



“Quality Assurance in Asian and European Higher Education – Opportunities for Inter- and Intra-Regional Cooperation”

Fourth Workshop under the EU-Asia Higher Education Platform of the European Union



in cooperation with the ASEAN University Network



and hosted by Chulalongkorn University

27-29 October 2009
Bangkok, Thailand

Outcome Report

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Introduction

The following topics were discussed at the 4th EAHEP Workshop on *Quality Assurance in Asian and European Higher Education – opportunities for Inter- and intra-Regional Cooperation*:

- Internal and external higher education quality assurance procedures in the European Higher Education Area and in Asia
- Quality assurance as the core of higher education systems
- Inter-regional and intra-regional cooperation in the field of quality assurance
- Common aims and common quality assurance standards in higher education

The aims of the workshop were to:

- Exchange information on the goals, strategies and working methods of regional quality assurance networks in Asia and Europe (exchange of good practices)
- Exchange strategies for gradual evolution from regional networks into regional quality assurance systems
- Strengthen the autonomous role of higher education institutions in regional quality assurance procedures
- Build trust between regional quality assurance networks, thus creating a pool of international peers between Asia and Europe
- Identify common aims and tasks and promote cooperation

The workshop was held in close cooperation with the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and was hosted by Chulalongkorn University, one of Asia's leading universities. Workshop participants had the opportunity to visit Chulalongkorn University and to meet with key staff from the field of quality assurance. Directly after the workshop, the two-year project period of EAHEP came to a close with the EHEF Symposium and Fair, also held in Bangkok.

A brief summary of the workshop outcomes was presented during the EHEF Symposium on 30 October 2009. A detailed summary of the workshop is given in this outcome report.

Official Opening of the 4th EAHEP Workshop

The workshop was officially opened by the Vice-President of Chulalongkorn University, *Assistant Professor Dr. M.R. Kalaya Tingsabadh*, the First Secretary of the Delegation of the European Commission to Thailand, Cambodia and Burma/Myanmar, *Mr Samuel Cantell*, and *Mr Stefan Bienefeld* of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Global Developments in Quality Assurance with a Focus on Regional Cooperation

Leendert Klaassen (NVAO), Secretary of INQAAHE

Key topics:

- Trends in global higher education
- Common issues and priorities in quality assurance agencies
- INQAAHE aims, activities and services
- INQAAHE and capacity building
- INQAAHE and regional quality assurance networks
- Regional cooperation in Europe, especially the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)

Looking at the trends in global higher education, the speaker mentioned the massification of higher education as one of the challenges that institutions face. There is ever more social mobility for ever more people. The growth in student numbers and the need for higher education lead to a diversified higher education system and an ever expanding infrastructure. It also forces the higher education institutions to take a more competitive attitude. Students compete for scarce places at universities and admission to top universities is becoming increasingly difficult. Universities compete for status, ranking and funding. This might lead to the risk of a general lowering of academic standards. Therefore, quality assurance is important and is currently at the top of the higher education policy agendas.

Other important aspects and challenges include globalisation and economic integration. Academic and professional mobility are growing. Traditional higher education is disappearing while new modes of delivery are emerging. In the meantime we see the “borderless” delivery of higher education continuing to grow. But this also means a growing danger of “degree mills” and “accreditation mills”. Therefore, there is a need for the international recognition of qualifications and for cross border quality assurance.

On quality assurance, the speaker saw the fact that national quality assurance systems are increasingly acting in accordance with international standards (e.g. the European Standards and Guidelines, ESG) as a trend in global quality assurance. The participation of students at all levels is growing. Another development is a stronger focus on learning outcomes than on processes and procedures and in most countries a clear link is seen between assessment and the Qualification Frameworks. By publishing the quality assurance reports, higher education is becoming more transparent with a greater emphasis on accountability. Concerning the provisions and the ways of teaching and learning, prior learning is increasingly being recognised and assessed; transnational education is growing.

The following topics were mentioned as common issues and priorities for quality assurance agencies:

- Information sharing and liaising
- Capacity building in national systems
- Research and policy development
- Dealing with different types of higher education institutions: public or private; professional or research oriented; national or cross-border
- Quality improvement
- Showing that external quality assurance is effective (impact studies)
- Limiting the costs of quality assurance (increasing efficiency, limiting bureaucracy)

In the second part of the contribution, the speaker discussed the role and functions of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). INQAAHE was established in 1991 and has NGO status with UNESCO. INQAAHE includes more than 200 members (2009) who come from six continents and 80 countries. The main purpose of INQAAHE is to collect and disseminate information on current and developing theory and practice in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education. It tries to promote good practices in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education and facilitates research into the practice of quality management. INQAAHE provides advice for new quality assurance agencies and facilitates links between accrediting bodies. It permits a better-informed international recognition of qualifications and assists members in determining the standards of institutions operating across national borders. Furthermore, INQAAHE is able to assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes and enables members to be alert to dubious accrediting practices (“accreditation mills”).

INQAAHE held biennial conferences and general assemblies (in Bangalore 2001, Dublin 2003, Wellington 2005, Toronto 2007, Abu Dhabi 2009) and a biennial INQAAHE members' forum for representatives of member agencies (in Budapest 2000, Kingston 2002, Muscat 2004, The Hague 2006, Buenos Aires 2008, Windhoek 2010).

INQAAHE publishes the Journal *Quality in Higher Education* and a quarterly Electronic Bulletin with regular news updates from members, from the (regional) networks and from the Board. There is a website with proceedings, discussion papers, etc. and a rapid answer query service. INQAAHE acts as a clearing house (website, launch 2010) and is developing a database of reviewers and consultants. It also includes education and training courses and qualifications (launched in November 2009).

On INQAAHE and capacity building, the speaker explained the discussion on the Guidelines of Good Practices (GGP) and the alignment of the quality assurance agencies with the GGP. A database of Good Practices in QA (GPQA) is being developed. Furthermore, there is a Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity building (GIQAC) with funds provided by the World Bank through UNESCO. INQAAHE supports various activities: education and training courses (QAP), a clearing house, a specific project with focus on the quality assurance needs of and in small states, and support for other networks.

The clearing house function is delivered through the website with quick access to the resources referenced by the system, a glossary of terms, with brief definitions, relevant for quality assurance agencies and links to URLs on the websites of various quality assurance agencies.

INQAAHE not only works with its member agencies but also with and for other networks of agencies. Various regional networks have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with INQAAHE, for example:

- Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE)
- ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN)
- Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
- Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE)
- Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN)
- Eurasian Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)
- Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES)
- Quality Assurance Network for African Higher Education (AfriQAN)

The organisers had asked for an emphasis on regional cooperation. Hence, the speaker went into greater detail on regional cooperation in Europe, where 4 regional networks are active: ENQA, CEE Network, ECA and NOQA.

