

Development in ASEAN:

ASEAN Regional Quality Assurance Framework and ASEAN Higher Education Common Space

*Professor Zita Mohd Fahmi,
Secretary, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network*

The ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), a sub-regional network of quality assurance authorities and ministries responsible for higher education of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries in Southeast Asia, originated in 2008 under the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and is a registered international association in Malaysia with the Secretariat at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.



*Professor Zita Mohd Fahmi,
Secretary, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network*

The formation of the network was initiated by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization's Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) to support a roadmap for establishing higher education common space through the field of quality assurance, similar to the initiatives in Europe.

SEAMEO RIHED proposed a "Structured Framework for Regional Integration in Higher Education in SEA:

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U-Multirank:

A Benchmarking Tool Providing New International Comparative Data for Internal Quality Assurance

Frank Ziegele, Executive Director, Centre for Higher Education, Germany

U-Multirank is a new multidimensional, user-driven approach to international benchmarking of higher education institutions. The project started in 2013 (after an earlier feasibility study), and in 2014, the U-Multirank publication was launched with the support of the European Commission and the site was established. It compares the performances of 1,500 universities in 99 countries, using more than 30 indicators in the five broad dimensions of university activity: teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement.

The U-Multirank web tool enables comparisons at the level of the university as a whole and for 17 specific fields of study. Based on empirical data, U-Multirank compares institutions with similar profiles ("like-with-like") and allows users to develop their own personalised rankings by selecting indicators in terms of their own preferences. The [U-Multirank website](#) is freely accessible and includes a detailed description of the methodology and indicators.



*Frank Ziegele,
Executive Director, Centre for Higher Education, Germany*

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National Qualifications Framework of Jamaica: A Tool for Increased Access and Buttressing Quality

Mrs. Maxine Henry-Wilson, Commissioner/CEO, Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC)

“World Class,” “globally competitive” and “internationally benchmarked” are just some of the common descriptors of tertiary education systems that have attained high quality standards. While some may dismiss these as just clichés, for a small island state such as Jamaica, they represent real objectives.

International development partners such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme posit that there is a close alignment between a country’s level of development and its gross enrolment rate in the tertiary sector. Graduates would possess the cognitive and affective skills, competencies and knowledge to add value to the vital social and economic activities of the country, leading to national growth and progress.

Consistent with the viewpoint, Vision 2030 Jamaica - National Development Plan, promulgated in 2009, established as one of its national outcomes “putting Jamaica in a position to achieve developed country status by 2030.” The target of gross enrolment rate of 35-45% at the tertiary level by 2015 was to propel Jamaica toward the developed country status. However, not only was the target not met but, indeed, there has been a decline in the gross enrolment rate from 30.5% to approximately 29% since 2014., While there is no empirical data to explain this decline, the Jamaican decision makers, opted to focus on those activities that would increase access to the system.

Historically, graduates of the island’s tertiary institutions have been recognised as comparable to the best of their peers anywhere in the world. This reputation had been earned through rigorous application of globally competitive standards both by individual institutions and the external quality assurance entities in Jamaica. The global trend of increased cross-border trade in education while facilitating increased access could leave Jamaica open to “education entrepreneurs” who could compromise the country’s reputation for quality.

To address the imperative of increasing access while maintaining quality, the policy makers began the process in 2011 to establish the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC) which was mandated to use the compulsory registration of new and existing institutions as a primary instrument to regulate the sector. One aspect of the public discourse in Jamaica around the role of J-TEC was that, as the regulatory entity, it would provide supervision to the tertiary sector, establishing minimum standards for entry. The concern was to ensure that there would be equity in the treatment of all applicants, thereby not indiscriminately excluding applicants who met the criteria for entry. Hence, standards-driven mechanisms had to be available to identify and ban those who would violate the academic and other principles that represented good practice in the tertiary sector. Transparency in the approach to provider participation in the sector was also critical. J-TEC was tasked with developing a National Qualifications Framework for Jamaica (NQF-J) which would facilitate increased access to the system while securing quality through benchmarking qualifications awarded by tertiary institutions against those of Jamaica’s major international partners such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

