



Netherlands Institute for Accreditation in Healthcare

Core Document

Mission, Vision, Values



This document describes the Mission, Vision and Values of NIAZ. The document was compiled and updated in the preparation of NIAZ being accredited by the International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua). Its content comprises a synthesis of earlier, more scattered documentation as well as new topics, based on the informed experience of the last few years. Board Members, General Manager, Associates and Surveyors have all participated in its generation.

The document gives a description of what NIAZ currently is (*'Ist'*) and of what NIAZ seeks to become (*'Soll'*). It wants to offer guidance and inspiration for all policy decisions, decisions on specific issues and themes and the design and execution of operations in NIAZ. The document also serves as a means for communication and accountability with regard to third parties.

Determined by Board: November 26th 2008



Accredited by the International Society for Quality in Healthcare

Mission

Core task:
judgment

NIAZ offers a contribution to the assurance and improvement of the quality of healthcare, in particular by developing quality standards and by using them in the external evaluation of healthcare institutions and healthcare services, resulting in a judgment giving third parties – healthcare consumers, healthcare insurers, collaboration partners, government agencies and society in general – assurance that healthcare is being produced reproducibly in an adequate and safe way.

Vision

One institute,
no
fragmentation

The healthcare sector is best served by having one institute for the evaluation of the quality of healthcare and healthcare institutions instead of having this activity scattered over many (commercial) providers. The healthcare sector needs one knowledge institute being able to steadily build on knowledge and skills with regard to standards development and quality evaluation and providing those with continuity.

Standards
development &
evaluation in
one cycle in
one
organisation

Standards development and evaluation are links in a continuous circle of improvement and therefore belong in one organisation. Knowledge and experience generated whilst performing evaluations remain available as input for a new phase of standards development. Knowledge generated in developing standards provides the know how during evaluation processes in order to assess not only in accordance with the (dead) letter of the standards, but with its deeper meaning.

Evaluation
aimed at
improvement

Evaluation of healthcare must inspire and stimulate quality improvement. It is not to have the effect of causing bureaucratic spasms. The ultimate purpose is to achieve a better healthcare, not rearranging the bookshelves.

Governance
philosophy in
evaluating

Healthcare institutions and their associates need room to work well. There are usually lots of different ways to achieve that. NIAZ evaluates healthcare institutions as little as possible on rigid detailed standards and as much as possible on 'band widths'. Does evaluate on 'What', not on 'How'. NIAZ guards against standards becoming a passive collection of inflated parochial interests. Active weighing is done with regard to what is really important, ultimately for the healthcare consumer.

Strict on risk-
critical issues

Where so needed NIAZ is very strict. With regard to risk-critical issues, where the safety of healthcare is at stake, NIAZ leaves no room for aberration.

Peer review
and focus

Evaluation of healthcare requires expertise on healthcare. Therefore peers, experts form the healthcare field who are motivated and trained as a surveyor, play an important role in designing standards as well as participating in the evaluation processes by NIAZ. In all echelons of NIAZ expertise on healthcare will be generously present. For the same reason NIAZ focuses its activities on healthcare, leaving other societal sectors unattended.

Confidence in
'future results'
and expert's
judgment

Accreditation is an important, though not the only quality instrument. For example quality indicators (regarding 'past results') and 'specs' by consumers and healthcare insurers constitute other modes. Accreditation seeks to offer added value in two ways: confidence in a reproducible quality level (regarding 'future results') and the appraisal of fundamental technical quality issues, as such not suited for being judged by laymen. As the aviation consumer must be able to rely on the Aviation Authorities, so the healthcare consumer must be able to rely on NIAZ.

Public domain

The ultimate goal of NIAZ – better healthcare – is best served by distributing existing knowledge and skills. Therefore NIAZ makes all its materials available for free for every citizen and every institution, to be freely used for every reasonable purpose. Evaluation services providers using NIAZ materials in evaluating healthcare institutions on a for pay basis are asked to contribute in the developing costs of NIAZ.

