Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (ASG-QA)

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This initiative is implemented on behalf of the European and African Union Commissions by:

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ASG-QA

- The **ASG-QA** developed in the framework (HAQAA) – support development of quality assurance and accreditation systems at institutional, regional and Pan-African levels

- The **ASG** are generally based on common principles of QA.

- Based on existing standards and guidelines of HE already in use in African countries..

Drafting Process

- .**Mapping Matrix** for existing standards and guidelines in Quality Assurance of African Countries showed very high level of similarities)
    - Half of the 54 African countries have QAAs - over 90% similarities in IQA Standards. Of the remaining half, half are in development stages.
    - Regional QA bodies and networks have been developed or being developed- East Africa (IUCEA), Southern Africa (SADC), North Africa (AArU), West Africa (CAMES). Central Africa – no regional body yet.
- **Benchmarke**d:
    - Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
    - Existing international, standards and guidelines, e.g. INQAAHE,
- **6 face-to-face meetings** and drafting by members between meetings. (September 2016 - Namibia; January 2017 - Ghana; April 2017 - Egypt; September 2017 – Belgium; November 2017, Ethiopic, and March 2018 Mozambique).
- Additional work done online between the meetings.

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Why Harmonised QA System in Africa?

- *Rapid growth of HEIs & graduates* and hence - focus on employability – quality assurance has become a central topic in HE.

- *Diverse systems of HE* – issue of recognition of degrees – constrains academic integration & student mobility.

- Increased *attention* given to *quality* & *quality assurance* in HE.

- Growing realisation globally for the *need for harmonised HE systems* to facilitate *mobility* of trained people with accredited qualifications.

- *AU vision* of an integrated Africa requires harmonised education system – hence *intra-Africa mobility* & *skills portability*.

- *Continental Strategy for Africa* (CESA) recognises that "harmonised education & training systems are essential for realisation of intra-Africa mobility and academic integration through regional integration and cooperation.

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Why Harmonised Quality Assurance System in Africa? (continued)

- The AU *Agenda 2063* – "the Africa We Want" - has called for harmonisation and strengthening of quality of HE in Africa – *make it locally relevant* and *globally competitive*.

- *Africa's Heads of States and Governments* have expressed their *commitment* to setting up a mechanism for harmonization of quality assurance processes and mechanisms – ensure comparable HE.

- *AUC is therefore promoting harmonisation* of QA in HE in Africa in collaboration with AAU with support from EU.

- **Note**: Harmonisation:
    - Does not mean uniform system for all countries.
    - Means shared viewed on quality, criteria, and standards in an equivalent way of assessing quality.
    - Is the basis for continental QA Framework

- Hence the development of the **ASG-QA**

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Some Challenges of HE

- Increasing access and ensuring relevance & quality of provision
- Governance issues – Good governance and succession
- Inadequate Funding – judicious use of resources
- Number and Qualification of academic staff
- Improving research capacity and innovative mind frame for socia economic development.
- A shift to market and consumer demands – programs focused to meet these demands
- Globalisation and internalisation and competition

Challenges Of HE

Addressing the Challenges for Improved Quality include:-

- *Recognising that HE* plays a fundamental role in the development of nations

- *Adopting good governance -* the hallmark of success of HEIs,

- *Collaboration* and *sharing of resources* - between institutions (locally & internationally).

- *Student and staff exchange* and international cooperation.

- Development of *common agendas* in HE – for improved quality.

- Taking advantage of *technological* development

- Collaboration on *research and contribute to innovations*

- Developing a *culture evidence-based* quality by HEIs

- Enhance investment in HE, strengthening local resourcing by enhancing intra-African collaboration, enhance efficiencies.

- Developing quality assurance system that meets the needs of Africa's higher education is critical - So *harmonised quality assurance system*.

Brief on Status of QA in HE in Africa

Overview

- QA of HE in Africa was introduced in the form of affiliations of HEIs with international institutions (e.g, Britain, France, Portugal).

- Post-independence – countries established state organisations, through Ministries of Education, to provide oversight of HE:

  - To regulate the quality of education being delivered for the rapidly growing number of students.

  - With focus on quality of lecturers, curricula and teaching facilities,

  - To ensure relevance of graduates - relevance of skills.

  - To develop a competitive HE systems

- Approaches to QA in HE are not the same

- Very few QAAs in are Africa are semi-autonomous, majority remain dependent on government in funding.

QA Systems and Models

- Most QAAs have programme accreditation and institutional quality audit as the main mechanisms of QA.

- Currently 28 countries out of 54 countries in Africa have established QAAs.

