis of the existing skills and abilities of SIU staff was carried out, in order to create a better knowledge base for further internal mobility of SIU staff as well as the recruitment of new staff. The analysis concluded that SIU's staff show great ability in terms of written and oral presentations in general, and communication in English in particular. Furthermore SIU staff are particularly good at applying relevant information in their work. More challenging areas were found in the need for more competence in political knowledge, such as relevant international trends, knowledge of key features of target groups related to countries, sub-groups and culture. The need for better competence in management approaches was also noted, for example methods for problem solving and how to motivate staff to work towards SIU's goals. There is also thought to be a need for better qualifications in drawing up formal agreements with external contractors the formal

making and agreements with external contractors, as these competences were found to be lacking.⁵

Working at SIU requires several competences. First, one needs to be an efficient programme officer and an accurate civil servant. Handling the programmes and keeping good track of heads and figures, and reporting in time etc. is what most staff at SIU do. This type of work is the core of the organisation. But in addition to this, most of the staff members also need field competence, or sector competence, whatever label suits best. One need to know quite a bit about internationalisation of higher education, and of the geographical region with which one is concerned. Sometimes deeper knowledge is required, like insight in the higher education system in a set of countries, and how policy develops there. A third kind of competence is increasingly required: analytical skills. While most staff at SIU comprehend the first two sets of skills, the third one is more difficult. The creation of the analysis section is the solution to this, but it also creates new challenges. One of them is internal collaboration. The staff at the analysis section must reach the programme officers and gain insight in their work, in order not to isolate themselves from the core work. Providing sustainable policy advice is dependent on close follow-up of the management of the programmes. This bridging may be a challenge for the near future. In the interviews, some interesting collaborations were mentioned in which programme officers also had the opportunity to engage in analytical work and policy advice. This illustrates also that in an organisation like SIU competence needs are not always necessarily solved by the recruitment of new people – however also poses a question about the management being conscious about the best use of their in-house competence. In the self-assessment it was mentioned that internal cooperation and synergy between staff at various sections were sought improved by introducing a project based form of organisation, a so called matrix structure.

For a single individual, his/her qualifications may only be used in part by the organisation. As described above, the work tasks for the majority of the staff are quite clearly divided into one part where the high qualifications are needed and one part where they may not be used as such. The actual work of filing applications, ordering documents and establishing formal contracts may not require higher education at masters level nor solid experience. When it comes to having professional contacts with applicants and scientific and administrative representatives in Norway or other countries however, a good insight into the higher education system as well as knowledge about the geographical area one is concerned with is, if not necessary, indeed a great advantage. Language skills may be valuable as well. Hence, for many of the programme officers, unskilled work with documents can suddenly be interrupted by a phone call which requires a broad set of advanced knowledge skills and social competence too. Herein lies the root to be regarded as a professional service organisation by the “customers”, the universities and colleges, as

⁵ Kompetansekartlegging 2009 Bergen: SIU/Hartmark AS August 2009.

well as the contracting authorities. The staff need to accept that their qualifications will only be used in part, but are still necessary.

SIU's competence is also a question of appropriate involvement of others. SIU engages external competence when it comes to evaluations of applications. There is in practice a pool of evaluators within the academic community which SIU repeatedly turns to. The individuals in this pool are replaced after a three year period. All in all it is about 20 people.

For the various programmes, there is typically a programme board, which consists of a majority of external experts. The programme board decides on the funding of projects. In some cases, for instance the programme for Russia and the West Balkans, the board is shared with the Norwegian Research Council, a construction which is new and yet has to find its ways of working. Here, SIU takes the role of a secretariat. The mandate of the board is visionary as well as operative.

In the interviews, voices have been raised that, in reality, external resources are not that often used and could probably be used to a larger extent when the need arises.

In all of the agencies there are different approaches taken to mixing up the procedural work, the information and communication function and the policy supporting knowledge. It is more carefully separated in NUFFIC, perhaps because it is the largest agency. In a larger organisation, knowledge sharing becomes more complex and in the case of NUFFIC, there are greater efforts to implement internal mechanisms of communication, such as an active intranet.

An internationalisation officer at a middle sized Norwegian university had lots of praise for SIU; when she made contact she got the best of advice, the SIU staff were professional and friendly and helpful. Another person with similar responsibility said much the same: "not bureaucratic, I get quick response".

As expressed also by other international coordinators:

SIU's staff are highly competent and service-oriented. We have received excellent help from SIU when we have contacted them with various questions and problems.

SIU's employees have a broad knowledge of what is happening internationally and run funding schemes via their programme from which our institution benefits.

SIU's annual information briefings about Erasmus have been especially useful over the years, in terms of both the information SIU provides and the answers to questions from participants; these are also an excellent place for international coordinators to meet. SIU plays a central role in working with art and cultural training programmes in developing countries, making it a crucial partner for our

institution. We find SIU's staff to be positive, helpful, knowledgeable, and experienced. We are also pleased that SIU produces general brochure material for other countries on the subject of studying in Norway and at Norwegian higher education institutions.

After 15 years in the field of internationalisation, I still find SIU and its staff a fantastic resource. They are knowledgeable, answer enquiries promptly and directly, and, not least, are always friendly to those who consult them no matter how trivial the problem. I consider SIU a highly professional organisation with competent and motivated employees.

SIU's areas of special expertise may appear to have been weakened. This is due in part to the new organisational forms, in part to the fact that key staff members have moved on to other jobs. In relation to the developed-developing countries dimension, there are indications that expertise about the countries that cooperate with Norway is weaker than it was. In addition, knowledge of the higher education system and its peculiarities has been reduced as a consequence of SIU's new status.

Others have asked whether it is reasonable to make such demands, and whether such forms of competence are essential to the running of the programmes in question. As SIU's growing role as an advisory body for the higher education system in general and for the ministry in particular, obviously requires advanced competence in-house and ways of communicating the message as well.

Although the re-organisation has introduced a new layer of management at group level, our impression is that the competence among the staff is efficiently used. Internal communication runs better and better, although some interviewees claimed that the intranet could be used more frequently. Again, there are occasions when the staff may seem over-qualified for some duties, but those other occasions when their field expertise suddenly is needed occur quickly and unpredictably, why it is difficult to use the competence of the staff in any other way – or employ staff with lesser qualifications. SIU should continue to pay attention to the analytical expertise among the staff at the section of analysis in order to secure and develop the level of competence there. Some more formal research qualification might be needed, candidates with a PhD and/or relevant researcher experience. However analytical competence can also be improved by recruiting staff with experience from working in central political organizations or by the use of secondment, for instance between SIU and the National Directorate for Education and Training.

2.6.1 SIU's attractiveness for higher education institutions

The UHR supports the new formal status of SIU, though the with expansion of its portfolio as an organisation, amongst other things, SIU has become much too complex to be organised by them. The council is generally pleased with SIU's role as program administrator on a national level. Given SIU's new mandate, however, for several reasons they anticipate conflict of interest within SIU as SIU should advise on behalf of the

Ministry on the one hand and the institutions on the other. There exists a challenge to balance the advisory role with the service role. Then there is the question about the division of labor between SIU and the institutions, as universities and colleges have a responsibility for profiling themselves internationally. Should this also be the responsibility of SIU? With what added value? Furthermore, universities and colleges, both public and private, are heterogeneous and have mixed expectations and needs as regards internationalisation issues; for instance small colleges are mostly concerned about developing mobility at bachelor level whilst universities also address masters and PhD level. Does SIU have the proper “knowledge and competence” in place to profile Norwegian research abroad as well as to connect institutions for the purpose of collaboration also within research? All in all the mandate of SIU has become quite comprehensive and demanding- leading to a potential mission overload. For SIU to achieve a position representing expertise on research is challenging, as the institutions, so far, appear not to find it of relevance or importance.

Many informants have stressed the need for developing a national platform for dialogue and collaboration between SIU and the higher education sector, an issue which has been the subject of discussion between UHR, SIU and the Ministry. Members of the board suggested that in addition a joint annual conference on internationalisation should be organized which highlights the work of SIU and the institutions, provides an opportunity for dialogue and debate and attracts the key decision makers/institutional leaders.

According to The Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions (NPH) private institutions have benefited from SIU since they were given access to services. It was argued that small university colleges in general and private ones in particular are in need of central drivers, and it is up to the institutions themselves to what extent they will benefit from what SIU can offer. But as it was argued by one of the international coordinators from a smaller university colleges we interviewed; *“I should be happy to benefit more from SIUs capacity if I had the time and resources to do so. As the only international coordinator at the institution, my capacity is limited to the actual administration of the programmes we take part in, from LLP to NOMA, as well as to take care of all the international students; 175 at the moment, a situation which is typical for many of the small university colleges in Norway.”* Generally however the results of the institutions in respect of activities within formalised agreements and programmes on international cooperation appear to be highly dependent upon the strategic and administrative priorities of the institutions; for SIU’s future success in fulfilling its role as a competence centre as regards higher education is also dependent upon the capacity and priorities of the institutions. SIU may fulfill a role as a “listening ear” and communicator as regards global trends and issues of relevance for boosting the international capacity of the institutions. For instance: how could SIU contribute to the improvement of the international ranking of institutions?

The international offices at Norway's main universities occupy a special position insofar as they require both specialised knowledge of internationalisation internally and close links to the country's most important academic environments. The major universities also need and depend on SIU, due to its national responsibility for coordinating central programmes. This is also illustrated by the results from a survey sent out to the international LLP coordinators where 90 percent of respondents to the question "How attractive is SIU as a cooperation partner for your institution?" replied 'to a considerable or to a great extent'.

Figure 2.4 How attractive is SIU as a cooperation partner for your institution? (N=51)

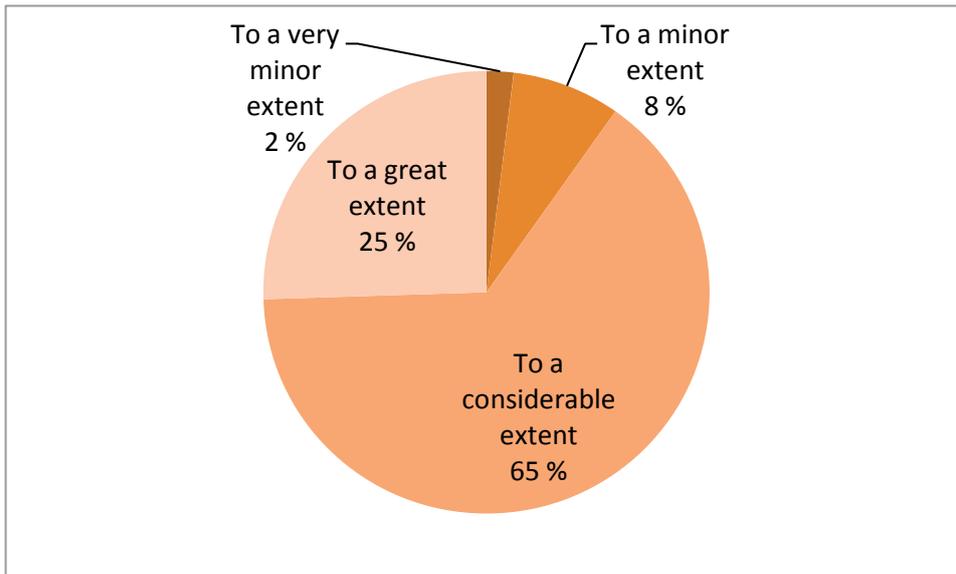
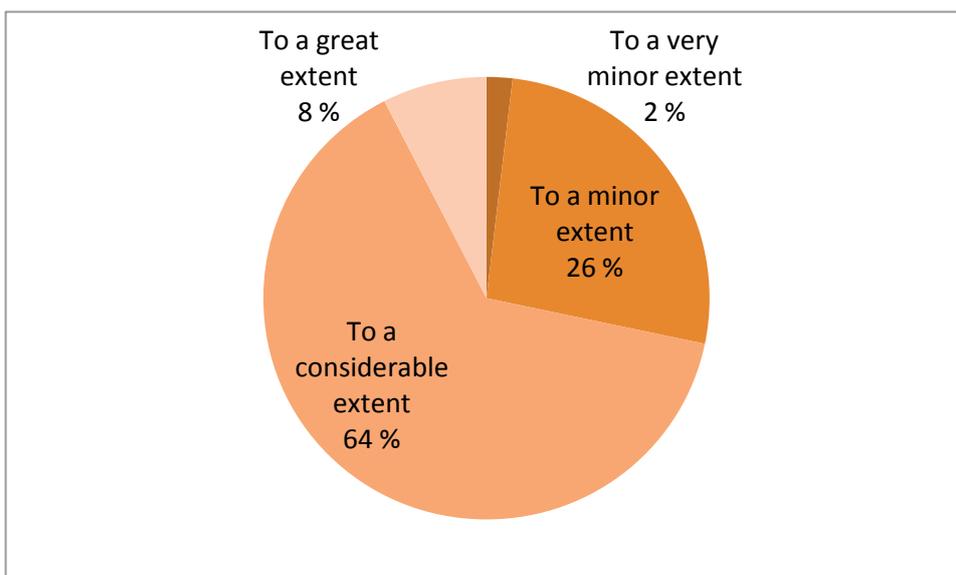


Figure 2.5 Furthermore 72 percent replied to a considerable or to a great extent to the question: To what extent do you seek the assistance of SIU in your internationalisation work? (N=52)



Some informants also gave their own view on how SIU was important to them: The following three statements illustrates the importance of SIU as a national agency for programme administration:

Given that SIU is the central institution that administers programmes like Erasmus, Nordplus, NOMA, the Quota Scheme (together with the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund) ... they are quite simply essential as a cooperation partner. It is usually no problem to get information about particular issues from the respective contact person at SIU either by phone or by email. SIU is also important when it comes to training for work on international programmes thanks to their seminars and information briefings

With regard to Erasmus and other such programmes, SIU is a reliable cooperation partner. We also run our own programmes, so our contact is unlikely to be as intense as it is for the institutions that use SIU more actively.

SIU is a vital cooperation partner, since much of the external funding for internationalisation is channelled through them. They also highly competent in handling HEI programme work, both inside and outside Europe.

In the interviews, it was clear that different institutions have different uses of SIU. The pattern is rather clear: SIU is an attractive collaboration partner for a vast majority of the higher education institutions in Norway – but not all. The ones which are less prone to seek collaboration with SIU are the larger universities.

University colleges and the newer universities seem to collaborate repeatedly with SIU and use its services. The larger universities' reluctance to do this has been explained by the fact that they have their own in-house competence and strategies for internationalisation of their educational activities. Thus, they have less need of SIU, in contrast to smaller institutions. The interviews reveal a rather definite attitude towards the absence of the universities in SIU's activities: *"They have enough competence of their own, they don't need SIU, or at least that is what they think"*. This belief is probably right, but it is only a problem if SIU has the idea that SIU should direct and manage all internationalisation activities in higher education. Instead of regarding the universities as customers who don't want to buy SIU's services, SIU could develop another attitude and take on a role where they ask what SIU can do for the universities? How can SIU be of value to them? Can other forms of internationalisation support of some kind be arranged? Can SIU get a mandate from the ministry to cooperate more freely with the universities? Can SIU learn from other organisations in other countries in this respect?

It is remarked also by the Ministry that SIU should improve their strategy for how to best facilitate the internationalisation strategies of universities and university colleges.

For one thing, criticism is leveled at SIU's underdeveloped routines for analysing and announcing the results of its programme activities, despite the fact that the centres of learning have to devote considerable time to reporting to SIU. It is felt that the uninspiring

form in which the programme results are presented may be due in part to a lack of crucial knowledge. For example, as remarked by a NOMA coordinator, in the programmes concerned with development aid, “gender” covers more than two gender variables in the statistics that are presented.

Despite its considerable expertise in the field of internationalisation in education and research, the larger offices find that they are not consulted about the strategies that SIU lays out.

Neither does SIU function as it should as a provider of advice and sparring partner for the larger offices.

In fact, leaders at the larger offices have begun to cultivate their own informal network, meeting a couple of times a year to discuss relevant matters.

A rather unconstructive competitiveness seems to be developing between SIU and the major offices. While competition is a somewhat troubling term in this context, it would be wrong to ignore the considerable displeasure that was caused when one of the international offices was handed responsibility for the administration of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs programme. In other words, although the Ministry of Education and Research intends SIU to take charge of all programmes on the national level, other contracting bodies, such as other government ministries, can favour other players. As already mentioned, SIU’s roots in the sector, as an organ that answers to the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, were weakened when it was transformed into a civil service department answerable to the Ministry of Education and Research. SIU is no longer the channel by which the universities communicate with the Ministry of Education and Research and has to work with the universities via weakened links. At the same time, SIU has undergone considerable growth in a short time and taken on new responsibilities in areas that have little to do with higher education, such as school education. The larger university offices, however, have enjoyed no significant growth, but have instead watched resources being funneled into SIU even while reporting requirements have increased. SIU has become a “large and cumbersome creature”, according to one of our informants. In its internal evaluation, SIU itself points out that it is a challenge to mesh well with the universities.

In our comparative analysis we find that NUFFIC in the Netherlands is now independent of the universities and works mainly on behalf of the Dutch government departments to promote international mobility and to attract students. This independence weakened the link between the universities and NUFFIC and this is compounded by the universities own internationalisation strategies. As such, one of its major future challenges it to re-establish the links with the universities and NUFFIC have recently put together a memorandum to involve higher education institutions in the policy making of NUFFIC. The new strategy sets out a number of different ways that NUFFIC can work with the research universities and the universities of applied sciences.

According to ACA, the European umbrella organisation for SIU, it is typical in all countries for tensions to exist between the national and international offices at larger universities concerning who should manage resources and carry responsibility for internationalisation work. Such tensions are bound to be present in the current Norwegian model, but it is vital that it should in future be balanced and handled better than is currently the case, not least in light of the fact that SIU's mandate has been extended to include school education, which might conceivably weaken the institution's legitimacy still further in the eyes of the universities.