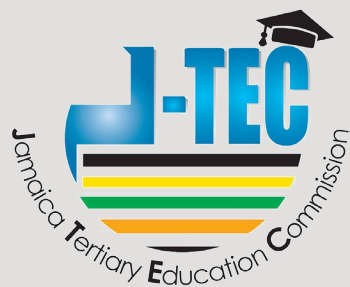
The Framework was publicly launched in February 2017. It is graphically represented by an eight-level pyramid with a hierarchy of qualifications ranging from certificates at level one (the lowest tier) to doctoral degrees at level eight (8). For each level, there are descriptors of outcomes-criteria of the knowledge, skills and competencies a graduate at that level should possess. The NQF has two access points into the tertiary system through prior learning assessments and the use of a credit system. This was anticipated to increase the numbers of persons who could matriculate into the tertiary sector and transition into higher level institutions. The latter could themselves match their programmes and awards against the criteria to determine their robustness and “fit.” The priority was to have a transparent system for the assessment and placement of local and international qualifications.

Conclusion

Increasing participation in the tertiary sector is critical but the quality imperative cannot be compromised. For a small nation state such as Jamaica, integrity and transparency are *sine qua nons* of our tertiary education system. This is the objective of the National Qualifications Framework of Jamaica.



*Maxine Henry-Wilson,
Commissioner/CEO, Jamaica Tertiary
Education Commission (J-TEC)*



An Interview with Stefan Bienefeld, Head of Division P3, Development Co-operation and Transregional Programs, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany

Stefan Bienefeld has been working with German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) since 2009, mainly in the field of development cooperation and since 2015 additionally dealing with projects on research mobility and project funding for German and European studies and the German language.

*Interview conducted in March 2017 by Brian “Blu” Christopher Kelley,
Director, CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)*



Stefan Bienefeld, Head of Division P3, Development Co-operation and Transregional Programs, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany

Question #1: As a representative of German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), what has been your role in Africa over the years?

and we are currently running capacity-building initiatives in West and Central Africa, where we work with African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education, a body coordinating the systems of 19 predominantly French-speaking countries. We are also part of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA), a joint initiative supporting the implementation of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework.

As a DAAD representative, I have been working with partners in Africa on various issues, quality assurance (QA) and accreditation being one of them. In this particular field, we have been supporting the Inter-University Council for East Africa to build its regional quality assurance framework

Question #2: How do you compare the quality assurance systems of different regions in Africa where you have visited and worked?

has a much stronger role in the governance of the system and there was traditionally much less institutional autonomy. QA was mainly done by units in the ministries through a process of licensing of institutions and also individual degrees. The establishment of QA agencies outside the ministries is therefore a new phenomenon, but there is a huge interest in many countries to do this. Senegal has started with the establishment of an agency and many other countries are planning similar steps. In addition, the African Union is trying to develop a continental framework for QA.

There are big differences among different regions emerging from differing academic traditions. While many English-speaking countries have already well-established QA systems, in francophone countries this process is just beginning. In those countries, the ministry



Meeting the minister of higher education from Senegal

Question #3: What strategies, if any, have you recommended to improve quality assurance in higher education? Have they been well-received by your African peers in the region?

DAAD has not recommended strategies, but has done a needs analysis and then developed concrete steps for the identified fields of intervention together with our partners, such as the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES), the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) or the Association of African Universities (AAU). We have touched on very general issues such as the independence of the agencies, the importance



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of peer reviews and of regional cooperation, especially in many African countries, where the higher education systems are small in terms of the number of higher education institutions per country. Apart from that, we have followed international principles such as the *European Standards and Guidelines* or the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education *Guidelines of Good Practice*.

Question #4: Please tell us about a memorable experience working among peers in Africa who seem determined to strengthen quality assurance in higher education.

What was very striking was the enormous motivation of African colleagues to make things work regarding QA, sometimes with very limited or barely existing resources. Student discussions were also quite memorable. Many

institutions were initially hesitant to include the students in the QA process. It was interesting to see how that changed over time and how the universities which tried this actually found that students have valuable contributions to make when it comes to judging the quality of educational offerings. That was a very interesting development to observe how opposition changed gradually to constructive collaboration in many places.