- Of the remaining 26, half are in the process of establishing QAAs. In these QAAs the Ministries responsible for HE usually provide oversight on its quality.

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Regional QA Bodies and Networks

- A number of regional QA bodies have been established - to harmonise QA systems in the region:
- Examples:
  - The Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA).
  - East African Quality Assurance Network
  - Southern Africa Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), under the auspices of SADC.
  - Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'enseignement superieur (CAMES),
  - Association of Arab Universities (AArU).
  - Association of African Universities.
  - African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN).
- IUCEA and CAMES have developed and documented standards and guidelines for QA used by individual countries in the region .
- (See Map - next slide)

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https://haqaa.aau.org/activities/mapping-report/
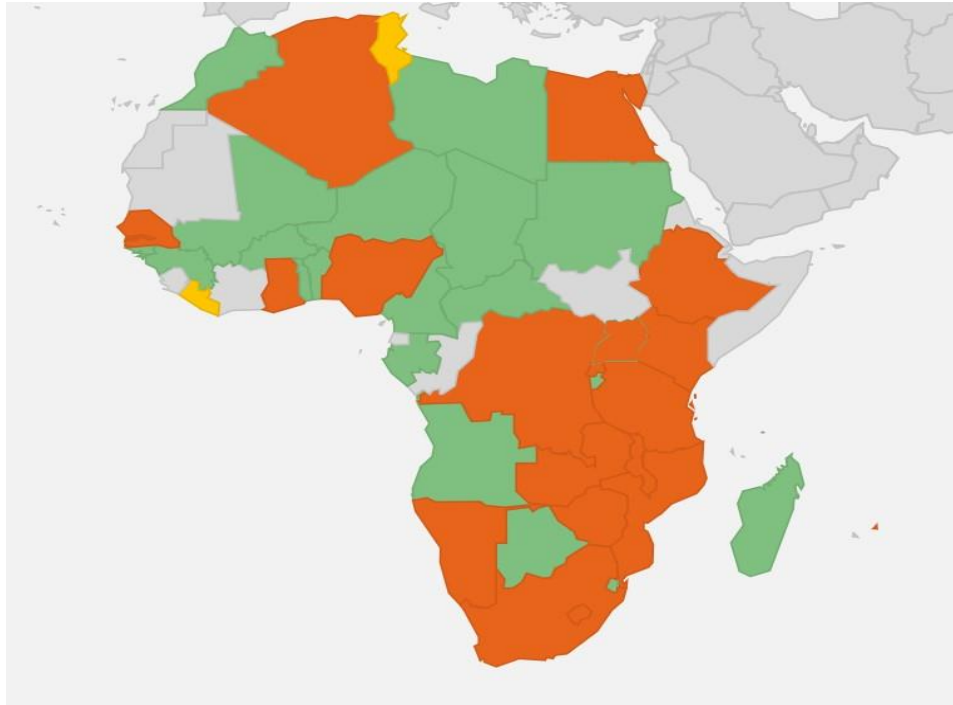
Red: Countries with QAA and have Standards and guidelines for IQA

Green: Countries using standards and guidelines that are provided by regional associations.
and do not have their own standards and guidelines for IQA.

Yellow: Countries that have national authority in QA, but no standards and guidelines have
been found.

The ASG-QA

They are:

- *Set of standards* and guidelines for *internal and external* QA in HE in Africa.

- *Standards stated as common minimum* standards or requirements.

- *Guidelines* are stated in *more specific terms* to allow for collection of evidence in support of the status of quality at HEIs and QAAs.

- *Benchmarked* with existing standards and guidelines, but contextualised

- *Not prescriptive* – mechanism for quality enhancement in African HEIs and QAAs.

- *Not exhaustive* – Can be adapted to suit context.

- Examples *of best practice.*

- Are *broad* enough to allow for diversity, yet *safeguarding comparability*.

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Purpose of ASG-QA

The ASG-QA will support HEIs and QAAs in Africa in implementing *good practices* for QA; and specifically to:

- Have a *common framework* and *understanding* of QA among stakeholders – at continental, regional, and national levels.
- Develop *mutual trust* – facilitating recognition and mobility of students and human resources.
- Ensure quality *improvement/enhancement* through self-assessment, external review and continuous M&E.
- Promote *transparency and accountability* by providing appropriate information to the public.
- Promote a *sustainable quality culture* in HEIs.
- Promote *international competitiveness* of Africa's HE system.

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Principles and Methodologies

Principles

- Quality and QA are primarily the responsibility of HEIs.
- The autonomy, identity and integrity of HEIs are acknowledged and respected.
- HEIs and QAAs can adapt the standards and guidelines to their HE system and context.

