Guidelines for Regional Review Visits

Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development

THE OECD PROGRAMME ON INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (IMHE)

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DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE REGIONAL REVIEW VISITS

1.   The purpose of this document is to provide briefing and advice for all those concerned with the processes involved in a regional review visit for the IMHE project "Supporting the contribution of higher education institutions to regional development." It describes the different elements in the process, the role of different persons in the activity, logistics and cost-sharing arrangements.

1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

2.   Regional review visits are an essential part of the whole project. From the point of view of each region, the regional review visit is part of a sequence of stages of engagement in the project – these are as follows:

- Preparation of the regional <u>Self-evaluation Report</u> (SER) by the region.

- Once the SER, or a full draft is available, a short <u>'Pre-visit'</u> to the region by the Team Co-ordinator to plan the main regional review visit (2 days)

- Some 2-4 months later, the week-long <u>Regional Review Visit</u> is undertaken by the OECD review team

- Preparation of the <u>Peer Review Report</u> (PRR) by the OECD review team. This should be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

- <u>Finalisation of the Peer Review Report</u>, and dissemination of agreed text, in consultation with the region.

- <u>Presentation and dissemination</u> of findings from the Peer Review Report.

- Both Peer Review Report and Self-evaluation Report feed into the preparation of the <u>Final Comparative Report</u>, covering all regions involved in the project.

3.   Each of these stages in the process is considered in more depth below.

1-1. Regional Self-evaluation Report

4.   The regional Self-evaluation Report (SER) provides an overview of the country & regional context, current policies and provision, major issues and concerns, and available data in the field of higher education and territorial development. The report can be written either by government officials or by commissioned authors. With the final approval of the region, the SER will be posted in the project website hosted by OECD. The SER should be completed in advance of both the pre-visit and the regional review visit, so that it can inform and support the regional review visit. However the SER also has independent value, and provides direct input into the Final Comparative Report on the review.

1-2. Pre-visit

5.   The pre-visit consists of a visit typically by the Team Co-ordinator to the region for two days. Participation by the lead evaluator or other team members is optional, but welcome. The purpose of the pre-visit is to plan the full regional review visits. It involves discussions with the regional co-ordinator, with the regional steering committee and with the report author/s. The outcome should first, be a shared understanding of the processes and objectives of the regional review visit and, second, a detailed draft schedule for the regional review visit, which can then be implemented by the regional co-ordinator.

6.   More specifically, the pre-visit aims to:

- Inform the region of the purposes and format of the review visit;

- Obtain information from the region on key substantive issues that should be addressed by the OECD review team;

- Meet with Regional self-evaluation report author/s;

- Prepare the actual regional review visit:
  - Identify the major stakeholder groups and key individuals that the review team should meet;
  - Identify institutions and organisations that the review team should visit;
  - Identify the geographical areas to cover within the region;
  - Map out a schedule for the review visit;
  - Agree the shape of the Review team.

- Clarify administrative arrangements (hotel bookings, within-country transportation, interpretation services, assistance to the team, time keeping, etc);

7.   A possible schedule for the pre-visit is set out at annex A.

1-3. Regional review visit

8.   The Review team consists of a multi-national team of 4 experts. It includes (1) two international experts one of whom is designated as the Lead evaluator who takes the lead in writing the subsequent Peer Review Report; (2) one national expert – but not from the region reviewed; and (3) a Team Co-ordinator – usually but not necessarily a member of the OECD Secretariat. The team should reflect so far as possible a balance of types of experience and expertise, country and gender backgrounds. Detailed person specification for the experts of the review team can be found at Annex B.

9.   The visit should allow for the discussion of issues with a wide range of stakeholders: government representatives in relevant ministries at a national level, senior policy makers, regional stakeholders such as municipal and regional authorities, individual businesses and their representative bodies, and various constituents of the higher education institutions in the region. There will be some field visits to individual higher education institutions in the region and other national, if possible, and/or regional authorities and organisations. An indicative Aide Memoire which can be used for the regional review visits is attached as Annex C.