Greetings with Secretary General of CAMES

DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

**SAVE
the
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CHEA 2018 Annual Conference

January 29 - 31, 2018

CIQG 7th Annual Meeting

January 31 - February 1, 2018

Washington, DC



The Future of Internationalisation in a World of Populism, Isolationism and Increased Tension

An Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) Seminar, Brussels, 30 March 2017

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs

The Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), devoted its 53rd European Seminar to *The Future of Internationalisation in a World of Populism, Isolationism and Increased Tension*. Its aims were to explore how developments like Brexit in Europe and the election of Donald Trump in the United States (US) might affect higher education, in particular European Union (EU)-US partnerships. For instance: will the United Kingdom (UK) still be able to participate in EU higher education programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020; will the US remain a magnet for international students; what is the future of the Fulbright programme?

Variations on this theme have become the *leitmotiv* of seminars, articles and publications in the last year. Examples were the fifth CHEA/CIQG Annual Meeting, which looked at *Quality and Quality Assurance in a Changing World* and the Scholars at Risk International Congress in Montreal, which debated *Universities in a Dangerous World*.

Sijbolt Noorda¹ began his keynote address, *Populism: A Threat to Higher Education and Internationalisation*, by highlighting the emerging threats in Europe in the post-truth era. Some governments no longer allow criticism, downplay the public good and dismiss the very idea of an open multi-party democracy. He asked what values universities are going to stand up for and why are they so slow to react to these threats. Do we live in a world of illusion created by the Bologna reforms, which have lost their relevance under the threats to democracy and open societies that we see in Turkey, Belarus and most recently Hungary, with its attempt to close the Central European University?

In the US, the surge of populism and nationalism is a reaction against globalisation and internationalisation. These trends present an even greater threat in a country that was traditionally seen as having the world's leading higher education system. Understandably, people are asking whether the flow of international students to the US will continue on a downward trend.

Noorda quoted the claim by Philip Altbach and Hans de Wit² that although internationalisation has previously been perceived as a Western concept, if the West now shuts itself off the next wave of higher education, internationalisation will likely flow to developing and emerging countries, in particular China and India, with growing student mobility between Asia, Africa and South America.

He urged that it is time for a profound rethink of higher education, both its identity and also the communities it serves. "We have been mesmerized by decades of growth and success, and were the last to have noticed that times have changed," Noorda concluded. Higher education institutions must rise to the challenge of these new times.



Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs

¹ Chair of ACA and President of the Magna Charta Observatory

² Altbach, P. and De Wit, H. (2017) Global Higher Education Might Turn Upside Down as West Turns Inward, *Times Higher Education* Accessed April 11, 2017, at <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/global-higher-education-might-turn-upside-down-west-turns-inward>

Speakers from the United States then speculated on the purpose, content and effect of the Trump administration's policies on higher education. They questioned whether the United States can remain a magnet for international students in this era of budget cuts, pressures on immigration, culture wars and the impression that these create overseas. They also, however, flagged more positive elements such as the tradition of university autonomy and the #YouAreWelcomeHereCampaign.³

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
ASSOCIATION



The Seminar also explored the impact of Brexit on higher education and how this dramatic political upheaval might affect UK universities. Different perspectives were given. One speaker recalled the longevity and resilience of universities through the centuries, citing the University of Bologna as an example, while others noted that UK higher education was part of the Bologna Process, which reaches beyond the European Union.

Nationalism and populism were acknowledged as forces to be reckoned with. However, universities should see Brexit as a wake-up call, reminding them that they must stand up for their values of openness, multilateralism and international collaboration. Politics and universities will be increasingly interlinked because higher education is more important than ever to the development of nations and communities in the 21st century.

Although the Seminar sounded an alarm about changing times, its message was ultimately reassuring. In this era when government policies in many areas will have an increasing impact on higher education, institutions must revisit their missions and gauge carefully how far to get involved in day-to-day politics. Through all this they must stand firmly behind their traditional commitments to rigorous knowledge, academic openness, professional expertise and international collaboration, which continue to be the basis for human progress. Besides, in these times of change, the future is unpredictable and geopolitics may well change faster than we now believe.

³ Speakers from the US: Chris Medalis, formerly from the Institute of International Education (IIE) and Erica Lutes, Fulbright, Belgium and Luxemburg

The [CIQG Website](#) provides an outstanding resource for information about quality assurance internationally.