Methodologies

- Subjected to consultation with key stakeholders for acceptability
- Benchmarked with existing good practices.

Technical Working Group

- Developed the draft ASG-QA

Membership of TWG

Africa

1. Prof. Abdle Karim Koumare – Africain de Formation en Pedagogie, Mali (***French***)
2. Prof. Eid Youhansen – President, NAQAAE, Egypt (***English & Arabic***),
3. Prof. Jeffy Mukora – Executive Director, CNAQ Mozambique (***English & Portuguese)***
4. Dr. Noel Sailu – Director, National Universities Commission, Nigeria (***English***)
5. Mr. Mock Shivute – Executive Director, NCHE, Namibia (***English***)
6. Ms. Anneley Willemse – QA Director, University of Namibia (***English***)
7. Dr. Rispa A. Odongo – QA Expert - Former Senior Staff of CUE, Kenya (*Chair***, English***)

EU

1. Ms Caty Duykaerts – Director, AEQES (**English** & ***French***)
2. Ms Paula Ranne – ENQA Rep, Deputy Director ENQA (***Coordinator, English & French***)

Advisory Board of HAAQA Initiative - Provides regular advise and support

Stakeholders Consultation

Feedback received from:

- Advisory Board in **May 2017 -** Accra Ghana.

- Vice Chancellors - at the 14th AAU General Conference 5-8 **June 2017** in Accra, Ghana

- Additional feedback - electronic consultations - made between **July and August 2017** (HEIs, National QAAs, Ministries of Education).

- Presented at the **9th International Conference and Workshops** on Quality Assurance In Higher Education In Africa (AAU), Accra Ghana (18-22 **September 2017**).

- The Final Stakeholder Consultation Workshop (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (16-17 **November, 2017**) –

  - HEIs, National QAAs, Ministries, Regional QA Association, University Associations, TUNNING Africa, UNESCO, Africa Student Associations and sample of national student unions, regional and continental governments (AUC, SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, ECCAS.

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Feedback from Addis Consultation

The feedback was useful and relevant issues were included.

- Clarity of language and translation

- Eliminate repetitions, and rephrasing done for clarity.

- Suggestion on national research and education network discussed but agreed to keep the ASG general for flexibility.

- Governance be included as a stand alone in Part C

- Reorganisation of sequences of the standards

TWG is seeking final input of the Advisory Board – **March 2018, Maputo,** Mozambique.

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Scope of ASG-QA

Application

- ASG-QA Will apply to all types of HEIs in Africa, irrespective of mode of delivery and QAA.