10.   The precise schedule of a regional review visit will very much depend on the substance to be addressed, distance to travel and bilateral negotiations in the pre-visit. For indicative purposes, however, a possible schedule for 7 day regional review visit is described at Annex D.

1-4. Peer Review Report

11.   After each visit, the OECD review team prepares a Peer Review Report (PRR) drawing together observations and analyses of region-specific policy issues. The PRR should identify the major issues arising from the visit, and advance recommendations to improve policy and practice in the region visited. The report may also highlight examples of innovative approaches with the goal of promoting cross-national (regional) exchange of good practice.

1-5. Finalisation of Peer Review Report in consultation with regions

12.   Once the draft Peer Review Report is received from the Lead evaluator by the OECD, the region of concern will be consulted about the text to ensure that there are no factual errors or misinterpretations in the report. With the approval of the region, the final draft of the Peer Review Report is distributed to other participating regions in the project and posted on the relevant OECD website once completed.

1-6. Presentation and dissemination of findings from regional review visits

13.   The OECD recommends that the region organises *a National Seminar* to present the results of the Peer Review Report. This will have the advantages of raising awareness of issues, highlighting the specific policy interests of the reviewed region, achieving dissemination of findings and obtaining support for reform from key stakeholders throughout the country.

14.   A *Final International Conference* will be organised to facilitate sharing of lessons and experiences among participating regions in the project, with voluntary country/region participation. Participants will be invited to present an analysis of the issues in their own regional context and the impact on policy initiatives. This conference will also give an opportunity for participating regions to share perspectives and understandings gained during the completion of the whole project activities, and present new insights and suggestions. In addition to the regional presentations, international experts and key stakeholders will be invited to contribute to the debate.

15.   Once the project report has been completed *other national & international dissemination events* will provide opportunities for participating regions to present findings from the study.

2. MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL REVIEW VISITS

2-1. Logistical arrangements for the regional review visit

16.   The logistical arrangements for the regional review visit are as follows:

- *Hotel bookings*: the region will make all hotel bookings for the OECD review team. (The OECD review team members will settle their accounts individually during their stay).

- *Within-country (region) transportation*: the region will arrange for travel within the country (region) and from meeting to meeting.

- *Assistance to the team during the visit*. The OECD recommends that someone from the region, normally the Regional Coordinator, travels with the team and attends the meetings. This person

will help the team with logistics, transport, and with time keeping for meetings. The team will ask her/him a lot of questions!!

- *Tentative daily schedule*. 9:00 to 6:30 daily, short lunches; a minimum of official dinners (one or at most two). The review team will have a meeting every evening to go over each day's experience and draw immediate conclusions, so evenings free of meetings are important.

- Meetings should be kept to around 50 minutes, with short 10 minute presentations by regional stakeholders and free time for OECD review team members to ask questions.

- *Interpretation services*. The review team will normally conduct its meetings during the visit in English. Depending on the region, interpretation may be required. If interpretation is required it is strongly recommended that an interpreter equipped with portable interpretation equipment be attached to the team, rather than organising meetings only in rooms equipped with translation facilities, as this reduces the freedom of a review team.

2-2. Resourcing issues

17.   The following costs are covered by the contribution paid by the region for participation in the project:

- *travel*, to and from the region by the review team and the Team Co-ordinator for the pre-visit;
- *subsistence* expenses for the review team and the Team Co-ordinator for the pre-visit; and
- the *honoraria* for reviewers where appropriate.

18.   The region will pay in addition for:

- internal transportation of the review team;
- interpretation costs if necessary;
- the costs of the dissemination of the Peer Review Report (other than through simply placing it on the OECD website), for example through a national seminar.

2-3. Roles and responsibilities

Within the region:

Regional co-ordinator

19.   Countries choose a Regional co-ordinator, who is in charge of co-ordination of the process and direct contact with the OECD. The Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Communications with the OECD Secretariat about the activity;

- Communications within the country about the activity, including the Regional Steering Committee and, as appropriate, collaboration between Education and other relevant ministries (i.e. Labour, Science & Technology);

- Ensuring that the Regional Self-evaluation is completed on schedule;

- Organising the review team visit with OECD and Regional Steering Committee guidance and ensuring that interpretation is available for the visit, if necessary;

- Co-ordinating feedback on draft materials produced through the activity, in particular the Peer Review Report and Final Comparative Report; and

- Assisting with dissemination activities associated with the review.