2.7 Performance

The European Commission and the Ministry of Education and Research expect effective management and good results from SIU, as the national office for the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). As a national office, it should administer the programme correctly and transparently, applying high standards of documentation and the use of checklists, together with financial administration and reporting. Both the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU are pleased that the number of critical comments has been reduced year by year. The transfer of all financial tasks from the department for programme administration to the financial department has apparently also contributed to a higher quality of management. According to our informants at the Ministry of Education and Research as well as on Nordic and European levels, SIU is of above average quality compared with other European national offices as based on the number of critical comments.

SIU is the main administrator of Nordplus Horizontal and principal coordinator for the administration of the Nordplus Framework Programme, the flagship project of the Nordic Council of Ministers, by means of which the latter promotes cooperation in the fields of education, culture, and language at all educational levels among the Nordic and Baltic countries. The new generation Nordplus programme that was started in 2008 aims for a more ambitious expansion of the Nordic educational area in order to promote the Nordic countries as a region of knowledge. SIU itself claims that, as principal coordinator, it is best qualified to coordinate administration and procedures. In 2009, the Nordic Council of Ministers resolved to extend the contract by two years, which indicates that SIU is well trusted as programme coordinator also among the Nordic countries.

According to our interviews and investigation of the steering dialogue between SIU and The Ministry of Education and Research, the ministry is generally pleased with the way SIU deals with its programme administrative tasks including information and advisory services offered to the applicants (letter 2008). This goes not only for the administration of the LLP programme. The Ministry is very pleased with SIUs approach to the North America programme that was launched in the beginning of this period as well as their efforts undertaken to increase the activity within the much older programme for French-

Norwegian cooperation in higher education. The fact that SIU has been assigned new tasks from the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as having demonstrated great ability in taking on and follow up new tasks such as becoming the National Agency for Leonardo da Vinci is also put forward as good examples of the good quality of SIUs activities .

SIU also received praise for the management of LLP in the commentary fields of the survey sent to the international coordinators at universities and university colleges, for instance for its promotion work, seminars, information gathering (such as the annual Erasmus seminar) and practical assistance to the coordinators at teaching institutions. However, the reporting routines in Erasmus were highlighted as still being too laborious.

During the last eight years SIU has taken part in administering the programmes within Education and Research in the Western Balkans. The programmes were initiated and funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cooperation in higher education and research has been administered by Research Council of Norway (RCN) and SIU whilst the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) has administered institutional collaboration between academic institutions in Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. An evaluation report from 2009 concluded that the RCN/SIU programme is characterised by high quality standards as regards routines for selection of projects and governance of the programme. The current model is however criticised for operating with an “artificial split between research and education”- which is illustrative of the strong division of labour between SIU and RCN in the administration of this programme. ⁶

Although SIU’s administration of its programmes is generally described in positive terms, a certain amount of criticism has also been noted, not least from Norwegian higher education institutions. In particular this criticism is that there is too much bureaucracy and that routines are too detailed.

The survey results, informants in the Ministry and other clients we have interviewed generally consider SIU to be rather effective in its organisation. Furthermore it is seen as obliging and committed. But some find it problematic that the NUFU programme in particular is run in the manner of a research council with regard to announcing, evaluating, and ranking projects. SIU is not an academic organisation and it could be asked whether it might not be appropriate to work with the Research Council of Norway, which could take over responsibility for quality control in the handling of applications. At present, cooperation between SIU and the Research Council of Norway is poorly developed.

We have received evidence of tasks assigned to SIU, relating to profiling and the marketing of programmes, being carried out too defensively. This was due in part to insufficient substantive knowledge among the consultants to whom the tasks were

⁶ Sigvaldsen, E. & Z. Velkovski 2009 *Review of Norwegian Programmes within Education and Research in the Western Balkans*. Oslo: Nordic Consulting Group/Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

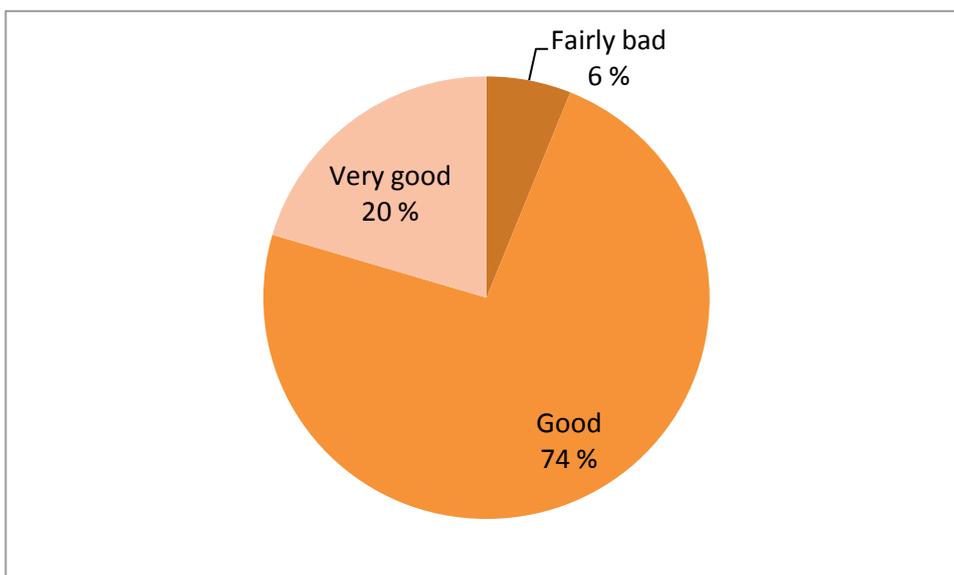
entrusted, in part to their not paying sufficient heed to advice from appointed reference groups, and in part to their insufficient understanding of political priorities. Too little focus on the analysis, profiling, and communication of results of programme activities also constitute an aspect of a weak marketing strategy.

There is always a potential conflict of interests between a contracting body and the contracted institution when it comes to the costs of administrating and running a programme. But SIU is criticised not just for being too expensive, for pricing itself out of the market; it is also criticised for suboptimal use of resources, since it does not manage to use all the funds they are allocated to fulfill their assignments.

Other client organisations besides the Ministry of Education and Research are also dissatisfied with SIU's shortcomings as a strategic advisor. In interviews it was typically argued that SIU exemplifies an executive culture; it is very good at administrating programmes but lacks the political sensitivity needed to advise client organisations effectively on how to reach their political goals, how to organise international cooperation etc. SIU should be more aware of the defocus that may occur in programme administration. Too much attention might be being paid to technicalities at the expense of strategic tasks. Like most national agencies dealing with internationalisation SIU for instance is bound to live up to the ICT optimism of principals like the European Commission, the various ministries, which means that considerable attention and resources has to be devoted to the development of cross-national databases for handling of applications and results. Nevertheless in order to take clients seriously the senior management needs to constantly monitor the ongoing activities and take the steps necessary to avoid defocus in programme management.

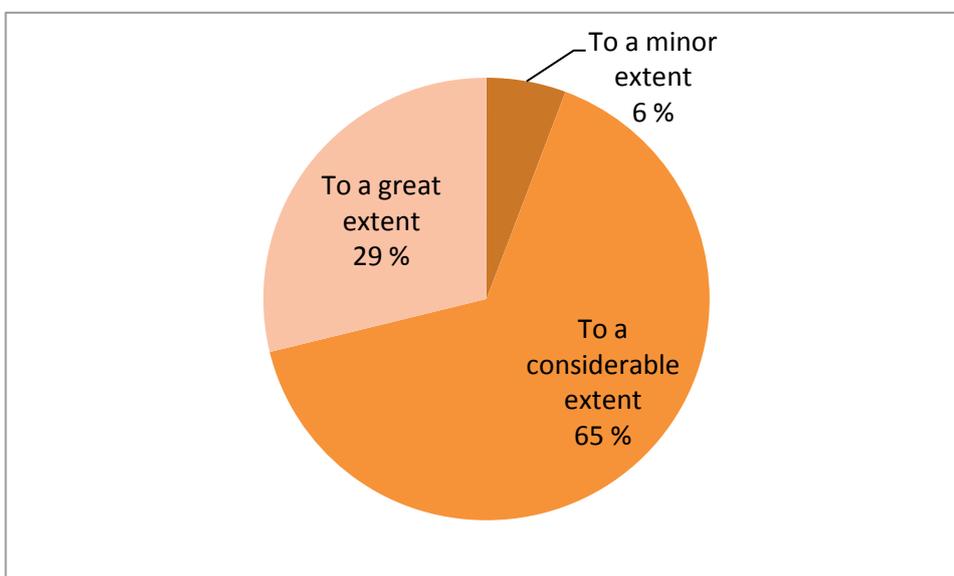
The survey sent to the international LLP coordinators at universities and colleges also stressed the quality of SIU's informational activities.

Figure 2.6 How do you assess the quality of the material produced to inform people about the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (e.g. Europaveien)? (N=49)



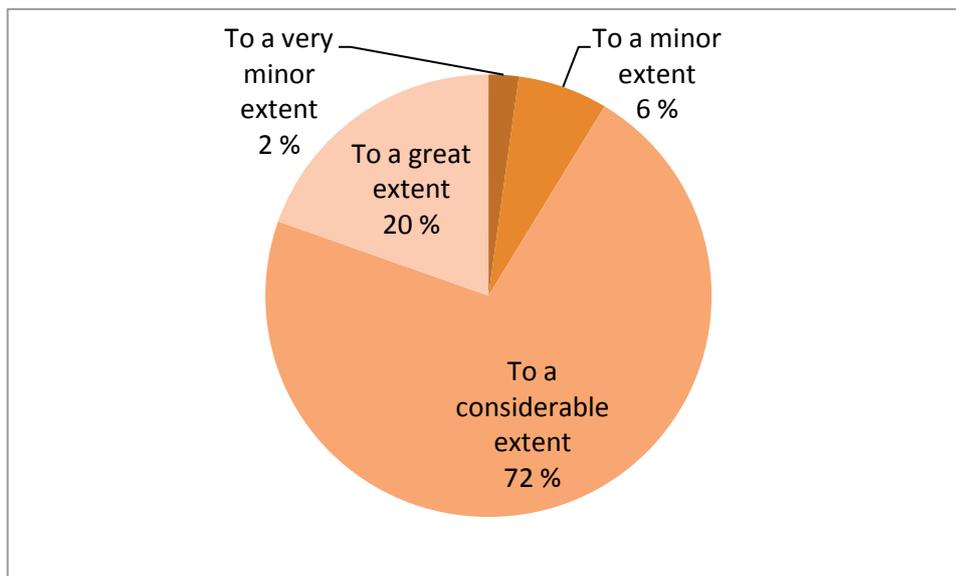
To the question How do you assess the quality of the material produced to inform people about the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme (e.g. Europaveien)? A majority of 94 % replied very good (20%) or good (74%).

Figure 2.7 How relevant and effective is the information that SIU provides the Lifelong Learning Programme? (N=52)



To the question "To what extent does the National Agency inform adequately and effectively about the LLP," a majority of 87% replied "to a considerable extent" or "to a great extent." A majority of 86% stated a positive or very positive opinion of the available information supplied to inform of the EU programme on lifelong learning.

Figure 2.8 How relevant and effective is the information that SIU provides the LLP programme? (N=52)



According to the comments from the survey respondents:

SIU is invaluable for the information on its website, which is always up to date and relevant where it concerns our participation in LLP. SIU is also invaluable as a mediator and network builder among Norwegian institutions regarding contacts between international coordinators/Erasmus coordinators working for institutions that are too small to have an academic staff of their own to manage these affairs.

SIU administers the great majority of programmes for international cooperation and mobility and is therefore crucial. They have considerable power and funds. Good working relations with SIU are therefore necessary and important. Generally this cooperation is enjoyable and positive. They are good at designing user-friendly programmes and forms. They are also good at defining roles in their programmes so as to raise international cooperation to an institutional level.

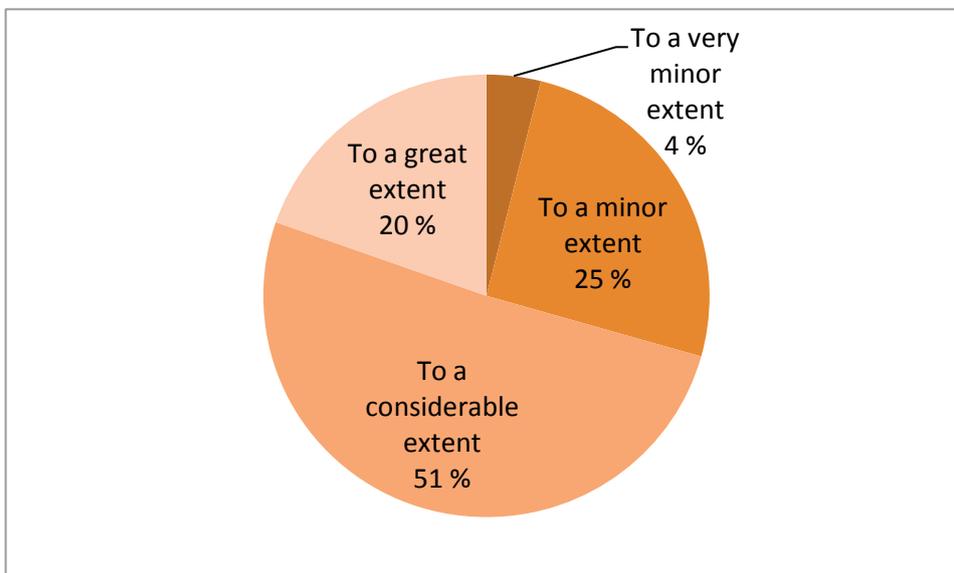
The annual Erasmus seminar is a very useful forum, which we hope SIU will continue to organise. The seminar usually offers a good mix of topical themes, useful information, updates, and specialised discussions. In addition, it is an important meeting place for those who work with internationalisation within the educational institutions as such.

Some survey respondents questioned the relevance of promoting programmes such as the Erasmus programme through general brochures. The students rather want information adapted to them and their fields of study in information that are constantly updated, which would make the information work within institutions easier. The respondents also stated the importance of informing of the programmes in the mass media.

Although one should bear in mind that the opinions of the international programme officers as regards the role of SIU may differ from the opinions of the institutional leadership it is interesting to note that 71 percent replied “to a considerable or to a great

extent” on the question to what extent SIU’s advisory role is in line with the needs of their institutions as regards efforts of internationalisation.

Figure 2.9 To what extent is SIU’s advisory role in line with the needs of your institutions as regards efforts for internationalisation?



SIU supervises institutions in higher education on the international profiling and marketing of study programmes. And SIU staff regularly gives presentations at various conference and seminars as well as participate in international networks and working groups.

When we receive funds from SIU we often ask for clarification about how they are to be used, i.e. what the rules really imply. There is frequent uncertainty on such matters when students and staff members travel on Erasmus grants. SIU always answers promptly and can refer us to the relevant source. They are also highly flexible. SIU is very helpful in providing advice and guidance in connection with applications for project funds.

The survey results as well as the comments are solid empirical indications on SIU ability to disseminate information about programmes to relevant parties through efficient channels.

Although SIU has not followed up the Ministry’s request to develop a horizontal system for administrative programme information, a system containing information about all programmes run by SIU, not only the LLP programme, the Ministry is generally pleased with the work SIU does on information – and in particular the improvement of SIU work on profiling Norway abroad as a research and study destination. The Ministry also expresses great satisfaction with SIU’s position regarding the positive development of SIUs web based services www.siu.nio and www.studyinnorway.no.

In our comparative analysis we found that in IU (Denmark) there is a new unit for IT and communications. Until recently each unit produced its own publications with no single

strategy. This has now been addressed and is tied to the creation of a new online service. There are plans for the online service to be more than just a static web site but have good links to the students through Facebook and also to use viral marketing to attract new students to Denmark. The new approach to communication will bring cost savings with it.

2.7.1 SIU's cooperation with the research agenda

One important question for the evaluation relates to the way that SIU interacts with other national partners, and how it supports its central mandate through these relationships. There are particular tensions which can be highlighted in relation to SIU's role as the agency for internationalisation of higher education and its cooperation with the research agenda.

The Quality Reform covered the need to attract students and researchers. In order to support this role there was an identified need to develop a comprehensive and well coordinated national strategy for profiling Norway as a study and research destination abroad (2002). Certainly this type of profiling work was to some extent undertaken, by SIU, by NAIC (the national agency for accreditation of foreign higher education) some of the institutions in higher education and the Research Council of Norway, but the activities and the responsibility was all in all very fragmented. This in part was due to a lack of clarity on whose responsibility it would be to do the work. As a consequence, a group set up at national level by the Ministry of Education for developing a strategy for internationalisation addressed this issue and suggested that SIU, given its competence and experience in the field, should be assigned this task as part of its mandate. This need for profiling Norway abroad as well as the need to concentrate relevant and formalised activities for internationalisation was, according to the Ministry, a major reason for transforming SIU into a state agency.

SIU's involvement in profiling Norway as a destination for research abroad is based on the idea that the internationalisation of education should be pursued in a way that links up with research and development activities and is based on shared thinking on internationalisation in the areas of education and research in the higher education institutions (White paper No. 14 (2008-2009) "Internationalisation in Education in Norway").

According to the Ministry officials we interviewed, profiling Norway as a destination for research and education is a natural and appropriate task for SIU given the interconnection between research and higher education. Although SIU in many cases has demonstrated its ability to deal with these issues, such as in connection with the Norwegian cooperation with South Africa or Science week in USA, they argue that it is important for SIU they develop a good understanding of Norwegian research in general and to distinguish between the general picture and the political strategic issues, of which the latter is particularly important to SIU as they have a responsibility for implementing certain strategic political initiatives within the field of internationalisation of higher education and research.