- *CIQG Policy Briefs*
- *The CHEA-CIQG Publication Series*
- *Issues of Quality International*, the CIQG Newsletter
- Translations of the *CIQG International Quality Principles* and other publications
- CIQG Annual Meeting presentations
- An International Directory of quality assurance bodies, accrediting organizations and Ministries of Education in countries around the world

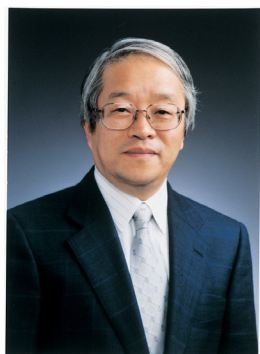


Visit the CIQG Website whenever you need information on quality assurance internationally or on CIQG activities.



Trilateral Cooperation on Quality Assurance of International Cooperative Academic Programs

Kazuo Okamoto, Vice President, National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE)



*Kazuo Okamoto,
Vice President, National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE)*

The Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia (CAMPUS Asia) is a government-led initiative to promote high-quality international cooperative academic programs in various areas such as public policy and international studies among universities in China, Japan, and Korea. Under this initiative, ten programs were selected in 2011, which were funded by the three governments for five years. To support CAMPUS Asia through quality assurance (QA), three QA agencies, i.e., the Higher Education Evaluation Center of the Ministry of Education (HEEC) in China, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE; currently NIAD-QE) in Japan, and the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) in Korea, decided to conduct monitoring on the CAMPUS Asia programs (first and second monitoring in 2013 and 2015, respectively). The main purpose of the monitoring is to identify good practices in educational quality and to disseminate them throughout the higher education community rather than merely confirming that the programs have a minimum level of quality.

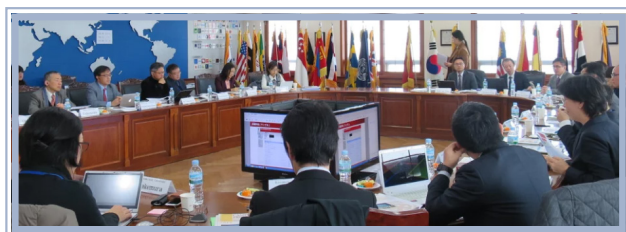
The second monitoring on the CAMPUS Asia programs in 2015 resulted in a common QA framework. The common QA framework was established based on the results of a comparative analysis of the monitoring criteria and procedures used in the



first monitoring, which was operated separately in 2013 by the three countries under their respective regulations for QA.

QA frameworks used in the first monitoring in each country were quite similar. Therefore, those QA frameworks were used as a foundation for the common QA framework. The common QA framework placed a greater focus on the cooperation among the participating universities in each program. The three QA agencies agreed that “cooperative” QA activities among participating universities are an important element in the development of high quality international cooperative academic programs. After the second monitoring, the three agencies established “Joint Guidelines for Monitoring International Cooperative Academic Programs in CAMPUS Asia,” which includes the common QA framework.

During the monitoring process, the participating universities drew up a joint self-assessment report, which required ample coordination among the participating universities to complete. Later, they received a monitoring report that included good practices and advice from the Joint Monitoring Committee members designated by the QA agencies of the three countries. This process provided the participating universities with an opportunity to jointly conduct a self-review of their programs and to share issues for further initiatives to be implemented together by them. The monitoring activity also encouraged participating universities to raise shared awareness of the importance of continuous quality improvement in order to foster the human resources articulated in their respective goals. This, in turn, contributed to the successful operation of the international cooperative academic programs of CAMPUS Asia.



Joint site visit in Korea

In January 2016, the three governments decided to continue supporting and expanding CAMPUS Asia with the participation of 17 programs. The international cooperative academic programs started in the fall of 2016, and are to be funded by the three governments for five years. The three agencies will conduct monitoring on the programs in 2018 using the common QA framework specified in the guidelines.