Regional Steering Committee

20.   It is required that participating regions establish a Regional Steering Committee to support the work of the Regional co-ordinator, to oversee the preparation of the Self-evaluation Report, to assist with the preparation of the OECD review team visit (guidance in selection of groups/institutions to visit) and to approve the Self-evaluation & Peer Review Reports. It is strongly recommended that the Committee include representation of (i) all HEIs in the region, (ii) regional authorities and business, and (iii) relevant ministries or agencies at a national level. It would be also very important to select an appropriate chair for the committee in a sense that this committee can play an important role in ensuring that a variety of perspectives are reflected, in particular, in the self-evaluation report.

Within the OECD secretariat and the review team:

21.   Each **Review Team Member** will be responsible for:

- preparing carefully for the visit by reading the Regional self-evaluation report and other background documents;

- taking part in the regional review visits as a team member. This involves asking probing questions during meetings, debating the issues arising with review team colleagues and agreeing collective conclusions; taking part in any presentations (for example at the end of the review with the Steering Committee); and

- working with the other review team members to plan the Peer Review Report (a 30 page report on the visit) and contributing to draft sections of the report on agreement with the team

22.   The **Lead evaluator** will be responsible for:

- undertaking all the tasks of a team member as set out above, PLUS

- delivering the team's report to the Project Steering Group which includes: (1) determining the structure of the report, (2) allocating drafting responsibilities and (3) signing off the final draft.

  in advance of the regional review visit

- taking the lead in identifying the issues to be addressed by the OECD review team, in consultation with the regional co-ordinator, on the basis of the information and analysis in the self-evaluation.

23.   The **Team Co-ordinator** will be responsible for:

- undertaking all the tasks of a team member as set out above, PLUS

in advance of the regional review visit

- undertaking the pre-visit and planning the full regional review visit in liaison with the Regional co-ordinator and under the guidance of the lead evaluator;

- preparing detailed guidance and background information for the team undertaking the regional review visit;

following the visit

- progress, and co-ordination of the preparation of the draft report

- once the draft Peer Review Report is signed off by the lead evaluator, discussing the draft with the region and agreeing amendments with the region, in close consultation with the lead evaluator and other team members.

ANNEX A: Possible Meeting Schedule for Pre-visit (2 Days)

1. Meeting with Regional co-ordinator (1.5 hours)

- Clarify reasons for pre-visit;

- Review schedule and arrangements for the pre-visit;

- Define objectives for each meeting during the pre-visit;
  - Self-evaluation Report:
  - Meeting with Regional Steering Committee: What type of decisions to be made there?

- Discuss make-up of Review Team for the Regional review visit;

- General logistics for the Regional review visit – Where the team will be based; Priorities for geographical areas to be covered; daily schedule;

- Other issues

2. Meeting with Author(s) of the Self-evaluation Report (1.5 to 2 hours)

- Review current status of report

- Discuss in detail the Self-evaluation Report and its main implications for the review visit and the overall activity;

- Provide comments and suggestions for the improvement of the Self-evaluation Report;

- Timeline;

3. Meeting with Regional Steering Committee (1.5 to 2 hours)

- Brief presentation by the OECD on the activity

- Brief presentation by the OECD on the purposes and organisation of the visit + composition of review team;

  - The Self-evaluation Report (maybe short presentation by Regional Coordinator)

  - The visit itself, what it includes – collection of information + discussions at different levels

  - The make-up of the review team

  - The Peer Review Report (30 pages)

- Discussion on: (i) the main priority issues for the review team to address; (ii) Should the review focus on any specific areas? (iii) what geographical regions should be visited; (iv) the main groups and individuals that should be consulted; and (v) the main types of institutions that should be visited.

- Identification of the main steps in planning the review visit.

4. Final meeting: Debriefing with the Regional co-ordinator (2 hours)

- Review the discussions and their implications for the review team visit.