The Ministry in this respect also calls for SIU to develop better ongoing dialogue with the Research Council of Norway: to ensure that communication between the two reduces any overlap in action and in addition that there is no duplication of material. Cooperation should be managed, for example, through joint agreements developed around action plans.

Within Norway there has been a growing emphasis on internationalisation policy for research cooperation. The other main actor in this area is the National Research Council which already, to some extent, undertakes other activities in the area of internationalisation.

From the perspective of the Research Council of Norway, there is doubt that SIU has the right competences to fulfill its current obligations in relation to its new role in research: particularly whether it understands enough of the structure and nature of the research system. The system of elite research with which the NRC is concerned, it was argued, has a very different structure and logic from the system of mass higher education. Research does not always include an educational component. The NRC is not concerned with general profiling of Norway as a research destination, but with certain distinct milieux. SIU it was argued are oriented towards individual students.

As a consequence there needs to be better cooperation between the two if the role is to be adequately fulfilled. The Ministry should be aware of the difficulties in developing dynamic collaboration due to the different roles and tasks of SIU and NRC. The reference group established does not seem to function according to its mandate. The Ministry's initiative to convene a meeting this autumn between SIU, NRC and themselves to discuss the interface between education and research seems to be a more sensible approach.

Regarding partners such as the Research Council, Vox, and ANSA, SIU's relations are less well developed. In 2007 the Ministry changed SIU's regulations by adding a sequence on SIU's general responsibility for cooperating with other actors in the field, such as the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (Vox and The National Directorate for Education), in order to contribute to the coordination of activities within the field of internationalisation (Letter from KD 15.8.2007). In 2008 the Ministry and SIU launched the idea of an annual informal dialogue meeting to take place for the discussion of issues in internationalisation as well as to improve coordination and efficiency at the national level (Letter from KD 27.6. 2008, letter from SIU 12.09.2008). This suggestion has not been carried into effect.

The Ministry should however understand that SIU cannot overcome all the barriers identified on its own, and it needs to support SIU by creating informal multilateral arenas for dialogue and cooperation, such as the Ministry's initiative to have a meeting on the interface in education and research which is going to be held autumn 2010.

Profiling Norway as an attractive country for foreign students and researchers is a comprehensive and challenging task. The resources that SIU possesses for this so far seem insufficient given the magnitude of the task. If necessary, SIU should recruit qualified staff and adjust the organisation. A well functioning communication strategy is probably a key issue. Within this relationship, there is also a clear role for the Ministry in making sure that in this case, both sets of stakeholders have the right environment to develop cooperation and joint agreements. The current relationships have blurred boundaries and it would not be possible for all of the tensions to be addressed without the full cooperation and understanding of the policy makers.

In conclusion, SIU, the Norwegian Research Council and the Ministry of Education and Research are all key actors in ensuring successful collaboration on the internationalisation of research. There needs to be continued effort to provide a more transparent environment for agencies and other associated organisations to deliver their mandates in this respect. This means more than annual letters of assignment from the Ministry and involves new overall working conditions and terms of reference for the associated delivery agents.

2.8 The role as competence centre⁷

SIU's development is not only categorised by growth, but also by questions of identity. Basically, this has been described as an evolution from programme management agency to a competence centre focused on internationalisation issues. In our opinion, the role as competence centre is not clear. What does SIU want to be in this respect? What specific function has SIU developed in its organisation that deals with the task of being a competence centre? The answers to these questions are still unclear. There are several possible interpretations of the notion competence centre. One might be the idea of creating a national clearing house, gathering facts and knowledge about internationalisation. Another could be to establish a national meeting point arranging conferences, workshops and other meetings. Yet another one is to produce knowledge by themselves as well as to offer country specific expertise on internationalisation.

The latter proposition, the brokering and facilitating role, could be a way to reach out to all institutions in higher education. The universities, but also some of the university colleges, have themselves in-depth knowledge of how international exchange and internationalisation of education and research can be achieved and managed (the situation may be different regarding schools). The idea that the universities should turn to SIU for advice regarding their internationalisation activities might be reconsidered. The universities are themselves well qualified when it comes to internationalisation in practice. SIU ought to recognise the universities' hesitation to use SIU for internationalisation of higher education, and try hard to find ways to reach out to all HE stakeholders. According

⁷ For a more comprehensive discussion on this issue, see appendix.

to survey respondents, SIU's visits at institutions higher education are highly esteemed and asked for, and this also goes for the website.

2.8.1 Advisory role

During the period of the evaluation SIU has responded to the Ministry's need for advice on request on connection with events such as the Minister's visits abroad to launch closer cooperation in research and education with countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and China. SIU's contribution to the recent White Paper on internationalisation of education in Norway (St.meld. nr. 14 (2008-2009) has so far been the most extensive contribution, where SIU launched the idea that academic quality should be enhanced through international mobility programmes and through the closer interface between education and research.

The Ministry wants SIU to take on a more active advisory role, and SIU is in turn happy to do so and develop in that direction. The establishment of the section for analysis is an undertaking in order to meet this ambition.

According to the opinions expressed in the interviews, SIU tries its best to meet the expectations from the Ministry regarding advisory services. However, members of staff at SIU often have the feeling that the ministry is not clear with what they want SIU to be and to do. As mentioned, they wish that the Ministry gave full support to SIU and established SIU as the national centre for internationalisation of education. They also wish that the requests from the ministry were a bit clearer; it is obviously not always easy to understand what the ministry wants. Currently, they merely feel that the ministry is feeding them with one hand while acting contradictorily to SIU's best interests with the other, or placing unclear demands upon SIU. It is considered problematic to try to be a competitor in a market at the same time as being a governmental agency.

There is a general trend in politics which suggests that political decision and policy proposals need to have professional justification in order to be legitimate. Policy areas are growing more complex and as such, diverse expertise is increasingly called for within the system. This is one of the underlying reasons for the trend towards better evidence-based policy making. As is evident in the organisational history of Norwegian central administration, the question of how to organise expert professional-technical competencies in relation to the political-executive level is a deep-rooted question of political organisation.

A central reason for establishing national agencies outside of the ministry environment is that the type of competencies that are needed for delivery of executive agency functions are long term technical-professional competencies that are indispensable to well-functioning implementation and feedback. Advice to the policy process will operate under better terms in agencies where the often short term exigencies of the political process at and shifting political agendas that are at the core of what a ministry should cater for.

In practice this complete separation of professional-technical, and highly specialised competencies organised within national agencies and the political role in the ministry has not been viable and contains several dilemmas visible in the practical operation of the relationship between ministry and agency. One observation is that it is very hard for an agency to fulfill its professional role, its role as a policy advisor, and as a feeder of information to the parent ministry, if the ministry is devoid of professional competencies itself. There needs to be a counterpart within the ministry that can act as the absorptive capacity of that ministry and be able to competently formulate the questions for which it wants advice and information.

At the same time an agency cannot expect to live in isolation as a technocracy without 'political sensitivity' and cut off from public and political accountability (see DIFI 2008: 5).

All three foreign agencies we reviewed took slightly different approaches to influencing policy making. The most clear is NUFFIC which has a specific department on consultation platforms and knowledge, though it would not class itself as a policy making organisation. It provides market intelligence and views for policy makers. The department serves NUFFIC as well as performing research for the Dutch HE institutions. It directly contributes to strategic policy making within NUFFIC.

The Danish Agency for International Education contributes to policy through its everyday work but does not have a separate remit to help support the Ministry through research and policy formulation. In CIMO there is some power to influence policy and staff are invited to Ministry working groups. This is a growing area of work although remains unofficial.

We believe that the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research needs to increase its political capacity, which will require the support of the agencies. In order to place SIU in the optimal position for analytical monitoring there needs to be a work plan produced which recognises that both the Ministry and the SIU itself have discrete needs for strategic intelligence on behalf of the interests they represent. For SIU, the identification of such needs and the development of future plans should be made in consultation with other stakeholders and customers, including the higher education sector.

A negotiation about the respective needs of the Ministry and the SIU should be arranged as soon as possible, and the development of SIU's work plan for analytical monitoring could be an ideal topic for informal meetings and discussions between the two parties. A pre-requisite to a new work plan should be a clear view of staffing needs, with an agreement by the Ministry to provide the necessary resources. This is not to pre-suppose that there should be any significant expansion of the SIU analysis section: it is important to bear in mind that agencies such as SIU often engage external contractors in addition to in-house analytical capacity.

2.9 Results⁸

The Ministry of Education and Research exercises responsibility over SIU by means of the governing statutes which define the agency's objectives, organisational and administrative structures, its finances, and its broad responsibilities, viz. the administration of programmes, profiling, information and communications, competence building, consultancy, reporting, and service functions (see appendix). In addition, the Ministry of Education and Research budget for SIU, with the priorities and targets contained in the commissioning brief, are all laid out in the government budget. The commissioning brief may also specify new fields of activity. In recent years, SIU has pursued the government's policy goal of increased cooperation with North and Latin America in the field of higher education.

A structure of objectives, together with the relevant steering indicators, provides the underlying framework regulating how SIU plans its activities. One example is that the number of applicants for any particular programme is an important indicator for measuring to what degree SIU has achieved performance targets in that domain. Another goal is "*SIU shall motivate and stimulate the education and research sector to emphasise internationalisation as a means of improving quality in education and research.*". Here the steering indicators are as follows: 1) the number of students at Norwegian higher education institutions who pursue part of their study abroad as a result of institutional cooperation (DBH number), 2) the number of visitors to www.siu.no, 3) the number of seminars and meetings held.

SIU reports its results annually to the Ministry of Education and Research.

With regard to administration of programmes, the management of international programmes accounts for most of SIU's portfolio, of which LLP is the largest component. In the Norwegian context, LLP is an important instrument in pursuing the central policy goals of internationalisation work. Moreover, the activities that LLP covers are representative of the internationalisation efforts in most aspects of the research, education and training sector. The decision to conduct an evaluation of LLP in parallel with the SIU evaluation provides an opportunity to treat the former as an important empirical case study for the latter.

The LLP is an integrated approach allowing greater synergies, flexibility and efficiency of the programmes organised under the former Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates (Vabø 2007). The Lifelong Learning Programme is designed to support the EU education and training policies, and decentralised implementation operates under the sector strands on schools

⁸ Written sources: SIU (2010): Yearly National Agency Report. Period: 1 January 2008 - 31 December 2008. Andersen (2009) Lifelong Learning Programme 2007- 2008 Activity Report. Synopsis. LLP-019-2010-annex1. Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013. Activity Report for 2007 and 2008. LLP-019-2010-annex 2. Lifelong Learning Programme 2007- 2008. LLP-019-2010-annex3.

(Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational education and training (Leonardo) and adult education (Grundtvig), while new cross-cutting transversal strands are centralised by the Commission.

SIU has to deal with the ambitious expectations of the Norwegian education sector for good and broad participation. A major task for SIU is ensuring that information about its programmes reaches relevant user groups. The LLP is aimed at all sections of the education system, from nursery schools to higher education. Moreover, the programme caters for user groups lacking well developed procedures for international cooperation, such as the school sector, occupational courses, and adult education.

Despite all the efforts put into boosting the activities of the LLP⁹, SIU faces many challenges in terms of the sub-programmes. Grundtvig shows a decreasing number of applicants, leading to a high proportion, as many as two-thirds, of applications being accepted. SIU in collaboration with the programme committee has achieved significant results in raising the number of applicants to the Leonardo da Vinci sub programme. As is the case in most participating countries in both Grundtvig and Leonardo there are substantial challenges faced in reaching out to new target groups, in particular those in the private sector. Comenius is successful and increasingly popular. Thus there are challenges in reaching out to the target groups in all parts of the country. Furthermore it seems to be proving difficult to reach pre-school target groups. Then, despite Erasmus being considered the central tool for increased internationalisation in higher education, the number of outgoing Erasmus students has started to decrease over recent years, despite a slight overall increase in 2009 and 2010. The number of incoming students has more than doubled and reports by international coordinators at the institutions show that the targeted efforts of SIU to increase institutions' use of Erasmus have been successful over recent years (2010:20). However as in other participating countries, certain subjects account for a higher volume of Erasmus participants than others, such as business and management studies, social science and medical science. The decreasing popularity, or apparent stagnation in popularity of Erasmus, reflects a wider trend, not simply a Nordic trend: as concluded in an international evaluation of the Erasmus programme, the opportunity for temporary study in another European country is gradually losing its uniqueness. *The time seems to be ripe for another major approach to Erasmus student mobility, where more ambitious curricular aims will be intertwined with financial support for mobile students* (Janson, Schomburg & Teichler 2009:172). In Norway it is also widely believed that the changing patterns of Erasmus mobility are related to the shift in degree structure to bachelor and master study routes. The new degree structures introduced undergraduate studies of a shorter duration and courses which have become modularised and structured into study programmes where students may feel they are less able to be flexible and study abroad for a semester (Frølich et. al 2008).

⁹ National report on the LLP implementation 2007-2009 – Norway. Oslo: The Ministry of Education and Research.

In pointing, for example, to the decrease in participation in the Lifelong Learning Programme most probably arising from factors beyond SIU's influence, the Ministry seems, to some extent, to be aware of the limits to achievement of internationalisation policy through the type of programme activities administered by SIU. At the same time, however, the Ministry reasonably requires SIU to become more pro-active and to implement measures to improve unsatisfactory results. Nonetheless, and not at least considering the conclusions of the international evaluation of Erasmus, we recommend the Ministry to have realistic ambitions and to consider all the structural conditions inhibiting the overall success of LLP.

As described in the introduction of this report Norwegian central authorities constantly strive to develop efficient measures for international cooperation in higher education and research to position themselves in a number of regions and areas. In recent years the ambition has been to further develop closer links with Canada and US, of which the latter has always been of great importance to Norway. Attention has also been drawn to the northern areas including North West Russia White Paper 2004-2005 (*Vilje til forskning 2005* & White Paper 2008-2009 *Klima for forskning*). As already mentioned the government recently implemented measures for improving collaboration with Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

Furthermore, the central authorities pay great attention to improving the interconnection between research and education, in a programme emphasising collaboration on education and research. Within this framework, cooperation on courses, study programmes and degrees have been developed. In general greater emphasis is being put on the mobility of masters and PhD/level of researcher training, such as Erasmus Mundus.

As new initiatives are constantly launched, SIU has to take on new tasks and areas of responsibility, while still paying attention to former agreements.

In this shifting and complex environment SIU has in recent years taken on many new types of responsibility, and has demonstrated a capacity to develop and implement operational strategies adequate for the purpose of the central authorities, as well as to increase knowledge and activities as regards institutional cooperation aiming at improving the interface between education and research.

Significant results are, for instance, achieved in the follow-up of the North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation 2008-2011 of the Ministry of Education and Research, which in short time resulted in many high quality applications and increasing levels of incoming and outgoing students between Canada/USA and Norway. Positive feedback has also been given as regards SIU's administration of the EEA Scholarship financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to people in the new EU member countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. SIU has developed

contacts and networks , amongst other by arranging contact seminars between relevant parties (for instance in Poland in 2008 and Romania in 2009). Seminar for exchange of experience were also arranged between participating Norwegian institutions like University of Oslo and NTNU.

Such examples are illustrative of the added value of having a national agency like SIU, as its broad programme experience certainly can be applied to new areas.

NUFU and NOMA¹⁰ are major elements of SIU's development oriented responsibilities, and the recent evaluation of NUFU and NOMA (NORAD Evaluation Report 7/2009) has been a valuable source also for the present evaluation of SIU. The overall aim of both programmes is capacity building in research and higher education at institutions in developing countries. NUFU is characterised by a bottom-up approach, and is based on partnership and collaboration between individual researchers or small research teams rather than on institutional partnership. Not only does this feature explain much of the programme's success, insofar as it involves the logic of scientific partnership, it also explains its weaknesses, especially those relating to institutional integration.

The NUFU/NOMA evaluation report concludes that these programmes have made a significant contribution to capacity building, that they are widely recognised and valued, and that good collaboration between the two has been instrumental to the results achieved. However, it is also noted that there is a need to review the programmes' capacity-building concepts to meet the demand for more holistic approaches. Furthermore, the potential for synergy between NUFU and NOMA is not yet fully realised.

It is the Norwegian partners in the collaboration that have the administrative and economic responsibilities towards SIU in running the programmes, representing an in-built asymmetry in the relationship between the partners. Generally, this asymmetry is tolerated as long as funds are forthcoming. Although administration of the programmes is a lesser concern to partners in developing countries, the Norwegian partners complain frequently about administration and management systems, reporting formats, and decision making.

Support to higher education and research aimed at capacity building in developing countries is, and will continue to be, an important part of Norwegian development aid. This has been clearly stated by NORAD. A considerable portion of the relevant financial resources are allocated via SIU, although the Research Council of Norway also allocates funds for development-oriented research.

¹⁰ Whereas NUFU has a 20-year history, the NOMA programme is fairly new. The latter was set up in 2006 to replace NORAD's former fellowship programme, which had been running for decades. While the fellowship programme also supported Master's students coming to Norway, NOMA only funds studies at institutions in developing countries with support from Norwegian institutions.

According to the picture that emerges for the evaluation team from the NUFU/NOMA evaluation and the interviews conducted, some of the most important challenges relate to the fact that the north-south activities have to operate at the point of intersection between two different policy areas: those of higher education and research on the one hand, and development aid on the other. These two policy areas have different aims and different operative principles, all of which have to be taken into account and balanced.

The main role of higher education institutions is knowledge production and knowledge transmission, and the principle of scientific quality is absolute. At the same time, SIU's development oriented activities have to be seen in the context of the overall political aim of Norwegian development aid, which is poverty alleviation. Support for cooperation in higher education and research, as organised by SIU, should be viewed with this in mind, meaning among other things that the research interests of the scientific community have to be balanced with the goals of development policy. If the north-south collaboration is to be an effective measure of support for capacity building in developing countries, it has to be sufficiently attractive also for the Norwegian institutions involved.