The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) forms the basis for mutual recognition initiatives in Europe. The Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Bergen 2005 stated: "*We underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions*". It was a long road to final mutual recognition and the road map is shown in Figure 1

ECA - ROADMAP TO MUTUAL RECOGNITION

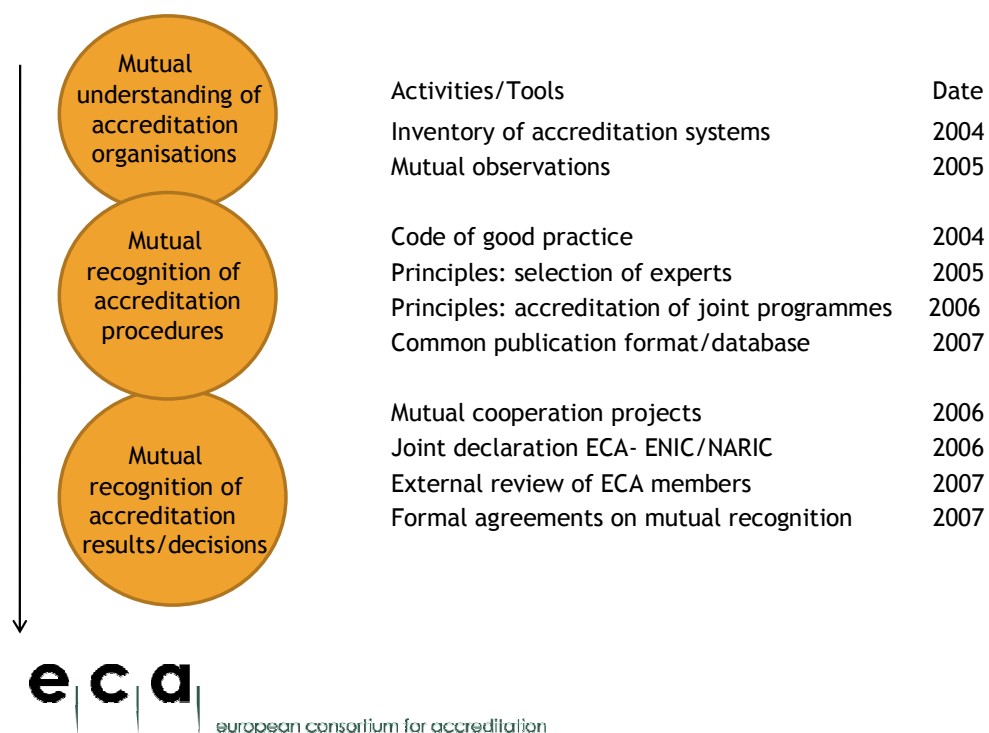


Figure 1: ECA Roadmap to mutual recognition

ECA's code of good practice guarantees the comparability of accreditation procedures. It contains 17 standards – signed by all ECA member organisations in Zurich in 2004 and is compatible with the ESG and the GGP. There is an external review of the ECA members to check fulfilment of the Code. Furthermore, ECA has some mutual cooperation projects:

- Exchange of experts/staff exchange
- Observation of other members' accreditation procedures
- In-depth comparisons of accreditation procedures and standards
- Joint accreditation procedures

Finally ECA members signed the following agreement:

"The signing accreditation organisations agree to regard their accreditation procedures, standards and results as free of significant differences and confirm that within their competences they accept the results/decisions of the procedures of the other signing accreditation organisation" (MR agreement, ECA 2007).

The **discussion** raised the following topics:

- National systems versus international systems: It was argued that quality assurance is mainly based on national systems and that the interest of the national governments is much stronger than the internationalisation of standards; governments have a too strong interest.
- Internationalisation of Higher Education: what does this mean? What are the consequences for quality assurance?
- What is the link between quality assurance and the Qualification Frameworks?
- What should one do with the trend towards ranking universities or programmes?

The following two presentations highlighted the **governmental perspectives** on quality assurance in higher education in both regions.

Quality Assurance in the ASEAN Region: Current Status and Challenges Ahead

Prof. Dr. Supachai Yavaprabhas, Director, SEAMEO RIHED

Key topics:

- The Higher Education Landscape in the Southeast Asian Region
- Quality Assurance in higher education in the Southeast Asian Region, in particular SEAMEO RIHED's Initiative for quality assurance

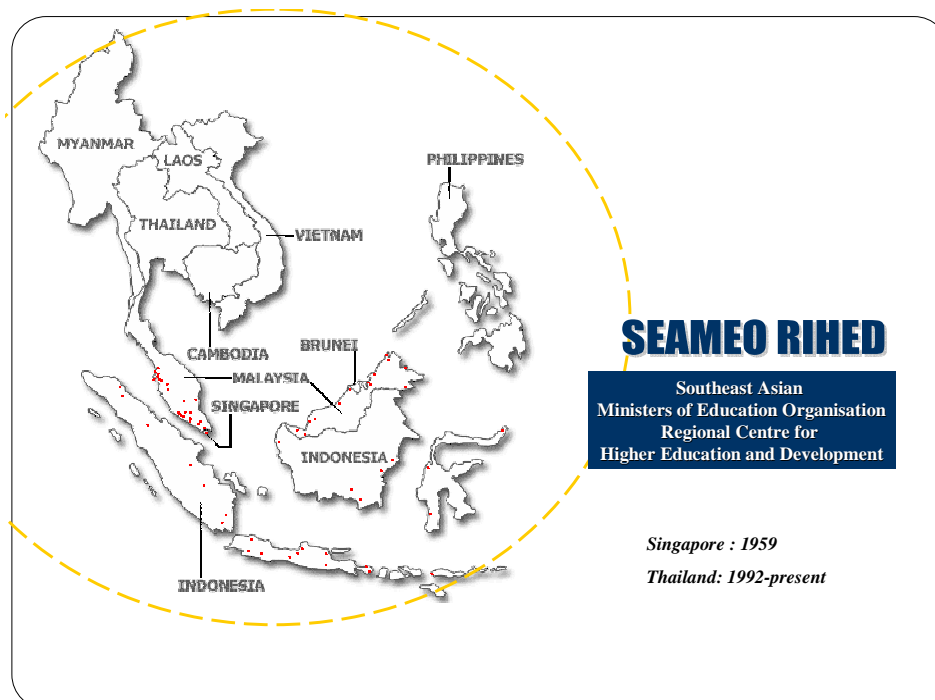


Figure 2: Countries in Southeast Asia, belonging to ASEAN and SEAMEO

The mission of SEAMO is 'to assist member countries in promoting efficiency and effectiveness in higher education policy planning and development.' The speaker stressed that Southeast Asia is a region of diversity. The Southeast Asian higher education landscape is also very diverse. The total number of higher education institutions exceeds 5,000, out of which 2,860 are in Indonesia, 1,647 in the Philippines, 488 in Malaysia and fewer than 20 in Singapore and Brunei. These 5,000 higher education institutions include around 40 or fewer "research universities".

The higher education systems in the region vary from being very centralised systems, closely regulated by the ministry, and extend to highly autonomous systems. At the same time, a mix of both characteristics can be seen within one country.

Looking at the student numbers, the ASEAN countries show the following picture: the total population of ASEAN countries amounts to 566 million. The total student population is 12+ million. Indonesia has the largest student population (more than 3 million), the Philippines has 2.6 million, Thailand 2.0 million, and Malaysia -1.8 million.

SEAMEO strives towards the regional integration of the higher education system in Southeast Asia by means of the quality assurance network, student mobility and a credit transfer system.

On quality assurance in the region, it is possible to see that every country, except Myanmar, has an agency responsible for quality assurance, either within the Ministry of Education or outside of it. The very first external was the accrediting body in the Philippines (1955) and the latest is EQAC in Lao PDR (2008).

