

## **ACCREDITATION OF OFFENDER PROGRAMMES**

**An overview of accreditation panels and procedures in various countries**

**The Dutch Offending Behaviour Programmes Accreditation Panel  
Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement**

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Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement**

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## **Contents**

1. Introduction	4
2. Short history	6
3. Panel	9
4. Organization	16
5. Scope of assessment	21
6. Accreditation	23
7. Criteria	28
8. Applying for accreditation	32
9. Summary and conclusions	40
Appendix A	43

# 1. Introduction

In many countries, official crime rates are causing concern and public fear for some time. Therefore, much attention is devoted on how to deal with offenders. Penal interventions, in particular custody, have not been proven effective in reducing crime and re-offending. Recidivism rates are relatively high.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, many countries have been looking for intervention methods showing more promising outcomes with regard to re-offending. Some countries in particular were inspired by the so-called *What Works* approach. *What Works* seemed to be the answer to a rather pessimistic view dominating in the 1970s and 1980s. The criminal justice system was not considered very successful. 'Nothing works', as it was suggested.<sup>2</sup> It took another 20 years before this view changed more positively. Several meta-analyses identified a number of principles or criteria, the so-called *What Works* principles.<sup>3</sup> Programmes incorporating these principles showed better results, reducing re-offending by up to 40%.<sup>4</sup> In order to stimulate and enhance the development and use of more promising offender programmes and at the same time to limit ineffective programmes, some countries developed procedures of formally accrediting the more promising programmes. For that purpose accreditation panels have been set up. The assessment or accreditation criteria used by these panels are similar to the *What Works* principles.

This report provides an overview of accreditation panels and procedures in eight Western countries: Canada, England and Wales, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Topics addressed in this report include panel membership, organizational infrastructure, scope of assessment and assessment criteria. The information presented here is comprised of several sources of information:

- A review of the literature: the information gathered consists of research papers and reports, either printed or from the internet;
- A survey among panels: accreditation panels were invited several times to give additional information;

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<sup>1</sup> Wartna, B.S.J., Beijersbergen, K.A., Blom, M., Tollenaar, N., Weijters, G., Essers, A.A.M., Alma, S.M. & Alberda, D.L. (2008). Recidivebericht 1997-2004: Ontwikkelingen in de strafrechtelijke recidive van Nederlandse justitiabelen. Den Haag: WODC [Electronic Version]. Retrieved September 26, 2008 from <http://www.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/recidive-in-nederland.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Martinson, R. (1974). What works? Questions and answers about prison reform. *Public Interest*, 35, 22-54.

<sup>3</sup> Andrews, D.A., I. Zinger, R.D. Hoge, J. Bonta, P. Gendreau & F.T. Cullen (1990). Does correctional treatment work? A clinically relevant and psychologically informed meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 28, 67-75.

Gendreau, P., F.T. Cullen & J. Bonta (1994). Intensive rehabilitation supervision : The next generation in community corrections? *Federal Probation*, 58, 72-78.

Andrews, D.A. (1995). The psychology of criminal conduct and effective treatment. In J. McGuire (red.), *What Works: Reducing reoffending. guidelines from research and practice* (pp. 35-62). Chichester: Wiley.

McGuire, J. & Priestley, P. (1995). Reviewing 'What Works': Past, Present and Future. In J. McGuire, *What Works: Reducing Reoffending. Guidelines from Research and Practice*. Chichester/New York/Brisbane/ Toronto/Singapore: John Wiley & Sons.

Andrews, D.A. & Bonta, J. (2003). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct. *Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing co.*

<sup>4</sup> Lipsey, M.W. & D.B. Wilson (1998). Effective intervention for serious juvenile offenders: A synthesis of research. In R. Loeber & D.P Farrington (red.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>5</sup> Northern Ireland and Ireland also had a joint accreditation panel, but we were unable to collect sufficient information.

- The proceedings of a seminar held in The Hague in October 2008, attended by panel members from eight countries (see Appendix A for a list of participants). At this seminar experiences were shared and several issues and dilemmas related to accreditation panels and procedures were discussed.

Core data for this report were gathered in 2008 and updated since. Even though there is not a fixed model of accreditation and procedures are constantly developing over time, a number of issues remains relevant. Such issues are assessment criteria applied, independence of panels and their proximity to practice, procedures, scope of assessment, and organizational support and resources. These and other issues are discussed in this report. Governments considering the accreditation of offender programmes may find it useful to read about these issues and the various aspects and characteristics of accreditation.

## 2. Short history

England and Wales were first to establish an accreditation panel. In 1996, HM Prison Service set up the General Accreditation Panel and the Sex Offender Treatment Programme Panel.<sup>6</sup> These panels were superseded, in 1999, by the Joint Prison/Probation Accreditation Panel and was later renamed the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel. Its purpose is to reduce re-offending by promoting excellence in programmes dealing with offenders and accrediting and encouraging effective approaches.<sup>7</sup> The panel also aims to promote closer cooperation between the Prison and Probation Services. Until May 2008, the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel was a fully independent body. Since then the panel has been incorporated in the National Offender Management Services.<sup>8</sup> Panel members are, for the most part, independent experts. However, the Panel is now chaired by a senior official in the Criminal Justice Group. The Panel performs an important function by assisting the Criminal Justice Group to achieve its aim of reducing re-offending through the development and implementation of high quality behaviour programmes. The panel also offers advice in developing strategy and guidance, based on the available evidence, to support Directors of Offender Management in securing what is called excellent services. This includes advice regarding generic and specific work on attitude and behavioural change.

In 1997, inspired by England and Wales, Canada also developed an Accreditation Panel. A report on evaluations of different behaviour programmes for offenders with similar risk profiles concluded that no continuity of care was present and that expensive programmes were carried out without any cost-benefit analyses. It suggested the Correctional Service of Canada to initiate the possibility to assess programme effectiveness and funding.<sup>9</sup> Staff of the Service developed research-based programmes that could help reduce recidivism among offenders. Data on offenders collected by the Correctional Service of Canada since 1995 provided information on programme needs and the effectiveness of behaviour programmes implemented to reduce recidivism. The database ensures that behaviour programmes are research-based, that they become part of the accreditation process and are evaluated appropriately for the federal correctional system.<sup>10</sup> As a result Programme Accreditation and Site Accreditation Process of the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel were developed. The panel was awarded a formal status in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. This Act states that ‘the purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by [...] assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programmes in penitentiaries and in the

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<sup>6</sup> Rex, S., Lieb, R., Bottoms, A. & Wilson, L. (2003). *Accrediting Offender Programmes: A process-based evaluation of the Joint Prison/Probation Services Accreditation Panel*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

<sup>7</sup> Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (2008). *The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel Report 2006-2007*. London: Home Office.

<sup>8</sup> Maguire, M., Grubin, D., Lösel, F. & Raynor, P. (2010). ‘What Works’ and the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel: Taking stock from an inside perspective. *Criminology and Criminal justice*, 10, 37-58.

<sup>9</sup> Brittan, D. (2003). Correctional Service Canada: Rehabilitation Programs for Offenders. In: Auditor General of Canada, *1996 May Report*. Retrieved July 25, 2008 from [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_199605\\_10\\_e\\_5041.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_199605_10_e_5041.html).

<sup>10</sup> The Correctional Service of Canada Review Panel (2007). *A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety*. Retrieved May 23, 2008 from [http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/csc-scc/report-rapport/the\\_current\\_environment\\_2-eng.aspx](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/csc-scc/report-rapport/the_current_environment_2-eng.aspx).

community'.<sup>11</sup> This Act acknowledges the importance of effective behaviour programmes that can contribute to a safer environment and a reduction in recidivism. Accreditation, therefore, became part of the Correctional Service of Canada. Specifically, the responsibility lies with the Commissioner. In the Commissioner's Directive the policy objective is to 'ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the correctional programmes offered to offenders'.<sup>12</sup> This Directive also provides the standards which the panel must use when assessing a behaviour programme for accreditation.

During 1996-1997 Scotland also considered the introduction of a series of behaviour programmes in Scottish Prisons. An accreditation process was set up by the Scottish Prison Service. The inaugural meeting of the prison panel took place in 1998. Adopting such a panel demonstrated the Chief's Executive accountability and the intention to increase the quality of offending programmes.<sup>13</sup> In 2003, the establishment followed of a Community Justice Accreditation Panel. In 2005, both panels merged into the Scottish Accreditation Panel for Offender Programmes<sup>14</sup> and found its place in the policy plan 'Working towards a safer Scotland'. Prison programmes are part of this policy to help offenders turn away from crime.<sup>15</sup> Finland developed an Accreditation Panel in 2001. At the end of the 1990s, the Cognitive Skills Programme was introduced in Finland by its Canadian developers Fabiano and Porporino. Since then, Finland gradually started using cognitive behavioural programmes. An accreditation system was developed to assess the quality of the programmes. A new policy in the Criminal Sanctions System functions as a base for the work of the Finnish Accreditation Panel. The aim of this policy is to set criteria on how programme work should be organized, managed and implemented. Specifically, all behaviour programmes that were used by the Criminal Sanctions System needed to be accredited by 2010. Programmes need to be structured and implemented according to what the panel approved of. Programme participants should be assigned according to their needs. Prisons and probation services are currently working on their long-term plans for programme work.

In 2002, another Scandinavian country – Sweden – began considering accreditation. It was the result of the What Works approach appearing on the Swedish criminal justice agenda. The What Works literature led to a general policy for the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. This policy requires working according to best practices and evidence-based practice. Evidence-based behaviour programmes are believed more effective in reducing re-offending. To strengthen this policy an Accreditation Panel was adopted.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Justice Canada (1992). *Corrections and Conditional Release Act c.20*. Retrieved August 3, 2008 from [http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/C-44.6/20080805/en?command=search&caller=SI&fragment=Corrections%20and%20Conditional%20Release%20Act&search\\_type=all&day=5&month=8&year=2008&search\\_domain=cs&showall=L&statuteyear=all&lengthannual=50&length=50](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/C-44.6/20080805/en?command=search&caller=SI&fragment=Corrections%20and%20Conditional%20Release%20Act&search_type=all&day=5&month=8&year=2008&search_domain=cs&showall=L&statuteyear=all&lengthannual=50&length=50).

<sup>12</sup> Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada (2003). *Commissioner's Directive 726*. Retrieved August 3, 2008 from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/plcy/doc/726-cd.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Concilio, A. (2003). Correctional Program and Site Accreditation in Canada. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 15 (2) [Electronic Version]. Retrieved July 25, 2008, from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e1521-eng.shtml>.

<sup>14</sup> The Scottish Government (2007). *Justice*. Retrieved April 4, 2008, from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/16910/14738>.

<sup>15</sup> The Scottish Office (1999). *A Safer Scotland: Tackling Crime and its Causes*. Retrieved September 4, 2008 from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w6/cp-05.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Kriminalvarden (no date). *Treatment Programmes*. Retrieved April 22, 2008, from [http://www.kriminalvarden.se/templates/KVV\\_InfopageGeneral\\_4717.aspx](http://www.kriminalvarden.se/templates/KVV_InfopageGeneral_4717.aspx).

