

SCAN Training Material Review by Technical Committee

Introduction:

A key feature of the SCAN program is to link the training material development process at the national level with the international level. Therefore, the training materials that are developed, reviewed and validated at national SCAN program-level are reviewed by the SCAN International Technical Committee (SITC) in a peer review process.

After the national process of identifying priorities and lead organizations developing draft materials on specific topics, they are reviewed by the national SCAN members, and are validated by trainers involved in the SCAN programs, as well as, producers and managers in the target organizations. Their recommendations on improving or adjusting the materials are then integrated into the training materials.

The input of the international SITC is then used to review the draft product so it can be approved and become the final training material. The SITC is also responsible for making recommendations on how to make the material more consistent with their approach. The SCAN material is pre-certification focused, but as much as possible should help advance consistency within and among the different SCAN partners training approaches, to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

Background on Peer Review approach:

Peer review is a process for enhancing a scientific, pedagogical or technical work product so that the decision or position taken by the SCAN members, based on that product, has a sound, credible basis.

Peer review of scientific and/or technical work products should not be looked upon as another “hurdle” in the decision-making process. Although conducting a peer review means that time and resources have to be included in the decision-making process, the benefits justify the added cost. Peer review enhances the credibility and acceptance of the training materials. By ensuring a sound basis for decisions, greater cost savings are realized since decisions will not be challenged as often and extra effort will not be expended to go back and redo the training materials. So while peer review requires resources, the cost of not doing peer review is usually much more expensive. Furthermore, not conducting a peer review may potentially place SCAN and its members in the position of having to decide whether to try to defend a scientifically questionable position – which can be very costly in terms of both resources, and, more importantly, credibility. Finally, the peer review allows the SCAN International members involved in the process to become more familiar with the tools and to be able to use them in their own efforts.

Peer review is the process whereby SCAN members involve subject-matter experts from their organization in one or more aspects of the review of training materials.

Typically, peer involvement takes two general forms: peer input (ongoing discussions during the development of the work product at national level) and peer review (an evaluation of a final draft training material by area experts).

When making recommendations, the reviewers should take into account the national context of the reviewed training materials. The recommendations have to be enforceable and workable.

The impacts and benefits of peer review include:

- Enhance or optimize specific procedures;
- Good practices by reviewing could be spread more widely;
- Broader acceptance of the training materials developed;
- Optimize and guarantee the quality of the work performed;
- Optimize and guarantee the quality of the management and organization;
- Identify deficiencies and professional development needs;
- Ensure that training materials comply with voluntary standards and the best international practices;
- Save resources in developing and reviewing joint training materials;
- Enhance the credibility of the SCAN members.

Areas of Review of Training Materials

The expected result is to achieve a critical synthesis that integrates the vision of different reviewers, to guide the content and scope of the materials and methodology guides more effectively.

• **Structure:**

Are the training materials:

- Developed for a specific purpose?
- Developed for a well-defined target audience (educational level, reading level, experience, knowledge - existing/desired)?
- Enhanced through 'instructional components'/Ease of use?
- Well-organized/Logically/systematically presented?

• **Content:**

- Stimulate learner interest/Help reader learn?
- Correctness of content (current, accurate)/ Technically correct?
- Without propaganda or bias?

• **Methodology:**

- Are clear teaching/learning objectives set?
- Clearly define implementation stages and clarity on the outcome and expected impact, including the ability to assess and / or evaluate its implementation?
- Instructional components clear?

• **Editing:**

- Adequate language depending on the target audience (simplicity and courtesy)?
- Uniform style (editing)?
- Text not too dense (short & simple)?
- Illustrations (quality/quantity/type) appropriate? / Captions should clarify and reinforce message
- Practical format?
- Equipment & infrastructure requirements clearly identified and explained?
- Overall attractiveness?

Review Criteria to guide the SITC:

• **Relevance:**

Training materials are considered relevant to the extent that they:

- Add-value on knowledge on the subject matter.
- Have unique features that differentiate them from other materials.
- Contribute to sustainability in the long term.
- Appropriate to the needs of the target audience.

• **Consistency:**

The consistency is defined by how the different components of the training materials and methodological guidelines are adequately articulated together, and if they maintain a clear, logical and accurate flow.

• **Sufficiency:**

This criterion assesses whether the training materials and methodological guidelines address the issues with sufficient depth and thoroughness, provide an up-to-date and relevant theoretical framework, clear conceptual definitions and that the approaches are developed sufficiently.

Rules of Review for SITC

- Treat the people involved in the development of the materials with courtesy and respect.
- Discuss about the product, not the people that made it.
- Focus on how the process can be supported (instead of criticized) / give supporting arguments.
- Comment on specific examples of strengths and problem areas.
- Ask just to clarify and suggest ways to strengthen the document in terms of scope and applicability.

- Do not limit your comments exclusively to technical details.