There were several reasons why external quality assurance agencies were installed, especially the transformation from:

- Elite to mass higher education
- Public to private higher education institutions
- A few to many higher education institutions
- Domestic providers to cross-border providers
- “Stand alone” to “connected/networking” system

Looking at the organisational structure of external quality assurance bodies, four predominant modes can be seen:

- centralised governmental
- quasi-governmental
- parallel governmental
- non-governmental agencies

Examples of centralised governmental approaches can be found in Australia and China. The state ministers of education are responsible for overseeing national quality assurance bodies. Quality assurance in Myanmar, Brunei, and Lao PDR, and Singapore is also under Ministry of Education governance. The quasi-governmental bodies are those which are sponsored by national governments but allowed certain degrees of autonomy to manage their quality assurance activities. This type can be seen in Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. The third type of agencies, i.e. the non-governmental ones, is rarely seen in the region except in the Philippines.

There are several important global and regional networks of cooperation in quality assurance, such as INQAAHE, APQN and the ASEAN University Network’s AUN-QA. The ASEAN University Network was founded in 1995 and aims at promoting human resource and capacity building through networking and cooperation activities among leading universities (21 members) in the ASEAN countries. AUN-QA was initiated in 1998 and focuses on internal quality assurance at programme level.

SEAMEO RIHED has made it its interest to point out the importance of establishing a sub-regional grouping of quality assurance agencies in Southeast Asia. SEAMEO RIHED and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) worked together to establish the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) from early 2008. The 1st Meeting was held in July 2008 and resulted in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN). The *Kuala Lumpur Declaration* recognised the crucial role played by quality assurance in promoting the harmonisation process and encourages active movements towards the development of quality assurance collaboration and sharing. The role of AQAN is to promote the harmonisation process by sharing best practices of quality assurance, by developing an ASEAN quality assurance framework, by collaborating in capacity building and by facilitating the recognition of qualifications and cross-border mobility.

The establishment of AQAN is certainly the major factor determining the level of development of quality assurance in the region, both in the capacity of a facilitator to encourage practice sharing

between quality assurance agencies and in developing the regional quality assurance and qualification framework in the future.

The **discussion** highlighted the following topics:

- Student mobility (e.g. the MIT project, a student mobility project between Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand)
- Credit transfer system: It is necessary for student mobility, but how can it be developed?
- External quality assurance systems and the role of AQAN. There is some similarity with the role of the European Accreditation Consortium (ECA).

Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – Current Status and Challenges Ahead

Dr Birger Hendriks, Deputy Secretary of State, Ministry of Science, Economics and Transport of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany and member of the Bologna follow-up Group.

Key topics:

- Importance of quality assurance in Europe
- Current status
- Bologna Process in general
- Bologna Process in the global context
- Importance of quality assurance in the Bologna Process
- The European Standards and Guidelines

The speaker outlined the reasons for introducing quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Globalisation required (and still does) more mobility and competitiveness and widens the market for higher education. The European answers were like a concert with different roles. The EU Commission supported student and staff mobility by developing ECTS, the Erasmus Programme with a network of Erasmus universities and with recommendations on quality assurance. The Council of Europe (CoE) responded with the Lisbon Convention on Recognition and the European States answered with the Bologna Process (starting 1998/1999) aiming to create the EHEA by 2010 along with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESGs) in the EHEA which have been developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB/ESU (the so-called E4 Group). Finally UNESCO/OECD reacted with Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education.

The Bologna Declaration currently includes 46 member states in Europe (plus EU COM with voting rights) and 8 consultative members (CoE, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, EI, BE, UNESCO, ENQA). It concentrates more on teaching and learning than on research. The Bologna Process improves the European development of higher education and has a strong impact on government policy in many countries as well on higher education institutions. It is networking rather than harmonising.

Putting the Bologna Process in the global context, one of the aims is to improve the attractiveness of the EHEA. A "*strategy on the EHEA in a global context*" (2007 in London) should lead to better information and to partnership and cooperation with other regions in the world, specifically in quality assurance and recognition. These two areas were addressed during the Bologna Ministerial Conference 2009 at the Policy Forum in Louvain-la-Neuve where next to the countries and organisations participating in the Bologna Process several other countries from different parts of the world took part.

Quality assurance is very important in achieving the aims of the Bologna Process. It is – next to the two-cycle academic system and recognition – one of the three key instruments (Berlin 2003). Quality assurance is the key to mutual trust and reliability in the context of mobility and employability within the EHEA, including the global context. As far as quality assurance is concerned, the Bologna Process aims to promote cooperation and convergence among European countries, to promote quality assurance at all levels and to develop guidelines on the basis of generic standards (ESG). The infrastructure to achieve this is the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and the rise of a quality assurance systems in all European countries. The speaker reflected on the usefulness of stronger cooperation between ENQA and APQN.

The E4 group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB/ESU) developed the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs) comprising three key components:

- Standards for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions
- Standards on external quality assurance of higher education institutions
- Standards for quality assurance of quality assurance agencies

The ESG concept is open to any solution on the admission and supervision of agencies. The ESGs emphasise the general responsibility of higher education institutions for quality assurance. They should develop their own quality assurance policy together with their own formal mechanisms for quality assurance into practice (self-accreditation, external review, student participation). Quality assurance agencies should take on a cyclical/ periodic review; they should be independent of government influence. In the opinion of the speaker, the development of internal quality assurance is still weak.

The ESGs have a strong impact on the European and national development and operation of quality assurance. At European level, ESGs improve credibility, mutual trust and understanding. They lead to more transparency about the national systems and thereby enhance the provision of quality education. At national level they have led in several countries to structural changes to the laws, to new laws, to new agencies, often assigned with additional tasks. They lead the improvement of the internal quality assurance of the agencies themselves and increase the cooperation with stakeholders and bring more involvement of foreign experts.

The EUA Trends V Report of 2007 (findings based on 908 institutional questionnaires and several site visits) shows a significant development in the quality assurance arena. There is a growing focus on quality culture. There is a significantly increased emphasis on internal quality assurance mechanisms: more student and graduate feedback, increasingly sophisticated uses of information. Students are increasingly present in the quality assurance process. Furthermore, there is an increased use of external experts. Indeed, it is possible to speak of the rise of quality culture.

Looking at the developments in Europe, the speaker still sees a number of open questions and challenges. The experience and activities of European higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies are still largely restricted to traditional higher education: degree programmes leading to Bachelor's/Master's degrees. Distance learning is also mostly covered by quality assurance. But translational education, lifelong learning are still largely located outside the scope of quality assurance and are insufficiently accredited.

As quality assurance is a means of guaranteeing the quality of a degree programme offered by a university, it should be examined whether the degree programme:

- is oriented towards explicit and published learning outcomes
- takes into account the necessary workload
- leads to the necessary competencies and skills

- is student-centred and not traditionally teacher-centred
- observes the qualification framework
- enables students to use opportunities of mobility

Due to the fact that many of these areas are not sufficiently developed, there may be a need in particular for focusing the quality assurance measures on study requirements. Furthermore, it is necessary to further develop the implementation of the ESG at European level, to improve the institutional quality management and to encourage more cooperation across the world in the field of quality assurance.

