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Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education

UNESCO-Shenzhen Project update June 2019

Welcome to the update of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust Project on Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa.

This periodic update features highlights of the implementation of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, to facilitate sharing of information and best practices in quality assurance in the 10 project countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, and Zambia. We hope you enjoy reading the update and we look forward to your continuous collaboration on the implementation of the project.

UNESCO-Shenzhen Project team

About the project

In 2016, UNESCO and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government of China joined hands with 10 African countries, and initiated the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, with an aim to strengthen higher education systems by developing quality assurance mechanisms. The three-year project implemented since 2017 represents the commitment of UNESCO to the realization of Target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to "ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" and the Education 2030 agenda.

Stay in touch

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Egypt

Preparation for seminars to be held at the Sixth International Conference of the NAQAAE

March - May 2019

In preparation for the Sixth International Conference of the NAQAAE (The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education of Egypt), during which several seminars were planned within the framework of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, the NAQAAE held working meetings to set the agenda in order to reflect the Project. The meetings were attended by NAQAAE executive personnel, board members and stakeholders representing higher education institutions of Egypt. The project outline was presented to participants and in alignment with the objectives of the Conference, three seminars and one workshop were planned to be held in June 2019 within the framework of the Project.

Seminar I: Quality assurance in the era of internationalization and regionalization of higher education

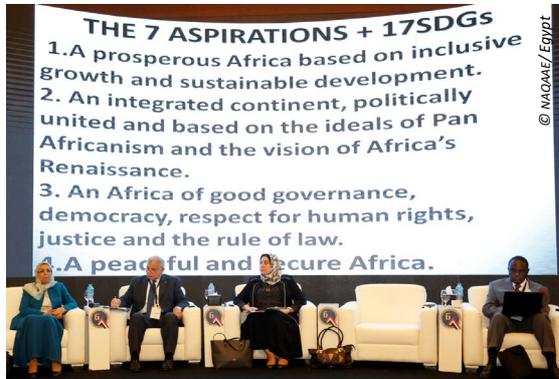
12 June 2019



A Seminar titled “Internationalization and Regionalization: Challenges and Opportunities” was held at the opening session of the NAQAAE Sixth International Conference (12 - 13 June 2019). The session was attended by over 500 participants including representatives of national quality assurance agencies from across the world, officials from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt, professors from higher education institutions, and individual attendees from African and Arab countries. The seminar reflected on challenges and opportunities of quality assurance in regionalization and internationalization of education, and highlighted good practices in enhancing inter-continental cooperation.

Seminar II: Continental aspirations in quality assurance affirmed during the NAQAAE International Conference

12 June 2019



A Seminar titled “Quality Assurance and The Continental Aspirations” was held on 12 June 2019 to present continental aspirations and the future of quality assurance in higher education. 250 participants attended the seminar, which includes representatives of national quality assurance agencies, officials from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt, professors from higher education institutions, and individual attendees from

African and Arab countries. The seminar witnessed fruitful discussions, during with participants from African countries agreed on enhancing connections between external quality assurance agencies and the development of an African qualifications framework.

Seminar III: Regional networking and trust building in quality assurance

13 June 2019

A Seminar titled “Regional Networking and Trust Building” was held on 13 June 2019 with a focus on quality assurance networking in Africa, gathering 150 participants representing quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions from African and Arab Countries. Experiences from different countries and networks were presented, including those of Association of African Universities (AAU), ANUC Nigeria, The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN), and the Moroccan Evaluation Agency. Participants were engaged to reflect on the role of quality assurance agencies and networks in building trust and agreed on promoting mutual recognition in quality assurance.

Technical workshop on developing mutual recognition tools in quality assurance in Africa

12 June 2019



A technical workshop was held on 12 June 2019 to explore the development of tools for mutual recognition, which will facilitate regional and international academic mobility. 35 representatives from quality assurance agencies and networks, ministry of higher education, UNESCO, and quality assurance experts attended the workshop.

Participants discussed approaches in promoting regional cooperation in higher education, scoped the state of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) in African countries, and explored possible recognition tools for mutual acknowledgement of accreditation between quality assurance agencies.

MALI

A state-of-the-art study in quality assurance completed

12 February 2019

A state-of-the-art study in quality assurance was completed in Mali. To share results of the study, a workshop was organized on 12 February 2019 with the participation of rectors of higher education institutions (HEIs), quality assurance specialists, and government officials from the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Innovation and Scientific Research (approximately 48 participants). The study developed an updated inventory of quality assurance in higher education of Mali, which sheds light on the operationalization of the recently established Malian national quality assurance agency (AMAQ-Sup). The study also issued a series of recommendations for the management of the AMAQ-Sup and for the operationalization of internal quality assurance units in HEIs.