One important theme in this context is financing principles. Whereas aid policy stipulates that funds are to be used in the recipient country, Norwegian institutions cannot be expected to subsidise development-oriented projects. In order for north-south partnerships to function, there should at the very least be no financial disincentives to discourage Norwegian institutions from becoming involved. Not only should cooperation be professionally attractive, the participation of Norwegian institutions should also be compensated to a reasonable degree.

Figure 2.10 illustrates how SIU operates within a field of tension between two aspects of political logic: development aid and knowledge policy.

Figure 2.10 Schematic summary of the interests underlying SIU's activities

Development aid/NORAD	Education/research/science community
Political responsibility	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Education and Research
Stakeholders	
NORAD, developing countries	Norwegian HEd institutions, UHR
Overall aims	
Poverty alleviation	Research and knowledge production
Main priorities	
Relevance for developing countries, responsiveness to their needs	Scientific quality, long-term collaboration, research production, research interests, access to data and fieldwork
Level of operation	
To contribute to institutional capacity building	Collegial cooperation, operating at the basic

and development in the south	level
Important criteria	
Select projects and students according to priorities for institutional support	Scientific quality
Funding logic	
Money should mainly be spent in the south	HEd institutions should not subsidize development and should be compensated for their efforts

Active academic partnership between Norwegian higher education institutions and respective institutions in developing countries may be beneficial to both parties. The SIU programmes have shown their potential for contributing to capacity building in the developing countries, but one should not forget that this may be beneficial to the Norwegian partners and an integrated aspect of the policy on internationalisation. The overall policy goals and priorities should be better coordinated between the two respective ministries – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research. If institutions in higher education are expected to play an active role in assisting capacity building in developing countries, this should be better recognised in the higher education funding model. This should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The possibility of NORAD applying a more “hands-on” approach to SIU’s activities could be considered, although this need not involve establishing a detailed control regime.

The Quota Scheme is popular and is said by informants in the university sector to create unique international perspectives and teaching environments – on global issues - as it attract students from different parts of the world to undertake various international masters degree programmes.

An evaluation of the Quota Scheme goes beyond the mandate of this evaluation, but it should be said that staff working with the program experience certain challenges with participating, amongst other things, since it should be based on institutional cooperation. SIU has however shown great flexibility in supporting the institutions in their process of application to the programmes (number of students). SIU is said to cooperate well with the State Educational Loan Fund in making appropriate arrangements for handing out money to the participants.

The Ministry of Education and Research wishes to improve the academic quality of the activities in the programme, for instance with regard to academic reason for allocating of students, something which should be a topic for discussion between the Ministry and SIU in the nearest future.

2.10 Information related activities

As regards information-related activities, as indicated in other parts of this report, SIU shows significant results in terms of visits to its web-sites and attendance at seminars and courses. SIU reports and publications are well received.

When it comes to SIU meetings with the senior management of universities, colleges and other actors in the sector of higher education, SIU's results do not fully reflect the agency's objectives and strategies or the expectations of the Ministry of Education and Research. It seems rather critical for SIU to reconnect with the strategically important leadership of the institutions in higher education.

As regards the profiling of Norway as a destination for research and education, results have been achieved in terms of a significant rise in the number of incoming students in general and from the priority regions in particular; Germany, France, US/Canada. The extent to which this results from SIU's activities is arguable, however SIU can report increasing use of its web site www.studyinnorway.no, as well as in the course of SIU's participation at international student fairs. SIU has generally increased its participation at international student fairs over recent years. International coordinators consulted in connection with this evaluation praise SIU for the high quality of this aspect of the agency's activity, both in terms of how well it cooperates with other Norwegian institutions in these settings as well as regards the quality of some of the printed publications of SIU which were even described as "collectables" among many administrators internationally. In the type of network within which it operates, SIU has achieved a good reputation for quality, and is, according to the American magazine *International Educator*, the leading Nordic nation in the branding of higher education and research.

As already concluded in this report the Ministry of Education and Research is generally very pleased with the results obtained from engaging SIU as an advisory agency. SIU has responded to Ministries' requests in numerous cases, of which the most significant has been the contribution to the white paper on internationalisation of education. Furthermore, demand for SIU's expertise has been met in terms of SIU staff giving various presentations at external seminars and conferences, participation in work groups and networks. Some colleges and universities also request SIU to assist them in the international branding activities of the institution. Hopefully more institutions will request this aspect of SIU services in the years to come. We find however that SIUs potential as a competence centre is not well known among administrators in the field. Moreover, many institutions don't seem to have the institutional capacity to benefit even more from SIUs expertise.

As will be detailed below there is however no universal agreement about what constitutes a good result in the kind of international cooperation administered by SIU. In an ideal programming situation, a high number of applicants is considered one criterion for a sufficient basis for selecting projects and candidates of high quality. A low rejection rate

may well indicate low quality of the applications as well as low relevance of the aims of the programme. To name just one difficulty, in reality there can be many reasons why it is hard to attract more applicants than there are grants on offer. For example, institutions, academic communities and individuals generally have to contend with various obstacles: financial, linguistic, time limitations, complex procedures for applications and reporting, cultural and professional scepticism about participation in organised internationalisation activities. An important issue that should be raised is how results are measured. Most indicators are quantitative, with the obvious advantage that they are easily measurable. Some of these measures focus entirely on doing things right, such as economic reporting to clients. It has been noted that indicators are to a high degree dependent on other actors' decisions. For instance, the number of international students studying in Norway and the number of Norwegian students studying abroad can only to a small degree be affected by SIU itself.

The level of funding also determines what goals can be expected to reach.

Et økende antall utenlandske studenter og forskere kommer til Norge. Samtidig som det er rimelig å anta at SIUs profileringsinnsats bidrar positivt til dette, henger utviklingen åpenbart sammen med globale trender på området. Det er vanskelig å påvise om studentene og forskerne som kommer er i tråd med institusjonenes ønsker. [...] SIU bruker kun omkring 1 million kroner årlig på profilering i tillegg til ett årsverk. Underfinansiering er derfor en betydelig utfordring og et hinder for større grad av måloppnåelse på området. I all hovedsak opplever likevel SIU at både departementet og sektoren er fornøyd med arbeidet som gjøres og at måloppnåelsen er tilfredsstillende ut fra rammevilkårene som er gitt. (The self evaluation, page 4).

It is obviously a relevant view that many goals are indirect. SIU may do all in its power, but due to external reasons beyond SIU's control, students may not travel anyway. It should be possible for SIU to achieve the objectives that are set by performing well in matters within its control. In this light, some objectives may need to be changed; others may just need to be re-phrased.

There seems to be an ongoing discussion with the Ministry of Education and Research on how to measure and assess results. The Ministry has announced that it wants to see more evidence of SIU's achievements. In the steering dialogue The Ministry requests that SIU should improve its analysis of results from programme activities.

From SIU's point of view, the need for more evidence has been identified.

SIU is required to report on its activities and results according to a range of indicators laid down by the Ministry of Education and Research, of which most are basic and important in order to monitor international programmes. The Ministry has requested that SIU should produce more adequate and comprehensive statistics. The Ministry has also remarked that SIU still lacks some statistics needed to answer to one of the steering indicators laid down,

which is clearly an important deficit, such as incoming pupils, teachers and instructors (Letter of Assignment KD 18.12.08).

However, some indicators and reports seem rather meaningless. We doubt, for instance whether the number of applicants is a good indicator of SIU's results in terms of attractiveness as a workplace. The computation of the number of top managers from universities and university colleges attending SIU seminars is also rather useless unless the data are contextualised (eg. what is the population of top-managers in Norway in this regard – who are the significant ones?) and analysed in more depth, since some parts of academic and administrative leadership should be more relevant to SIU purposes than others. There are obvious limitations to the quality of information that can be provided by quantitative reports as regards site visits to universities and university colleges including institutional leadership of different kind. In cases like this SIU would benefit from delivering more sophisticated analyses of results than currently seems to be the case.

On the whole, the work at SIU is a combination of administrative effectiveness and qualified analysis and expert knowledge. It is a combination of doing things right, e.g. fewer adverse comments by the national audit office, and doing the right things, e.g. initiating and delivering high quality and relevant reports to different stakeholders including the Ministry of Education and Research. From the documents we have seen, dissatisfaction with the reporting is occasionally expressed. As far as the reporting is concerned, several steps have been taken in order to increase quality in the deliveries to contractors. It is, however, a considerable task: one interviewee at SIU notes that there are some 30 report deliveries required by different contractors, plus the Ministry. He thinks that there is a lot to win by developing the reporting procedures. SIU has to use its available resources to reach out to many and varied sectors and client groups and interested parties within society. It must report to a range of people on different administrative levels (ministries, management groups) nationally while also contending with supranational systems and structures.

Measured against the existing parameters we can conclude that SIU has, to a large extent achieved its results in accordance with the expectations and priorities of the Ministry of Education and Research.

A rationalisation and better coordination of report procedures are needed in order to increase the strategic capacity of SIU, for instance by streamlining various administrative reports. This may lead to an increase in the strategic capacity of SIU.

All in all the Ministry of Education and Research as well as SIU's board has a large responsibility to specify what SIU ought to deliver. Then it is possible for SIU to put proper analytical capacity in place. The Ministry has everything to gain by clarifying SIU's role and objectives. Only then can useful analyses and policy advice be expected.

2.11 Efficiency

Questions have been raised about SIU's cost effectiveness and financial management in the running of the north-south programmes, not least in a review of financial reporting between SIU and NORAD (Andersen 2009). The administration budget for NUFU, NOMA, and the Culture Programme were set at 11 m NOK for 2009. The decision to put a new energy programme out to tender, for which responsibility was eventually granted to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), can be seen as a response to SIU's high running costs.

Another example is the West Balkan programme. In the evaluation the administrative efficiency of the programmes was said to be good, however the administrative costs per project is higher in the case of RCN/SIU than for UMB. According to the report this is partly due to the programme differences: "*The UMB is an institution specific programme while RCN/SIU is not. But SIU and RCN run more costly procedures, and are as independent institutions less inclined to internalize extra cost as perhaps UMB may do*", which is illustrative for the "handicap" independent agencies like SIU are confronted with if having to compete with institutions of higher education in the running of international programmes

As argued in the discussion on SIU's purpose, professional standards in the administration of international programmes require sufficient administrative resources. Many stakeholders we believe are not aware of this. Given the barriers to internationalisation in general, and mobility in particular, a quite extensive administrative apparatus is needed in order to attract enough participants.

Questions have been raised, however, about the level of travel activity of SIU staff and arrangements of conferences abroad. When measured against the generally low importance of the conference there has been a disproportionately high attendance from Norway with an accordingly high subsistence cost. Questions are often raised about SIU's travel activity in this context. The scale of SIU's travel activity should be determined in relation to the importance of SIU having first-hand knowledge of a country, an issue on which opinions seem to differ. Others have argued that SIU staff needs to travel and meet collaborators at a personal level in order to develop adequate cooperation schemes. This should however to be balanced with an ever increasing need for accountability for public sector funds and best value.

The drive for greater efficiency should be integrated into the future strategy for SIU and the board, which will encompass a more focused approach to priority setting and subsequent questioning of the best use of resources in relation to the organisation's priorities.

In addition to the regular cycle of programme administration, evaluation of applications, disbursement of grants and final reporting, considerable efforts are put into the promotion of programmes, bringing together possible partners and giving advice to clients in the application process. In recent time SIU has also put considerable efforts into improving its efficiency and cost effectiveness.

A system for internal quality assurance, KVASS, has been implemented in SIU. KVASS includes systems of quality procedures for risk management developed on basis of the framework of The Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management (SSØ). As mentioned above several internal assessments aiming at improving SIU's results have been completed; for instance a self assessment aiming at identifying factors important for improving SIU's efficiency and attainment of good results was completed in 2009 in line with the Common Assessment Framework model (CAF). Improvement in cost efficiency is also being sought by a better integration of the financial- (Contempus, Agresso) and programme administrative systems (Espresso, LLP Link), and are intended to help simplify the financial flow, for instance by automatic administration of transactions.

According to SIU, the transferring of financial tasks to a separate section for financial management has contributed to more standard procedures, improved efficiency and quality. The same benefits are said to be the case in the transfer of "information staff" to a section for communication and profiling. One should not overestimate the benefits to be achieved from systems like KVASS, but SIU should be commended for seriously putting administrative efficiency into focus.

Although difficult to measure, in overall comparison with similar national systems, performance is in line with what would be expected.

In the national comparison, however it can be seen that SIU has a more complex governance and management approach. SIU could very well benefit from closer examination of other approaches.

2.12 SIU, strategic actor and service centre for schools

In line with suggestions contained in the parliamentary White Paper (St.Meld.nr 14 (2008-2009) *Internasjonalisering av utdanning* (Report to the Storting, no. 14 (2008-2009), *On the Internationalisation of Education*), the Ministry has extended SIU's mandate to become a service and competence centre for schools and authorities concerned with school education to ensure increased use of EU programmes and other relevant programmes. In 2010, 2.25 m kroner were reserved for this purpose in the state budget.

Internationalisation in education and training is a broad field covering everything from how schools should establish links with the world outside Norway, through to the

integration of international themes in teaching and curricula, and internationalisation on the national level, which includes such things as our approach to multiculturalism.

Central authorities are concerned about the frequent absence of comprehensive plans of schools and school owners for boosting the international dimension in the local curricula as well as to find various possible approaches to it, such as to take advantage of the language competence of immigrants.

Furthermore teachers often lack knowledge of the relevant Nordic and European programmes for which they can apply, and SIU now has the mandate to attract more schools and teachers to take part in programmes such as Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as other relevant programmes including those not administered by SIU.

SIU's strategy

So far in 2010 SIU has investigated and built up a general picture of the strategies for internationalisation of schools at the county and local municipality levels. This general picture includes the extent to which a strategy is present, what kind of strategies have been adopted to organise internationalisation, what arenas exist, examples of best practice, and the extent to which schools are involved in programmes administered by SIU.

Furthermore, SIU aims to produce a new version of the existing handbook of internationalisation for schools emphasising topics such as definitions of internationalisation, its connection to the field of politics, how it could be incorporated in local strategies for school development and improved teaching, available resources for internationalisation, as well as examples of best practice.

According to SIU's plans, the "mapping phase" will be followed by an outward phase.

SIU will further develop its communication of the results of the programme activities, as is generally done in publications like *Europavegen* and *Itinera*, while in future years it aims to link programme activities to the ongoing strategic goals of the school sector.

Furthermore it is SIU's ambition to develop web-sites containing information and advice particularly adjusted to the needs of the school sector.

SIU also aims to develop new ways of communicating with schools, and will in 2010 launch some pilot projects for discussing alternative modes and arenas for communication in dialogue with representatives from schools and school owners.

Furthermore networks between SIU and the schools sector will be developed, for which it is particularly important to approach the county and county governors as they are responsible for upper secondary schooling and training. SIU also aims to participate in new

arenas, such as those coordinated by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and Directorate of Education.

SIU also aims to develop its collaboration with the Directorate for Education and the various centres therein (8 altogether), such as the National Centre for ICT in Education and the National Centre for Language Learning, of which the latter was also argued for by the National Directorate for Education.

The evaluation panel agrees with the Ministry and other stakeholders who basically find SIU's approach adequate as first steps to be taken to further approach the sector of schools and school owners.

The internationalisation of primary and secondary education and of training, it must be said, is however a long-term ambition that will have to contend with many obstacles, cultural, linguistic and financial, and will be more difficult to implement than is internationalisation in higher education. (Vabø 2007)

Certainly, it is possible to mention some successes, such as the initiatives taken by Karmøy municipality (see www.karmoyped.no) in close cooperation with SIU. Despite its scarce administrative resources, over the years SIU's success in stimulating activity around the Comenius programme is impressive. Nevertheless, it is important that the Ministry should keep its expectations at a realistic level and bear in mind the time and resources needed to boost internationalisation in this field. Despite all potential positive benefits like financial support and professional development of teachers and so forth, the success of Comenius is highly dependent upon the will of the school authorities at various levels like the regional municipalities – to follow up the issues on internationalisation. There is great variation between them as regards the attention paid to internationalisation, and among those who are, attention is particularly oriented towards various forms of business collaboration and regional development, not education and training.

As was also argued in interviews, SIU cannot reach out to every single school, yet should approach existing arenas and network of schools and school authorities, such as annual conferences at regional level such as “østlandske lærestevne”, “skolemøter for Rogaland” (see www.skolemote.no), annual meetings of rectors, and, to a certain extent pedagogical centres at county level. SIU seems to already be on its way- as staff for instance recently met with the network of international coordinators of the regional municipalities. As goes for all of SIU's activities certain strategic priorities should be made within certain time spans. SIU and the relevant programme committees should for instance pay special attention to increasing the level of participation within certain parts of the programmes, such as Comenius Regio. Furthermore SIU should pay special attention to geographical areas and regions with particular low level of activity as regard internationalisation in education and training. SIU may benefit from experienced users from other regions to take part in mobilising regions with less experience.

Other central stakeholders such as the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the Directorate of Education appreciate that SIU has been assigned this role; it accords with the nature of the agency, since SIU already has national responsibility for programmes such as Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci, which gives it unique experience of having operative responsibility for the types of activities in question. Over the years, SIU has demonstrated its ability to motivate schools to take part in international programme activities. Since the transfer of Leonardo da Vinci from the then National Agency of Leonardo, Technological Institute (TI) in 2007, SIU is said to have developed a good understanding of the field, the key actors as well as the relevant policies in that area. The Directorate of Education has also transferred some of its international portfolio to SIU. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities praises SIU for having recently demonstrated its ability to link its programme activities to wider policy issues relating to internationalisation in the field of education and training, both within the EU as a whole and at a national level – which makes more sense for the programmes' target groups.