The following two presentations focussed on the **institutional perspective** on quality assurance in higher education.

Quality Assurance in Higher Education – The Perspective of European Universities

Ms. Lesley Wilson, Secretary General, European University Association (EUA)

Key topics:

- EUA's mandate
- The Changing World of Higher Education
- A Decade of Quality Assurance in Europe: actors, roles and responsibilities
- Quality assurance from a university perspective
- Quality assurance in international cooperation

The speaker first explained the mandate of the EUA as the representative body of 34 National Rectors' Conferences and 800 individual universities. The aim of the EUA is to develop common policies and to contribute to European level policy-making in higher education and research and to support institutional development, exchange of good practice and mutual learning. The EUA offers two independent member services, the EUA-IEP – Institutional Evaluation Programme and the EUA-CDE – Council for Doctoral Education.

The EUA plays a role in the changing world of higher education and the European responses to global developments: the European Higher Education Area (Bologna), the European Research Area, and the Modernisation Agenda for Universities. All these processes have an impact on universities. There is a need for institutional profiling and mission differentiation. There is a need for more autonomy of the universities, but there is also a need for more accountability. Quality assurance and accountability call for more transparency.

The following key changes are influencing the institutions:

- Research and Innovation – growing in importance and changing in nature (triple helix, the knowledge triangle)
- Bologna Process – enhancing the student experience (new qualifications and teaching methodologies)
- Internationalisation – becoming a more strategic element of the institutional mission
- Partnerships – more important in all areas

All these changes require attention to quality and the development of appropriate arrangements.

Looking back at the past decades, the conclusion is that ensuring quality is crucial for mass higher education systems. Over the last few decades quality assurance has developed at all levels in Europe. There is a European framework – the Bologna Process, there are national systems almost

everywhere. We see the development of a 'quality culture' in universities. A problem is that most of these systems only address issues of teaching and learning, and then only Bachelor's /Master's.

Another important development in Europe is the Bologna Process. Since 2003, there has been a consensus *“that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself”* (Berlin Communiqué). There is also growing consensus on the key characteristics of national quality assurance systems, because in 2005 the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESGs) were adopted and in 2008 the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was launched. EQAR is managed by the stakeholders and now has 17 quality assurance agencies listed.

European developments are also characterised by the involvement of the stakeholders. The EUA is one of the players as a representative body of the universities in Europe and among others promoting the development of a quality culture among its 800+ members. Another player is the European Association for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education (ENQA). The stakeholders are working together in the E4 group which has the mandate to work on quality issues within the Bologna Process setting. In that light it organises annual quality forums and manages EQAR.

The national systems and the institutional implementation reflect the diversity of Europe. The national quality assurance systems differ widely, in scope (programme or institutional) and in applied methods (accreditation, evaluations or audits). The European countries and institutions are in different phases of implementing institutional as well as national quality assurance systems. This depends on the history and traditions at national level, because there is no 'one size fits all' solution. The level of institutional autonomy across Europe differs, and this is reflected in the state of development of internal quality assurance procedures in universities across Europe.

Looking at the principles of quality assurance, there is a European consensus on the following topics:

- The primary role of the institutions in managing and monitoring their quality
- student participation in internal and external quality assurance processes
- political independence of quality assurance agencies
- the diversity of national quality assurance procedures

The speaker emphasised that from a university perspective the existence of robust internal quality processes is strongly linked to enhanced inter-institutional cooperation. At the same time, success in improving quality remains directly correlated with the degree of institutional autonomy. In the coming decade, quality assurance along with funding and governance issues will be one of the most important challenges. Increased autonomy requires institutional leadership, policies, and strategic decision-making.

There are some burning questions: An ENQA survey shows that the majority of quality assurance agencies continue to evaluate/accredit at programme level. This leaves little room for higher education institutions to develop more extensive institutional quality assurance processes and bears the danger of a compliance culture as universities seek to respond to national requirements. Given the parallel demand for greater diversity, the question is how to set common standards in such a way that they do not stifle creativity and innovation.

The EUA has its own contribution toward a European approach through enhancement oriented institutional evaluations in the frame of the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP). EUA-IEP has evaluated over 200 universities in the last decade and is a full member of ENQA. IEP serves as a strategic tool for institutional change focusing on the institution as a whole:

- Structures, decision-making processes and the effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which they are used in planning and decision-making processes.

Ranking is a newly emerging phenomenon. European funding has been made available to develop a feasibility study for a multidimensional European ranking. But, is there a need for developing a set of performance indicators in higher education? What is the relationship with quality assurance? Are rankings a new form of accountability? The discussion about ranking is ongoing, but there is a common understanding that *“universities need to provide accurate information about institutional mission, activities, performance and results obtained to learners, employers and other stakeholders” (EUA 2009).*

A further topic is internationalisation and international partnerships. As internationalisation becomes a strategic issue for universities, ensuring the quality of provision is crucial and has to be addressed at an early stage in any partnership. This should not mean the export of national curricula or standards; or be reduced to purely measurable indicators. Inter-institutional partnership needs to be mirrored by dialogue between external quality assurance bodies. As far as internationalisation is concerned, the speaker formulated some open questions:

- How to best use the Bologna tools to improve the quality of international partnerships?
- What is the role of joint/double degrees as a vehicle for enhancing international cooperation? At what level?
- Are there specific quality assurance issues for research partnerships?
- How to manage the particular challenges of transnational education? This is a growing phenomenon with different institutional and national approaches.
- How to set global standards? (The Bologna Process has endorsed the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Higher Education)

Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Perspective of Asian Universities

Mohd Amin Jalaludin, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Key topics:

- Higher education transformation in the Asian region and the need for quality assurance
- Quality assurance in the Asian region – policies and practice
- Intra-regional quality assurance development – an ASEAN Scenario
- Quality assurance in Asia: challenges ahead

The transformation of higher education is a response to internal and external factors. The internal factors mentioned by the speaker are greater economic and population growth. The massification of education leads to higher demands for higher education and to an increase in and the diversification of higher education providers. As external factors, globalisation and internationalisation of higher education must be mentioned. Countries become higher education “exporters” and/or “importers”. Furthermore, there is growing student mobility. We also see the rise of new technologies in teaching and learning and a changing learning environment.

These transformations made it necessary for the higher education systems to re-orient their structure and functions in order to cope with the challenges of internationalisation. There is also a need for change in the quality assurance system and mechanisms of quality assurance from an ad hoc, isolated conventional approach and its systems to a formal, systematic and unified approach and system. Furthermore, there was a need to establish a quality culture in higher education and to

establish quality assurance systems not only for monitoring quality in higher education but also for engaging in the delivery of higher education at international level. The higher education landscape and transformation of quality assurance in the Asian Region is characterised by:

- Cultural, linguistic, social, political and economic pluralities
- Many growing economies
- Increasing attention to higher education and its quality
- Considerable diversity in quality assurance systems, approaches and stages of development
- Need for a regional harmonisation of frameworks and approaches
- Increasing regional cooperation

In the scope of regional cooperation in quality assurance in the Asian Region, the speaker mentioned the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in 2005. The mission of APQN is to enhance the quality of higher education services in the Asia-Pacific region by strengthening the quality assurance agencies and enhancing cooperation between them. The reference point for quality assurance in Asian Countries are the “Chiba Principles” which have been drafted under the Brisbane Communiqué in Chiba, Japan in 2008 during the APQN Annual Conference. Based on the acknowledgement of the diversity in quality assurance, they provide guidance for higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in enhancing quality assurance policies and practices. Emphasis is on a generic approach, applicable and relevant to all higher institutions and quality assurance agencies. The breadth of the principles allows for the different roles of quality assurance agencies, i.e. accreditation, audit or both and also for different levels of assessment, institution, programmes and/or both. The underlying view is that the prime responsibility for quality assurance lies with the individual higher education institutions.