For joint international QA projects to be sustainable and constructive, we suggest first conducting joint monitoring with a high level of cooperation. Further, after the agencies have learned each other's characteristics, they can consider the possibility of conducting joint monitoring in an abridged form such as joint recognition of monitoring results obtained by each country for the next and subsequent monitoring cycles. Moreover, the participating agencies should periodically review and improve the common QA framework on the basis of their practices and experiences. Lastly, it must be stressed that building mutual trust among participating agencies is an essential part of adequate and continuous monitoring.

The three agencies in China, Japan, and Korea are proud to report that we have been successful in that regard.

The Joint Monitoring Report is available here: http://www.niad.ac.jp/english/campusasia/second_monitoring.html#report

U-Multirank – A Benchmarking Tool Providing New International Comparative Data for Internal Quality Assurance

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How does the tool contribute to the development of quality assurance? Institutional quality management has to be based on evidence. Therefore, most higher education institutions are using their own empirical data for internal analysis, often comparing their departments. However, comparing the institution with external benchmarks provides additional insight into the performance and positioning of an institution. In certain areas, this is common practice – research quality assessment, for instance, usually comprises comparative bibliometric data; accreditation makes use of national student surveys to assess teaching quality relative to competitors. In support, U-Multirank, the largest global performance data tool, made efforts to go beyond the common practice by supporting benchmarking and quality development in completely new areas. For example:



1. When making comparisons on the subject/department level, comparing the physics department of a university to the physics departments of other universities worldwide is more informative for internal quality assurance than comparing physics and biology within the same university. It takes into account different structures and cultures between different academic disciplines and hence helps to avoid misinterpretation of differences among departments in quality assessment. Of all global data pools, U-Multirank provides the most comprehensive set of subject-level indicators in the five dimensions.

2. While bibliometric data offer good options to compare classical research performance, there is a lack of metrics to assess applied research. For universities with an application-oriented profile, it is crucial to improve the data situation. In support of these aims, U-Multirank ran a pilot project in cooperation with major universities of applied sciences organizations to fill the gap on data regarding applied research and knowledge partnerships. Together with those stakeholder organizations, U-Multirank developed new indicators: the numbers of professional publications, of graduate companies, and of strategic partnerships. Including those new indicators, U-Multirank compiled a readymade ranking on *Applied*



Knowledge Partnerships. For many higher education institutions those activities are highly important to their mission; U-Multirank helps to develop measurable quality goals by providing unique data.

3. Another pilot project is a subject ranking of music schools and departments. Together with the European Association of Conservatoires, U-Multirank developed a unique set of indicators taking into account the particularities of music. Those specific indicators include, for example performance related artistic output, the number of public concerts organized by the music school, and the availability and quality of practice rooms for students. Due to this pilot, options for evidence-based quality assurance for music will substantially increase by providing comparative empirical data for the first time.

U-Multirank informs internal quality assurance by providing a rich set of comparative performance indicators on similar or benchmark institutions. In some areas (subject-based data, specific indicators for music and applied research), U-Multirank developed innovative indicators that have not been available before on a broad international scale. Evidence-based quality management becomes applicable to a broader scope of missions and subjects.

Contact: info@umultirank.org



What is the *Quality Platform*?

The *Quality Platform* is an innovative form of external quality review of the performance and effectiveness of non-institutional (alternative) providers of higher education offerings. It is focused on assuring quality as this emerging sector attracts students around the world.

What are innovative providers?

Innovative or non-institutional providers offer higher education experiences and include companies that provide Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), bootcamps and companies that provide online courses in a variety of areas, such as hospitality, engineering, nursing and general education.

CHEA/CIQG QUALITY PLATFORM

Why is it important to be a *Quality Platform* Provider?

The emerging non-institutional sector is becoming an attractive option by which a growing number of students undertake education. Traditional colleges and universities are developing partnerships with non-institutional providers to offer continuing education offerings. As this trend is becoming part of an already diverse education system, the alternative provider will be required to show expected and actual learning outcomes.

The *Quality Platform* can prove beneficial to the provider, the student, and other stakeholders that seek quality and transparency.

CHEA Council for
Higher Education
Accreditation
CHEA International Quality Group

CIQG

QUALITY
PLATFORM
PROVIDER



Who does the *Quality Platform* review?