Missionary goals

Healthcare wide institute	<p>NIAZ will develop a healthcare wide institute, working for all healthcare sectors. Inspired by what is common to all healthcare and guided by what is considered of value to the healthcare consumer and other relevant third parties and with respect for the particular character of specific branches of healthcare.</p>
Dutch-speaking countries	<p>NIAZ will work for healthcare institutions in the Dutch-speaking countries in the World. Belonging to these are the Netherlands, Belgium (Flanders), Aruba, the Dutch Antilles, Surinam. NIAZ sees working in different countries primarily as a stimulus for being a knowledge institute.</p>
Knowledge institute	<p>NIAZ will be a knowledge institute, contributing to the generation and dissemination of knowledge and skills regarding quality of healthcare. To this belong the distribution of the experiences won in the auditing processes e.g. regarding good practices – within the bounds of the terms of the Publication Policy and the Accreditation Agreement – and training programs.</p>
Fiduciary institute	<p>NIAZ will be a fiduciary institute for all parties having an interest in the assurance and improvement of the quality of healthcare and for society in general.</p>
Countervailing power against exaggeration	<p>NIAZ will offer an informed and authoritative countervailing power against exaggerated standardisation, needlessly burdening healthcare institutions and their employees and offering no value for relevant third parties, especially the healthcare consumer, or even diminishing that value.</p>
Instrument for accountability	<p>NIAZ will offer healthcare institutions an instrument for making themselves accountable regarding their proceedings. This requires apt standardisation, adequate surveying processes and a sufficient and transparent Publication Policy.</p>
Synergy in external quality evaluation	<p>NIAZ will cooperate with other institutions and organisations in order to achieve synergy in external quality evaluations and limit the auditing burdens of healthcare institutions. This regards governmental agencies (like (in the Netherlands) the Netherlands Healthcare Authority and the Healthcare Inspectorate) as well as private parties (like (in the Netherlands) the visitation programs of the medical profession, indemnity insurance companies, cooperatives of healthcare institutions and assessors of technical specialties).</p>
Financially independent, not for profit	<p>NIAZ will be working on a not for profit basis and will be a financially independent institute, paid by clients for its products and services: standards development and evaluation. Government subsidies or grants will only be accepted for specific projects to be accomplished (project contract).</p>
Active member of international community	<p>NIAZ will be an active member of the international society of healthcare evaluation organisations, united in ISQua. NIAZ will learn from fellow institutions, make it self accountable, be of assistance to other organisations and contribute in general to the advancement of quality evaluation in healthcare.</p>

Core Values

NIAZ and all those affiliated with it will in their attitude and conduct, towards colleagues, organisations and all that NIAZ meets professionally, be guided by the core values written down below.

Patient Value is 'True North'	NIAZ is aware that to the best possible care for the healthcare consumer is the ultimate purpose of all healthcare institutions and their employees. And is therefore also the purpose of all activities of NIAZ. NIAZ will remain critically conscious whether its proceedings contribute tot that.
Trust	NIAZ treats all healthcare institutions and their healthcare workers with an attitude of trust. NIAZ looks upon healthcare institutions and healthcare workers as responsible and committed organisations and individuals, unless proven otherwise. Quality standards and quality evaluation processes should support them, not suffocate them in a straitjacket. Healthcare institutions and healthcare workers may trust NIAZ to respect confidentiality regarding all confidential information about organisations and people. NIAZ will respect that under all circumstances and on all times.
Diligence	NIAZ will generate its judgment in a diligent, fact-based manner and with adequate professional distance. NIAZ will be fair and just in its judgment and decision processes. NIAZ is critically aware of its own functioning and its limitations and keeps continually working on increasing its professionalism. NIAZ will guard against conflicts of interests.
Innovation	NIAZ wants to contribute to innovation in healthcare and the way healthcare is evaluated. NIAZ continually seeks improving the way it discharges its societal responsibility. NIAZ will invent new methods to enrich the encounter of healthcare institutions with NIAZ as well as the value of the NIAZ judgment.
Sharing	NIAZ shares its knowledge and experience liberally with others. The ultimate goal is: achieving better healthcare. All materials of NIAZ are made available in the public domain. They are accessible for free to all citizens and all organisations and may be freely used for every reasonable purpose. Evaluation services providers using NIAZ materials in evaluating healthcare institutions on a for pay basis are asked to contribute in the developing costs of NIAZ.
Openness and learning attitude	NIAZ will evaluate quality using standards and an evaluation method that are known in advance. NIAZ will be an open organisation, knowing of no dogmas, open to new developments. NIAZ will be frank about its own mistakes, principally trying to learn from them. NIAZ constantly and systematically works on improving the execution of its societal task, founded in proven and robust developments in the healthcare sector. NIAZ will in all its activities and policies not be led by fashionable trends or 'flavour of the month' issues.
Wisdom, not pettiness	NIAZ will carry out its activities heart and soul for healthcare, weighing what is visible and measurable but also keeping an eye for what is imponderable. The full reality of healthcare will not be captured in linear reductionist flow charts or protocols. NIAZ will always bear that in mind. Wisdom will have precedence above pettiness.

Appendix: short historical impression of NIAZ.