In 2004 an Accreditation Panel was initiated in Denmark as a response to the vast amount of behaviour programmes. Since 1990, the Danish Prison and Probation Services have been introducing behaviour programmes to those in custody and on probation. By developing an Accreditation Panel an evaluation culture is established that produces a systematic collection of potentially effective treatment forms and methods of different institutions. The panel's criteria and mandate have followed the accreditation model of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. Today, behaviour programmes are first and foremost offered to prisoners with serious drug and/or alcohol problems. There are also programmes for distinct target groups such as sex offenders, juveniles, pathological gambling and violent offenders.

Inspired by the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales and as a reaction to report showing high levels of recidivism, the Dutch Ministry of Justice established the Offending Behaviour Programmes Accreditation Panel in the Netherlands in 2005. The panel is incorporated in a more general policy plan called *Reducing Recidivism*. With this policy plan the Dutch government aims at guarding the safety of its citizens as well as reintegrating the offender into society and thereby trying to reduce recidivism.<sup>17</sup>

Norway appointed its advisory panel in 2006. This panel was developed to create more unity in the use of programmes and to gain higher programme integrity. The accreditation system is the result of the policy paper on the professional strategy of the Norwegian Correctional Service for the period 2004-2007. This policy is based on the *What Works* literature and identifies a number of criminogenic factors that need to be the central focus of correctional work. The preferred working method of tackling these risk factors is that of cognitive behavioural and social modeling. The White Paper on Corrections from 1998 states that 'a sentence shall be executed in a way that secures the community and that provides the offender with the best possible conditions for a life without crime'.<sup>18</sup> The development of an advisory panel supported a framework for securing the quality of all behaviour programmes for offenders. The Norwegian panel is not formally called an accreditation panel, since the final decision on accreditation lies with the Ministry of Justice. The panel has a more advisory role.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (no date). *Programma Terugdringen Recidive*. Retrieved May 23, 2008, from <http://www.justitie.nl/onderwerpen/criminaliteit/terugdringen-recidive/index.aspx>.

<sup>18</sup> Norwegian Advisory Panel (2008). *Norwegian advisory panel for the accreditation of programmes in corrections*. Retrieved October 1, 2008 from <http://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/getfile.php/760075.823.twpufprbwwf/undefined>.

<sup>19</sup> Id.

### 3. Panel

Implementing accreditation procedures often starts with the establishment of a panel. In this paragraph, the focus will be on the role of the panel and its members in accreditation. Adopting an Accreditation Panel is not a development that stands on its own. It is linked to a country's standing policies and policy goals. A global description of how accreditation accomplishes these goals is given, followed by an outline of concrete steps taken towards the development of an Accreditation Panel. Panel composition, the selection of panel members and member integrity will be described. Key features of panels are summarized in Table 3.1.

#### 3.1 Panel goals and tasks

The primary role of the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales is to promote behaviour programmes for offenders to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending, and that they are of high quality and effective. The Panel's main task is to accredit programmes for offenders. It also oversees the system of audits and monitoring of programmes and the outcomes of audits of the delivery of programmes in particular establishments.

In Canada, the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel supports the Correctional Service of Canada by encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens through the use of effective behaviour programmes. Secondly, the panel is initiated to ensure that behaviour programmes are delivered with the highest possible quality.<sup>20</sup> The Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel realizes these goals by undertaking the following tasks. First and foremost, the panel judges whether correctional behaviour programmes are designed and delivered in the way it is intended. This is complemented by undertaking periodic reviews of the design of accredited behaviour programmes to ensure consistency and integrity. Panel members also give advice on the content of the Integrated Correctional Programme Standards. They collectively and individually sign the Programme Accreditation certificates for those behaviour programmes that have attained the accreditation status. The panel also surveys best practices elsewhere and gives advice on how this possibly can be achieved in Correctional Service of Canada practice. Furthermore, the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel has been asked to apply consistent standards to behaviour programmes designed within and outside the Correctional Service of Canada to keep programmes state of the art.

The goals of the Accreditation Panel in Finland are, first, to reduce recidivism among offenders in the Criminal Sanctions System. Behaviour programmes are accredited to ensure that the effect is reached as intended. The second goal is securing the quality of the behaviour programmes. The Panel has two tasks. The first is accrediting submitted programmes. The second task is helping with the development of programmes.

In Norway, accredited behaviour programmes should stimulate offenders to change their behaviour and motivate them to acquire skills to resist crime and turn into law-abiding citizens. The panel's objectives are to ensure a high level of quality of behaviour programmes, and an efficient use of resources. It provides a framework of evaluation, stimulates the use of existing programmes and ensures the correct use of behaviour programmes. The panel's task is to advice the Ministry on

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<sup>20</sup> Lundström, F. (2002). *The Development of a New Multi-Disciplinary Sex Offender Rehabilitation Programme for the Irish Prison Service*. Dublin: The Irish Prison Service.

whether a programme should receive the accreditation status or not. The panel also gives advice on new behaviour programmes and recommends pilots in order to evaluate programmes as a first step to accreditation at a later stage. The panel only gives advice and does not carry out evaluations.

Similar to the countries mentioned above, the role of the Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes in Scotland is to reduce recidivism and to encourage effective behaviour programmes to be used nationally.<sup>21</sup> The tasks of the Scottish panel are, first, to accredit behaviour programmes for offenders. Such a decision will always be followed by direct feedback to applicants. The panel develops and applies programme criteria as well criteria for programme delivery.<sup>22</sup> These two sets of criteria are regularly reviewed and modified in light of new research and experience.<sup>23</sup> The panel is expected to comment on best practice and provide advice to Ministers.

The tasks of the Swedish panel are similar to the above mentioned panels. Its task is to accredit submitted behaviour programmes according to its criteria. The panel also gives feedback and advice on what needs to be changed in order to work more effectively.

The situation in Denmark is very similar to Sweden. Since they, too, are seriously involved in *What Works*, accreditation was developed as a tool to ensure the quality in behaviour programmes. The Danish panel's main task is to assess and give direction to submitted behaviour programmes. The panel also gives advice and feedback to programme developers.

The Offending Behaviour Programmes Accreditation Panel in the Netherlands has three main tasks.<sup>24</sup> The first, similar to all other accreditation panels, is to assess programmes. Second, it also gives advice on topics regarding the effectiveness of behaviour programmes for offenders in general. And third, the panel provides public information about its activities and decisions on behaviour programmes. It should be noted that a strict separation between assessment and consultancy to programme developers is maintained in the Netherlands. The Dutch panel concentrates on assessment and not so much on guidance.

### 3.2 Panels and sub-panels

Denmark, the Netherlands<sup>25</sup>, Finland and Norway have one single panel that deals with all kinds of behaviour programmes. They don't work with sub-panels.

Scotland also has a single accreditation panel that considers conditions for delivery and reviews audits. Programme and site accreditation criteria are defined by this panel, but it does not perform site assessments.

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<sup>21</sup> The Scottish Government (2008). *Role of the Panel*. Retrieved April 4, 2008, from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/criminal/16910/14735/14738>.

<sup>22</sup> Site Accreditation was a term previously used in prison-based settings. Following the joining of the prison and community panels into one panel - the Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes - the name 'site' was transformed into Delivery Accreditation. A reason for this change is that a programme can be delivered across a variety of sites and not just at one as the previous term implied.

<sup>23</sup> The Scottish Government (2008). *Role of the Panel*. Retrieved April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/criminal/16910/14735/14738>.

<sup>24</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2006). *Referentiedocument Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

<sup>25</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2008). *Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie Jaarverslag 2007*. Retrieved May 25, 2008, from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

In Canada,<sup>26</sup> The Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel consists of sub-panels that are created for each of the largest programme areas: cognitive skills, substance abuse, violence prevention, family violence and programmes for sex offenders. These panels focus on programme accreditation and take care of site accreditation reviews. Canada has spread its responsibilities in assessment to different panels in order to maintain high standards in accreditation and to assure that accredited treatment programmes are ‘state of the art’ for correctional programming. England and Wales also work with sub-panels. Similar to Canada, sub-panels have been formed to look at programmes aimed at general offending or specific offences or offender groups. In Sweden the attention is divided between programme and site accreditation. The Swedish panel has adopted the criteria used by the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales, and these include criteria for site accreditation. They, too, work with sub-panels.

### 3.3 Panel membership

#### *Professional background of the members*

Panels are comprised of individuals with and without an affiliation with governmental organizations. The Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel in Canada counts seven individuals. The chairperson, the Assistant Commissioner of Correctional Operations and Programmes, comes from the Correctional Service of Canada and is appointed to these panels to maintain consistency and focus.<sup>27</sup> In Sweden, the panel is comprised of staff from the correctional services and from universities, but there is no fixed composition. The number of experts is around six and the Swedish Prison and Probation Services provide three members including the chair and a secretary. England and Wales have fifteen appointed members and three nominated members. Appointed members are independent experts with an academic or other expertise on programme development. Nominated members come from the Prison and Probation Service and from the Analytical Services.<sup>28</sup> The Scottish Panel currently has eight independent members appointed by the Minister, an independent chairman and seven experts on programme design drawn from academics, consultants and practitioners. In addition, two nominated members from community and one from prisons bring experience of programme delivery and its management within their settings. Furthermore, policy advisers from the Justice Ministry and Scottish Prison Service and the secretariat attend panel meetings. The Finnish panel consists of ten members. Five members are not affiliated to the Criminal Sanctions Agency. These members come from universities, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises. The other five members are civil servants working in various units of the Agency. The chairperson of the panel works for the Prison Service in Southern Finland while the two secretaries are staff members of the Criminal Sanctions Agency.

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<sup>26</sup> Lundström, F. (2002). *The Development of a New Multi-Disciplinary Sex Offender Rehabilitation Programme for the Irish Prison Service*. Dublin: The Irish Prison Service.

<sup>27</sup> Rex, S., Lieb, R., Bottoms, A. & Wilson, L. (2003). *Accrediting Offender Programmes: A process-based evaluation of the Joint Prison/Probation Services Accreditation Panel*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

<sup>28</sup> Id.

In Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands independent panel members are not tied to the Ministry of Justice or Correctional Services. They come from universities, research institutes and forensic treatment centers.

#### *Appointing panel members*

In Canada, members are appointed by the Commissioner, based upon nominations from the Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programmes. In Norway and the Netherlands, members are appointed by the Minister of Justice. In Sweden it is the Director General who appoints members of a Scientific Council.<sup>29</sup> In England and Wales, the Ministry of Justice runs a recruitment campaign to select members for the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel. Scotland has a similar approach to appointing panel members. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice within the Scottish Government approves of members. The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes selects independent members through an open recruitment process. Members are selected in an open procedure by a specially set up selection committee consisting of the chair of the panel, an independent assessor, a member from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service. If, however, open recruitment does not provide the required areas of expertise, it is also possible to nominate experts for the Accreditation Panel. The chair is also selected through an open selection procedure. In addition, three members are nominated from prisons and community for knowledge of management and delivery. In Finland, the two secretaries of the panel look for suitable outside members. They need to be an expert in his or her field. Qualifications can, for example, consist of having a PhD or scientific publications closely related to the area of behaviour programmes. Possible members are then presented to the Director General who makes the final decision. In Denmark, advice on new members is given by the existing panel to the Prison and Probation Service. This advice involves the expertise new members have that can contribute to the panel. The Prison and Probation Service makes the final decision and appoints members. The panel may hire external expertise when necessary.