So far the internationalisation aspects of education and training in Norway have been of a rather fragmentary character, and these stakeholders hope SIU's role as a competence centre will contribute to better coordination while also boosting policies and activities in this field. It has even been suggested that SIU may well take a leading role as a national coordinator. The subsidiary project Comenius Regio was mentioned by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) as a particularly interesting area of cooperation as it has the municipalities, county administrations, and regional training agencies as their target groups. The need to attract more teachers to take part in the programmes was also put forward as important.

According to the stakeholders we interviewed SIU's web-pages should be improved, simplified, in order to attract target groups in the field of education and training; it should be made clearer who can apply for what, and how European Commission decisions will affect programme activities. In the abovementioned white paper *On the Internationalisation of Education* the Ministry suggests the development of international projects by the use of eTwinning as ways of approaching collaboration between Norwegian and European schools. And users argued that the use of social media is crucial for reaching out to the world of education and training.

In this regard, it was suggested by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities that SIU should benefit from using the networks and arenas coordinated by them, to establish contact with and to inform school owners.

There are however financial limitations to the realisation of internationalisation activities by aiming for more extensive use of Leonardo and Comenius. The Ministry should therefore consider the improvement of national funding to increase schools' possibilities to

participate in these programmes. As was also pointed to in interviews with SIU representatives, the Ministry needs to give clearer signals, for instance in the annual state budget, of what are their priorities as regards the sector of education and training. The next step is to outline what they expect from school authorities. The issue of priorities as regards education and training should be an issue for further discussion and development between the Ministry and SIU.

Today organisations such as National Directorate of Education and Training and Centre for ICT in Education also administers programmes for internationalization of education and training. Given the purpose of and advantages of one agency, the Ministry should consider transferring these and other relevant national activities to SIU at the earliest opportunity.

Vs. the higher education sector

Representatives of the higher education sector are not pleased that SIU has taken on this new role. They claim that it will compromise SIU's efforts to meet its higher education responsibilities. The Ministry cannot expect to solve this dilemma simply by stipulating in the mandate that SIU's role as a competence centre should not be pursued at the expense of its other tasks. Even so, EU programmes directed towards education and training have been part of SIU's portfolio for a long time, and necessarily so, since the European Commission requires that responsibility for the administration of LLP should be carried by only one national agency. The policies of the European Commission help to determine the organisational structure of the national educational field. To further stimulate SIU's activities in the school sector by assigning it the role of a competence centre does not in itself represent a radical break with its former position. SIU should consider approaches that do not conflict with the interests of the higher education sector. For instance, we question the wisdom of linking its regular publications *Europavegen* and *Itinera* more closely to international activities in the school system. It is not only that this might draw attention away from the need to promote international programme activities in the higher education sector. *Europeavegen* already receives a certain amount of criticism for its generic character. Thus, in some cases, synergies could be achieved insofar as the LLP also aims to link the various levels of the educational system. For instance, teacher education might be linked to the activities of Comenius.

As SIU's extended mandate as a competence centre for school education is permanent, both its statutes and its mandate are, according to the Ministry of Education and Research, to be revised accordingly and the composition of the board should reflect the outcome. A change of name should also be considered, as SIU's responsibility as a competence centre for school education has been permanent. We suggest that the acronym SIU be retained, but that the full name be changed to "Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education and Training".

2.13 What can we learn from other countries?

As part of this study, the team reviewed a number of similar organisations to SIU, investigating the types of approaches that can be taken to delivering the same types of services. In addition to a brief overview of the Swedish system three main agencies were reviewed: NUFFIC in the Netherlands, IU in Denmark and CIMO in Finland.

The comparative analysis highlights the fact that there is no one common approach to the governance and organisation of executive agencies. The internal governance and external accountability to the fund holders varies considerably. In addition, there are several different interpretations of the nature of internationalisation which are shaped by national policy priorities and funding programmes. There is one common factor that determine service delivery, which is the EU programmes (LLP) something which all of the internationalisation agencies looked at, administer.

Therefore, there is no one solution or approach that SIU necessarily should take in order to improve its own performance. The examples given, nevertheless give SIU points for discussion which may help to address the recommendations put forward by this evaluation.

The different approaches of executive agencies

There are varying degrees of autonomy seen in the executive agencies ranging from the almost fully autonomous, in the form of foundations, through to the agency that remains almost as a small government department. In the examples reviewed, NUFFIC in the Netherlands is a foundation (not for profit), and the Danish and Finnish Agencies much more tightly controlled by their Ministries, like SIU. Both CIMO and IU see themselves as directly accountable/responsible through the director, to the Ministry in charge of Education. NUFFIC is a little more “arms length”.

NUFFIC, CIMO and IU all have relatively slim line structures of governance and accountability in comparison to SIU. None has a governing board, there is a more varied use of advisory committees as a mechanism for additional steering and strategic development as and when is necessary.

In lighter governance structures, one issue which is of paramount importance is the trust which is engendered between the fund holders and the agency. There is often much more internal control over strategy and priority setting, with the accountability to the fund holders being more related to the impact of the work rather than the processes undertaken. Impact oriented contracts can be an important change for the relationship between an agency and its fund holder.

The nature of internationalisation

Another key area for comment is the way in which the agencies address internationalisation and globalisation. In all cases the emphasis of aspects of

internationalisation differ according to national priorities. The thread running through, and the one that has led to many of the recent changes in the agencies under review is **global competition**. All of the agencies have been through a period of significant change or reflection in the last few years. There has been a reorientation and redefinition of aspects of internationalisation with a much greater focus on global competition. The work in developing countries, even if still significant, is also seen in light of its influence on future competition rather than pure aid work. This is a change which is being embedded in the strategies and culture of the organisations and the staff.

The balance between procedure and knowledge acquisition

In all of the agencies there are different approaches taken to programme administration, the information and communication function and the policy work/knowledge generation. There are arguments for and against organising departments into the different types of programmes (aid work, EU work, national mobility programmes etc) vs a department which processes all applications regardless of programme type. There needs to be a balance between the knowledge gained from being programme specific and the creation of administrative efficiencies. Another factor in this mix is job satisfaction, many staff join these agencies due to specific skills sets and a subject desire rather than a desire to administer funds. This needs to be carefully considered in organisational change. NUFFIC with its major restructuring in 2006 is a good example of an agency which has automated large numbers of its processes internally.

The relationship with the Higher Education institutions

One final area to highlight is the relationship between the agencies and the universities and university colleges. Most higher education institutions have their own internationalisation and globalisation strategies. Like SIU, NUFFIC has faced increasing tensions in its relations with certain institutions over how best to work together, avoid overlap and issues such as competition for funding. Nuffic have recently put together a memorandum to involve HE institutions in the policy making of NUFFIC. The new strategy includes the Hogescholen (Universities of Applied Sciences). The strategy marks out a number of different ways it can work with the research universities and the universities of applied sciences highlighting their increasing differences.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

This report has been carried out by NIFU and Technopolis in response to an invitation from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research to tender for an evaluation of SIU – The Centre for the Internationalisation of Higher Education.

The broad objectives of the evaluation are to analyse SIU's performance in the period 2004-2009; examining how SIU has fulfilled its role according to its mandate. The evaluation further examines how SIU understands its own mission and responsibility in relation to different stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Education and Research, different client organisations and users. It examines how SIU balances programme management with its broader responsibility for internationalisation, and whether SIU's activities give added value to the internationalisation of higher education and education in general.

Finally, the evaluation offers advice on the future development of SIU, exploring what tasks should be undertaken by the Agency, whether it has the ability to take on new tasks (eg schools) and whether it is adequately supported by the regulatory framework in which it works.

The evaluation was supported by both the steering group at the Ministry and additionally by an independent resource group which helped shape the recommendations. This section provides a structured overview of the conclusions and recommendations on the questions posed in the Terms of Reference for how to further develop SIU and its activities.

3.1 Overall findings

SIU's mandate, strategies and goals are clearly formulated but at the same time, they are ambitious and potentially conflicting in their objectives and interests. The internationalisation of higher education covers, amongst other things, development aid, cultural promotion, quality in higher education and research, and inward and outward mobility. SIU is also taking on wider roles, for example in becoming a strategic actor and service centre for schools. SIU has in recent years taken on many new types of responsibility, and has demonstrated a capacity to develop and implement operational strategies adequate for the purpose of the central authorities, as well as to increase knowledge and activities as regards institutional cooperation aiming at improving the interface between education and research. This is achieved in the main through a comprehensive internal approach (division of labour and synergy) and through the equitable external promotion of all aspects of its work. Programme officers at universities and university colleges give a very positive evaluation of SIU. SIU particularly receives praise for the management of the LLP, for their promotional work, seminars, information

gatherings and practical assistance to the coordinators at teaching institutions. SIUs priorities and achieved results basically reflect the centre's objectives, strategy and activities. Despite complexity and conflicting interests, SIU has succeeded in being a national node in both national and international networks for administration of the international programmes. Therefore, the evaluation findings show that SIU does manage to balance the wide ranging and potentially conflicting goals set out in its mandate and strategy.

Nevertheless, due to its evolution, SIU has a number of issues which have come to the fore in the course of the evaluation and this represents a good opportunity for the Agency to reflect on the results in the light of its core purposes and consider taking on board recommendations which may better ensure its future success. The major issues arising from the evaluation can be categorized as follows:

- Governance – in particular the role of the board and committees
- Management – the director and the roles and responsibilities of staff
- Relationships – reconnecting with old and building new relationships
- The identity of SIU – SIU as a competence centre

3.2 The need for a lighter governance structure

SIU is an agency with a wide mandate and various contracts and funders. It is also facing increasing competition. It is crucial that SIU's approach to governance supports all its strategic priorities top down and bottom up. SIU is currently subject to a structure of steering that is rather complex, resource demanding and inadequate as regard to SIUs overall goals and missions. Overall SIU would benefit from lighter steering structures, as seen in other national situations.

The Board of SIU

SIU is currently served by a board of management, which is a classic approach to steering a relatively autonomous organisation. The board structure has the capacity to play a key role in liaising with the Ministry of Education and Research as well as reconnecting SIU with the Universities and University Colleges, as well as other key relationships. SIU's current board is not optimally supporting these complex relations or providing SIU with the common strategic vision it needs. The current members of the board, in spite of representing a large number of key players in the internationalisation of higher education are not necessarily showcasing the right level of competence. The members need to function as network nodes, bringing with them the necessary experience to govern and also a capacity to act as ambassadors of SIU. The role needs to focus on strategy, not administration.

SIU now has to contend with the replacement of almost all its board members, and this presents a good opportunity for some innovative thinking about the role of the board.

SIU's programme committees

SIU's structure of steering is characterised by many overlapping programme committees. There are programme committees for Leonardo da Vinci, Gruntvig, NUFU and NOMA for example. The central authority and SIU would benefit from consolidation and better coordination through fewer programme committees dealing with groups of programmes. Fewer committees could also help the social partners and other representatives to make better use of their time.

With regard to the board our main recommendations are:

1. The board of SIU needs to increase its strategic role and capacity to improve the relation between SIU and its clients (and spend less time on administrative matters).
2. The competence of the board needs to be increased – particularly in light of the relationship with the Ministry and also for the legitimacy of SIU towards its clients.
3. The Ministry of Education and Research should conduct a functional analysis as part of the task of staffing a new board.

Furthermore, we recommend:

1. The board members need to be appointed in their full personal capacity, not as “deputies” from the sectors / interested parties appointed by the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions
2. However, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education needs to be consulted in the appointment and make up of the new board in order to ensure its legitimacy
3. The new board needs to reflect SIU's new mandate as a competence centre and include school education. With regard to other representatives, there needs to be further discussion to ensure that the right types of individuals are appointed who can support the future strategic needs of SIU. Questions need to include, the necessity for business representatives/sectors, ANSA, nationalities etc.
4. SIU involves external competence when it comes to evaluation of applications and by the use of programme board members. However external resources could be used to a larger extent. When the authorities and/or SIU launch important new initiatives, such as a new geographical area of commitment, new expert groups should be appointed on an ad hoc basis, with representatives from relevant institutions, in order to clarify the strategy.
5. Remuneration (over and above normal civil service rates) need not be essential to attract competent people from institutions and companies onto SIU's board, although it could be a useful, within reasonable limits, as a means of indicating that members and leaders of the board are expected to assume a considerable workload.
6. Furthermore the relationship between SIU's board and the Ministry should be improved, amongst other by more informal meetings and by improving the board's understanding of political processes.

With regard to the programme committees

1. We recommend a considerable rationalisation of the programme committee structure. The role and tasks of the programme committees should be possible to be solved by two basic committees; one serving the needs of the LLP and one the needs of the aid related programmes.
2. As a minimum one should merge the Leonardo and Grundtvig committee on the one hand and the committees for the aid related programmes on the other, which is also in line with the recommendations of the recent NUFU/NOMA evaluation (COWI 2010).
3. Although difficult to measure, overall comparison with similar national systems shows SIU performance is in line with what would be expected. In the national comparison it can be seen that SIU has a more complex governance and management approach.: SIU could very well benefit from closer examination of other approaches to further advance its impact.

3.3 Improving management

SIU's organisational history to date appears to have followed a trajectory that is common among new organisations. It began with an expansionist, entrepreneurial phase, which culminated in SIU out-growing its simple managerial structures, accounting, reporting and IT resources. The tasks have grown in number and complexity. One other feature of the organisational growth has been increasing hierarchies at SIU.

At the same time the role of the agency leadership is a key condition for how the advisory role of the agency and the Ministry can be fulfilled and also cater for the independent voice of the directorate. A basis for giving professional advice on an independent basis requires an agency leadership that is professional competent and political sensitive. There have been some concerns in the overall leadership of the organisation, especially as it enters into a consolidation phase, and in light of the need for a reviewed governance structure.

The roles and responsibilities of staff

There is already capacity in the sectoral knowledge of the second tier of management in SIU to address any concerns in balancing the needs of vision and expertise with administrative excellence.

Recommendations for the internal management of SIU

1. In the late phase of the evaluation the new director (app. Autumn 2009) resigned and a constituted director has taken over the role. We recommend that the board hires a new director with solid field competence as well as strategic and administrative capacity.
2. As the organisation matures further, the managers at section level should be assigned a stronger strategic role and their "deputies" take a clearer administrative responsibility. These roles can then extend from the internal environment to the

external environment with a more devolved approach to contacts with the Ministry, stakeholders and other agents.

3. Staff also have a role to play in better outreach toward universities and improving dialogue with them regarding what they would like from SIU.
4. SIU could benefit from having more contacts with other similar organisations. Challenges, critical tasks or issues, and ideas and experiences of ways of organising programmes may be shared between SIU and others. Given what SIU is working towards as such – intensified internationalisation for increased quality – having international contacts may also be a matter of legitimacy for SIU itself. Such connections could very well be further developed.
5. SIU needs to pay attention to further sub-optimalisation of the resources. As a minimum one should expect that SIU manage actually to make appropriate use of budgets reserved for certain tasks.
6. The drive for greater efficiency should be integrated into the future strategy for SIU and the board which will encompass a more focused approach to priority setting and subsequent questioning of the best use of resources in relation to the organisations priorities.
7. There is recognition of the need for SIU to create a separate unit for IT, a new strategy and through this clearer roles and responsibilities for those involved in IT. This includes a system of nominated “super-users” embedded across the organisation's departments/sections. This requires, we argue, capable people with a certain degree of training, both administrative and IT experience to ensure that IT is effectively implemented across the whole of SIU.

3.4 Improving external relationships

One recurring theme in this evaluation is questioning whether SIU can be fulfilling objectives of promoting and facilitating cooperation, standardisation, mobility and exchange in higher education at an international level in all their relationships. Two particular relationships are of utmost importance to the functioning of SIU: its relationship with the universities and university colleges and its relationship with the Ministry of Education and Research. Other relationships are also highlighted and many of the recommendations can be applied across the board. The relations between SIU and all other actors also has to be seen in light of the national structure – it is characterised by tribes and territories – which means that attempts to come together needs to have buy in from all actors, and is not just the responsibility of SIU.

The universities and university colleges

The universities and university colleges are central partners for SIU and vice versa. There is evidence that some are receptive to SIU’s role in the international landscape and use their knowledge, expertise and organisation capacity to support their own internationalisation agendas. There remain a number of disconnected institutions where further efforts need to be made. There are a number of inevitable tensions about how SIU

and the institutions deliver internationalisation. In addition, with SIUs widening role to include schools, institutions may question its legitimacy toward them.

There is no doubt that SIU is a necessary coordinating partner for universities and colleges. SIU has a vast knowledge about international cooperation in education and research which is of benefit to the institutions that it, in some parts, serves. In particular in its role as an NA for programmes such as LLP and Nordplus. Through administration of these programmes, SIU contributes to increased knowledge, activities and policy developments which is of benefit to individuals and institutions.

SIU is particularly important for smaller university colleges to boost their capacity for internationalisation. However many institutions in higher education, particularly these smaller university colleges including the private ones, do not have the institutional capacity needed to take full advantage of SIU's competence.

SIU and the Ministry of Education and Research

Both the Ministry and SIU agree that their formal relationship has improved due to the various steps taken such as one coordinator/contact point in the Ministry and the development of a template for how the Ministry should request information and policy advice from SIU. This formal relationship should nevertheless be an issue for further discussion and development. There is an obvious need to develop informal relations between the Ministry of Education and Research and SIU. In its future interactions with SIU, the Ministry of Education and Research should pay greater attention to precision in its assignments and should be somewhat more generous in setting deadlines.

How the ministry should request information and policy advice from SIU must be an issue for further discussions. Perhaps a handful of contact points at SIU can be appointed, for different geographical sets of programmes, for schools, for research collaboration, for aid-oriented programmes, and so on. They can receive requests from the ministry and can engage the colleagues who are most qualified for the respective question.