After presenting examples of quality assurance in some Asian countries (India, Japan and Malaysia), the speaker highlighted the role of the intra-regional quality initiatives of AUN-QA. The AUN-QA was set up in 1998 with the main aim of promoting quality assurance and the harmonisation of quality assurance in the region. It organised several workshops, finally leading to the AUN-QA Guidelines. These Guidelines were endorsed by the AUN-Board of Trustees in 2004. From June to September 2005, workshops were conducted for all member universities in the different ASEAN countries. In November 2006, the AUN-Board of Trustees endorsed the *Manual for the implementation of the AUN-QA Guidelines*. This manual aims to support the universities in the ASEAN region in implementing the AUN-QA Guidelines and in applying the AUN-QA standards and criteria. It is an instrument for developing an adequate internal quality assurance system that fits both the AUN-QA criteria and international developments, and helps the universities to discover their own quality regarding the teaching and learning process and other institutional aspects. The manual does not replace the AUN-QA Guidelines, but rather complements them.

In 2008, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Agencies Roundtable Meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur and adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the establishment of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) with the aims:

- To promote and share good practice of quality assurance in higher education in the region
- To collaborate in capacity building
- To share information and to facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications throughout the region
- To develop a quality assurance framework for Southeast Asia

The Asian universities are facing the challenge of creating a quality culture and of building quality mindsets amongst university staff. There is a need for a management of change. There must be a shift from the management of quality to management for quality, a change from transactional leader to transformational leader. New management knowledge and skills are needed. And last but not least the issue of cost-effectiveness is important.

The speaker ended with the following conclusions:

- Quality assurance in higher education in the Asian region is moving in parallel with other regions
- Efforts are being taken at various levels: institutional, national as well as intra- and inter-regional
- Regional collaborations and cooperation are emerging

Working Group A: Internal Quality Assurance: How Can Universities Safeguard Their Quality?

Chair: Ms Tia Loukkola, Head, Quality Assurance Unit, European University Association

Rapporteur: Dr Titi Savitri Prihatiningsih, AUN-Chief Quality Officer, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

The working group discussion was opened by two case studies on *Internal Quality Assurance at University College Cork* (**Dr Norma Ryan**, Director of the Quality Promotion Unit at the University College Cork in Ireland) and on *Internal Quality Assurance at the National University of Singapore* (**Professor Dr Tan Kay Chuan**, Acting Director of the Office of Quality Management at the National University of Singapore). The ensuing discussion focussed on the following topics:

What kind of internal quality assurance system is currently in place at the institutions presented?

Both case studies showed a lot of similarities:

- Both were based on self-assessment
- Both use peer review
- Both were effective at unit level and individual level
- Both institutions provided the freedom to design the internal quality assurance system
- Both focused on quality enhancement /quality improvement (beyond quality assurance)
- Both included the provision of incentives (teaching awards, quality improvement projects, etc.)
- In both systems national authorities require the setting up of internal quality assurance systems
- In both systems the autonomous status of universities is acknowledged as long as the fundamentals of the governmental quality framework are met

The methodology applied was based on self-assessment, including the use of questionnaires, followed by peer review. The peers could be institutional, national or international peers. The quality assurance process is oriented towards ongoing quality improvement based on a quality improvement plan and follow-up review.

Compared with UCC, the NUS emphasises more international benchmarking and international partnership. Ranking is seen as important and the NUS is focused on entrepreneurship.

How is the internal quality assurance system linked to the national regulatory framework?

At the UCC, internal quality assurance is based on a Government Regulation and at the NUS on the Government Act. Both are in compliance with the quality framework of the Government.

Who are the key players and stakeholders involved in institutional quality assurance processes?

The stakeholders involved in both institutions are:

- Top management (top and senior leaders)
- Committed staff involved in quality assurance activities
- External stakeholders (external driving force): government, industries, society, regional and international higher education associations

In the Irish case also students play a major role.

What were the success factors when introducing internal quality assurance procedures? Which obstacles had to be overcome?

The success factors are:

- Acceptance of the quality review process in the institution
- Appreciation of the need for self-reflection
- Embedding a quality culture in all areas of the university began
- Ownership by unit being reviewed seen as a benefit for the unit
- Follow-up procedures ensuring that actions are taken on recommendations for improvement

The challenges at the NUS were connected with the quality assurance of various cross-border programmes and the quality assurance of various functions of the university (education, research, services, and enterprise). The challenges at the UCC were the acceptance of the benefits of a second cycle. How can the workload for departments/programme boards of study/units in gathering data be reduced and how to ensure the university acts on recommendations requiring resources?

How are university autonomy and quality assurance interlinked?

In both cases, government granted autonomous status required that an internal quality assurance system is established. Quality assurance is the consequence of autonomous status.

What role does the national, regional and international dimension play for internal quality assurance processes? Should the international dimension be strengthened?

In both cases it is seen as the external driving force. The international dimension is used for benchmarking procedures and practices and for sharing best practices. It is agreed that the international dimension should be strengthened.

During the group discussions it was concluded that a commitment by senior leadership is necessary for an efficient internal quality assurance system. International networking and collaboration are a must for benchmarking and checking the system. It was also agreed that the system should be made less threatening. It should be clear who the owner of the system is. Clear communication and a transparent process are required.

Working Group B: External Quality Assurance: Regional Benchmarking and Development of Quality Assurance Standards in the Region and between the Regions

Chair: Professor Nantana Gajasen, Executive Director, ASEAN University Network

Rapporteur: Mr Leendert Klaassen, Secretary, INQAAHE

The working group discussion was opened by two contributions on *The development of Quality Assurance Standards in the European Higher Education Area - Current status and perspectives* (**Dr Iring Wasser**, Managing Director, ASIIN, Germany) and *AUN-QA Peer Evaluation seen from the perspective of the Gadjah Mada University* (**Dr Kirbani Sri Brotopuspito**, Chief Quality Officer, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia).

In his contribution, **Dr Iring Wasser** emphasised the important role that learning outcomes will play in the future. The formulation of learning outcomes was seen as a joint responsibility between the quality assurance agencies and the higher education institutions. It is clear that national qualification frameworks cannot be defined without making use of the expected learning outcomes. Student mobility and professional mobility cannot be achieved without the recognition of degrees based on comparable qualification frameworks.