#### *Expertise*

Members bring specific expertise to the Accreditation Panel. Norway's main focus is on cognitive behavioural programmes. Therefore, members should be familiar in this area, its research and interpretation. Members should also have thorough knowledge of the correctional system and the actual programmes with respect to contents, structure and delivery. Finally, members need to know the research on which the criteria are based.

Some panels require a wide scope of expertise. Members of the Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes have knowledge in a number of areas such as programme design and delivery, psychology, criminology and social work. A similar situation is found in the Netherlands. Members need to have specific expertise in certain areas such as criminology, clinical psychology, sociology, methodology and criminal justice. Panel members must also have knowledge about the implementation process in one of the following policy areas: police, crime prevention, child care and protection, probation, and prisons. Some members are experts in areas such as: social skills training, cognitive skills training, addiction care, programmes focusing on education, family therapy,

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<sup>29</sup> The Scientific Council gives advice about the research that needs to be done and assesses applications for the funding of researches within the Swedish Prison and Probation Services. The Scientific Council also advises on matters concerning psychiatry, risk assessment and methods concerning drug analyses.

programmes for sexual offenders or work therapy.<sup>30</sup> In Denmark, similar to Scotland and the Netherlands, experts have backgrounds in what works, treatment of delinquency/dependency towards drugs, criminology, prisons, probation, and evaluation. Correctional Service Accreditation Panel members have expertise in a range of specific fields of offending, such as substance abuse, sex offending, domestic violence, and violence in general. Members are expected to have some knowledge of other accreditation systems and current academic work in the area of offending. They have a clear understanding of the work prisons and probation do with offenders, the methods of dealing with offenders, and the practical applications of these methods to all offenders. The Finnish panel has four PhD's in psychology, political science or pedagogy and one licentiate. The other members have degrees in relevant disciplines or have acquired their expertise through a long working experience in the field and/or the Agency.

In other panels, expertise may vary depending on the programme that is to be accredited. Canada has specific criteria for selecting members for the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel. Experts should have internationally recognized expertise in corrections or correctional programmes. They are not allowed to have connections with the development of the Correctional Service of Canada's correctional programmes. Sub-panels consist of specialists and one generalist. Special knowledge is linked to the programmes assessed. Ad hoc expertise can be called in. Preferably, experts have published on the subject. Members of the Swedish Accreditation Panel are primarily PhD's in psychology and psychiatry and to some extent in social work with special knowledge about drug treatment and treatment of violence. However, similar to Canada, the expertise changes according to the behaviour programme that needs to be accredited. When a sex offender treatment programme is assessed, experts in this area are included in the panel. Certain experts stay in the panel and assess most treatment programmes. They need to have a broad knowledge about the prison and probation service and under what circumstances these programmes need to be delivered. In other words, these panel members look after the integrity of the process. Three panel members come from the Swedish Prison and Probation Services and should be well-informed about the service, including sentence planning, quality systems and criteria, and ongoing evaluation. This expertise is necessary to understand under which circumstances programmes can be delivered in the service, its limitations and how evaluations take place using pre- and post-tests and control groups.

### **3.4 Integrity**

#### *Independence*

Independence of panel members is seen as condition for strengthening member integrity. There should be no ties or dependencies between the panel and the organizations submitting programmes for approval. In Norway and Denmark, panel members are not allowed to be employed by the correctional services. In addition, members who have been involved in the development or delivery of a programme that has applied for accreditation are excluded from the assessment process. It is up to the member themselves to decide on their own competence in this matter. This is also the case for Canada where independence is defined as autonomy: not being involved in any justice-related organization.

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<sup>30</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2006). *Referentiedocument Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

Scotland uses a similar definition of independence in order to offer the Scottish government impartial advice on submitted programmes and criteria for accreditation. Finland, England and Wales and the Netherlands also see independence as not basing decisions on someone's interest.

#### *Code of conduct*

In some countries, independence of panel members is laid down in a code of conduct. Codes may differ to the extent of which rules and norms are formally written down. The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales has adopted a Code of Practice whereby members are expected to uphold the highest standards of impartiality, integrity, objectivity and impartiality in relation to the advice they give to treatment programmes. Other countries have adopted a more informal kind of code. In Scotland, panel members are required to register annually their interests and involvement in interventions. If a programme is considered for accreditation in which panel members have a stake in, they do not participate in the assessment. The situation in Canada is similar since panel members must list any areas they are or will be working on in the coming year. Sweden does not have a formal Code of Conduct but the general rule is that if a member has an interest that is in conflict with the accreditation of a programme, he or she should not take part in any decisions that need to be made about that particular programme. The Netherlands and Denmark are comparable in this respect. In the Netherlands this rule is laid down in a formal rule of conduct. A similar situation is found in Norway. There is no specific Code of Conduct but a document incorporating the criteria, procedures and a number of rules on conduct for panel members. Finland works with ethical principles similar to a Code. Panel members are not allowed to join the decision making if they have had any interest in a submitted behaviour programme.

**Table 3.1 Accreditation Panels**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Goals and Tasks</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Independence/ Code of Conduct</b>
Canada	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme and site accreditation</li> <li>- Advising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 chairperson from CSC</li> <li>- 6 experts from the field</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
Denmark	<p><i>Goal:</i> standardization of programmes</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme accreditation</li> <li>- Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 experts from universities and non-governmental agencies</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
England and Wales	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme accreditation</li> <li>- Auditing</li> <li>- Advising</li> <li>- Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 nominated member from the Prison, Probation Service and Analytical Service</li> <li>- 15 experts from the field</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> initially fully independent, later on incorporated in NOMS</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> formal</p>
Finland	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 experts from the field</li> <li>- chairperson from the Prison Service</li> <li>- 2 secretaries from the Criminal Sanctions Agency</li> <li>- 3 members from the Criminal Sanctions Field</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
Norway	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Task:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme accreditation</li> <li>- Advising to Ministry of Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 experts from universities and non-governmental organizations</li> <li>- 1 member is a former member of secretariat</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
Scotland	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme and delivery accreditation</li> <li>- Annual evaluation of criteria for accreditation</li> <li>- Providing advice to Ministers and on effective practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 independent chairperson</li> <li>- 7 independent experts</li> <li>- 3 members from Community and Prison</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
Sweden	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme and site accreditation</li> <li>- Advising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 members from the Kriminalsvarlden</li> <li>- 7 experts from universities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> informal</p>
The Netherlands	<p><i>Goal:</i> reducing recidivism</p> <p><i>Tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme accreditation</li> <li>- Advising</li> <li>- Reporting of activities to their Ministry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9 experts from universities and independent research institutes</li> <li>- 1 member from Probation Services</li> <li>- 1 member from an Institute working with offenders and forensic patients</li> </ul>	<p><i>Independence:</i> yes</p> <p><i>Code of Conduct:</i> formal</p>

## 4. Organization

The organizational structure and support of a panel seems essential for the credibility of an Accreditation Panel. Society, government and practice should have confidence in the panel and the quality of its decisions on behaviour programmes. Relevant aspects of the organizational structure and support of panels such as accreditation authority, support provided, periodic evaluation of tasks and the relationship with other organizations are discussed in this chapter.

### 4.1 Accreditation authority

In Canada, the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel meets on the request of the head of the Correctional Services and submits its decision to him.<sup>31</sup> The Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programmes, is responsible for the implementation of programme and site accreditation. Hence, the panel reports decisions on the accreditation of a programme to this Assistant Commissioner. The Commissioner has also allowed the National Correctional Programme Advisory Committee to review Site Accreditation reports.<sup>32</sup> The Danish Accreditation Panel is appointed by the Department of Justice and Department of Prisons and Probation to ensure the quality and development of treatment programmes offered by the Prison and Probation Services. The panel, therefore, reports to the Department about its activities and decisions.<sup>33</sup> In England and Wales, the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel is chaired by a senior member of the Criminal Justice Group. The panel assists the Criminal Justice Group in achieving its aim of reducing re-offending through the development and implementation of high quality offender programmes. In Sweden, the Accreditation Panel is part of the Swedish Prison and Probation Services. In the Netherlands, the Accreditation Panel reports to the Minister of Justice. The Minister has decided which criteria for assessment are to be used and that programmes that are to be implemented in the near future need to be accredited according to these criteria by the Accreditation Panel.<sup>34</sup> The financing of these programmes depends on the accreditation status. The Ministry expects to be kept informed on accredited programmes. In Scotland, the Panel is appointed by, and the work of the Panel is reported to, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice within the Scottish Government. The Norwegian advisory panel reports to the central level of the correctional services, which is located in the Ministry of Justice, department of corrections. The panel's decision is formally an advice to the Ministry. It is the Ministry that makes the final decision on accreditation. The Finnish Accreditation Panel does not report back to any central level. The two secretaries are staff members of the Criminal Sanctions Agency. They take part in the meetings and are therefore constantly on top of the activities of the panel. These meetings document the valid decisions of the panel.

### 4.2 Financial matters

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<sup>31</sup> Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada (2003). *Commissioner's Directive 726*. Retrieved August 3, 2008 from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pley/doc/726-cd.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2005). *Report on Plans and Priorities*. Retrieved July 23, 2008 from [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/20052006/CSC-SCC/CSC-SCCr5603\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/20052006/CSC-SCC/CSC-SCCr5603_e.asp).

<sup>33</sup> Kriminalforsorgen (2005). *Kriminalforsorgen Arsberetning 2004; English Summary*. Retrieved April 15, 2008 from <http://www.kriminalforsorgen.dk/publika/aarsberetning2004/html/kap11.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Justice (2008). *The Accreditation Panel for Behavioral Programmes for Offenders in the Netherlands*. Retrieved April 29, 2008, from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

In Canada, funds come from the budget portfolio of the Offender Programmes and Reintegration that is part of the Correctional Service of Canada. The budget covers traveling costs of members as well as meeting rooms, site visits and more. The costs for supporting the Accreditation Panel vary according to the number of programmes a panel has to review. For each programme assessment on a four to five day schedule, the cost lies between 12.000 to 35.000 dollars in total. If a panel member would lose income as a result of participation, a small honorarium of up to 500 dollars is available.

The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes receives funds from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service. The costs vary per panel meeting as it depends on the number of programmes submitted for accreditation and number of days worked. Panel members receive 450 pounds per day, usually a day for reading and assessment and a day for discussions at the Panel meeting. Consideration is given to the need for the panel to meet for a total of eight days per year. If this is the case, total costs (all members) are likely to be around 87,000 pounds a year. This includes the costs of accommodation and travel for panel members, venue hiring, and reading and attendance fees. It does not include the costs of recruitment advertisement and secretariat support.