The predecessor of NIAZ, the Foundation Pilot Project on Accreditation of Hospitals (PACE), was founded in 1989 with the aim to prepare for a healthcare wide institute for external quality evaluation. The International Health Development Foundation (IHDF) – a consortium of industry, universities and healthcare providers – and eight hospitals (eight academic, eight general) were instrumental in taking this initiative. It was decided to have the first phase of this endeavour started in hospitals only. The reason for this being that they had stronger organizational capability, ample resources, were limited in number and had a clearly defined scope. Such a project wise approach was considered to be more fruitful than the usual tactic of having all parties confer about all topics at the same time.

The ambition to achieve one institute for healthcare evaluation was inspired by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) (now named: Accreditation Canada), remaining an example for PACE and later on NIAZ. CCHSA had started in Canada in the late fifties of the previous century, beginning in the hospital sector but eventually expanding to other sectors and now working for the entire healthcare spectrum. Besides this history, the basic philosophy of this institute looked appealing as well: quality assurance aimed at quality improvement. Important building blocks in realising that philosophy comprised having standards development and quality evaluation in one organisation and a liberal use of peers in both processes.

In the nineties PACE developed an impressive number of standards for hospital departments and services. Besides that several pilot surveys were organised. From the start managers as well as medical professionals have contributed to all these activities. From 1996 the foundation of the current NIAZ was prepared by PACE, together with the Netherlands Hospital Association (NVZ), the Association of Academic Hospitals (VAZ) and the General College of Medical Specialists (Orde van Medisch Specialisten). In the course of this preparation a General Quality Standard, covering the entire healthcare institution, was developed. NIAZ was formally founded on December 22nd 1998. September 9th 1999 saw the first hospital (the Academic Hospital of Maastricht) being accredited by NIAZ. From January 1st 2003 NIAZ broadened its governance base: healthcare providers, professionals, healthcare insurers and healthcare consumers are now represented in the Board of NIAZ. In 2004 the General Quality Standard saw its first revision, using the template of the INK, being the Dutch version of the EFQM-model. This model is widely used in Dutch healthcare institutions for governance and accountability purposes. In 2008 the general standard is again being revised and updated (General Quality Standard 2.0), integrating departmental standards and preparing for external evaluation programs in other healthcare sectors.

NIAZ seeks a method of external quality evaluation that causes as little as possible bureaucratic burdens. NIAZ believes that formal certification processes are ridden with that problem. The ultimate goal must be to achieve better healthcare, not rearranging the bookshelves. By building on relationships with interested parties in a climate of trust for years, now more than 80 % of the Dutch hospitals participate in the NIAZ accreditation program. The demand from other sectors is increasing. Late 2007 saw the first hospital in Belgium (Flanders) – the Virga Jesse Hospital in Hasselt – being accredited by NIAZ. This is expected to be the beginning of a further deployment in that country.

In the Netherlands relationships with strategic partners keep maturing. NIAZ has shouldered a strategic alliance with the market leader in indemnity insurance, MediRisk (covering over 70 % of Dutch hospitals). MediRisk acknowledges the NIAZ accreditation program as sufficient to replace its own standard periodic assessment. With the Healthcare Inspectorate NIAZ seeks to outline and demarcate the respective proceedings, trying to have the NIAZ program recognized as an adequate basis on which the Inspectorate may rely for its own surveillance. Furthermore, NIAZ systematically works on further synergy between the visitation programs of the Colleges of Medical Specialists and the NIAZ program.

NIAZ in 2008 prepares an accreditation program for the chronic and elderly care sector that for all concerned may offer added value above and beyond the existing certificates. This is done in a close dialogue with interested parties. NIAZ will at the occasion of its 10th anniversary rename itself as Netherlands Institute for Accreditation in Healthcare.



NIAZ is a member of the international community of national institutes for external healthcare evaluation, united in the International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua). NIAZ shares experiences with fellow institutes in – amongst others – Australia, Canada, France and the USA. NIAZ now seeks to be accredited as an institute for external evaluation by the ISQua International Accreditation Program.

NIAZ is a not for profit organisation and has, after temporary support by the founding organisations, build its current position by its own merits and on its own strength. NIAZ has never vied for structural subsidies because NIAZ considers those to be leading to a wrong kind of organisation. One focussed on status and money instead of focussed on customers. NIAZ beliefs that retribution by paying customers is the best test for an institute for offering an added value. And the best guarantee for real independence.

NIAZ however has always adopted the philosophy of the public domain. All materials of NIAZ are freely accessible to all citizens and all organisations to be used freely for any reasonable purpose. That, NIAZ believes, contributes best to trying to achieve a better healthcare.



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