The issue of learning outcomes was not addressed in the Bologna Declaration in 1999. The concept was first mentioned by the European ministers in the 2009 Leuven Communiqué (“...*need to continue to develop learning outcomes and international references for a number of subject areas.*”) The question is who will be developing and implementing all this? Is there a role for INQAAHE or ENQA? According to Dr Wasser, generic accrediting only looks at generic learning outcomes, relying on the expertise of the review panel. At this moment there are disciplinary networks evolving at European level for specific disciplines e.g. engineering and chemistry. They are developing learning outcomes for first and second degrees, in accordance with the ESGs. As a result, specific labels (e.g. for engineering programmes the EUR ACE label) are being developed which higher education institutions are seeking to obtain for their programmes. The idea is to spread this to other regions in the world. The challenge is how procedures can be developed for countries without an accreditation regime.

Regarding the formulation of learning outcomes, some problems were mentioned by the speaker:

- Formulating learning outcomes is often an internal and external political power game
- There is no system in place to measure learning outcomes across national boundaries
- Most mutual recognition agreements rely on input criteria (number of years) in spite of all the rhetoric about learning outcomes
- Academic and professional mobility: the acceptance of the learning outcomes is at the sole discretion of higher education institutions and employers

As a way forward he recommended that international peer groups are installed for the cross-examination of the output of degree programmes. Furthermore, thought could be given to joint accreditation procedures and the development of measurable cross-border learning outcomes.

The second contribution by **Dr. Kirbani Sri Brotopuspito** explained the accreditation process in Indonesia, based on the experience of Gadjah Mada University. Gadjah Mada’s internal quality assurance was based on conducting self-evaluation taking into account the national accreditation criteria. In his presentation, the speaker focused on the following aspects:

What were the main driving forces for introducing regional benchmarking and/or external evaluation procedures involving regional peers into the national quality assurance system(s)?

- GMU uses regional benchmarking as a bridge to achieve international standards
- GMU uses the regional benchmarking as a system for sharing experience, expertise, and resources
- GMU uses regional benchmarking as a tool for recognising degree programmes in the region (e.g. accreditation, credit transfer and reputation)
- Creating a competitive advantage in global competition (e.g. commencing joint degree programme with other international universities, attracting international students, appealing for research grants from international sources and for more joint research with international counterparts)

How is the external peer review process interlinked with the national regulatory framework?

External peer review is linked with the national framework through intensive meetings between the Indonesian Accreditation Body (BAN PT) and similar counterparts (Southeast Asian countries) with the Office of Quality Assurance of the respective universities. The AUN QA guidelines and manual were then introduced through such collaborative work.

What obstacles had to be overcome (funding, language, cultural sensitivities, etc.)?

The first obstacle mentioned is the work culture, mindset, and oral tradition in Indonesia. Also, local government regulations in many areas such as the regulation of national curricula, human resources (for teaching staff and support staff, and so on) are an impediment. Funding is also a major issue,

since the funds for purchasing research facilities to meet international standards is limited. The language barrier is another obstacle, less for the teaching but especially for the support staff.

Why is an international dimension in peer review important?

It is vital to be in line with internationalisation and globalisation. It exposes the local culture and values to the international community. It also increases competitive advantages and mobility and it improves regional cohesion. It is important to have international peers for evaluating the degree programme. For the GMU, which has the vision of being a world class university, its contribution, especially in the preparation of high quality graduates and publications that meet international standards, should be evaluated by international peers.

The GMU is a member of AUN and participates in the AUN-QA Network. For the near future, it expects to introduce an AUN-QA Label for internal quality assurance. The GMU also hopes that the European quality assurance organisations recognise the AUN QA procedures. AUN-QA should also promote the ASEAN Qualification Framework.

In the ensuing working group discussion, several topics required specific attention:

- What is the best scope for assessment: programme or institution? Programme accreditation, institutional accreditation or should the quality assurance management of the higher education institution be considered? In the latter case, proper responsibility is given to the institution.
- What about the rise of so many quality assurance agencies? Instead of setting up more agencies, perhaps agencies should be merged. This might also solve the problems of the small countries.
- Is it necessary to work out learning outcomes for each and every discipline or should a more generic approach be taken?

Panel Discussion: Internal and External Quality Assurance – Why are they two sides of the same coin?

Chair: Ms. Lesley Wilson, Secretary General, European University Association (EUA)

The working groups on internal and external quality assurance procedures were followed by a panel discussion “*Internal and External Quality Assurance – Why are they two sides of the same coin?*”

In his introductory comments, **Mr. Ton Vroeijenstijn**, independent quality consultant from the Netherlands, emphasised that quality assurance systems in higher education all over the world had two elements, namely internal and external quality assurance. To make it more concrete: Quality assurance is based on self-assessment followed by external assessment.

Through self-assessment, the institution tries to discover its own quality and to find its strengths and weaknesses. In most countries this is followed by external quality assessment. Internally organised self-assessment is not sufficient on its own. It has to be complemented by external assessment. An outsider’s view will help us overcome some blind spots when we look at our quality. On the other hand, external quality assessment can never be done without self-assessment by the institution. Without that information, it is impossible to assess the quality. Internal quality assurance without external checks does not make sense, external quality assurance which is not based on self-assessment is useless. Therefore, the answer to the question for this panel is positive: yes, Internal and external quality assurance are two sides of the same coin.

If this conclusion is right, the role of both should be in balance. External quality assurance often serves two masters: on the one hand, it is expected to help the institutions to enhance and improve the quality, and, on the other, it is meant to provide information for government, policymakers and

taxpayers. Is it possible to combine those two functions without corrupting the balanced relationship with internal quality assurance?

When the discussion on accreditation started in Europe, it might have been expected that the players in the field (higher education institutions and governments) would undertake joint efforts to discuss how best to develop a Europe-wide accepted system of providing a quality label. However, this did not happen. Many countries in Western Europe started to develop an accreditation system on their own. External quality assurance, or better, the accreditation system in the developing stage, became politicised. In many countries, it was clear that higher education institutions and governments became opponents. Instead of keeping the higher education institutions responsible for the quality it became the accreditation agency that was seen as the guardian of quality.

What are the conditions for an efficient quality assurance system, in which both elements are well balanced? *Looking at the higher education institutions* one may expect all of them to develop a robust internal quality system as a safeguard for quality. Although there is no “one-size-fits-all-solution” and an internal quality assurance system will always be tailor-made, there are some requirements to be taken into account. The European Standards and Guidelines (2005) formulate some guidelines on internal quality assurance. These guidelines have also been adopted by the AUN in the AUN-QA guidelines and are used in the manual on the implementation of the guidelines (2007).

Looking at the accreditation agencies, a better balance with the internal quality assurance system may be expected. Accreditation should be less politicised and less based on power. Rather than being a monopoly of the state, it must rather be more improvement oriented with less control.

It is important to make a clear distinction between “*accreditation = providing a quality label*” and *connecting consequences to being accredited or not accredited*. Awarding the quality label is a professional activity to be done by a reliable and recognised quality assurance agency. To connect consequences to a quality label (or not getting the quality label) is a political decision and the monopoly of the state. Because of the consequences, governments also like to keep the accrediting system in their hands. Although the national agencies are mostly independent organisations, this does not mean that they do not act politically. The governmental monopoly hinders universities from choosing to be accredited, for example by European accrediting agencies, while in some disciplines it will be an advantage when the accreditation is not organised nationally, but rather Europe-wide.