In Sweden, too, the Prison and Probation Service funds the Accreditation Panel. The costs for one meeting are estimated around 12.000 Euros including preparation by six members. About 2000 Euros are allocated for each panel member. This amount is for one day's reading and another day for the meeting. However, the process of accreditation also includes suggestions for further programme developments to reach accreditation status. Usually a few members from the Scientific Council are asked for this work and includes a written opinion about the programme. This is estimated at two days work for which they receive around 2000 Euros. This early opinion given by the Scientific Council is warranted to let programme developers know whether they are on the right track before applying for accreditation. Special funding is granted from the Head Office for each programme that needs to be implemented. This money is meant for programme delivery only.

The Finnish Accreditation Panel receives financial support from the Criminal Sanctions Agency. The expert members receive a fee for each meeting of approximately 350 Euros. This fee includes preparation and assessment of two behaviour programmes. Panel members are also paid for any other costs that they may have, for example traveling.

In Norway, panel members are paid by the Ministry of Justice. An annual budget of 125.000 Euros is available for accreditation activities. Panel members receive approximately 1,250 Euros for preparation and for the actual meeting. Other expenses, such as travel expenses, are reimbursed additionally. Moreover, Norway takes financing a step further by allowing submitters of a programme to apply for financial support. This support comes from the Ministry and can be up to 9.500 Euros.

The Dutch Accreditation Panel is also paid for by the Ministry of Justice. The annual costs of this panel are around 350.000 Euros. This includes fees for all ten panel members and their chairperson. It also covers the secretariat and any other administration costs.

The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales is funded by the Ministry of Justice. Its budget for 2008/2009 is around 150,000 pounds. It covers the panel's programme of work, including members' fees and traveling costs.

The Danish panel receives funds by the Prison and Probation Service. Panel members receive a fee for one day's preparation and for one day's meeting. The costs of supporting this panel is around half million Danish crowns every year.

### **4.3 Administrative support**

In some countries administrative support is provided by separate organizational units. In Canada, at the National Headquarters in the Correctional Operations and Programmes Branch, the Programme and Site Accreditation Section provides administrative support to the panel. National Headquarters is responsible for the Correctional Service of Canada's planning, policy and administration and also supports the Accreditation Panel. There are managers for programme accreditation and for site accreditation. The first provides administrative support as she is responsible for coordination, logistics, implementation and the follow-up of all Correctional Programme Accreditation Panels. The Scottish Government Effective Practice Unit and the Scottish Prison Service Accreditation Unit provide for administrative support to panel members. This involves receiving, copying and issuing all materials in relation to behaviour programmes submitted for accreditation. They organize site visits, write minutes and communicate the outcome of each application to programme sponsors and/or developers. In addition, all domestic arrangements, financial aspects and updating the website are done by the secretariat. In contrast to Norway and the Netherlands, they have no further formal involvement the applications themselves. In Sweden, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service provides the administrative support by preparing panel meetings and ensuring that the application and its manuals are complete and written according to the specified criteria. Members receive the full application from one month before the meeting. A similar situation is found in Denmark. The Prison and Probation Service provides administrative support. Not only will panel members receive support through the arrangement of meetings and documents that need to be read, but applicants are also helped. The Service explains the criteria to them and how application works.

In other countries, support to the Panel is given by its secretariat. In Finland, administrative support is provided by the secretaries of the panel who are employees of the Criminal Sanctions Agency. Next to searching for promising panel members, they also organize the programme of the panel. This includes setting up meetings, writing the minutes of the meetings, receive and clear the bills of the panel members. The secretaries also send the behaviour programmes that are ready for accreditation to members. Norway shows a similar picture. The Norwegian secretariat provides administrative support to the Accreditation Panel. The secretariat consists of five members working in the Correctional Services. Two of them work at the Correctional Service of the Norway Staff Academy and lead the secretariat. The secretariat does a preliminary reading of the application and decides whether the programme is ready for accreditation. The secretariat checks if a submission has fulfilled all formalities regarding application and reports back to the applicants, if necessary with comments and recommendations. They also provide assistance to submitters if the application is not complete. Feedback and requests on additional information will be given. This is done to prevent unfounded applications for accreditation. When an application is complete, the secretariat sends the material to the panel. They can also be invited in the discussion of a programme, depending on their specific expertise. Their contribution, as an additional source of information, is greatly valued by the panel members. They do not take part in the formal decision. Finally, the secretariat is responsible for writing reports on the meetings held by the panel. Other administrative work, such as the organization of meetings, takes place at the Ministry. It is also the Ministry that appoints the chair of the panel. This chairperson leads the meeting and can participate in discussions, yet he does not take part in making the final decision. This is done to protect the independence of the panel. In the Netherlands the staff of

the accreditation panel provides the administrative support to the Accreditation Panel. Similar to Norway, its goal is to make the procedures more successful by informing submitters about the procedures they need to follow in order for the programme to be accredited. The Bureau reviews submissions and prepares the meetings of the panel. They also take care of the reports and publish the annual reports on the panel. In addition, the Bureau communicates the outcomes of assessments to the submitters.<sup>35</sup> In England and Wales, the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel secretary, who works for the Ministry of Justice, provides administrative support to the panel. She manages the panel's programme of work and budget.

#### **4.4 Evaluation of the panel**

In some countries Accreditation Panels are evaluated in terms of their activities, criteria and outcomes to keep up with new research on effective treatments. In the Netherlands, the Accreditation Panel is evaluated by an external organization after a period of three years. In Canada, the evaluation branch of the Correctional Service of Canada is responsible for evaluating the panel, its activities, process and results when required. The work of the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales also adheres to an evaluation. In 2002-2003 the Panel's work and processes were evaluated. The outcome was published.<sup>36</sup> Recommendations were made for the Panel's future development and changes to working methods. An internal review of the Panel was carried out in 2004. In Scotland a model of evaluation does exist, but the focus of assessment is different compared to the Netherlands, Canada and England and Wales. The Deputy Director of the Scottish Government's Community Justice Service Division undertakes an evaluation of the Accreditation Panel with the Chair on an annual basis. The Chair of the Panel evaluates member's performance by undertaking performance appraisals. Countries like Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden do not have plans yet for evaluating their panel but this may change in the future.

#### **4.5 Annual reports**

In two countries panels write annual reports. The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales publishes an annual report recording the outcomes of the panel's meetings during the year, including advice and decisions on programmes seeking accreditation, and information on its work in safeguarding the quality of programme delivery.<sup>37</sup> Annual reports are available in hard copy and electronically. The Dutch Accreditation Panel also publishes annual reports which contain all behavioural programmes that have been assessed the past year.<sup>38</sup> Main reason for publishing annual reports is to actively disseminate information on evidence-based intervention programmes.<sup>39</sup> All decisions are mentioned in the report, including negative decisions ones. Other countries do not (yet)

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<sup>35</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2006). *Referentiedocument Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

<sup>36</sup> Rex, S., Lieb, R., Bottoms, A. & Wilson, L. (2003). *Accrediting Offender Programmes: A process-based evaluation of the Joint Prison/Probation Services Accreditation Panel*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

<sup>37</sup> For example: Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (2008). *The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel Report 2006-2007*. London: Home Office.

<sup>38</sup> For example: Ministerie van Justitie (2008). *Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie Jaarverslag 2007*. Retrieved May 25, 2008, from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

<sup>39</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2006). *Referentiedocument Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

have annual reports but internal evaluation of panels' activities is forwarded to Justice Departments. The Canadian Programme Accreditation Panel provides an update of its activities to the executive members of the Correctional Service of Canada. These updates are not made public. There are also plans to submit an annual report to the Executive Committee at the end of a fiscal year. In Finland, a short account of the activities of the panel is written annually for the Annual Report of the Agency. Every three years a report on the work and achievements of the panel is prepared. Scotland has, in the past few years, not kept itself busy with annual reports. Nonetheless, a draft report is under review and will be made available on the Scottish Government website. The Swedish Accreditation Panel does not write annual reports due to a lack of resources. The secretary keeps track of all the meetings and informs Swedish Prison and Probation Service. Similarly, the financial situation of the Danish Accreditation Panel does not allow publishing annual reports discussing its activities and achievements. Norway expects to publish annual reports soon.

## 5. Scope of assessment

Accreditation Panels regard behaviour programmes for offenders in a judicial context. Four aspects can be distinguished:

- Assessment of preventive or repressive treatment programmes
- Assessment of general or specific treatment programmes
- Assessment of prison- or community based programmes
- Focus on treatment programmes for minors and/or adults

An overview of the assessment domains per country can be found in table 5.1.

### *Repression or prevention*

As can be expected most Accreditation Panels focus on repressive and (tertiary) preventive behaviour programmes. In all countries it was the Justice department that instigated and supports the accreditation process. The focus is primarily on reducing recidivism of offenders. They have committed a crime and, therefore, the interventions have passed the stage of primary prevention. Reducing recidivism is important as these are the goals stated by nearly all Accreditation Panels (chapter 3). Primary prevention programmes are not taken into account by panels. However, the Netherlands developed in 2007 an Accreditation Panel for youth interventions. Its focus is on the development of the child.<sup>40</sup> Even though there is no specific focus on preventing crime, the panel assesses programmes that intend to improve the quality of life of children (and as such indirectly preventing crime).

### *Prison-based or community-based programmes*

Nearly all panels accredit both prison-based and community-based behaviour programmes. In Denmark only prison-based programmes are assessed.

### *General or specific programmes*

Nearly all Accreditation Panels concentrate on assessing both general and specific crime programmes. Many behaviour programmes are developed, some of them focusing on a specific type of crime that they would like to 'treat' such sex offences or violent offences. Most countries have just one panel assessing all types of programmes. In Canada, the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel has sub-panels that are created for each of the largest programme areas: cognitive skills, substance abuse, violence prevention, family violence and programmes for sex offenders. A similar situation is found in England and Wales.

### *Minors or adults*

All Accreditation Panels assess behaviour programmes for adults. Yet the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland also deal with behaviour programmes for juveniles. Scotland has considered assessing programmes but for now only looks at programmes for offenders aged over 16.

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<sup>40</sup> Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (2008). *Certificeren*. Retrieved August 29, 2008 from <http://www.rivm.nl/gezondleven/Certificeren/>.

**Table 5.1 Assessment Domains per country**

	<b>Prison</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<b>Minors</b>	<b>Adults</b>
<b>Canada</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Denmark</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Finland</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Norway</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Scotland</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Sweden</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>The Netherlands</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **6. Accreditation**

Accrediting behaviour programmes comes in different forms. The two most distinct types are programme and site accreditation. This chapter focuses on the procedures of these forms and the meetings held. An overview of the proximity to practice will be given to understand the contact panel members have with programme developers and submitters.