The review is conducted by a team of experts, including professors and other persons with significant academic faculty or administrative experience or both in traditional and non-traditional higher education. Individuals from business, government, accreditors and employers who have significant experience or interest in higher education will serve as team members as well.

What is the process of becoming a *Quality Platform* Provider?

Providers complete a *Quality Platform* Application, supply and certify background information, submit evidence that the four *Quality Platform* standards are met (self-review) and engage with a *Quality Platform* Team for an external review. If the non-institutional provider meets the the *Platform* standards and expectations, it would achieve “*Quality Platform* Provider” status for a three-year period. The review typically takes three to six months from the date of receipt of an application.

Is the *Quality Platform* suited to meet your needs as an innovative provider that seeks public affirmation of quality?

Are you an innovative provider? Are you seeking to get ahead of your competition? Are your students expressing the need for these offerings to further education or employment? If you have answered “Yes” to any of these questions, then you may want to become a *Quality Platform* Provider.

To learn more about the *Quality Platform* and how your organization can benefit, please contact us at CIQG@chea.org.



UNESCO Regional Conference on Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Asia-Pacific

Shenzhen, People's Republic of China, June 15-16, 2017

Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang, President of APQN and Member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) International Quality Group (CIQG) Advisory Council attended the UNESCO Regional Conference on Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Asia-Pacific in Shenzhen, People's Republic of China, providing a PowerPoint presentation, *Aligning Institutional, National and Regional Strategies to Strengthen Quality Assurance: Efforts from Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)*.



The focus of the presentation was building capacity to strengthen quality assurance at all levels, including the offering of regional strategies. Publications from CIQG were introduced as part of the presentation, including the *Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice: Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity: A Contemporary Challenge for the Quality and Credibility of Higher Education*, the *CIQG International Quality Principles*, the *Quality Platform* and the *Memorandum of Affiliation*, available through *CIQG membership* in an effort to promote partnerships in quality assurance of higher education.

UNESCO Regional Conference on Quality Assurance
of Higher Education in Asia-Pacific

Aligning Institutional, National & Regional
Strategies to Strengthen Quality Assurance:

Efforts from Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) &
CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)

Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang
President of Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
Advisor & Member of CIQG Advisory Council
15-16 June 2017, Shenzhen, People's Republic of China

To address quality assurance of qualifications, student outcomes and lifelong learning, the stakeholders of higher education that were present at this regional conference have signed on to the *Shenzhen Statement*, ensuring continuous engagement for the harmonization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific.

Development in ASEAN: ASEAN Regional Quality Assurance Framework and ASEAN Higher Education Common Space

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The Road Towards a Common Space” (SEAMEO RIHED, 2009)¹ to the Ministers of Education during the SEAMEO Council Meeting in March 2008. The proposal was intended to promote quality assurance principles and practices, capacity building and a credit system to promote student mobility. Activities included a research study on states of affairs in the field of quality assurance, a questionnaire and a regional seminar on quality assurance with the support from policy makers. The outcomes of the study reflected a development of a shared consciousness of the crucial role of quality assurance in promoting harmonisation in higher education and the benefits of collaboration in the ASEAN community. This has led to the establishment of AQAN and the development of a regional quality assurance framework. In August 2016, AQAN became an affiliated entity within the ASEAN, thereby recognizing and enabling AQAN to take a more effective role in the the field of quality assurance today for its members and ASEAN.

In 2013, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) was developed by AQAN's working group of experts and was endorsed in principle by AQAN membership. Its purpose is to enhance the quality assurance systems of higher education in the region and which will support the mobility of students, workers and services both within and outside the region.

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¹ Supachai Yavaprabhas, SEAMEO RIHED. “Facing Global and Local Challenges: the New Dynamics for Higher Education”: 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (24-26 September 2008), Accessed 7 July 2017 at http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/apeid/workshops/macao08/papers/1-p-1-3.pdf

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Additional improvements to the AQAF were made in 2015 and the guidelines for its application were launched in 2016 with the cooperation of the European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU SHARE), a project that is “funded by the European Union, and has a global objective to strengthen regional cooperation by enhancing the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education.”² The Project (2015-2019) which focuses on four key result areas (quality assurance, qualifications framework, credit system and student mobility in the field of higher education) provided the platform and impetus to the harmonisation endeavours to establish a strong ASEAN community under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar, “one of the three pillars of ASEAN Community that is committed to lifting the quality of life of its people by putting their welfare and well-being at the heart of its activities.”³



AQAF, an indigenous, development-oriented instrument to serve ASEAN quality systems as a common reference point for its members, was developed to strengthen their quality assurance systems. The Framework consists of four interconnected “quadrants” of principles in good practice: establishment of competent and proper functioning of an external quality assurance body; external quality standards; national quality assurance systems, standards and processes which relates to the internal quality assurance of institutions; and core principles of good practice and features/elements of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs).

An ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) has been developed as well, bringing the various national qualifications frameworks together. These ASEAN and national frameworks complement each other, essential in harmonisation efforts, which is timely and crucial to ASEAN’s agenda, post-2015.

Harmonisation of higher education is also an important factor in serving the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), established in 2015. The AEC provides for the free mobility of goods, services, investments and greater mobility of professionals, talent and skilled workers within ASEAN and other communities.

During 2017-2018, the AQAF principles are being piloted with four mature agencies and whilst other national systems are being reviewed for capacity building with the guidance of the principles of good practices in AQAF. At the same time, eleven (11) higher education institutions from eight countries in ASEAN have agreed to be assessed based on AQAF internal quality assurance (IQA) principles on the development of their internal assurance systems. These exercises will be beneficial both to AQAF and AQAN, as well as the participating institutions as the reviews will involve both European and ASEAN experts. A final report of the EU SHARE-funded AQAF project will be presented in 2019.

Phase one of the AQAF’s journey toward harmonization in establishing a higher education common space (2015-2019) marked a stage when it had begun to contribute towards building an ASEAN Higher Education Common Space with support from the EU SHARE project.

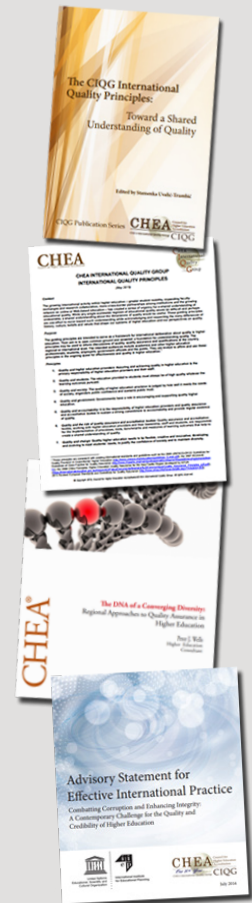
Phase 2 will see AQAN undertaking the reviews and continue to support strengthening the national systems in various ways. While AMS are setting their own road maps to harmonisation of higher education and particularly in the quality assurance systems, each have individual challenges in shaping their systems. However, AQAN calls for stronger collaboration and sharing between the nations. It is exciting to observe the growing convergence in quality assurance practices as this has impact in rationalization within the national systems. The journey toward harmonisation and regionalisation in ASEAN is a long and challenging journey but with AQAN, it has begun with small steps, key instruments and most important the support of various policies, authorities, agencies, institutions and other stakeholders of the AMS.

2 European Union Association. European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE). Accessed 30 May 2017 at <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/current-projects/internationalisation/SHARE.aspx>

3 ASEAN Secretariat, 2016. ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC). Accessed 29 June 2017 at <http://asean.org/storage/2012/05/11d.-April-2016-Fact-Sheet-of-ASCC.pdf>

CHEA/CIQG Publications in Translation

- ***CIQG International Quality Principles***
Available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and English
- ***CIQG International Quality Principles: Toward a Shared Understanding of Quality***
Available in Chinese, French and English
- ***CHEA/CIQG and IIEP-UNESCO Advisory Statement on Combatting Academic Corruption***
Available in Chinese, French and English
- ***Is Big Brother Watching You? The Evolving Role of the State in Regulating and Conducting Quality Assurance***
Available in Arabic, Chinese and English
- ***The DNA of a Converging Diversity: Regional Approaches to Quality Assurance in Higher Education***
Available in Chinese and English
- ***Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education***
Available in French and English
- ***CHEA/UNESCO Statement on Effective Practice to Discourage Degree Mills in Higher Education***
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