Mr Vroeijsstijn’s introduction was commented on by **Dr Kittiya Evans**, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Thailand. Dr Kittiya endorsed the opinion that the self assessment report was an important link between internal and external quality assurance. From her point of view higher education institutions have a certain evaluation phobia. It would be on the one hand necessary to be less afraid. Listening to the discussion about accreditation in Europe, the question on the other hand is why is government taking back the autonomy and why does it like to control higher education? In some cases governments should have less control, like in Germany, Hungary and the UK (QAA).

Dr Evans agreed with the statement that an external quality assurance system will only be successful when stakeholders trust the system and have confidence in it. In view of the situation in Thailand the following steps are considered important elements in the process of trust building. First, an assessment system should be developed which allows the higher education institutions to participate. Public hearings held all over the regions ensure the flow of information. The development of a transparent recruitment system and a standard training programme for assessors and experts is another important step. Furthermore, higher education institutions should have the opportunity to nominate a number of external assessors.

The speaker also concluded that internal and external quality assurance are two sides of the same coin. The role that each of them plays should be in balance. The lesson learned from the Europe can help Asia to leap-frog certain problems, such as issues on credit transfer, on how to recruit and train experts and on the disparity of accreditation systems introduced.

For the following panel discussion, **Mr Vroeijenstijn** and **Dr Kittiya Evans** were joined by **Dr Titi Savitri Prihatiningsih**, AUN-Chief Quality Officer, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia and **Mr Leendert Klaassen**, Secretary of INQAAHE.

Ms Lesley Wilson invited the **panel** to discuss the following questions:

- Is it possible to combine control oriented accreditation with improvement oriented quality assurance?
- What role does the government play in quality assurance in Europe and Southeast Asia?
- How are the stakeholders involved in setting standards in Europe and Southeast Asia?
- How are internal and external quality assurance systems interlinked? In Europe? In Asia? What can be done/should be done to create more synergies between internal and external quality assurance?
- What kind of role can be played by national, regional and international players/organisations in harmonising both internal and external quality assurance?

The following **conclusions** could be drawn from the discussion:

- Internal quality assurance cannot be managed without external assessment. This view was supported by participants from the higher education institutions and from accrediting agencies or governmental organisations.
- The groups differed in the role that external quality assurance should play. Some participants saw a need for accreditation, because there is a need for change and higher education institutions would not change without external pressure.
- Autonomy and quality are two sides of the same coin. But is accreditation needed for accountability?
- How can governments guarantee standards? In this regard also the advantages and disadvantages of institutional accreditation and programme accreditation were discussed.
- In connection with external quality assessment, the question was raised as to how far learning outcomes, formulated by an accrediting agency, might hinder flexibility and innovations.
- There is a generally shared feeling that quality assurance should be based on trust. Trust is often lacking.

Working Group C: Capacity Building for Quality Assurance

Chair: Professor Maria Helena Nazare, Rector, University of Aveiro, Portugal

Rapporteur: Prof. Dr. Amelia Guevara, AUN-CQO and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, University of the Philippines

The working group had three input statements on *Capacity Building for Quality Assurance: Lessons Learned*

(Ms Concepcion Pijano, Executive Director, Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities and President, Asia-Pacific Quality Network), *Capacity Building in Quality Assurance through Distance Education* (**Dr Anthony Stella**, Author and Trainer in Distance Education for UNESCO-IIEP) and *Joint Quality Assurance Capacity Building in Sub-regional Systems* (**Mr Stefan Bienefeld**, Head Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation Unit, German Academic Exchange Service).

Ms Concepcion Pijano started with the role played by the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in capacity building. The APQN was founded in Hong Kong in 2003. The current host is the Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI). The APQN is organised to serve the needs of quality assurance agencies in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region. The mission is to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region by strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending collaboration between them.

The Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) is a second important development. This is a partnership between the World Bank and UNESCO launched in March 2008 to support capacity building in quality assurance for higher education in developing countries and countries in transition. Activities supported by the grants are:

- Workshops and conferences to build quality assurance capacity in developing countries/territories (14 countries in various aspects)
- Consultations and external reviewer services for quality assurance agencies in developing countries/territories
- Regional staff exchanges and secondments for capacity building
- Internship and cross-regional staff exchange programmes
- Production of training materials and resource packages

The countries served so far are Cambodia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Mongolia and Indonesia. Looking at the impact, the greatest effect is seen in the improvement of quality assurance mechanisms across national systems in various countries, in the exchange of ideas and expertise, in enhanced institutional capabilities, and in the promotion of communication and cooperation between agencies and institutions.

The lesson learned so far is that a regional approach is an efficient and cost effective mechanism for delivering capacity building across a wide and diverse region. The regional model serves to develop higher education quality assurance systems more quickly and efficiently (geographic proximity and ties that bond together, within the neighbourhood). The subject of educational quality is global, but the work of quality assurance is, for the most part, local (must happen on the ground, must be contextualised). International cooperation and a commitment to building capacity in quality assurance as demonstrated by the World Bank and UNESCO are yielding positive results.

APQN realises that their work is far from complete. The search for quality and excellence is a never-ending journey. There are new and continuing challenges as we forge ahead.

Talking about capacity building, **Dr Anthony Stella** emphasised that the areas which needed capacity development the most were training for quality assurance staff, training for peers and training for policymakers. Furthermore, it is important to share information and good practices in quality assurance and to develop guidelines, manuals, publications. It is important that efforts are made to understand each other's policies and practices and observe each other's activities. For capacity building, a regional approach is needed: a regional pool of peers, regional training programmes, joint quality assurance activities, benchmarking and comparative studies. One strategy with the potential to contribute to most of these recommendations is the IIEP Training Program. IIEP stands for International Institute for Educational Planning. It is an autonomous body of UNESCO for training and research. It aims to strengthen the capacity of countries, to plan and manage their education system, and it offers full-year courses, shorter intensive training, and distance education. A recent emphasis lies on quality assurance and the online Forum on External Quality Assurance. Participants are policymakers, quality assurance staff and academics from higher education institutions. 'Distance' was turned into an advantage and brought in new perspectives. The on-line discussions made the course more effective and topical than traditional delivery.

Mr Stefan Bienefeld stressed the need for a (sub-) regional quality assurance approach. Looking at how students move to neighbouring countries, it is evident that the degrees are not easily recognised. Regional cooperation is also important for sharing good practices from several countries for mutual learning. It is also important to share key experts in specific fields within the region. Direct political interference is minimised by a regional approach.

Regional cooperation is also needed, because the credibility of the institution is higher, internationally and nationally, when peers do not come from the home country. Also economies of scale for training and capacity development require regional cooperation, but regional cooperation cannot be left just to political groups. Academia must play a major role, too.

To promote regional cooperation in quality assurance, the Triple Sandwich Approach, has been successfully implemented in a number of projects (see figure 3).