### **6.1 Procedures**

The Canadian Accreditation Panel focuses on programme accreditation since 1998 and delivery site accreditation a half year later. Programme accreditation is done to provide an account of a programmer's scientific basis. A programme sponsor or developer submits a case file two weeks before the review by the panel. On the day of the meeting, additional documents like manuals, instruments used, charts or videos are provided. Case files are reviewed by the Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel and is judged against eight criteria. Only programmes that have already been implemented or piloted are accredited. A 'Question and Answer period' is taken with the sponsor where he can present his programme in a nutshell. Panel members also visit a site of one of the programmes that is being reviewed. They write a short report on their findings and submit it to the panel. Finally a decision is reached by the panel members. The Chairperson gives an oral summary of the decision to the programme sponsors. Sponsors will be given clear motivations for the decision and improvements that could be made. The final report with the programme certificate is sent to the Commissioner. The Canada Programme Accreditation Panel is also involved in site accreditation in order to restrain programmes from deviating from the original model and to encourage the adoption of 'best practices'. First results of site accreditation were rather disappointing. Staff was not trained well and programme integrity was not always present. Furthermore, pre- or post-test evaluation was absent, as was follow up training, and sometimes offenders were put in the wrong programmes. As a result not one site was accredited. The Panel was blamed for this disappointing result of site accreditation and was believed to be too strict on sites. Site accreditation was then put on hold. As the new government was more focused on keeping offenders out of society, instead of reintegrating them, the process of site accreditation was stopped and expected to commence again in 2009. Re-accreditation also has certain procedures that need to be followed. Programme sponsors need to provide panel members with an updated case file. It should include indications that concerns raised in the previous accreditation have been worked on. This also counts for site accreditation. The case file also needs to contain evaluations that have been done during the accreditation period.

The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales focuses on programme design and up till recently on maintenance of programme integrity. Before accreditation programmes need to show they have already been implemented or were piloted. The panel, specifically the sub-panels, assesses applications for advice or accreditation using a set of ten accreditation criteria. The panel has an audit team, focusing on therapeutic communities, offending behaviour programmes and drug treatment programmes. Members give advice on the effectiveness of the procedures for audit of programme delivery. Currently, the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel does not undertake site visits.

The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes in Scotland is involved in programme design, content, maintenance of programme integrity and, to a lesser extent, delivery accreditation. This dual focus is to ensure program integrity. Programmes are assessed by using the Standards of Programme and Delivery Accreditation. Behaviour programmes are assessed against seven programme standards. Delivery accreditation is under development and differs in a prison or community setting. The proposed delivery accreditation model within the community involves the assessment of organizational readiness for delivery. There is also an annual self assessment form filled out by programme managers to inform performance improvement plans and to assure the panel of the quality of the programme. The panel is involved in considering whether programmes delivered within the prison setting has met the criteria, but are not involved in approving the delivery of programmes within the community. Scotland is not involved in the actual implementation and delivery of programmes. The panel devises and approves the nine delivery standards but play no role in the monitoring of the actual standard of delivery in community setting other than receiving reports on implementation and delivery accreditation issues. The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes audits programme integrity. They find it important to know how the programme has been delivered.

In Sweden, the assessment criteria are for programme and site accreditation. However, the focus is mostly on programme accreditation. A separate part of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service focuses on site assessment within the framework of a special quality system built upon ISO 9000. The outcome of each site assessment is reported annually to the regional as well as to the head office. The panel does not receive these annual reports. The procedure for programme application is quite demanding for the submitter. Manuals are handed in together with the application form. These manuals elaborate on the ten criteria set by the panel. An oral presentation is given by the submitter followed by questions from the panel. In a closed session, the panel deliberates and decisions are made. These are written down in a protocol by the secretary. If the programme is given the status of accreditation it is up to the Swedish Prison and Probation Services where and to what extent the programme shall be used. If the programme is not accredited it keeps its pilot status and improvements need to be made before applying for accreditation again.

Where the above countries include site accreditation to their procedures, Finland does not, as they do not have the authority to implement a programme. The Finish Panel had site accreditation in the beginning whereby special attention was paid to programmes that came from abroad. Due to a lack of budget and lack of political support, site accreditation was abolished. Instead the Panel focuses on programme accreditation. There are two rounds in which programme accreditation takes place. In the first round a global view of a submitted programme is made. Thereafter, two members are appointed to take a closer look at the behaviour programme. This is done before the start of the second round. These members are experts on the specific area of the programme. The Finish Accreditation Panel finalizes the procedure by giving recommendations to the Criminal Sanctions System.

Norway too, focuses exclusively on programme accreditation. The Accreditation Panel considers the provision of the right material conditions, facilitation and support by management at different levels, registration and documentation, training of programme staff, guaranteeing ethical and human rights aspects to be the responsibility of the different administrative departments within the Correctional Service. The panel's attention is exclusively on programme contents and form and not on conditions for execution of a programme. The procedure for programme accreditation is as follows. An

application of a programme is sent to the panel's secretariat. The secretariat decides whether the application is complete. If it is not complete, it is sent back to the submitter with feedback. If complete, panel members receive a copy of the application, at the latest, two weeks before their meeting. The panel must reach a unanimous decision. The reasons for the decision are stated clearly so that improvements can be made to the programme if necessary. Once the panel has reached its decision, the secretariat draws up a draft of the conclusion and is sent back to the panel members for approval. If approval is given, the conclusion is passed on to the Ministry who takes the final decision on accreditation. The panel may also postpone its decision when it sees the potential of a submitted programme, but is in need of improvement in certain areas. The submitters will be given feedback on the improvements that need to be made so that they can apply again with an improved application within a given period of time.

The Dutch Accreditation Panel for Behavioural Programmes for Offenders focuses strictly on programme accreditation. It is neither involved in site accreditation nor in auditing. An application is submitted to the Bureau of the Panel. The Bureau checks every submission to make sure it is complete. Incomplete applications are sent back to the submitter with feedback. Several weeks before the meeting panel members receive the complete application. They are expected to read the manuals before each meeting as on the day itself a decision will be reached regarding accreditation. Feedback will be given during this meeting. The Bureau writes reports this down and sends these to programme submitters. If accredited, programmes can be implemented. If not accredited, submitters are given the time to rewrite some aspects of their programme and re-apply for accreditation. The decision of the panel is passed on to the Ministry and made public through annual reports.<sup>41</sup> Auditing is done by other government bodies.

The Danish Accreditation Panel does not do site accreditation but only programme accreditation. An application for accreditation is sent to the members of the Accreditation Panel through the Danish Prison and Probation Services, Sentence Enforcement Division two weeks before an assessment meeting. The members note their assessment scores for the individual criteria prior to the meeting. On the day of the meeting the panel members discuss the application and establish themes of questions for a question session with the programme developers. An employee of the Danish Prison and Probation Services chairs the meeting. Thereafter, panel members discuss whether the programme meets the individual criteria. When the decision is made, the programme developers are called in for a brief presentation of the overall assessment and follow-up on potential areas of development. Recommendations for quality improvement of the submitted programme are also made. The decisions made by the Accreditation Panel are only guiding for the Service. It is the Service that makes the final decision.

## 6.2 Meetings

As the Canadian Programme Accreditation Panel focuses on programme and site accreditation separate meetings are organized. Programme Accreditation Panels meet once a year with the meetings lasting up to five days. Two days are needed to assess one programme. The panel takes five days to review three to four programmes and consults on one or more new behaviour programmes. With

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<sup>41</sup> Erkenningscommissie (2007). *Interne Werkwijze van de Erkenningscommissie*. Retrieved July 3, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

respect to site accreditation, site accreditation reports are submitted to the Director, Reintegration Programmes no later than twenty working days after the site visit. Upon review, the Director, Reintegration Programmes recommends site accreditations to the Director General, offender Programmes and Reintegration who grants the accreditation of the specific site. The site report as well as the decision is then presented at the National Correctional Programme Advisory Committee that meets once a year. They confirm the decision. The results are then shared with the National Correctional Programme Accreditation Panel.

The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes in Scotland meets twice a year, usually in February and September, with each meeting lasting up to four or five days. Deliberations on each submitted programme take one day. This also includes a question and answer session with the programme developers when clarification is needed. At the meetings also receive reports are received on programme roll-out, policy of government and prisons, future work load and information on delivery.

Denmark meets four times a year to assess treatment programmes. Programme deliverers need to hand in their application two weeks before each meeting in order to be assessed. This application is sent to the Department's accreditation secretariat at the Sentence Enforcement Division. It takes the panel up to three hours to assess and advice on a submitted programme. Similar to Denmark the Accreditation Panel in Finland also meets four times a year, but the process of accreditation varies. If changes to a behaviour programme are substantial and/or the developers are too busy or unable to make the required changes the process can take as long as a few years. However, usually the process takes about a year. Panel members have a month to prepare themselves for the meeting. During the meeting discussion and feedback are given to programme developers. It is not unusual for programmes to be on the panel's agenda three times. In the Netherlands, the panel meets three to four times a year. Full assessing one behaviour programme is estimated on fifty hours in total.

While the above countries have set meetings, England and Wales, Norway and Sweden are more flexible. The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales works in sub-panels to consider applications for advice or accreditation. These meetings are very flexible as it depends on the nature and number of applications. Generally, one day is needed to assess a behaviour programme. The panel meets collectively once or twice a year to discuss panel business. Norway is also more flexible in their meetings. They do not have set data on when to meet. It all depends on the number of applicants. Usually two applications will be assessed per meeting. Two days are reserved for reading the manuals and one day for the actual meeting. Sweden usually meets twice a year, but they too are flexible. It depends on how many treatment programmes need to be assessed. The Accreditation Panel generally assesses one per day.

### **6.3 Proximity to practice**

An important aspect to the process of accreditation is how close panels and panel members are involved with programme developers and practitioners. Proximity to practice relates to different aspects of the accreditation process. All panels support programme developers by providing feedback when their programme does or does not get accredited. However, some countries advice and guide programme submitters through the accreditation procedures before and after the programme is formally assessed. Developing programmes in order to get accreditation or to meet recommendations after first assessment is not only time-consuming but also a complicated enterprise. Discussions with

panels and panel members may be helpful in that process. Scotland is a good example since panel members give directions during the development of a programme. Panel members may visit sites that are delivering programmes in the community or in prison settings in order to foster the connection with delivery standards. Sub-panels of the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel in England and Wales work closely with programme developers throughout the process providing advice and guidance when and where needed. This helps to ensure that the programme meets the Panel's recommendations when it is resubmitted. The Panel is not involved in the development itself but panel members may give their views when developers ask for it. In Sweden, some panel members give advice to programme developers to ensure better quality of behaviour programmes. In Finland, some of the panel members come from organizations that co-operate with local prisons or probation officers. They have close contacts with the field. Canada is also in close proximity to practice. Programme developers can submit their programme to the panel for consultation only. The panel will provide advice and guidance where required.

The Panels in Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands are positioned further away from practice; they keep a certain distance. Too close proximity is perceived as threatening independence. The Dutch panels keep a strong distinction between information and advice. Contacts with programme developers are dealt with by the secretariat.