- Clarify the key stages of the review team visit;

- Agree on the next steps to be taken by: (a) the Team Co-ordinator; (b) the Regional Co-ordinator.

- Review team;

- Geographical areas to be covered.

- Tentative schedule. 9:00 to 6:30 daily, short lunches; no official dinners (maybe 1 or 2)

- Logistics: Hotel recommendations, place for the team to be based; translation/interpretation; assistance during visits; time keeping; transportation.

- Costs: Internal travel, interpretation services, staff member(s) to assist the review team.

  The region' financial contribution to the project (€ 35.000) covers travel to/from country of the review team, secretariat members and per diems (covering hotel + meals, honorarium fee for external reviewers).

ANNEX B: Person Specification of the Experts for the Regional Review Visit

It is expected that each expert will have the following knowledge, experience, skills and abilities:

Criteria	Essential/Desirable
Knowledge and understanding of:	
• how different organisations (at the national and regional levels) work with HEIs.	Essential
• national and regional policies that relate to HE (including how regional policies support national needs)	Essential
• how HEIs support and deliver a regional agenda, and how the regional agenda supports teaching, learning, research and 3rd stream activities.	Essential
• HE developments internationally, including other HE systems and current developments in at least two countries.	Desirable
• Regional governance and strategy arrangements within different national systems	Desirable
Experience	
• Experts will have a proven track record of achievement in senior roles within a range of organisational settings related to HE, or evidence of direct relevant experience, and the capacity to operate at the highest level.	Essential
• Experts will have experience of reviewing/evaluating HE policy and practice at regional or national levels.	Desirable
• It would be desirable for experts to have direct practical experience of HE policies and practices in other countries.	Desirable
• In working with regional groups and agencies of various kinds from a strategic partnership and project perspective	Desirable
Skills and abilities	
• Excellent communication skills, including interviewing and writing skills and an ability to carry out cogent discussions concerning national and regional policies and practices with senior managers from a wide range of HE organisations at the national, regional and institutional levels as well as with regional organisations and various local and regional stakeholder groups	Essential
• An ability to analyse and synthesise a range of evidence/strategies related to a wide range of HE and regional development policy and practice matters within the relatively short period of time of a site visit	Essential
• Ability to work within a team and be able to contribute to developing a consensus view	Essential
• Able to identify and discuss creative approaches to complex problems related to HE and regional development policy and practice at the national, sub-national level	Desirable
• It is anticipated that English will be the main language of the project, however, the ability to communicate in other languages relevant to the study is desirable	Desirable

ANNEX C: Regional Review Visit Aide Memoire (Example)

This note is an exemplary prompt for a series of discussion during a regional review visit to a participating region in the OECD project *Supporting the contribution of higher education institutions to regional development.*

Since each country and each region will be different, the set of questions illustrated here is provided just for an indicative purpose. Therefore, it would not be rigidly followed in actual review visits. Team members are expected to use these types of prompts to structure a discussion that will develop as each answer suggests a new line of enquiry.

Discussions are expected to take place at three levels national, regional and institutional.

National

1. Has government set out a statement of its policies for regional engagement of higher education and what is its scope? What processes were used to develop it, get commitment to it and implement it.

2. What data analysis has been performed to establish the demand and supply of different types of higher education 'product'?

3. What is known about the contribution that HE makes to the regions? How accessible is this information and what are its key dimensions.

4. What resources are made available to HEI's by government to support regional engagement – how are these distributed?

5. What incentives and support does government provide to support regional engagement of HEIs?

6. What is the scope of the national policy for regional engagement of HEIs?

7. Are there clear objectives and/or targets in respect of regional engagement of HEIs? How were these developed.

8. What is the potential for increasing the contribution that HEIs make to the regions and what are the issues associated with any increase?

9. Does government monitor the contribution that HEIs make to the region and if so, how?

10. How does government evaluate the success of HEIs in regional engagement?

11. Are there any tensions between regional engagement policy and other policies (e.g. funding excellence) – if so, how are these resolved?