Institutional evaluation framework disseminated

27 February 2019



An institutional evaluations framework in quality assurance was disseminated to key stakeholders in higher education in Mali on 27 February 2019. Participants included 60 representatives from the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Innovation and Scientific Research, rectors and directors from higher education and research institutions, internal quality

assurance managers, university associations, and concerned partners of higher education. The institutional evaluation framework was piloted at the University of Ségou in December 2019 by the Directorate-General for Higher Education and Scientific Research (DGESRS), which comprised of an on-site exploratory evaluation, a self-evaluation by the University, monitoring visits of a committee of experts, and the draft of an evaluation report. The pilot evaluation tested the relevance of the framework and identified necessary adjustments for conducting institutional evaluation in all HEIs of Mali. Following the successful pilot of the framework at the University of Ségou, the evaluation framework was revised and widely shared to guide external quality assurance.

Capacity building for the operationalization of internal quality assurance units in higher education institutions

1 April - 6 June 2019

The Directorate-General for Higher Education and Scientific Research (DGESRS) initiated capacity building sessions for staff of internal quality assurance (IQA) units in all higher education institutions and research of Mali, both public and private. The training of private

institutions was conducted in partnership with the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions. The training courses were developed in accordance with the national quality assurance system and 275 people were benefited from the first round of training.

Namibia

Phase 2 capacity building training completed

26 - 28 February 2019



Following the Phase 1 capacity building workshop for quality assurance practitioners (November 2018), Namibia organized the Phase 2 training on 26 - 28 February 2019. About 30 representatives from 5 quality assurance agencies/councils and 11 institutes for higher learning and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and

Training) participated in the training. Phase II training focused on three key elements, namely working with quality in higher education, embedding a quality culture, and global competitiveness and quality assurance. Through training sessions, case studies, and group discussions, participants were actively engaged to exchange knowledge and expertise in internal and external quality assurance.

Niger

National quality assurance agency established

15 February 2019

The Council of Ministers of Niger adopted the decree in establishment of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANAQ-SUP) on 15 February 2019 in Niamey. In accordance with the Decree No.2019-111/PRN/MESR/I, the ANAQ-SUP was created with a mission to contribute to quality assurance of the Nigerien higher education system, higher education institutions, teaching and research. Following the establishment of the ANAQ-SUP, Professor Boureima AMADOU, focal point of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project of Niger, was appointed Director General of the ANAQ-SUP by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, on 10 May 2019.

Senegal

Developing the ANAQ-Sup strategic plan 2020 - 2025

May 2019

To strengthen the management of the national quality assurance agency (AN AQ-Sup), the ANAQ-Sup will develop a strategic plan for 2020 - 2025 and set performance indicators for its work with the support of an external expert. Currently, the ANAQ-Sup has set the timeline for this initiative and in the process of identifying an expert to complete the tasks in collaboration with the ANAQ-Sup and the UNESCO Office in Dakar.

The Gambia

Survey developed for the national needs assessment in quality assurance

18 - 22 February 2019

To conduct a national needs assessment survey in quality assurance, the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) convened a five-day working session from 18 to 22 February 2019 to develop the survey questionnaire for the needs assessment, in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), the Gambia Bureau of Statistics and the National Commission of the Gambia for UNESCO. Seven experts in statistics, quality assurance and higher education, contributed jointly to the development of the data instrument, which covers aspects including the institutional profile, profile of students, structures and facilities of HEISs, profile of faculty and staff, governance and management, teaching and learning assessment, stakeholder involvement, research assessment, and challenges to quality assurance initiatives.

Inception meeting of the quality assurance needs assessment survey

26 February 2019



The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), organized an inception meeting for the needs assessment survey in quality assurance. The meeting drew about 40 participants from the MoHERST, the NAQAA, the National Commission of The Gambia for UNESCO, tertiary and higher education institutions, and the media.

During the meeting, the Focal Person and Director of Research of the NAQAA made presentations on the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project and the survey instrument. Participants

discussed the modalities of the survey and validated the survey questionnaire. The inception meeting sensitized stakeholders on the necessity to conduct the national needs assessment and ensured support of the initiative.

Training of data collectors

12 - 13 March 2019



The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) in collaboration with the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) organized a two-day training session for data collectors from the 12 - 13 March 2019. Ten participants from the NAQAA, the MoHERST and the University of The Gambia participated to the training. The training was facilitated by the Director of Tertiary and Higher Education

and Director of Research, NAQAA. Participants were familiarized with the instrument and undertook a simulation exercise. After the training, the data collectors will administer the survey in thirty-nine institutions of which nine are Public and thirty Private.

Report of the quality assurance needs assessment survey validated

7 May 2019



The Quality Assurance Needs Assessment Report was finalized and validated on 7 May 2019 with the presence of stakeholders from the tertiary and higher education sector. Forty participants from the MoHERST, HEIs, the NAQAA, and the National

Commission of the Gambia for UNESCO attended the validation workshop to review the survey process and validated the results. Statements were delivered by Representative of the National Commission of the Gambia for UNESCO, Focal Person, Chief Executive Officer of the NAQAA and Representative of the Permanent Secretary of the MoHERST. The Report established the baseline information of quality assurance in The Gambia and will assist the tertiary and higher education sector to institutionalize effective quality assurance mechanisms.