## 7. Criteria

England and Wales were the first to start their Accreditation Panel and, therefore, also the first to formulate criteria for assessing behavioural programmes. By conducting a meta-analysis standards were identified that were associated with effective interventions<sup>42</sup>: *effective risk management, targeting offender behaviour, addressing the specific factors linked with offending, relevance of intervention to offenders' learning style, promoting community reintegration and maintaining the quality and integrity of service*. These standards are similar to the *What Works* principles. From these principles, ten assessment criteria were formulated. Most countries with an Accreditation Panel have incorporated the accreditation criteria developed by England and Wales (see Table 7.1). Criteria for site accreditation were also developed.

### 7.1 Programme accreditation criteria

Programme accreditation criteria provide a framework for assessment of the submitted behaviour programmes<sup>43</sup>:

1. A clear model of change backed by research evidence
2. Selection of offenders
3. Targeting dynamic risk factors
4. Effective methods
5. Skills orientation
6. Sequencing, intensity and duration
7. Engagement and motivation
8. Continuity of programmes and services
9. Programme integrity
10. On-going evaluation

All other countries have taken over the criteria from England and Wales, sometimes in a slightly different wording. Canada<sup>44</sup> uses the term *responsivity* instead of *engagement and motivation*. Other countries have standards that incorporate various other elements or criteria. Scotland<sup>45</sup>, for instance, assesses programmes using only seven standards or criteria. The first standard - *the programme rationale, target group and intended outcomes are clearly stated and based on the best available evidence* - includes the criteria *a clear model of change* and *selection of offenders*. But Scotland's second standard is similar to England and Wales' *effective methods* and *motivation and engagement*. A similar situation is found in the Norway. Their criterion *a clear description of the pedagogical aspects* demands that the type of pedagogical framework or theory the programme is based on must be

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<sup>42</sup> Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (2007). *The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel Report 2006-2007*. London: Home Office.

<sup>43</sup> Home Office (2003). *What Works: Accreditation a Summary*. Retrieved November 7, 2008 from <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingoffenders/workingoffenders13.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> Concilio, A. (2003). Correctional Program and Site Accreditation in Canada. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 15 (2) [Electronic Version]. Retrieved July 25, 2008, from <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e1521-eng.shtml>.

<sup>45</sup> Scottish Accreditation Panel for Offender Programmes (2008). *Manuals of Standards March 2008*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

described and how this is connected to seriousness and type of the target group. It includes a description of the separate parts a programme consists of, its methods, the order in which the programme needs to be presented to the offender, the amount of work, length and duration of a programme, the level of intensity and the way these aspects are connected and adapted to one another.<sup>46</sup> In other words *selection of offenders, engagement and motivation* and *sequencing, intensity and duration* must all be met. Denmark, too, has standards that contain multiple criteria. Denmark's standard *target group* has incorporated the criteria *selection of offenders* and *targeting dynamic risk factors*. The standard *method and motivation* includes the criteria *effective methods* and *engagement and motivation*. A final standard is the *documentation, quality assurance and quality development*, thereby incorporating *program integrity* and *on-going evaluation*. Denmark has also embraced a new and different criterion: *ethics*. The criterion aims at stimulating programme developers and programme staff to reflect on their behaviour towards clients. Clearly, this criterion is considered important since a programme needs to receive the maximum score on this criterion in order to get accredited.

#### *Re-accreditation criteria*

Scotland has developed an additional criterion for programmes submitted for re-accreditation, i.e. when programmes seek renewal of accreditation. The following material needs to be provided:

- A new, comprehensive submission document which includes an overview of the programme, an account of its development and a detailed account of how the programme meets each of the criteria which underpin the design standards
- An account of any changes made to the programme based on the experience of delivery
- An updated theory manual to take account of any emerging research or changes in the intervening years
- Independent evaluation and outcome data.

In light of the experience of delivery and of any new research evidence submitters have to show what has changed. Also, out outcome data from the programme have to be presented in order to demonstrate effectiveness.

## **7.2 Site accreditation criteria**

Another type of assessment regards site accreditation, focusing on quality of delivery of programmes and whether or not a programme is delivered as stated in the programme protocol. To perform this kind of assessment, different accreditation criteria are needed. However, not all Accreditation Panels are involved in site accreditation. The Accreditation Panel of the Netherlands and Norway<sup>47</sup> do not consider this type of assessment part of their responsibility<sup>48</sup>. The Finnish Accreditation Panel does

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<sup>46</sup> Norwegian Advisory Panel (2008). *Norwegian advisory panel for the accreditation of programmes in corrections*. Retrieved October 1, 2008 from <http://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/getfile.php/760075.823.twpufprbwf/undefined>.

<sup>47</sup> Norwegian Advisory Panel (2008). *Norwegian advisory panel for the accreditation of programmes in corrections*. Retrieved October 1, 2008 from <http://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/getfile.php/760075.823.twpufprbwf/undefined>.

<sup>48</sup> Ministerie van Justitie (2006). *Referentiedocument Erkenningscommissie Gedragsinterventies Justitie*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

not have the authority to implement a programme and is therefore not involved in site accreditation.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in England and Wales site visits have not been part of the accreditation process for the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel, but in the future these visits will be facilitated if there is a specific need to view programme delivery or as part of the review process. Site accreditation is present only in a few countries, and the interpretation of these criteria differs per country.

Canada, Scotland<sup>50</sup> and Sweden have developed site accreditation criteria. In Sweden, special rules regarding implementation and assessment have been decided by the Director General. They are to be applied to each site. Local management must report about the programme delivery to the regional director and the head office every year. This is called 'the revenue by the management' and includes general information on the site and special information regarding a specific programme. When the regional director reviews the report, other demands can be added or changed, which allows the criteria for site accreditation to change annually. In Canada, programmes that apply for programme accreditation must be also site accredited. Even though a temporary halt has been made on site accreditation, it is still considered important as it will offer support for programme integrity and consistency in programme delivery. Scotland has formulated nine delivery standards, but has not yet put it in practice.

The criteria of Canada, Scotland and Sweden are similar to one another. All demand well trained staff and that programmes are delivered to meet the needs of the offender. Yet, while Canada includes specific criteria on the correctness of the status of a programme, Scotland and Sweden focus more on specific parts of the programme such as rooms, equipment, number of staff and routines.

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<sup>49</sup> Laan, P. van der, Krooi H., van der Voort, P. & Wijkman, M. (2006). *Toetsing en Certificering van Preventieve, Curatieve en Repressieve Interventies in de Jeugdzorg: Een Internationale Oriëntatie*. Leiden: NSCR.

<sup>50</sup> Scottish Accreditation Panel for Offender Programmes (2008). *Manuals of Standards March 2008*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

**Table 7.1 Programme Accreditation Criteria**

	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>The Netherlands</b>
<b>A clear model of change</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Selection of Offenders</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Targeting Dynamic Risk Factors</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Effective Methods</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Skills Orientation</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Sequencing, Intensity and Duration</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Engagement and Motivation</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Continuity of Programme and Services</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Programme Integrity</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ethics</b>		✓						

## **8. Applying for accreditation**

This chapter is about various issues regarding procedures. Topics addressed are who can apply, the format according to which applications should be presented, how accreditation decisions are reached by panel members, and what happens after accreditation such as informing submitters on special conditions and the possibility to appeal. Table 8.1 provides a global overview of this chapter.

### **8.1 Who can apply?**

Behaviour programmes can be initiated by governmental and non-governmental organizations. In Canada, any correctional programme that is offered by the Correctional Service of Canada or a correctional programme that is contracted can apply for accreditation. The Correctional Service has many correctional programmes that are offered to offenders while incarcerated or on parole. These programmes need to be accredited to ensure its continuance. The Swedish Prison and Probation Services are also the only organization that can design and submit a programme to the Swedish Accreditation Panel. The Service has adopted and funds the Accreditation Panel to help reduce re-offending among offenders sentenced to prison or probation. Only those programmes that are delivered within the Service and share the same goals as the Service are allowed to apply for accreditation.

In other countries, Accreditation Panels extend the application process to other organizations. The Danish Accreditation Panel allows private and governmental organizations to apply for accreditation, as long as these private organizations carry out treatment in cooperation with the Prison Service. England and Wales show a similar picture. Next to accepting programmes from the National Offender Management Service (prison and/or probation), the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel Wales considers applications for accreditation from external and third party (voluntary) organizations provided the programmes meet specific criteria. In Finland, programmes that are developed by the Criminal Sanctions System can apply for accreditation. Furthermore, organizations that are related to the System can submit a behaviour programme. In Scotland, similar to Finland, applications should come from either a) the Scottish Prison Service with or without a private organization involved in the development of a programme or b) Scottish Local Authorities with or without the involvement of a private or voluntary organization can apply for accreditation. The Netherlands too has specific requirements as to who can apply for their service, making a distinction between juvenile and adult programmes. The following organizations are allowed to submit programmes for adults: the Dutch Probation Service, the probation department of the Salvation Army, the Addiction and Probation Department of the Netherlands Association for Mental Health Care, the Dutch Prisons and Custodial Institutions Services, the Sanction and Prevention Policy Department, the Ministry of Justice. Submitters of juvenile offender programmes are: the Youth Care Agencies, HALT, the National Office of the Child Protection Board, and the Department of Correctional Institutions for Juvenile Offenders and the Judicial Youth Policy Department. Organizations that would like to submit a programme should address an organization that is allowed to apply directly.

The Norwegian advisory panel allows any organization to submit a programme. A rationale for this open application is that extensive pre-reviews of a programme are done by their secretariat. They make sure that no programmes are sent to the panel if they are not complete.

## 8.2 Application process

In Canada, the programme sponsor completes the 'Accreditation Readiness Checklist' to identify the stage a programme is in and whether it is ready for accreditation. Once the National Headquarters has reviewed the checklist and confirmed that the programme is ready to be assessed, a case file must be submitted along with the following manuals; programme- and training manuals, research and evaluation reports, awareness of materials for offenders and staff, a reference list and a cost-benefit analysis.

In Denmark, the application must be brief and specific. With the application, submitters must also enclose all treatment manuals, not exceeding fifty pages. And as accreditation is largely concerned with development, it is important that the application includes a description of the criteria that the programme does not immediately meet. Any areas for improvement must also be described and added. To apply for accreditation in England and Wales, programme developers must submit a full application of a programme and the following manuals: a theory-, programme-, assessment and evaluation-, management-, and a staff training manual. Additionally, a full application must provide an overview of the programme including target group, treatment and each of the ten criteria are addressed. The Correctional Service Accreditation Panel also allows preliminary applications of programmes. Applications for advice are generally made when a programme is at an early stage of development and the Panel's views are being sought on its suitability for accreditation. Programme developers can contact the Panel at any time throughout the accreditation process, not just at the point of application, for advice and guidance.

The application process in the Netherlands is similar to that of England and Wales. Application needs to include a theory-, programme-, assessment and evaluation-, management-, and a staff training manual. If present, folder containing information that is given to participants must also be included.<sup>51</sup> The Bureau checks the application before sending it to the panel.

