



Second Presence Phase of the HAQAA Training Course: Summary

**Accra, Ghana
31 May – 2 June, 2017**

The second presence phase of the HAQAA Training Course was a three-day workshop in Accra, Ghana, designed to bring together the Francophone and Anglophone cohorts of the course, discuss the outcomes of Personal Actions Plans that were undertaken and gain a better understanding of common quality assurance trends and challenges across the continent. The course also presented the state of play regarding several elements of PAQAF- including the African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA).

1) African Standards and Guidelines for QA in Higher Education (ASG-QA)

One of the major points of discussion of the second phase of the HAQAA Training Course was the first draft of the African Standards and Guidelines for QA. This has been developed by a Technical Working Group representing different African linguistic communities and regions. Participants provided initial reactions and feedback:

- On the whole, the document was widely accepted and participants were positive that it could offer added value to both emerging and established QA systems in Africa.
- Some participants wished to see a stronger distinction between the sections (IQA, EQA and QA of agencies) and to understand better how they relate.
- It was agreed that sensitization to the document, what its purpose is and how it should be used, would be critical both within universities and at the policy level.
- The HAQAA consortium announced a formal consultation process that would take place via an online survey, in four languages. The Training Course participants will be contacted both to respond to this and to disseminate it.

2) PAPs

A number of different PAPs were presented in the Training Course and participants discussed the lessons learned and the potential follow-up. Some of the issues and themes highlighted were:

- Mauritius is committed to the process of developing a SADC credit transfer system and utilizing the work done in TUNING to assist with this. Recognition problems regarding degrees (especially in medicine) still need to be resolved.
- Several countries, like Burkina Faso, are working to set up QA units in universities and have an ad hoc committee to support this.
- Sensitization to the need for QA culture was an important theme in Benin, Egypt, South Africa, Liberia and Ghana, for example. In Algeria, this is also a priority, especially at the level of professors. All of these countries are interested in how best to sensitize diverse QA stakeholders. Establishing national platforms and questionnaires (to internal stakeholders in QA agencies) are two methods.
- Creating a national QA agency remains a priority in several countries (Togo, Ivory Coast). In the DRC, the agency has been initiated but help is needed to create a database in order to channel data for evaluations.

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- In other countries that have a national QA agency already, reform is being sought. Tunisia has two agencies - one for research and one for teaching – but would like to establish a coherent system that is more credible. In Ghana, QA processes are sometimes differentiated according to sector and institutions complain about receiving different recommendations from professional bodies versus other regional initiatives. There is an expressed need for regional level initiatives to be harmonised or interlinked.

3) Regional projects

In the context of the HAQAA Training Course, the countries of SADC have developed a concept note for the establishment of an SADC Credit Transfer System. This process will be overseen by SAQAN and should also complement to work done by the TUNING initiative to establish a continental credit system.

Harmonization of higher education in the Eastern African Community (EAC) context refers to the establishment of a common frame of reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition of higher education and training systems and the qualifications attained among the EAC Partner States, based on shared views on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes, for promoting students and labour mobility in the EAC. This has led to a common understanding of Quality Assurance; Standards and Guideline for EA QA (Volumes 1-5); training of experts and the establishment of Quality Assurance units in universities.

In April 2017 East Africa was declared a common higher education area by the Heads of States of East Africa. The countries of the EAC in the HAQAA Training Course have used the PAP to further their discussions on how to implement these existing frameworks and commitments.

4) Future of HAQAA Training Course

Several discussions were had on future training needs and the future of the HAQAA Training Course in particular. Ideas shared were the following:

- A further needs assessment should be done, perhaps extending the survey that has already been conducted by the Egyptian representatives in the Training Course (who received few responses).
- A future course should indeed maintain the EU-Africa dimension; The EHEA example is highly pertinent
- The future course should include wide participation from as many countries as possible as this makes the course unique.
- A future course should also prioritize QA staff training and support for IQA. Training reviewers regarding the AQG could also be an option.
- In the interim, HAQAA should facilitate a centralized portal for information sharing.

In terms of next, immediate steps:





- The HAQAA Initiative will try to organize a follow-up workshop in 2018 for the Training Course participants. A working group will be formed to develop an approach and the desired content. One possible approach could be to do a specific training on using the ASG. The workshop could also include Tuning representatives so as to seek synergies. A call will be made for hosts.
- In the interim, national QA agencies can strive to bring continental perspectives into their national training workshops for QA.
- Participants are willing to develop "Country pages" on QA systems which could be featured on the HAQAA website
- A Facebook group has been created as an alternative means to posted information and share content. This will be a closed group.

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