In addition the Ministry wants SIU to take on a more active advisory role, and SIU is in turn happy to do so and develop in that direction. The establishment of the section for analysis is an undertaking in order to meet this ambition. SIU's need for more analytic competence should be solved by staffing new people, as well as by the management being conscious about the best use of their in-house competence. Providing sustainable policy advice is dependent on close follow up of the management of the programmes. The staff at the analysis section must reach the programme officers and gain insight in their work. This bridging may be a challenge for the near future. SIU should improve their ability to draw on the skills and experiences of their program officers.

SIU and its new role as a service- and competence centre for schools, school owners and school authorities.

The Ministry has extended SIU's mandate to become a service and competence centre for schools and authorities concerned with school education to ensure increased use of EU programmes and other relevant programmes.

Over the years SIU has demonstrated its ability to motivate schools to take part in international programme activities and since the transfer of Leonardo da Vinci from the National Agency, SIU is said to have developed a good understanding of the field, the actors and relevant policies in the area. The concern is the integration of the schools agenda into the overall mandate and strategy of SIU and make clear prioritization of all its activities, both internally and to its external stakeholders.

SIU and other key relationships

SIU has a number of formal relationships with various national and international funders. This is due to its expanding portfolio and the wide remit of internationalisation of higher education conditions (aid, capacity building, mobility programmes, profiling). The relationships are in general considered to be well functioning and effective, however, one may argue that SIU has not taken full advantage of the room for manoeuvre – as they have not reached out to the other actors responsible for internationalisation of which they are expected to cooperate with.

Cooperation in the area of research is a particular area to highlight. SIU, the Norwegian Research Council and the Ministry of Education and Research are all key actors in ensuring successful collaboration on the internationalisation of research. There needs to be continued effort to provide a more transparent environment for agencies and other associated organisations to deliver their mandates in this respect. This is more than yearly letters of assignment from the Ministry and involves new overall working conditions and terms of reference for the associated delivery agents that should mirror the Ministries expectations of collaboration with agencies like SIU.

Against this backdrop we recommend

That SIU strengthen the links with the universities and university colleges in Norway.

1. Instead of regarding the universities as customers who don't want to buy SIU's services, SIU could develop another attitude and take on a role where they ask what SIU can do for the universities? The board needs to include this recommendation as a key part of their future strategy - in order to support SIU in its endeavours to reconnect with the institutions. It should adopt a "what can we do for you?" strategy that would involve the board meeting with SIU's more important client groups in order to listen and plan accordingly. Such a bottom-up strategy would help SIU not only to rebuild its relations with the universities, but also to develop

its relations to the school education sector, to which end it should also involve relevant players and institutions from the latter.

2. The Ministry should also take responsibility for SIU to legitimise their role as a competence centre as well as to equip the agency with the necessary resources with regard to analytical and political competence.
3. SIU and the board also have to “use” the room for manoeuvre actually assigned to them- by adopting a more pro-active approach to engaging the significant national and international actors involved in internationalisation of education, training and research.
4. SIU needs to set up regular meetings with UHR – creating a national platform for discussion on issues of common importance and how best to work synergistically together. This platform must be significant enough to be of interest to all institutions and provide actions/outcomes which are of benefit to all parties.
5. In addition to the national platform, a joint annual conference on internationalisation should be organized which highlights the work of SIU and the institutions, provides an opportunity for dialogue and debate and attracts the key decision makers/institutional leaders.

With regard to its new relationships with schools our main recommendations are

1. The issue of priorities as regards education and training should be an issue for further discussion and development between the Ministry and SIU.
2. As goes for all of SIU’s activities certain strategic areas of prioritisation should be made within certain time spans. SIU and the relevant program committees should for instance pay special attention to increasing the level of participation within certain parts of the programmes, such as Comenius Regio.
3. SIU should pay special attention to geographical areas and regions with particular low level of activity as regard internationalisation in education and training.
4. Given certain financial limitations to the realization of internationalisation activities by aiming for more extensive use of Leonardo and Comenius, the Ministry should therefore consider increasing their financial support to these programs.
5. Given the purpose of and advantages of one agency, the Ministry should consider transferring other relevant national activities to SIU in the nearest future, such as the programmes currently administrated by the National Directorate of Education and Training and Center for ICT in Education.
6. SIU should continue to develop networks between SIU and the schools sector, to approach the county and county governors, to participate in new arenas, and to develop collaboration with the Directorate for Education and the various centres therein, such as the National Centre for ICT in Education and the National Centre for Language Learning.
7. SIU should benefit from using the networks and arenas coordinated by KS to establish contact with and inform school owners.

Furthermore, we recommend

1. SIU should consider approaches that do not conflict with the interests of the higher education sector.
2. SIU's extended mandate as a competence centre for school education has become permanent, then both its statutes and its mandate should be revised accordingly.
3. As SIU's extended mandate as a competence centre for school education has become permanent, then the make-up of the board should reflect this.
4. A change of name should also be considered, if SIU's responsibility as a competence centre for school education is to be made permanent. We suggest that the acronym SIU be retained, but that the full name is being changed to "Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education and Training".
5. SIU's web-pages should be improved, simplified, in order to attract target groups in the field of education and training; it should be made clearer who can apply for what, and how European Commission decisions will affect programme activities.
6. SIU should make extensive use of social media as crucial for reaching out to the world of education and training.
7. SIU may benefit from experienced users from other regions to take part in mobilizing regions with less experience.

3.5 The identity of SIU as a competence centre

The role of SIU as a competence centre in relation to higher education is still not clearly defined internally or how it benefits the external environment. As already highlighted, there is a new role in terms of school education to be well integrated into the functioning of the Agency, at the strategic level, organisational level, and in terms of growing expertise.

Despite being assigned the role as a competence centre, the situation for SIU in this period has been characterised by the classic dilemma between serving the role as an independent policy developing and advisory body and the Ministries "detailed top down steering" on the other.

In spite of this lack of clarity, stakeholders hope that in becoming a competence centre, SIU will play an integral part of overcoming the fragmented market of internationalisation, coordinating actors and providing expertise. SIU exemplifies an executive culture; it is very good at administrating programmes but lacks the political competence needed to advise the Ministry and other client organisations effectively on how to reach their political goals, and how to organise international cooperation. SIU can be said to possess sufficient expertise, and has improved in particular areas for instance with regard to expertise on economic/administrative laws and regulations. However there remain some gaps with respect to analytical and political skills, etc.

Against this backdrop, our main recommendations are:

1. A negotiation about the respective needs of the Ministry and the SIU should be arranged as soon as possible, and the development of SIU's work plan for analytical monitoring could be an ideal topic for informal meetings and discussions between the two parties. In delegation of political and strategic capacity there needs to be a balance between trust and autonomy.
2. In order to place SIU in the optimal position for analytical monitoring there needs to be a work plan produced which recognises that both the Ministry and the SIU itself have needs for strategic knowledge on behalf of the interests they represent. For SIU, the identification of such needs and the development of future plans should be made in consultation with other stakeholders and customers, including the higher education sector.
3. A pre-requisite to a new work plan should be a clear view of staffing needs, with an agreement by the Ministry to provide the necessary resources. This is not to pre-suppose that there should be any significant expansion of the SIU analysis section: it is important to bear in mind that agencies such as SIU often engage external contractors in addition to in-house analytical capacity.

Furthermore we recommend:

1. All the evidence collected in connection with this evaluation confirms SIU's ability to disseminate information about programmes to relevant parties through efficient channels. The evaluation panel agrees however with The Ministry in requesting that SIU should produce more adequate and comprehensive statistics, particularly as regards the primary school level.
2. SIU needs more evidence to show its results and the impact of the work. Evaluations and impact studies might offer a broader picture and provide more knowledge on results and outcomes than the extensive use of existing indicators.
3. A rationalisation and better coordination of report procedures are needed in order to increase the strategic capacity of SIU, for instance by streamlining various administrative reports. This may lead to an increase in the strategic capacity of SIU.
4. Despite the growth, the portfolio seems manageable. However, as regards the efficiency organisations like SIU will benefit from initiatives to reduce the number of programmes by mergers.
5. The evaluation of NUFU and NOMA present an overwhelmingly positive impression of these programmes and their significance for developed-developing country cooperation and as contributions to development in developing countries. By and large, SIU also appears to administer its programmes in a satisfactory manner. SIU has amassed considerable experience and has demonstrated strengths in terms of detailed knowledge, firstly, of the cooperation partners in developing countries in general, and secondly, of the actual projects in particular. Knowledge of this kind cannot easily be transferred to other players. If, on the other hand, NORAD sees a need for more fundamental change of the programmes compared to the role they currently play, then it may be appropriate to discuss a redistribution of responsibilities.

3.6 Coordination of internationalisation activities at a national level

With regard to coordination of internationalisation activities at a national level we recommend

1. The Ministry should take responsibility for arranging multilateral informal meetings between SIU and other actors like the National Research Council as is the case this autumn to discuss the interface between education and research.
2. SIU needs to be clearer about how it conducts separate relationships with other major stakeholders such as the European Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This needs to be strongly supported at board level.
3. A better understanding between contracting bodies is needed on the administrative costs involved in administration of programs to avoid corruption etc.
4. SIU needs to further balance the need for professional administration of programmes with the strategic needs of the commissioners and stakeholders.

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Appendix 1: SIU's tasks

The following description is drawn from the legal articles of association,

Statutes

Articles of association for Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education.

Laid down by the Ministry of Education and Research 3 March 2004, revised 2007.

Purpose

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (hereafter referred to as SIU) is organised as a public agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research (Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet, hereafter referred to as UFD).

SIU shall be a service agency and a partner for public and private institutions of higher education. The centre shall promote internationalisation, cultural communication and international mobility within higher education and coordinate efforts on a national level in accordance with the official political guidelines in the field.

The centre shall be a national office for international programmes and initiatives within higher education, including those with developing countries, but it can also manage programmes which cover other levels of education (basic and adult education). Further, the centre shall promote Norway abroad as a study and research destination, provide counselling and assist in building competence in internationalisation at universities and colleges, and advise the Ministry in relevant areas.

Tasks

General

The centre must be updated on official Norwegian policies in their areas of responsibility, and act and disseminate information in conformity with these policies.

In the area of UFD's responsibility, the centre shall enter into close cooperation with other national actors, such as the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education (Utdanningsdirektoratet) and the National Institute for Adult Education (Vox), in accordance with established divisions of responsibility and work, so as to contribute to the coordination of the initiatives in the international area.

If SIU enters into agreements regarding cooperation programmes which entail obligations towards several institutions of higher education, it will be with the understanding of and

cooperation with the sector of higher education /the institutions concerned, so as to ensure solid institutional anchoring.

In order to ensure optimal solutions of the various tasks, it is an objective to make use of the centre's own expertise in cooperation with the considerable expertise and competence found at the institutions.

Program administration

The centre shall:

- be a national office for international programmes and initiatives within higher education which are established by UFD, other public ministries and agencies, on their own initiative, or in which the Norwegian authorities decide to participate, such as the EU programmes. The centre shall also be able to run international programmes for levels of education other than university and college levels, and to manage educational programmes which include basic education, company training and adult education.
- be a contracting party for other ministries and agencies who want to carry out projects within international higher education and research cooperation, including development cooperation, and assume the operational responsibility for new programmes.

Profiling Norwegian higher education abroad

The centre shall:

- produce information about Norwegian higher education in several languages aimed at various target groups and assist higher education institutions in strengthening their profiles and marketing.
- contribute, in cooperation with the sector, to increasing academic contact with potential partners abroad. The centre shall also represent Norway at educational conferences and conventions abroad.
- participate in relevant international forums and organisations, as well cooperate with other bodies in other countries that have functions equivalent to those of SIU.

Information and communication

The centre shall contribute to the overarching information initiatives established by the authorities and present it in a form compatible with these initiatives. The centre has a particular responsibility for information activities concerning internationalisation in higher education and educational mobility.

In its profiling and information work the centre must have portals with relevant links and updated information

- for Norwegian students who want to travel abroad, for foreign students who want to study in Norway and for foreign professionals who consider a research and/or teaching post in Norway
- on courses and available programmes at Norwegian institutions and their courses in foreign languages

- on relevant seminars and conferences abroad and at home
- on the cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in developing countries.

Competence building to promote international cooperation in higher education

The centre shall assist Norwegian higher education institutions in their international activities by creating arenas, giving courses and conducting seminars and conferences.

The centre shall also offer assistance to institutions of higher education and their academic environments concerning their strategic development, contracts and agreements.

Furthermore, the centre shall assist in arranging contacts and academic partner searches.

The centre shall establish databases to disseminate experiences with various types of international education and research cooperation.

Counselling, studies and service functions

The centre shall:

- be a centre of competence in internationalisation of higher education and advise UFD on matters of relevance in this field.
- participate in studies and prepare contributions, notes and reports for UFD as well as for other contractors pursuant to the extant agreements.
- implement new initiatives concerning internationalisation in higher education and, where relevant, other levels of education on behalf of the Ministry.
- organise national and international seminars and conferences and host regional, national and international delegations.
- through its mandate as a Norwegian centre of competence, contribute to strengthening internationalisation in the higher education sector, including development-related cooperation, by facilitating common international initiatives among the institutions.

Appendix 2: SIU's portfolio

Programme name	Description
<i>Comenius</i>	Comenius is a sub-programme under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary school.
<i>Erasmus</i>	Erasmus is a sub-programme under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and supports European activities of higher education institutions.
<i>Erasmus Mundus</i>	The Erasmus Mundus programme is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance quality in European higher education.
<i>EU-programmes</i>	Norway is fully integrated in education- and research cooperation with the EU through the EEA-agreement, various bilateral agreements and national action plans.
<i>Europass</i>	Europass helps to make your skills and competences clearly understood throughout Europe whether you are planning to enrol in an education or training programme, looking for a job, or getting experience abroad.
<i>European Language Label</i>	The European Language Label encourages new initiatives in the field of language teaching and learning. It aims to let teachers and learners know about such initiatives, and to inspire them to adapt the ideas and techniques concerned to their own situation.
<i>EEA scholarship and training funds</i>	SIU is the Norwegian focal point for the scholarship- and training funds established through the EEA Grants.
<i>Cooperation in higher education with France</i>	Enables Norwegian students and teachers to take both full degrees and shorter courses at selected French institutions of higher education.
<i>Bilateral agreement with Germany</i>	Gjør det! (Do it!) is a bilateral exchange programme between Germany and Norway offering vocational exchange opportunities for students and young workers.
<i>Grundtvig</i>	Grundtvig is a sub-programme under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and addresses the teaching and learning needs of institutions and individuals involved in adult education.
<i>Quota Scheme</i>	The goal of the Quota Scheme is to give students from developing countries in the South, Central- and East-Europe and Central-Asia, relevant education that would also benefit their home countries when they return after graduation.
<i>Leonardo da Vinci</i>	Leonardo da Vinci is a sub-programme under the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and supports vocational education and training.
<i>NOMA</i>	NOMA is a programme for providing financial support to develop and run Master Degree Programmes in the South through collaboration between local and Norwegian Higher Education Institutions.
<i>Norad Programme in Arts and Cultural Education</i>	The goal of the Norad Programme in Arts and Cultural Education (ACE) is to contribute to the strengthening of cultural education institutions and to the professionalisation of artists and art forms in selected countries in the South.

<i>Nordic Master Programme</i>	Provides funding for developing Nordic Master Programmes.
<i>Nordic-Russian cooperation in education and research</i>	A joint Nordic-Russian programme in education and research based on mutual interests and joint priorities and shared funding.
<i>Fellowship Programme for Studies in the High North</i>	Fellowship programme for studies at institutions of higher education in Northern Norway.
<i>Nordplus Framework Programme</i>	Nordplus is a cooperation programme within the Nordic countries and the Baltics. The programme comprises of action plans in several educational levels and is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.
<i>Norwegian teachers abroad</i>	About 140 higher education institutions in Asia, Europe, Latin-America and North-America offer teaching in Norwegian language and Norwegian subjects. Among these, some 25 universities, mainly in Europe, have created non-tenure track positions for Norwegian teachers, called 'Norwegian teachers abroad'.
<i>The NUFU programme</i>	Supports independent academic cooperation based on initiatives from researchers and institutions in the South and their partners in Norway.
<i>Pakistan Ph.D. programme</i>	Norway is included as a country of destination for candidates in Pakistan's Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Ph.D. in Selected Fields.
<i>Pestalozzi-programme</i>	The Pestalozzi-programme is a training programme for education professionals organised by the Council of Europe.
<i>Cooperation Programme with Russia</i>	Supports long-term collaboration in higher education and research between universities, university colleges and research institutes in Russia and Norway.
<i>Eurasia Programme</i>	Supports project cooperation between institutions in Norway and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Moldova, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The overall goal is to contribute to renewal and internationalisation of higher education in the cooperating countries.
<i>Cooperation with South Caucasus and Central Asia</i>	University cooperation with countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.
<i>Study visits for education specialists</i>	One of the transversal programmes in EU's new programme for lifelong learning (LLP).
<i>The Tanzania Agreement</i>	The overall goal of the Tanzania agreement is enhancing the quality of higher education and research in Tanzania in order to contribute to poverty reduction in the country.
<i>Western Balkans 2006-2009</i>	Supports cooperation within higher education and research between universities, university colleges and research institutions in the Western Balkans and in Norway.

Appendix 3: Description of the evaluation of SIU

The following areas should be taken into consideration in the evaluation: SIU's purpose, mandate and strategy, SIU's organisation and management, SIU's qualifications, SIU's performance and results, and the future development of SIU.

SIU's purpose, mandate and strategy

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU's strategy, goals and activities correspond to management regulations as presented in SIU's mandate and letters of assignment in the period 2004-2009.

SIU has a consistent understanding of its role and room for manoeuvre.

SIU's mandate, strategies and goals are clearly formulated.

Organisation and management

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU's system of organisation and management facilitate the professional and efficient running of the agency's activities.