In Norway, an application for accreditation of a behaviour programme is sent to the secretariat of the Norwegian advisory panel. The secretariat decides whether the application is complete by looking to see if it has fulfilled all quality criteria. They also assess whether the descriptions are detailed enough for the panel to form an opinion. If not complete, it is sent back to the submitter with feedback. If complete, panel members receive a copy of the application including the manuals two weeks before their meeting.

In Sweden, application is a two-step process. Before applying for accreditation, there is a pilot study of the programme. The head office appoints individuals of the staff in the Swedish Prison and Probation Services to be responsible for programme development providing supervision and support. The head office makes the final decision on whether a programme is ready for assessment by the Accreditation Panel. During this stage the programme is also referred to members of the Scientific Council to ensure that the programme has fulfilled the quality criteria for further development. In the second stage, a series of documents need to be handed in to the Accreditation Panel: an application form, theory-, programme-, training-, management- and follow-up manuals. These manuals elaborate on the ten criteria set by the panel.

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<sup>51</sup> Erkenningscommissie (2007). *Interne Werkwijze van de Erkenningscommissie*. Retrieved July 3, 2008 from <http://www.erkenningscommissie.nl>.

In Scotland, the process of application includes the following steps. First, programme designers submit a proposal for the development of a programme. This proposal will be considered and a sponsorship decision is made by Scottish Prison Service Partnerships and Commissioning Directorate or Scottish Government Community Justice Services Division. Thereafter, if programme designers secure sponsorship, a preliminary application or concept paper should be submitted to the Scottish Offender Programme Accreditation Panel and a target date is set for full submission. This preliminary application describes the target group of the programme, the intended outcomes and a description of how the programme will achieve these outcomes. The final step is full application. This application includes a pre-determined set of manuals (theory, programme, assessment and evaluation and management and training manual) and a document containing the aims of the programme and the links between the various manuals. These manuals must cover each criterion.

In Finland, the requirements are not as extensive as in other countries. The secretary gets acquainted with the submitted behaviour programme to make sure it has incorporated the required elements, such as all the accreditation criteria. Then the behaviour programme generally goes through a three-stage process before it is accredited. This process will be discussed in the next section.

### **8.3 Rating procedures**

Each Accreditation Panel employs a specific rating procedure when assessing a behaviour programme. The Swedish Accreditation Panel assesses a programme against ten criteria using a point system. Following accreditation and possible advice, four possible outcomes can be given to a programme. A programme can be given the accreditation status when it has fulfilled most of the criteria. As a maximum of two points can be given per criteria, a programme with an accredited status has scored 17 points or more. Additionally, certain criteria need to have two points in order to get accredited. This distinction between criteria is made, because the panel feels that some are of more crucial importance to be entirely fulfilled than others. The second outcome is 'accredited with conditions'. In other words, a programme is temporarily accredited. The panel specifies which changes need to be made. If a programme is not given the accreditation status during the second assessment, the panel can advise the Swedish Prison and Probation Services not to use the programme before a new assessment by the panel has been made. To be accredited with conditions, the programme must have 15 out of the 20 points and at least one point per criteria. The third option is 'further development possible but not accredited'. Extensive work needs to be done on a programme before it can be accredited by the Accreditation Panel. The panel gives advice on the areas that need improvement. This may create a problem when accreditation concerns programmes imported from other countries that do not allow making changes in a programme without consulting the copyright owner first. Distribution of a programme across Sweden is not advisable until a programme has met its conditional changes. To achieve this status, a programme must achieve a minimum of 10 points out of the 20. The final possible outcome is 'not accredited', having scored below 10 points. A programme with this status is not considered worth of further development. The panel clarifies its decision to the submitters.

Denmark, too, has four possible outcomes. Working with the point system a maximum of two points can be given per criterion leading up to a total of 16 points. To receive accreditation status, a programme must receive at least 13 points with criteria 1, 2 and 7 receiving the maximum points. Similar to Sweden, Denmark also acknowledges that some criteria are essential for an effective

behaviour programme. The second outcome is 'Accredited with conditions' for a programme receiving between 10 and 15 points. A key condition is that none of the assessed criteria can have zero points. If a programme scores under 10 points the status 'Developable, but not fully accredited' can be given and the programme needs numerous improvements. The final option is 'Not accredited', because the programme is very much out of line with the criteria of accreditation. Feedback will be given by members on the areas of improvement. After a year, a programme can come back and share changes and improvements with the panel. Before each meeting, members note their assessment scores using the above point system for the individual criteria. During the meeting, panel members discuss the application and invite programme developers for a questioning session. After the question session, members discuss whether a programme meets the individual criteria. A decision is to be reached.

In England and Wales, the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel works with a point system where a maximum of two points can be given per criterion. Individual assessments rein advance and are discussed during the meeting. At the end of the day a rating is done. Accreditation leads to four possible outcomes. A programme must score between 18 and 20 points to be accredited. The panel award provisional status when needs for specific changes are identified that can be made in less than twelve months (or longer, where specified) and the programme has reached a score of around 16 points. A programme may be identified as not yet accredited but promising, if the panel considers that a significant degree of further development work is needed to bring it up to standard. The panel may also decide that there is no value to further developing a programme. Reasons are set out and explained to programme developers.

The Netherlands also assesses behaviour programmes against ten criteria and gives advice to possible improvements that can be made to the programme. This Accreditation Panel uses a point system. A maximum of two points can be given per criteria. Following the point system, a decision can have four possible outcomes. Full accreditation is given, to programmes that have a score of 16 points or more. None of the criteria are allowed to have zero points. The second possible outcome is 'temporarily accredited'. A programme must have received a minimum of twelve points and none of the criteria a zero score. The third option, when a minimum of ten points is given, is 'not accredited, needs further improvements'. The final outcome is 'not accredited', where a programme has been given less than ten points. No further improvement is needed. In the Dutch panel, each member is a so-called foster parent for at least one criterion. This is done in order to continuously review the criteria but also to make the process more efficient for the Bureau. If they have any questions about the advice given on a certain criterion they can contact that specific member.

In Canada, programme assessment is based on eight quality criteria. Site accreditation has different criteria. To accredit a programme reference is made to the quality criteria, thereby rating them globally and not using a point system. Panel members see at whether a programme has met the criteria or not. The Canadian Accreditation Panel has three possible outcomes for programme accreditation: accredited, not accredited or not accredited, but creditable. The first outcome is only given to those programmes that have met all eight criteria. The latter can only be accredited if certain identified deficiencies are dealt with. If a programme is given the 'not accredited' status, it is likely that the programme will end its work. Only the National Headquarters of the Correctional Service of Canada has the power to make such a decision.

Norway works in the same line as Canada. They do not employ a scoring system since they do not want to force highly-skilled and well-informed experts to quantify their judgment in a score of 0, 1 or 2. Giving a score of 1 or 2 may be highly arbitrary and the summation of several arbitrary decisions on multiple criteria may lead to a conclusion that is not fully in line with the member's overall opinion of the programme. Rather, accreditation is done by consensus. This panel has four options: accredited, temporary accredited, temporarily not accredited and not accredited. Accredited programmes are expected to submit an annual report about the progress and possible changes to the programme. Panel members motivate their decisions so that applicants are able to use these comments to improve the programme if necessary and possible.

Finland does not use a point system either but works in rounds. In the first round, panel members give their opinions on the programme and possible improvements that need to be made. The submitters are present at this meeting and take the feedback into account when changing the programme. For the second round, the programme has made the changes panel members have suggested in the first round. The changes are assessed followed by an entire programme evaluation. More suggestions are given to the submitters and this is usually done by experts of that special area the programme concentrates on. In the third and final round an evaluation takes place to make sure that all suggestions have been taken on board. It is in this round that accreditation to a programme can be given, with or without a few minor requests. Only two outcomes are possible during programme assessment: accredited or not accredited. The reason for only having two options is that the Accreditation Panel only assess a programme that have the chance of being accredited.

The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes assesses programmes against the standards of accreditation. Each panel member offers a preliminary score against each standard using a scale of 0 (not met) to 3 (fully met) before each meeting. When the panel meets, they discuss, debate and share their views about whether the submission has met each criterion. By using this process, panel members' initial preliminary scores and views can change, thereby reaching a well-thought through decision. Since all seven criteria are considered necessary, the panel has to be convinced that all criteria are met before the programme can be accredited. When a decision is reached only two possible outcomes can be given: accredited or not accredited. The reason for having only two outcomes is to avoid major flaws still presiding in the programme. If only certain areas in a behaviour programme are changed to gain the extra point needed to receive the accreditation status other problems are left untouched.

#### **8.4 Accreditation status**

In Canada, programme accreditation is valid for five years unless changes are made to the programme. A certificate is given to a programme with a date and signed by all members who were part of the decision. Implementation of the programme is valid for three years. In order to retain their accreditation status, programmes must focus on all the deficiencies mentioned by the panel. A programme must also go through the site accreditation process. In addition, programmes need to apply for re-accreditation before the expiry date. In Norway, the accreditation status is valid for five years; a yearly progress report is obligatory. After five years, an application for renewal needs to be made and sent to the panel. An accredited programme also needs to keep the panel informed of its progress on an annual basis. The Netherlands is similar as the accreditation status is also valid for five years.

After this period, the programme needs to be re-assessed by the Panel. In the Netherlands, the procedures for re-accreditation are the same as described in 9.2. In Denmark the accreditation status is valid for five years. The assessment of whether a programme continues to comply with the accreditation criteria is made on the basis of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of that particular programme. These reports must be submitted to the panel on an annual basis. When applying for re-accreditation, a new comprehensive application must be submitted to the panel that also includes alterations and additions. The Finish Accreditation Panel has not yet applied any special conditions programmes need to fulfill in order to keep their accreditation status. This status is for some years (usually 4 to 6 years) and after this period, it is expected that programmes need to be reassessed. The panel does not adhere to a fixed number of years as the situation varies individually from programme to programme. The Swedish Accreditation Panel requires that behaviour programmes report back in two years after they have received accreditation. This report must also include results from evaluations that have taken place during implementation. A condition that all programmes need to uphold when receiving accreditation is that no major changes are to be made without the permission of the panel.

In England and Wales, programmes are generally awarded accreditation for a five-year period. The Panel may ask for a programme to submit for review earlier than this. This may be the case, for example, where evidence from evaluation is required. The Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Programmes takes on-going research also into account when determining the validity of the accreditation status. Normally, programme accreditation is valid for five years. However, if there is on-going research within a particular field present in a submitted programme, the panel may shorten its validity by a number of years. This to ensure a programme's effectiveness. When a programme applies for re-assessment, it must submit the results of all evaluations taken place during implementation and any changes. A separate criterion has been developed for re-accreditation, where a behaviour programme must answer the following questions: what is done differently and what are the outcome data?

