



Agencies for international cooperation in higher education; a brief comparative analysis

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Introduction

As part of the evaluation of SIU – the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Vabø et al 2010) the evaluation 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 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.

The structure of this piece of work includes: an overview of the agencies reviewed, history, structure and future, including their individual take on internationalization, as regards organisational and steering structures, strategies and priority setting. As the Swedish structure differs significantly since many organisations have national responsibility for internationalization of higher education, the overview of this system is presented separately.

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 (IU)

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 and 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 Finnish 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.

Agency main figures

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 percent 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.

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.

Figure 1 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
SIU	1992	65	Four	€9,4 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 2 Main types of activities

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

Figure 3 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
Norway	Medium	High	Low	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.

Autonomy in 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, and 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 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 the work of Van Thiel (2009)¹ 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.

¹ S Van Thiel and CRIPOS (2009) "The rise of executive agencies: comparing the agencification of 25 tasks in 21 countries" EGPA CONFERENCE, 2-5 SEPTEMBER 2009, MALTA

In the case of these executive agencies. IU and CIMO (and SIU) are 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.

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.

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.

Figure 4 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 5 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 6 Danish IU

Director			
Communications and IT Director		Director of finance	
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 four 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 four 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 and in comparison with SIU 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.

Figure 7 Steering structures

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

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.

The nature of internationalisation

A 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 relationship with the Higher Education institutions

Another 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.

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	One website and the studyindenmark	There is a new unit for IT and communications
CIMO	Numerous brochures, guides, reports and reviews	Three websites, one studyinfinland	A drop in information centre
SIU	Numerous brochures, guides, reports and reviews	One website, one studyinnorway	Separate units for IT and communication

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 specialists 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.

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.

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. Like SIU 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 new 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.