SIU's formal relation with the Ministry of Education and Research is optimal, in view of SIU's many roles and commitments.

SIU's collaborative structures and dialogue with relevant stakeholders and users are sufficient and relevant.

SIU has a consistent and manageable portfolio.

SIU is an attractive workplace that manages to attract and retain qualified staff.

SIU's qualifications

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU possesses sufficient expertise to fulfil its objectives, including knowledge and use of economic/administrative laws and regulations.

SIU's competence is used in an efficient manner.

SIU brings in external expertise when this is needed and/or desirable.

SIU is an attractive partner for relevant stakeholders, such as the universities, the university colleges, etc.

SIU's performance

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU's programme management is efficient in view of the requirements from different commissioners and stakeholders.

SIU's advisory services (e.g. analysis and policy development) towards the Ministry of Education and Research and other relevant stakeholders is in accordance with expectations.

SIU's collaboration and dialogue with commissioners and stakeholders is sufficient and relevant.

SIU disseminates information about programmes to relevant parties through efficient channels.

SIU's organisation and working methods create synergies between the organisation's different tasks, e.g. whether the programme management is linked to other parts of its portfolio, such as dissemination of information, policy advice and profiling Norwegian education and research, in a satisfactory manner.

SIU disseminates information about studies and research in Norway to relevant parties through efficient channels.

SIU's growth in the period in terms of tasks has affected its performance in a positive or negative direction.

SIU's overall performance is optimal compared to national agencies with similar tasks in other countries.

SIU's results

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU's set of priorities and achieved results reflect the centre's objectives, strategy and activities.

SIU's achieved results are in accordance with the expectations and priorities of the Ministry of Education and Research.

SIU's achieved results are in accordance with the expectations and priorities of the higher education institutions, commissioners and other relevant stakeholders.

SIU's methods, reports and chosen measures represent an efficient and cost-effective use of resources.

SIU's chosen measures represent an efficient and cost-effective way to achieve results in internationalisation of higher education.

SIU has contributed to increased knowledge, activities and policy development in the field of internationalisation.

SIU's future development

It should be evaluated whether:

SIU's mandate, purpose and portfolio should be adjusted.

SIU's steering model should be altered.

SIU's room for manoeuvre in relation to the Ministry of Education and Research and relevant stakeholders should be more clearly defined.

SIU's advisory services (e.g. analysis and policy development) are used by the Ministry of Education and Research and relevant stakeholders in an optimal manner.

SIU's collaboration with commissioners and relevant stakeholders could be further developed.

SIU has potential to enhance performance and results.

In addition, the evaluation should give advice on how the suggested adjustments may be done, also in light of SIU's proposed role as a service- and competence centre for schools, school owners and school authorities.

Appendix 4: A comparative analysis

Introduction

The objective of this part of the evaluation was to review alternative modes of steering organisations such as SIU. There are a number of approaches taken to delivering these types of services ranging from government executive agency through to a separate foundation. Agencies also come in many different guises, some tightly controlled by government departments and others which are more autonomous although still accountable to funders for budget and outputs.

These types of organisations also serve a variety of target groups or stakeholders often with very different expectations: Internally, the managers and the staff; Externally, Ministers and other politicians, ministries, other funders, beneficiaries of funds (in this case students, national and international), future beneficiaries, the general public.

This comparative analysis looked at three other organisations working in the same areas.

- IU - Danish Agency for International Education (Denmark)
- CIMO (Finland)
- NUFFIC Netherlands.

The structure of this piece of work includes: an overview of the agencies reviewed, history, structure and future, including their individual take on internationalisation. It follows with a brief critical reflection for the purposes of enhancing the conclusions and recommendations of the main study of the evaluation of SIU. We are very grateful for the time and support given by IU, CIMO and NUFFIC in compiling this information for the evaluation of SIU.

Overview of the Agencies

The Danish Agency for International Education

The Danish Agency for International Education (formerly known as CIRIUS) is an authority within the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation responsible for the internationalisation of education and training in Denmark.

The Agency has the following tasks:

- to help extend and strengthen internationalisation of education and training at all levels and to promote mobility
- to handle the national administration of international education programmes for school education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult learning as well as the youth sector

- to make authoritative decisions in the field of assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications
- to act as a national information centre in relation to internationalisation and recognition
- to contribute to the development of international cooperation between educational institutions and in relation to trade and industry
- to assist in launching new initiatives concerning the internationalisation of education and the development of competences in the global society.

CIMO in Finland

CIMO in Finland is called the Centre for International Mobility. It operates under the Finish Ministry of Education. CIMO administers scholarship and exchange programmes and is responsible for implementing nearly all EU education, training, culture and youth programmes at national level. To support internationalisation of educational and training institutions in Finland, CIMO offers training, information, advisory services and publications. CIMO also promotes and organises international trainee exchanges. In addition, CIMO advances teaching of Finnish language and culture in universities abroad and arranges summer courses in Finnish language and culture for international students. CIMO works across the entire education system from primary to higher education.

NUFFIC in the Netherlands

NUFFIC is the Dutch Organisation for Internationalisation of Higher Education. It is the oldest, founded in 1952, and the largest and has the motto “Linking Knowledge Worldwide”. It is a foundation and was more directly associated with its Universities than its funders. NUFFIC administers all international staff and student mobility programmes and institutional cooperation programmes on behalf of the Dutch government and other donor organisations. NUFFIC also provides higher education institutions, students and government bodies with information on trends and new developments in international cooperation through studies and research assignments.

Autonomy in executive agencies

The last decades have seen a proliferation of countries governments using Agencies in which to carry out particular tasks external to government department structures. This new mode of delivery gives a certain amount of freedom through lighter governance structures and less steering. There are a number of different, if not models, then variances in that way that government agencies are designed and put together. In this small piece of work, we look at three agencies that are performing the same fundamental tasks as SIU and explore the similarities and differences in approach. There are varying degrees of autonomy seen in executive agencies ranging from the almost fully autonomous, often in the form of foundations, through to the agency that remains almost as a small government department.

In the work of Van Thiel at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, she categorises Agencies in the following way:

1. National/central federal unit: a ministry department, state institution
2. Semi-autonomous: No legal independence but some managerial autonomy
3. Legally independent: Based on statutes with managerial autonomy. Could be based on public or private law
4. Private of private law based organisations established on behalf of the government like a foundation
5. Execution of tasks by regional or local bodies or governments
6. Other: contracting out where the state is not a major shareholder.

In the case of these executive agencies. IU and CIMO (and SIU) are perhaps a mixture of 1 and 2 with NUFFIC being a foundation. Denmark and Finland have a much longer tradition of ‘agencies’ than the Netherlands which created the majority of its agencies in the 1990s. Although NUFFIC is long established, it comes from the universities rather than government.

Agency main figures

Figure 1 Budgets

Organisation	Total budget (€)	Ministry responsible for Education	Ministry Responsible for Foreign Affairs	European Commission	Other
IU (Ministry for Science)	* Not available in this form	6,500,000			
CIMO (approx)	39,700,000	9,700,000	1,700,000	19,000,00	9,300,000
NUFFIC	132,021,000	12,957,000	90,755,000	25,134,000	3,175,000

* IU.dk has no funds or bloc grants at its free disposal. There are several licensees to the funding: First, an annual appropriation from the government’s Finance Act accounting for 57 per cent of total expenditure. The appropriation is earmarked to the Danish co-financing of the EU educational programmes and to the collection of knowledge and information in the field. Second, the centre holds a contractual license with the European Commission accounting for 26 per cent of total expenditure. Other contracts cover the remaining 17 per cent, among these contracts with the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers.

The budgets are different with the majority coming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for NUFFIC and a larger Ministerial proportion coming from the Ministry of Education in the case of CIMO. CIMO has around 70% of its budget from external funds. The main ministry budgets are linked to operating costs. NUFFIC is potentially facing a change in

the way that funding will happen in the future with a move to competitive tendering for some of its functions.

Figure 2 Agency data

Organisation	Year established	Staff size	No of departments	Spend on salary and operating costs
IU	2000	95	Six	N/A
CIMO	1991	104 23 (lecturers in Finnish)	Four	€9 million
NUFFIC	1952	199 (NL) 63 (overseas)	Four main directorates	€24.2 million

In terms of size, IU and CIMO are comparable, SIU a little smaller and NUFFIC is around twice the size. The Netherlands has a population around 3 times the size of Denmark and Finland.

The history and evolution of the agencies

Each of the three agencies under examination has a different start point and also different interpretations of “internationalisation” based on both national and international policy priorities. We see a mixture of “reasons” for internationalisation. For example these include, development work, gaining experience abroad, gaining from international students, inward mobility, changing attitudes and prejudices and preserving culture and language. This section gives a brief overview of the agencies’ histories and an indication of the main focuses of the agencies.

In Denmark, CIRIUS was formed in 2000 as an agency under the Ministry of Education. It further merged with CVUU (Centre for Vurdering af Udenlandske Uddannelser), the Danish Centre for the Assessment of Qualifications in 2004 and moved to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. By 2007 there was an increased focus on marketing Denmark as a study destination. The Danish Agency for International Education went through a rebranding/refocusing exercise which was completed at the beginning of 2010. From January 2010 it ceased to be called CIRIUS and is now the Danish Agency for International Education to ensure its mission is well communicated. It is moving from an Agency focusing on cultural exchange to embracing global competition for talent. Denmark is interested in both outgoing and incoming students.

NUFFIC is the oldest of the Agencies having been founded in 1952 by the universities in the Netherlands. This is different from the other agencies which are governmental in

origins. This was a call from the universities who wanted to work together to embrace the opportunities of international academic cooperation. One of the first priorities was developing countries and exporting the Dutch model of international education. In the 80s and 90s there was a lot of activity in developing courses and setting up links overseas. With European integration in the 90s the role of NUFFIC changed and the Universities of Applied Sciences as well as the universities started looking for broader markets. NUFFIC is now independent of the universities and works mainly on behalf of the Dutch government departments to promote international mobility and to attract students. It continues to work with developing countries and administering scholarships. This is a significant part of the budget. NUFFIC showed the most varied interpretation of internationalisation. It included how foreign students coming to the Netherlands can affect the way that Dutch students perceive the world. The Netherlands is a country which has also introduced English language teaching on a good proportion of its Masters programmes and even on some Bachelor's programmes. This helps with attracting foreign students, although there remains issues with getting foreign students to study outside of the capital. NUFFIC was reorganised at the end of 2006 from four thematic divisions into its current structure.

CIMO was set up by law in 1991. It operates under the Ministry of Education, soon to be the Ministry of Education and Culture. The idea behind its formation was to bring a number of different programmes and activities under one roof. The core activity is scholarships. In 1998 the promotion of Finnish culture was subsumed by CIMO bringing with it a new focus and additional funding. 2008 also brought about some changes in CIMO where the law that had been in place since 1991 was reviewed. There was a plan to merge CIMO with the National Board for Education which was rejected but nevertheless caused a timely review of the legislation and changes in the structure of CIMO. There is a new Director appointed in 2010 who had been in post for 3 months at the time of this work.

The following figures summarise the main activity types and also the focus/orientation of internationalisation. These are reasonably subjective but show the overall importance of global competition and how other activities taken on equal or lesser roles dependent on national priorities. The development work of NUFFIC is very strong and the motto of NUFFIC is "linking knowledge worldwide". At the same time NUFFIC links its development work with the notion that knowledge production is now happening world wide and that the talent pool is world wide, not just from the West. Therefore being globally competitive and capacity building are intrinsically linked.

Figure 3 Main types of activities

Agency	National mobility programmes	Promotion of country destination	Overseas development	Assessment of foreign qualifications	EU programmes
IU	√	√	(√)	√	√
CIMO	√	√	√		√
NUFFIC	√	√	√	√	√

Figure 4 Focus/orientation on internationalisation

Agency	Global competition	Development work	Changing attitudes	Cultural economy/citizenship
Denmark	High	Low	Low	Medium
Finland	High	High	Medium	Medium
Netherlands	High	High	High	Low

Organisational and Steering structures

With different sizes and structures it is no surprise that there are different ways used for organising the activities of the organisations or different comitologies for steering.

Organisation

All three agencies are structured slightly differently. NUFFIC is the most different in that it has all of its scholarships and capacity building, no matter what the study destination, under one department which separates out the function of the administration of large numbers of applications from its other activities. NUFFIC was reorganised this way in 2006, one of the main reasons being that it would be more efficient to put together all the capacity building and scholarship work. The staff were then more professionally organised and it also worked to remove the more “missionary” feeling of the organisation.

Figure 5 NUFFIC

Board of Trustees			
Board of Directors			
Directorate Capacity building and scholarships	Directorate Communications	Directorate Knowledge and innovation	Directorate Business Support
Capacity building programmes department	Education promotion department	Consultation platforms and knowledge department	Internal services department
National Agency for Lifelong learning	International recognition department	National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat	Planning and control department
Scholarships programme department	Public information services department		

CIMO is organised around customer facing themes (schools, Higher Education etc). It means that all departments understand their customer well but means that similar administrative functions are carried out across all the departments. It is considered to work well by the agency. Staff have a very good understanding of the mission of the agency.

Figure 6 CIMO

	Ministry of Education	
Director for Development	Overall Director	Communications Director
Assistant Director	Deputy Director	Assistant Director
DEPARTMENT 1	CIMO Services	DEPARTMENT 2
General and adult education	Information services	Higher Education cooperation
Vocational education and training	Admin	Traineeships and postgraduate studies
Youth and culture		Finnish language and culture
		Halls of residence

The Danish agency has the largest number of departments with six managers over six divisions which are organised around customer facing areas in a similar way to CIMO, although it is more administrative. There is work being undertaken in the Danish agency to streamline processes such as publications and the website through the creation of the new communications and IT department which will work with all other departments.

Figure 7 Danish IU

Director			
Communications and IT Director		Økonomichef	
Evaluation and recognition of qualifications	Youth, training, primary and secondary, general adult education and promotion	Higher education and vocational education and training	Denmark as a study destination

Steering structures

The Danish agency and CIMO in Finland are more directly linked to their respective ministries than NUFFIC which operates as a not for profit foundation. In terms of accountability, both CIMO and IU see themselves as directly accountable/responsible through the director, to the Ministry in charge of Education. NUFFIC is a little more “arms length”.

In Denmark there are 4 agencies under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, each with its own Director and the four Directors are directly accountable/responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Departementsjef). The Permanent Secretary hires the directors who together make up an Executive Committee of the Ministry. Ideally the 4 Directors meet every week. The advantage to this is the power/influence that comes with the direct ear of the Ministry. The disadvantage is not being able to disagree with the Minister and government agenda. Of the three agencies, the Danish model is the most tightly tied to its ministry. The Danish model is also relatively light. There is no advisory committee, although ad-hoc committees may be formed and disbanded to address particular issues (for example one on improving destinations and another on marketing Denmark). One formal aspect in Denmark is the Council for the Internationalisation of Higher Education for which the agency plays a secretariat role. The Council is a Ministry structure, rather than agency. Although the agency works with other Ministries, it is mainly responsible to Science, Technology and Innovation. It is almost self contained apart from some budgetary processes.

Council for Internationalisation of Danish Education

The Council for Internationalisation of Danish Education was established January 1, 2007 and consists of a chair and 8 members. It was created by the Ministry and has members from all over the sector. The aim is to work on key aspects of internationalisation. This year the focus is primary schools, last year, professional training.

The terms of reference for this council are the following:

To advise on possible initiatives ensuring that all young persons in Denmark receive an education with a global perspective.

To advise on possible initiatives ensuring that Danish students at all levels acquire global and intercultural competences and skills combined with a global view.

To advise on possible initiatives ensuring that Danish education and Danish educational institutions are attractive for foreign students and foreign teachers at all levels.

To advise on possible initiatives ensuring Danish schools and other educational institutions to become attractive cooperation partners.

To advise on possible initiatives ensuring that Danish educational institutions develop professional environments which can attract and withhold qualified manpower from abroad.

The Council shall further contribute in bringing international trends into the development and formulation of the educational policies in Denmark

CIMO is also director led and directly responsible to the Ministry of Education. There are two other directors. It is self contained, running its own HR and IT. The only thing in common with the Ministry is the accounting structure. There used to be a governing body but it was removed in 2008. It consisted of a number of stakeholders who accepted the budget proposal and annual reporting. There is an advisory board and there are plans to reinstate the governing board. The director meets three times a year (officially) with the Ministry of Education to review agreements. It is said to feel like a partnership with the Ministry.

There are three directors of NUFFIC and one overall Director General who is responsible of the overall strategy and day to day management. He is the chair of the senior management team whose members meet weekly. There used to be more directors but this is now constrained to three. There was also a large board which was abolished 10 years ago. There is now a board of trustees with seven members and they choose their own successors. Although the Director General works closely with the Ministry, he is not steered by the Ministry. The Ministry is involved in yearly plans and budgets only.

NUFFIC – Board of trustees

NUFFIC’s corporate governance structure is based on the principle of transparent accountability for strategy, performance and risk. There is a strict division of tasks, responsibilities and authority between internal supervision and senior management. This division ensures that the interaction between the day-to-day management and the trustees is efficient and effective. The Board of Trustees is composed of no more than seven members and its role is to advise management and to supervise the general running of the organisation.

It also has the task of signing off NUFFIC’s annual financial statements and the annual report. The budget and the annual plans for the organisation’s activities also require the approval of the Trustees. The Board of Trustees meets four times a year. When vacancies arise on the Board of Trustees, the remaining Trustees are tasked with appointing new members. In their endeavours, they aim to strike a balance of expertise in education in the Netherlands and in the rest of the world, expertise in national or international administration or legal affairs, expertise in finance and business, and expertise in the field of human resource management and employment law.

Trustees meet 4 times a year and also have 2 committees

Audit and Committee for performance management.

They do not involve themselves with management.

Overall all three agencies have relatively slim line structures of governance and accountability which mean that there needs to be a good level of trust between the fund holders and the agency.