## **8.5 Implementation**

Once accredited, a programme is ready to be implemented. Essential for implementation are management and treatment manuals. In Canada, the programmes that are being accredited originally belong to or are contracted by the Correctional Service of Canada. Therefore, accredited programmes will continually be offered to offenders. Programmes that have not been accredited are either phased out or replaced with an accredited programme. This is also the case in England and Wales. Accredited programmes are commissioned by the National Offender Management Service to run in prison- or community-settings depending on the need. In Finland, when a programme is accredited, the Criminal Sanctions Agency can buy the programme or the training. If the programmes have not been fully accredited, the Agency is able to subsidize them until their new application. Most of the programmes are intended to be used in prisons as programmes for the Probation Service are believed to be more difficult to develop. Group interventions are difficult to realize and individual client work is preferred during probation. Norway similarly finances accredited programmes by the Correctional Services in both its delivery and in dissemination. In Scotland accredited programmes implementation is the responsibility of either the Scottish Government or the Scottish Prison Service. Local authorities are funded through Community Justice Authorities for this purpose. In Sweden, a programme cannot

reach the status of a 'National Programme' (permitted to be used nation-wide) without accreditation status. All accredited programmes are taken over by the Swedish Prison and Probation Services, including all responsibilities (such as reporting back to the panel). When accreditation is approved, the aim is to offer the programme to all offenders, according to their assessed risks and needs. Starting next year ISO 9000 will be part of the regular planning to prevent money for programmes being spent on other issues. In the Netherlands, accreditation is a prerequisite for a programme to be funded by the Ministry of Justice.

Denmark is the only country that does provide possibilities for the continuance of a behaviour programme that is not accredited, due to practical matters on a given prison for a given period. A programme will not be subsidized by any organization.

### **8.6 Possibility of appeal**

Accreditation can have important consequences for a programme; whether they can be continued or not. Therefore, the possibility is an important issue. In Canada, programme developers cannot appeal to a panel decision. When it has been presented to the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, the decision is final. However, warden or District Directors of sites that have been reviewed for site accreditation can appeal to a decision made on site accreditation. A new site accreditation tool should prevent such appeals. The Dutch Accreditation Panel does not give submitters an opportunity to appeal to their decision, but the Ministry of Justice does. This possibility becomes available when the Ministry decides not to fund the programme. Norway too has no such provision in their procedures. Since the panel only gives advice, and the Ministry makes the decision final, any complaint or appeal should be directed towards the Ministry. These complaints will be brought under general complaint procedures. The Finnish Panel does not feel that is necessary to create a system of appeal as all programmes that have applied for accreditation do eventually receive the accreditation status. Also, as their decision is only guiding for the Criminal Sanctions Agency, programme developers need to appeal to the Agency. In Scotland the situation is similar. The panel feels that giving feedback to programme developers allows them to make the necessary changes so they can re-apply for accreditation in the future. If all the issues have been identified and changes made, accreditation is likely to follow. Sweden, Denmark and England and Wales currently have no plans for appeal procedures.

**Table 8.1 Applying for Accreditation**

	<b>Submitters</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Accreditation Status</b>	<b>Funding when accredited</b>	<b>Possibility of Appeal</b>
<b>Canada</b>	- Correctional Service of Canada - External contract providers	Discussion 3 possible outcomes	5 years	Yes	For site accreditation only
<b>Denmark</b>	- Criminal Sanctions System - Non-governmental organizations related to System	Point system 4 possible outcomes	5 years	No	No
<b>England and Wales</b>	- Governmental organizations - External or third party providers	Point system 4 possible outcomes	5 years, with exceptions	No	No
<b>Finland</b>	- Governmental organizations - Non-governmental organizations in agreement with government	Discussion 2 possible outcomes	Individual consideration, approximately 4-6 years	Yes, even when temporarily accredited	No
<b>Norway</b>	- Governmental organizations - Non-governmental organizations	Discussion 4 possible outcomes	5 years	Yes	No
<b>Scotland</b>	- Scottish Prison Service - Scottish local authorities - Non-governmental organizations in agreement with Service or local authorities	Point system 2 possible outcomes	5 years, with exception	Yes	No
<b>Sweden</b>	Swedish Prison and Probation Service	Point system 4 possible outcomes	2 years	Yes	No
<b>The Netherlands</b>	- Governmental organizations - Non-governmental organizations in agreement with government	Point system 4 possible outcomes	5 years	Yes	No

## 9. Summary and conclusions

Accreditation of behaviour programmes for offenders started in England and Wales in the mid 1990s and expanded to other countries during the following ten years. Perceived benefits of adopting accreditation are to protect the public and help reducing re-offending. Accrediting behaviour programmes for offenders stimulates effective, high quality programmes to be instigated in prisons and probation services and thus contributing to a safer society. To ensure its continuance accreditation has been embedded in national policies.

In this concluding chapter we mention a few issues that we believe are important to consider in our thinking and further development of accreditation procedures.

### *Organization of accreditation*

The organizational structure and support of a panel is important as it is essential for its credibility. Due to a good organizational structure society has faith in a panel's high-quality decision making. Such a good organization is realized firstly by providing all means necessary to allow a panel to function. Ministries or governmental services are responsible for this task by providing administrative and financial support. Less attention seems to be given to the evaluation of the Panel and the use of annual reports since these issues are not found in all countries possibly due to a lack of funds and resources.

A second feature of a good organizational structure is the panel and panel composition. Panel members are competent and should have insight in criteria and how these need to be applied. Panel members bring an array of expertise to the panel and their knowledge is particularly important when accrediting behaviour programmes that fall in their specific area of expertise.

Panel members are usually appointed by justice departments. Some countries allow members from governmental and non-governmental agencies to join the panel. Other countries only accept members from non-governmental agencies in order to safeguard independence of the panel. Yet, allowing experts from justice department or justice-related organizations can help maintaining consistency and focus. Whatever the model, all panels stress the importance of being an independent body with independent panel members. In some countries the latter is laid down in a Code of Conduct. And when no formal code exists, the general rule for panel members is to be independent when assessing a behaviour programme. Member integrity, therefore, becomes a key issue in making sure that only those behaviour programmes that have proven to be effective are given the accreditation status and not because of an individual interest in that programme. Even though independence is believed to be important for a panel, not all chairpersons are considered independent since they are nominated civil servants. Another aspect of independence is proximity to practice. All panels agree that some distance must be maintained between panel and programme developers. But panels differ in the extent to which they collaborate with and give advice to programme developers before or during the process of programme submission.

Most countries have one panel that is responsible for programme and/or site accreditation. Some countries have also sub-panels that look into special programmes for specific offender groups. There is no consensus whether a single panel or several (sub)panels are to be preferred. Sub-panels may

bring along the risk of stigmatizing certain offender groups. Sub-panels may also differ from each other in how to apply assessment criteria or they may look at programmes in a too detailed manner. Single panels may gain authority and respect because of its knowledge-based membership but it can also have certain power-effects and thus block innovation.

All panels receive - sometimes rather substantial - financial support. This allows an accreditation panel to exist. Administrative support facilitates panel members to focus exclusively on submissions instead of spending time on incomplete applications. In some countries financial support is not limited to the panel. In some countries programme developers also receive administrative and/or financial support through guidance and ability to evaluate their own behaviour programme.

### *Scope of accreditation*

To understand the procedures of accreditation panels it is important to consider the scope of assessment. Accreditation mainly focuses on general and specific repressive behaviour programmes developed for adult offenders. These behaviour programmes can be prison- or community-based. Accrediting programmes with a similar scope may have a downside since it may limit innovation as it is easier to accredit programmes that are similar to one another. Additionally, there seems to be a need for system accreditation. As specific targets do not sufficiently work, a more holistic point of view addressing not only programmes but correctional systems as a whole may be helpful. This may lead to a more stepping stone-like attitude towards offenders providing them with a job, healthcare and education in addition to specific behavioural programmes. Besides re-offending addressing other relevant and protective factors can help to keep them away from crime. These activities could also be part of an accreditation system, similar to what Scotland is trying to realize. The focus then turns more on social capital, instead on human capital only.

Looking at the various forms of accreditation of each panel it becomes clear that programme accreditation is done by every panel, but currently site assessment is more or less absent. Accreditation panels tend to follow a hands-off policy where site accreditation is not considered the responsibility of the accreditation panels. Panels, however, do look at programme integrity, for instance by demanding a training manual. Programme staff skills are important to consider. They need to be specialized, highly educated and reflexive. It is also important that the next person in line to work with an offender should be involved in the programme as well. Assessment, however, remains a theoretical or paper exercise; trust is given to programmes that they operate according to what has been written down on paper but it is not checked.

Another problem regarding appropriate programme delivery is that it is expensive. Organizations constantly look for efficient and cost-effective implementation. This may lead to a loss of quality in delivery, for instance if there is a tendency to save on qualified staff. Manuals may give the impression that the mere existence of a manual guarantees programme delivery as intended. Panels are convinced that some kind of evaluation must take place to ensure that programmes are implemented as designed and accredited. Site accreditation is believed very important, but more arrangements should be made for it to happen.

Core of procedures are the assessment criteria. The various accreditation criteria are shared by all panels and considered equally important. However, some criteria are seen as more fundamental than others, thereby implying some kind of order. Panels using point systems do not yet weigh their credits according to the importance of a criterion but receiving no points or credits for specific criteria may lead to denial of accreditation. The criterion *a clear model of change* is considered very important. This model articulates the risk- and protective factors that need to be addressed and perhaps changed in the behaviour programme. If such a model of change is not presented, then the other criteria cannot be met. The theoretical basis needs to be correct and complete before the other criteria can be fulfilled. Most panels consider the criterion *continuity of care* also very important, but not easy to fulfill.

Another important criterion regards *evaluation*. Programme developers are asked to present evaluation plans with their programme submission. However, evaluation designs are sometimes lacking or do not meet adequate scientific standards. And often no funding for evaluation is available and, therefore, making this criterion a controversial aspect of programme accreditation. When evaluations are hindered, the quality of a programme remains unknown. Site accreditation will be difficult as no effect studies can show the quality of a programme. Audits cannot fill this gap. Monitoring is becoming more important, but it cannot fully replace evaluation. This is not to say that evaluation is positive in all respects. Evaluation may block future developments since it does not fully allow flexibility in future planning. Also the focus may become too narrow.

The Danish Accreditation Panel has added one new criterion: *ethics*. The purpose of this criterion is making the programme think about what they are doing with regard to offenders and how this affects offender's position in the correctional system. Whether this can be seen as a separate criterion or it can be categorized under any of the other criteria remains to be seen, but it certainly adds to a more fundamental thinking about offender programmes.

Application and other procedures were the focus of the final chapter. Most Accreditation Panels limit the possibility to apply for accreditation to certain organizations. Only those involved in or linked to Justice Departments are allowed to submit a programme. Applications should also be well prepared by means of pilot studies and/or a series of detailed manuals. It is believed that limiting application to only a few organizations and by asking programme developers to prepare ample and appropriate material helps to make submissions and the accreditation process more controllable and allow the panel to reach a decision more quickly. Rating procedures are similar in the various countries. Decisions are based on discussions between panel members. Some panels additionally use a point system. The downside of using a point system is that scoring may become rather mechanical. It may also drive developers to seek for the extra (missing) point and thus ignoring the broader picture. Accreditation of a behaviour programme is often valid for a period of five years with a few exceptions.

## **Appendix A**

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