- ASG-QA should be applied taking into account existing qualification frameworks (QFs) and credit accumulation and transfer systems (CATS).
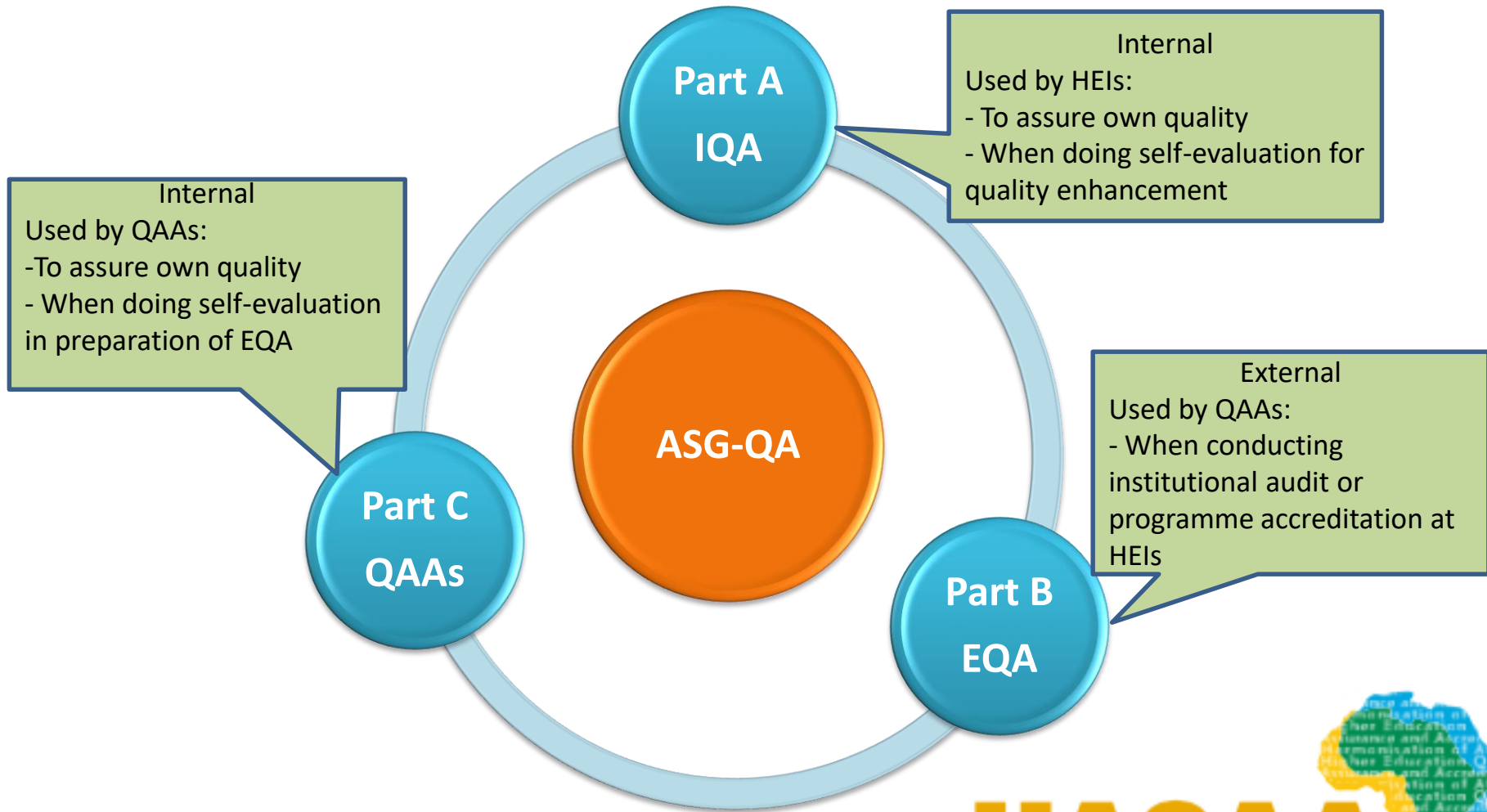
ASG-QA Parts: 3 Parts

- Part A: Internal QA (IQA) of HEIs (including QA for ODL) - 13
- Part B: External QA (EQA) - 7
- Part C: Internal QA (for QAAs) - 8

NB: ***The 3 parts are interlinked and together form the basis for an African Quality Assurance Framework*** (See Fig. 1).

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Fig.1: Inter-linkage

Part A
IQA

Internal
Used by HEIs:
- To assure own quality
- When doing self-evaluation for quality enhancement

Internal
Used by QAAs:
- To assure own quality
- When doing self-evaluation in preparation of EQA

Part C
QAAs

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External
Used by QAAs:
- When conducting institutional audit or programme accreditation at HEIs

Part B
EQA

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Part A - IQA

Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance (for HEIs) –

1. Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives
2. Governance and Management
3. Human Resources
4. Financial Resource Management
5. Infrastructure and Facilities
6. Student Recruitment, Admission, Certification and Support Services
7. Design, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation of Study Programmes
8. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
9. Research and Innovation
10. Community Engagement
11. Information Management System
12. Public Communication
13. Collaboration, Staff and Student Mobility

Part B: EQA

Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance -

1. Objectives of External Quality Assurance and Consideration for Internal Quality Assurance

2. Designing External Quality Assurance Mechanisms Fit-for-Purpose

3. Implementation Processes of External Quality Assurance

4. Independence of Evaluation

5. Decision and Reporting of External Quality Assurance Outcomes

6. Periodic Review of Institutions and Programmes

7. Complaints and Appeals

Part C: QAAs

Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance of QAAs –

1. Legal Status
2. Vision and Mission Statement
3. Governance and Management
4. Independence of Quality Assurance Agency
5. Policies, Processes and Activities
6. Internal Quality Assurance
7. Financial and Human Resources
8. Benchmarking, Networking and Collaboration
9. Periodic Review of QAAs

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Some Challenges Faced During Drafting Process

- ODL – Stand alone or Incorporate into IQA (HEIs) – finally incorporated into IQA

- The number of standards – Too many or too few

- Guidelines - level of details

- Translation challenges – words mean different things in different languages

What Next?

a) Final translation will be done on the final Document

b) ASG-QA will be officially submitted to AUC for adoption.

c) TWG has developed a draft methodology for external review of QAAs based on ASG-QA (Next presentation).

d) Commence Advocacy for the use of the ASG-QA by QAAs and HEIs

Thank you and God bless