Agency	Governing board	Advisory Committee	Board of trustees	Ad hoc committees
IU	No	No	No	Yes
CIMO	No	Yes	No	No
NUFFIC	No	No	Yes	No

Policy making function

All three agencies under review took slightly different approaches to influencing policy making. The most clear is NUFFIC which has a specific department on consultation platforms and knowledge however they would not class themselves as being a policy making organisation but as a provider of market intelligence and views for policy makers. The department serves NUFFIC as well as performing research for the Dutch HE institutions. It directly contributes to strategic policy making within NUFFIC.

The Danish Agency for International Education contributes to policy through its every day work but does not have a separate remit to help support the Ministry through research and policy formulation. In CIMO there is some power to influence policy and staff are invited to Ministry working groups. This is a growing area of work although remains unofficial.

Strategy and priority setting

In all three agencies, the strategy and priority setting is done in partnership with the Ministries. The agencies appear to be fully involved and mostly leading on this issue.

NUFFIC's strategy is a four year strategy which is translated into an activity plan which is subsequently translated into yearly plans which reflect the targets of the directors. NUFFIC has just published its new strategic framework for 2010.

For IU there is a formal contract with the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation "the strategic plan". It is a short formal document containing the goals for each financial year and how this should be measured. In the case of IU there have been some significant changes in the way that the goal setting has been done and they are now categorised as:

1. Production goals (outputs)
2. Quality goals (improvement)
3. Effect goals (impact)

The effect goals include strengthening outgoing mobility and also incoming mobility. This is a new type of contract with the Ministry and the effect goals can be rolled forward over years. This is challenging on the one hand as the control over some of the effect goals can be limited. In addition to the contract between the agency and the ministry, there is a personal contract between the Director and the Permanent Secretary. The Director sets equivalent contracts for the managers within IU taking into account their personal responsibilities.

CIMO have an annual proposal and a four year plan with the Ministry of Education which sets out budgets. Within the agreement there are objectives set. These are output oriented and there is a view that this needs to be reviewed under the new Director and in the future to have an agreement which is result/impact oriented.

Overall, the Danish model has the most accountability in terms of impact. There is a move for CIMO to follow suit.

Human resources

As highlighted the agencies (except IU) have control over HR with little ministerial control. All agencies undertake staff satisfaction surveys which are generally positive.

IU has a low staff turnover. Although the staff satisfaction is high, the organisation has not growing considerably which may not allow new talent and ideas to come in at a rate which could help with the modernisation of the agency. Training in IU is on offer but is not taken up to any extent. CIMO with its high level of staff satisfaction has a salary system which is based on performance. In NUFFIC, with the reorganisation, the staff have a new understanding of the mission and orientation of the agency which is more in keeping with its future vision.

Internal communication

In NUFFIC, the intranet is an important tool for the purpose of communication and one employee works full time on this. The IU also has an intranet but usage is low. In IU there weekly management meetings where the plan is communicated to staff. There are also monthly staff meetings of one hour, very focused. The Director uses his email sparingly to inform staff or issues.

Use of external experts

There is very little use of external experts in the Agencies. IU rarely uses external expertise. It may be used for conferences and speakers. CIMO also rarely uses external experts, only for assessing projects.

Outsourcing of functions

IU outsources IT functions, bookkeeping and HRM to the Ministry. CIMO and NUFFIC are self contained. For the Danish Agency, outsourcing provides cost savings for the agency and the Ministry (bulk licenses etc) but also leaves it open to issues in the future such as its ability to adapt, take on new roles etc. This is highlighted as one of its future challenges.

The Public face of the agencies

The different faces of internationalisation means that the ways that the agencies are “communicated” to users and the public also differ. All the agencies have recently been through or are still going through a process of review of their communication activities.

Main messages of what the agencies do from their websites

IU	CIMO	NUFFIC
<p>The Danish Agency for International Education is the national agency for two EU education programmes, Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action, as well as for other similar programmes, including Nordic and Danish education programmes and initiatives.</p> <p>The Agency is also the central institution in Denmark where persons with foreign qualifications can get these assessed and recognised.</p> <p>In addition, the Agency is an information centre concerning internationalisation of all the educational sectors.</p>	<p>CIMO administers scholarship and exchange programmes and is responsible for implementing nearly all EU education, training, culture and youth programmes at national level. CIMO also promotes and organises international trainee exchanges.</p>	<p>As an independent, non-profit organisation based in The Hague, the Netherlands, NUFFIC supports internationalisation in higher education, research and professional education in the Netherlands and abroad, and helps improve access to higher education worldwide.</p> <p>..... We play an important role in fostering international cooperation in higher education between the Netherlands and other countries.</p> <p>NUFFIC has a motto: Linking Knowledge Worldwide</p>

In NUFFIC, there are several layers of communication activities. At the corporate level there are a minimum number of main publications (4) which are printed. The target of the corporate communications is the general public. There has been a significant decrease in the budget for printing and the money has been invested in the websites. Under the Education promotion department of the Communications Directorate, NUFFIC coordinates all its “Study in Holland” literature and activities. The public information services department, which is in charge of corporate communication, also answers all public enquiries. The NUFFIC website was renewed two years ago and as said is the main focus of communication. It considers its audience to be: Ministry, clients and the general public. All grant applications can be only made on line now and this has greatly impacted on efficiency.

In IU there is a new unit for IT and communications. Until recently each unit produced its own publications with no single strategy. This has now been addressed and is tied to the creation of a new online service. There are plans for the online service to be more than just a static web site but have good links to the students through facebook and also to use viral marketing to attract new students to Denmark. The new approach to communication will bring cost savings with it.

	Publications	Websites	Other
NUFFIC	Four main corporate publications Numerous others	Just been redone and incorporates studyinholland	Public enquiries service
IU	Numerous fact sheets CHECK	One website and the studyindenmark	There is a new unit for IT and communications
CIMO	CHECK	Three websites, one studyinfinland	A drop in information centre

Serving the customer

All organisations are strongly customer facing in terms of the students. In CIMO, many of the staff come from an international environment and have an interest in this area. CIMO also has an open library and welcomes people to come in. This is not the same for NUFFIC and IU, although NUFFIC has a specific information services department.

NUFFIC, in spite of having been originally developed by the universities in the Netherlands, considers itself to be too removed from the institutions in present day. This is something for the future strategy as relations need to be repaired and made. The universities have their own internationalisation strategies but there is common ground where NUFFIC could work more closely to support the institutions and vice versa. NUFFIC have recently put together a memorandum to involve HE institutions in the policy making of NUFFIC. The new strategy includes the Hogescholen (Universities of Applied Sciences). The strategy marks out a number of different ways it can work with the research universities and the universities of applied sciences.

In CIMO the information and communication department under the communications director centralises all the communication activities and has a helicopter view of the organisation. It serves both the foreign and domestic customers, although all units have a role in developing ideas for publication and there are communication specialised in each department.. CIMO has three websites and there is a current overhaul and a relaunching later this year. Two are domestically focused and one is for foreigners “studyinfinland”.

NUFFIC undertakes customer satisfaction surveys every two years. CIMO’s most recent customer satisfaction survey emphasised the growing need for a good website, fewer printed publications and explicit links with other related networks.

All three agencies are moving from print to web. IU has seen a decreasing budget. In CIMO, communication is both centralised and decentralised. The challenge is the growing need to communicate coupled with static staffing of the department and a need to reorientate products.

Conclusions, critical reflections

The review of the three agencies needs to be looked at with reference to SIU and its own priorities. There are a number of reflections which can be drawn from the information gathered in the international comparison.

The definition of internationalisation of higher education

In all cases the emphasis of aspects of internationalisation differ according to national priorities. The thread running through, and the one that has led to many of the recent changes in the organisations is the aspect of global competition. The work in developing countries, even if still significant, is also seen in light of its influence on future competition rather than pure aid work. This is a change which is being embedded in the culture of the organisations and the staff.

Managing diverse priorities

All the agencies take slightly different approaches to managing priorities. CIMO is the agency with the most diverse set of priorities. Its focus includes global competition, inward mobility, outward mobility, as well as a need for the preservation of the Finnish language and culture. It also works across all levels of education to a greater or lesser extent. It marries its priorities well but the new director will no doubt bring about changes to help the organisation to move forward to meet the new challenges facing Finland in terms of a multi cultural, multi ethnic society. CIMO sees itself as part of the reshaping of the future rather than responding to change.

Trust between Agency and Ministry

There is a move towards much more slim line approaches to governance. This is seen in all the agencies and there appear to be no particular knock on effects from removing governing bodies for example. The impact has been in the case of CIMO and IU, and in particular IU, very close relationships with the ministry. CIMO see this as a partnership. IU have very high levels of trust between themselves and the ministry, which is liberating but also could make them vulnerable. The provenance of the Director in the case of IU (non civil servant) would appear to help view this relationship one of equals. The impact oriented contract is also an important step forward in terms of accountability and trust built on evidence.

The balance between procedure and policy – effect on knowledge within the organisation

In all of the agencies there are different approaches taken to mixing up the procedural work, the information and communication function and the policy supporting knowledge. It is more carefully separated in NUFFIC, the largest agency –which may be why. In a larger organisation, knowledge sharing becomes more complex and in the case of NUFFIC, there are greater efforts to implement internal mechanisms of communication such as an active intranet.

Dynamic environment

Overall, all the agencies have been through a period of significant change or reflection in the last few years. There has been a reorientation and redefinition of aspects of internationalisation with a greater focus on global competition and the free flow of people and knowledge around the globe. There are also some aspects which the agencies have which are more cultural in origin for example around the preservation of the language in the case of Finland. The interviews with CIMO gave an indication that the agency, with its new Director, was about to go through another period of change in the coming years to reflect new priorities and challenges. In Finland, traditionally internationalisation was viewed as being the mobility of the elite. With a need to embrace multiculturalism within Finland, it is also a mechanisms for embedding tolerance, understanding and an overall widening of opportunities across the population. CIMO can have a key role in this. It is only recently that universities in Finland are putting together internationalisation strategies and CIMO has a role in helping the universities.

NUFFIC, with its major restructuring in 2006, would appear relatively happy with the automation of certain processes and the internal organisation of the agency. Its challenge is to reconnect with the universities and newly connect with the universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. This will encourage the promotion of Holland as a whole as a study destination and help play to the strengths of both its research and also teaching and vocational training. The Nesos network of offices are very important for NUFFIC to promote links between the Dutch institutions and the country institutions. Great links with the universities could enhance this role.

NUFFIC in its new strategy asks questions about whether it should too become international, offering its services to other countries to manage scholarships for example or recognition of degrees. There are a number of expertises in the agency which could be used internationally and NUFFIC is a foundation and so therefore the structure is more receptive to opening up to know revenue streams. One of the issues associated with this is NUFFIC works in partnership with other agencies and organisations and going into direct competition with them would change a number of dynamics.

The Swedish approach to managing internationalisation of research and higher education

In Sweden, at least three organisations are having a national responsibility for internationalisation of research and higher education, including related issues such as profiling Sweden as an attractive country for foreign students, and managing international exchange programmes. Two of these organisations are national agencies, one is a semi public-private foundation of the kind which is typical for Sweden (there are a handful of such foundations which play an important role in the Swedish national system for research funding). The oldest and perhaps first organisation that at least foreign students come across – and Swedish students who wish to go abroad – is the Swedish Institute (SI).

SI is a national agency which operates under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but has an annual sum of funding from the Ministry of Education and Research as well. SI manages scholarship programmes for foreign undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students who wish to come to Sweden for studies. SI also runs the national web portal Study in Sweden (www.studyinsweden.se) with extensive information and links to higher education programmes and courses, as well as information on how to apply, how it is like to live in Sweden and all possible related information.

Secondly, there is The International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK).

IPK is a government agency that promotes academic exchanges and cooperation across national borders. The mission is to support different forms of international cooperation within education. IPK awards grants and project funding as part of the cooperation and exchange programmes for which it is responsible. IPK also runs communication initiatives aimed at various target groups in the field of education in Sweden. The work is funded by and managed in close cooperation with several Swedish and foreign institutions. The primary funders are the European Commission, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish government.

Together with partners in other EU countries, IPK participates in the development of European cooperation in the field of education. The goal is to attain greater mutual support, cultural understanding and new knowledge, as well as to create and develop international contact networks.

IPK awards all sorts of funding, ranging from grants for different cooperation and development projects to individual scholarships for overseas study, teacher exchanges and further education. The programmes are aimed at different levels and types of education: from preschool to university, vocational training and adult education. The funding can be applied by Swedish organisations, and in some cases, Swedish individuals.

Thirdly and last, there is the Swedish Foundation for Internationalisation of Research and Higher Education (STINT). STINT was established and got a major governmental donation in 1994, and operates independently from the government. The mandate is to promote internationalisation of Swedish higher education and research, for the benefit of Sweden. All academic fields and all countries are included. The priorities are set by the foundation itself.

STINT manages a handful of internationalisation programmes which target specific geographical or academic areas, or specific academic layers of the academic community. Support through scholarships are for instance given to outgoing PhDs, short term visits in both directions, long term research team support, and advancement of teaching staff. Other smaller initiatives are also in operation, targeting for instance developing parts of South East Asia or Latin America. The lion's share of STINT's support goes to research rather than to higher education.

Appendix 5: Main trends and some dilemmas in the organisation and role of agencies: Evidence from the literature

The Nordic countries have historically followed different models for organising the executive branch of government. Denmark has traditionally organised the professional administrative units within the Ministries. This creates a strong central administrative body with a short distance between policy making and implementation. Sweden has a tradition of strong external agencies which are semi independent from their ministries. This gives them a certain distance from political steer. Norway is somewhere in between. The use of semi-independent national agencies has varied between the sectors and over time. Traditionally for instance the central agricultural administration would not have independent agencies but have strong professional administrations organised at the ministry level but with a strong professional director heading for instance the veterinary or forestry department. Whereas in the fishery sector, the Directorate of Fisheries predates by decades the establishment of a separate Ministry for fisheries and has held a strong independent professional role in fishery management.

Internationally the trend the past two decades have been to hive off tasks from the ministry to semi-independent national agencies – this is in the literature on public administration referred to as the trends towards agencification. Agencification refers to the organisational separation of policy implementation from policy formulation in central departments – “the hierarchical model of regulation by command and control is being supplemented by greater delegation of this function to autonomous agencies” (Christensen and Lægreid 2005:1). In short the agencification is underpinned by ideas that ministries should off-load part of their implementation and case-by-case decision making in order for the ministries to use their capacity to focus on policy formulation and strategic decision making and hence be free to act as political secretariats. In a Norwegian context it is referred to as the “directorate doctrine”.

The argument for establishing national agencies has also been strongly rooted in the idea that a directorate at arm’s length to the political level of its parent ministry can take on a more long-term professional role in the political-administrative system.

There is a general trend in politics which suggests that political decision and policy proposals need to have professional justification in order to be legitimate. Policy areas are growing more complex and as such, diverse expertise is increasingly called for within the system. This is one of the underlying reasons for the trend towards better evidence based policy making. As is evident in the organisational history of Norwegian central administration, the question of how to organise expert professional-technical competencies in relation to the political-executive level is a deep rooted question of political organisation.

A central reason for establishing national agencies outside of the ministry environment is that the type of competencies that are needed for delivery of executive agency functions long term technical-professional competencies that are indispensable to the well-functioning implementation and feedback and advice to the policy process will operate under better terms in agencies where the often short term exigencies of the political process at and shifting political agendas that are at the core of what a ministry should cater for.

In practice this complete separation of professional-technical, and highly specialised competencies organised within national agencies and the political role in the ministry has not been viable and contains several dilemmas visible in the practical operation of the relationship between ministry and agency. One observation is that it is very hard for an agency to fulfill its professional role, its role as a policy advisor, and as a feeder of information to the parent ministry, if the ministry is emptied of professional competencies itself. There needs to be a counterpart within the ministry in that can act as the absorptive capacity of a ministry and be able to competently formulate the questions for which it want advice and information.

At the same time agencies cannot expect to live in isolation as a technocracy without 'political sensitivity' and cut off from public and political accountability (see DIFI 2008: 5). In sum the use of the national agency model assumes that there is in practice a balancing act also at the agency level between professional role and its role as a part of the political-administrative system. Agencies have a dual role: "Direktoratene er politisk styrt men ikke politiske – de skal primært ivareta faglige hensyn i oppgaveutførelsen, men de må ha en politisk forståelse" (NOU 2006: 14). Studies of directorates show that agency officials in general do act in a role that gives more weight to professional-expertise considerations rather the political decision making criteria when compared the official in Ministries. The decision-making premises used by actors in autonomous agencies are less attentive to political signals than in an integrated model (Egeberg 2003). Christensen and Læg Reid summarised the research in this areas in the following way:

[....], one main argument is that structural devolution changes and weakens the instruments of control and increases the distance between the political leadership and subordinate units and lower levels of management ((Christensen and Læg Reid 2005 (REGULATORY REFORMS AND AGENCIFICATION WORKING PAPER UIB 6 – 2005.).

The professional role of an agency is also dual in another sense – an independent agency is in general expected to have an advisory role for the ministry and for other public bodies in the sector it is located within and for the public in general. A study by DiFI (2008) shows several areas of tension in agencies' advisory role to the parent ministry.

First, although this role is considered a natural and legitimate part of an agency function, it is often that agencies find themselves in a position where the ministry expects both advice

and input the “big” processes such as in connection with the annual preparations for the state budgets, often with a call for resource demanding gathering of “hard facts” and on top of this agencies have several ad-hoc “orders” from the ministry for hard facts. This requires the appropriate competency among staff for doing so and capacity for data processing and so on. Also several agencies underline how the expectations of parent ministry for how the agency should be its policy adviser is so attention- and time-consuming that little is left for the agency to cater for its advisory and servicing role with respect to other constituencies and the general public.