Regional agencies

1. What is the role of the agency generally, and what specifically in respect of HE?

2. Has the agency set out a statement of its policies for regional engagement of higher education and what is its scope? What processes were used to develop it, get commitment to it and implement it.

3. What are the key responsibilities of and key relationships with HEIs in respect of regional engagement?

4. What data analysis has been performed to establish the demand and supply of different types of higher education 'product' within the region?

5. What is known about the contribution that HE makes to the region?

6. What incentives and support does the agency provide to support regional engagement of HEIs?

7. Are there clear objectives and/or targets in respect of regional engagement of HEIs?

8. What is the potential for increasing the contribution that HEIs make to the region and what are the issues associated with any increase?

9. Does the agency monitor the contribution that HEIs make to the region and if so, how?

10. What resources are made available to HEI's by the agency to support regional engagement – how are these distributed?

11. How does the agency evaluate the success of HEIs in regional engagement?

12. Are there any tensions between regional engagement policy and other policies (e.g. funding excellence) – if so, how are these resolved?

13. Are HEIs engaged in the governance of the region?

14. Do HEIs make a contribution to the understanding of the region by their research programme?

15. What mechanisms exist to coordinate the activities of HE in regional engagement with those of other participants?

16. Has the agency identified any good practice in respect of regional engagement of HEI's and if so how has this been disseminated.

Institutions

1. Is regional engagement part of the institutions mission?

2. Is regional engagement reflected is the institutions planning and resource allocation processes?

3. How has the institution developed an understanding of the needs of the region?

4. Who are they key partners that the HEI works with and what is their individual role and responsibilities?

5. What incentives are provided to the HEI? What else would be helpful?

6. How does the institution know if it is successful in this area of activity?

7. What, if any, arrangements does the institution have in place to ensure it meets the needs of the region?

8. How is the institution increasing

   a. the degree of social inclusion

   b. the sustainability of the region

   c. the economic development of the region

   d. community regeneration within the region

   e. entrepreneurship within the region

   f. use of community of cultural facilities

9. What incentives and/or support does the institution offer its staff to encourage them to participate in regional engagement?

10. What contribution does the HEI make to the regional cultural identity?

11. What arrangements and plans does the HEI have to develop its capacity for regional engagement?

12. How is the activity of the HEI coordinated with those of other partners?

13. Are there any tensions between the objectives of the HEI and regional stakeholders, if so, how are these managed?

14. What are the main opportunities for greater regional engagement?

15. What is the main barriers to greater regional engagement?

ANNEX D: Possible Schedule for Regional Review Visits (7 Days)

1. Day 1 (Sunday): Arrival at the region & Informal meeting in the evening

Arrive individually at the region under review; Informal meeting of the review team at the hotel in the evening

2. Day 2 – 5 (Monday to Thursday): Planned Activities (Field visits, meetings & interviews)

Day 2

Meet with the regional co-ordinator & the Self-evaluation Report author(s): questions and comments and suggestions for the SER;

Meet with Steering Committee

Day 3 -5

Specific schedule depending upon the situation in the region under review. However, the typical stakeholders for the review team to meet during the regional review visit might include:

National level:

- Relevant ministries (agencies) or organisations
- Senior policy makers
- Academics

Regional or local level:

- Municipal and regional authorities
- Individual businesses and their representative bodies
- Other regional stakeholders (i.e. public research institutes, training organisations, social partners)

Institutional level:

- Higher education institutions: The rectorate, deans, heads of departments, students

3. Day 6 (Friday): Team discussions and working on the report (No planned Activity)

Before leaving the region under review, the review teams convene to summarise and discuss issues & preliminary findings, to exchange ideas on drafting the peer review report, and to agree at least broadly on the direction of the policy recommendations. ***This time can also be used for last-minute or re-arranged meetings, or for follow-up with people seen earlier in the week.***

4. Day 7 (Saturday): Final Meeting with the Regional Steering Committee & Return

Meet with the regional Steering Committee in the morning (Joint Meeting)

> ➤ *The OECD review team presents preliminary findings to the Regional Steering Committee followed by responses from & discussion with the Steering Committee members and other regional representatives.*

Meet with the regional co-ordinator to review the visit and plan the next steps