Togo

Mid-term review of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project at a ministerial seminar in higher education

1 March 2019

The focal point of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, Professor Francois Kuassi DECKON, attended a seminar organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR on 1 March 2019) in Lomé. The ministerial seminar brought together thirty-eight participants, including heads of the various directorates of the MESR, and coordinators of projects and programmes in higher education and research, to review on-going initiatives and activities in strengthening the national higher education system. Professor DECKON presented the implementation of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project at the seminar, highlighting progress achieved in the establishment of the national quality assurance agency. The Prime Minister of Togo issued an official mission letter (11 February 2019) to the Minister of Higher Education and Research, in which one of the main tasks was the elaboration of “draft decrees in establishment of the national quality assurance agency”. Within the framework of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, Togo is supported to elaborate institutional texts, tools and technical documents in both internal and external quality assurance in preparation for the establishment of the agency.

Members of steering team of the Project attended UEMOA-UNESCO-CAMES quality assurance training

4 - 8 and 11 - 15 March 2019



Three members of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project Steering Team of Togo attended trainings at the 2019 UEMOA-UNESCO-CAMES quality assurance workshops held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) successively on 4 - 8 March and on 11 - 15 March 2019. The workshops aimed at reinforcing

quality assurance systems in terms of research, funding and technological innovations. Ninety-two experts from institutions of higher education and research from the UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union) took part in the workshops, during which the focal point of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project was invited as trainer.

Participation to the HAQAA Initiative and official handover of the final evaluation report

1 April 2019

Togo participated in the HAQAA Initiative (Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation) with an aim to align its quality assurance system to regional systems. In December 2018, Togo welcomed two experts from the HAQAA and the steering committee of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project presented progress in building its national quality assurance system, including the implementing of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project. Based on reports of the steering committee, and exchanges with officials of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR), stakeholders from higher education institutions, and the private sector. Experts from HAQAA conducted a SWOT analysis and issued recommendations on building national quality assurance system in Togo. On April 1, 2019, the final evaluation report was officially handed over to Professor Koffi AKPAGANA, Minister of Higher Education and Research of Togo. Key recommendations include adopting a quality assurance agency funding strategy, popularizing quality assurance tools, diversifying means of dissemination of information, mobilizing administrative and technical personnel, and seeking membership of higher education associations.

Commissions on IQA and EQA in working progress

10 and 31 May 2019

The Commission on internal quality assurance (IQA) and the Commission on external quality assurance (EQA) held working meetings respectively on 10 May and 31 May 2019 at the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. During the meetings, commission members elaborated draft texts of the national policy statement on the quality of higher education and research, and the draft decree on the establishment, organization and operationalization of the national quality assurance agency for higher education and research.

Zambia

Participation to sub-regional conference for enhancement of quality assurance management

26 - 28 February 2019

Zambia sent four quality assurance experts to participate to the Quality Promotions Conference held in Pretoria (26 - 28 February 2019) organized by the South African Council for Higher Education, for capacity-building purposes. The participants serve different quality assurance functions in Zambia: Dr. Orleans Mfuno, Manager of Standards, Research and

Institutional Audits, Ms. Elizabeth N. Hamvumba, Manager of Programme Accreditation from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Ms. Rudo Banda, Director of Training from the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), and Mr. Fidelis Cheelo, Standards Setting Manager from the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA). At the conference, the team was exposed to a variety of quality management approaches. They also discussed with other quality assurance experts issues in quality assurance, examined cheating risks to the quality and integrity of higher education, the role of the regional quality assurance system in promoting socio-economic development, and the function of quality assurance agencies in creating a conducive environment for academic integrity. After exchanging expertise with peer organizations, participants are expected to apply acquired knowledge and lead the improvement of quality assurance management in their respective institutions back in Zambia.

Internships of the quality assurance staff in developed systems

1 - 5 March 2019

Dr. Orleans Mfunne, Manager of Standards, Research and Institutional Audits, Ms. Elizabeth N. Hamvumba, Manager of Programme Accreditation from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Ms. Rudo Banda, Director of Training from the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), and Mr. Fidelis Cheelo, Standards Setting Manager from the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) conducted an internship programme at the Council for Higher Education (CHE) of South Africa in Pretoria from 1 to 5 March 2019. The internship provided an opportunity for the Zambian team to learn from experiences of a mature quality assurance agency in areas including quality assurance, institutional audits, monitoring and evaluation, and standards setting. Participants to the exchange programme were exposed to various functions at CHE, which enabled them to identify areas in the Zambian legislative provisions that require strengthening in order to enable HEA and ZAQA to be more effective and efficient in performing quality assurance functions.