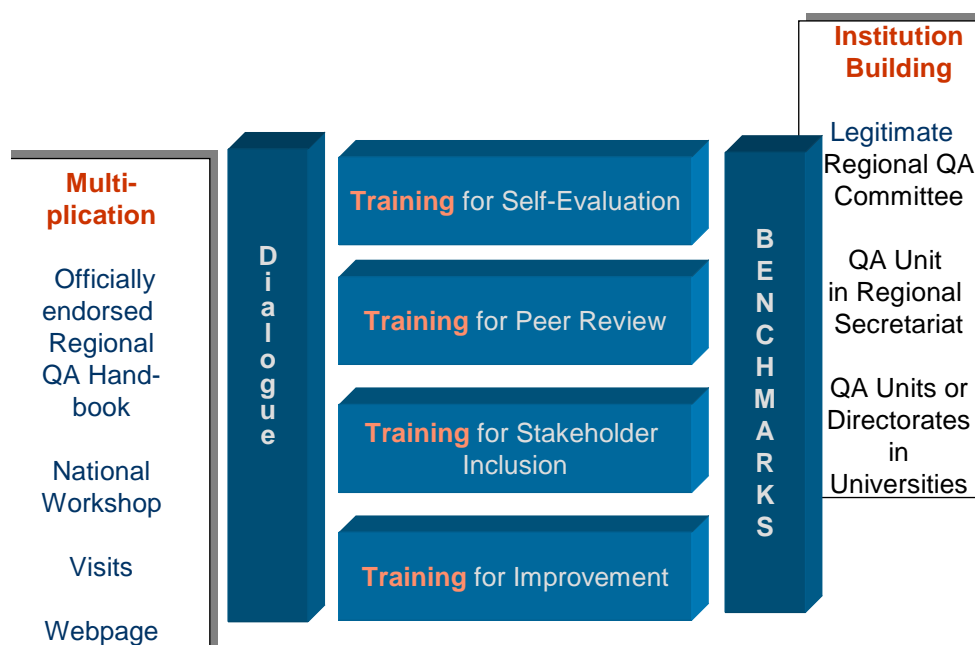


Figure 3: The triple sandwich of DIES

The speaker referred to two projects in the frame of the programme “Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies” (DIES) which has been jointly established by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK).

The first one is the Central American-German Project on Building a Regional Quality Assurance System (1998-2008). The regional partner CSUCA (Central American Association of University Rectors) is a highly respected regional university organisation and officially recognised by the Central American Integration System. It represents the majority of the student population, provides a self-financed secretariat and has legitimacy and capacity. In terms of institution building during the project a multinational and multi-stakeholder regional accreditation council and three regional quality assurance agencies have been set up. More than 200 people have been trained and more than 2,000 have been reached with the various activities. thus cross-border trust between academics has developed. There have been regional benchmarks in two fields. The results at university level are:

- Dialogue between different levels of university hierarchy
- Quality evaluation units institutionalised in all 18 public universities, another 15 new units were established in private universities
- More than 150 evaluations completed which have stimulated major curriculum changes
- Comprehensive innovation processes ongoing in key public universities

The second example is the East African-German Project on Building a Regional Quality Assurance System (2006 to date). This DIES project was initiated by the DAAD and the HRK together with the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) at the beginning of 2006. The IUCEA is a politically endorsed long-standing regional body representing both universities and governments on a regional scale and therefore provides the necessary legitimacy to get involved in shaping the quality assurance integration process in the East African member countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi). The IUCEA Secretariat builds up quality assurance structures together with the staff of national quality assurance agencies. A group of pilot universities has been selected. The project started by jointly developing an officially endorsed strategic plan and developing a regional Quality Handbook as a common frame of reference. The IUCEA together with the DAAD and the HRK organised intensive training activities for quality assurance officers and peers, as well as for staff of the quality assurance agencies, deans and rectors. Methodology is based on international learning. So far Quality Assurance Offices have been established in 45 universities and on the regional level. 50 self-evaluations are to be completed by February 2010.

After the three input statements, the following topics were discussed:

- How best to cope with small and big countries? Should the same benchmark be used? On the one hand, there is a need to contextualise, and, on the other, it is essential to think regional because of student mobility, the need to raise the bar and being careful that benchmarks/standards are not too low.
- Is it absolutely necessary to have a quality agency in every country? For example, Iceland decided to outsource its external quality assurance. Outsourcing might be good, but still a national capacity must be in place to be able to interpret and implement recommendations of the external team and to monitor quality assurance developments at a national level.
- A regional approach may be the way to go, but many challenges lack political will and commitment, through which tension, competition and the struggle for power might arise.
- The involvement of different stakeholders, like students, for example. Some universities do not want any student participation at all. Students who attend are usually a minority, very well chosen, and thus not representative. Student participation has an added value because students have different perspectives; but there are language and cultural problems. The Asian culture is a culture where sometimes the young fall in line with their elders and do not have the habit of questioning their views. There is a need for training to enable them to express their views and to get involved more actively.
- The need for sharing experiences is an important aspect of regional cooperation. There is already a wealth of experience, both in Europe and in the Asia-Pacific region. It is possible to learn from each other. Hardware components of quality assurance are costly and could be shared. In meetings and conferences, everything seems to be in place and resolved but when details are addressed, it becomes clear that many things still remain unresolved. It is important to have a discussion on practical tips: what to do/not do. Especially useful for states that are just starting their quality assurance system.

Working Group D: Quality Assurance in Joint Study Programmes and Dual Degree Programmes

Chair: Dr Ton Vroeijenstijn, independent quality consultant, the Netherlands

Rapporteur: Dr Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit, University College Cork, Ireland

The working group saw two input statements on *Quality Assurance in the joint Master's programme "Chinese-European Economics and Business Studies (CEEBS)"* (**Ms Annette Fleck**, Higher Education Development Planning, Berlin School of Economics, Germany, and **Mr Zhang Zhaohui**, International Education School, South-Western University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE) Chengdu, China), and *Implementing Joint Quality Assurance Procedures – The Viewpoint of an auditor* (**Mr Paul McGrath**, Independent Higher Education Consultant, United Kingdom).

Mr McGrath explained how an auditor looks at the quality of a joint programme. One of the first things to do is to look at the 'mapping' of the two or more institutions involved in the programme. What are the teaching and assessment strategies to be used? An important aspect is whether the programme is sustainable or not. Is the support provided by the universities for development adequate and is the on-going support for staff and students sufficient?

The first thing an auditor does is to look at the context of the audit. The following questions need to be asked: What is the rationale of the programme? Who has the programme approved? Is there a Memorandum of Understanding? What has been regulated in the contract? Do clear rules for recruitment, advertising, no serial franchising exist? Is there a written schedule of responsibilities: who does what? Do rules of engagement exist for students are they made explicit to them? And last but not least: What are the agreements concerning quality assurance?

There are some hot spots as far as collaboration is concerned:

- On outcomes, explicit external references must be in place
- On teaching, a clear timetable, adequate staff, a feedback mechanism as well as staff development activities must be in place
- The assessment must be explicit, appropriate, secure, assured and transparent. It should also take into account the language problem
- Sustainability: adequate resources for staff and students as well as clear decision-making processes must be in place
- On quality, a quality assurance system must be in place that is responsive and reflective and assures the standards.

Ms Annette Fleck and **Mr Zhang Zhaohui** shared their experience in the development of a joint Master's degree programme in *Chinese European Economics and Business Studies*. The following steps were taken in the development of the programme:

Planning – 1st phase (2003-2007)

- **Marketing** (Title of the joint programme; target groups; media)
- **Student** selection/admission (entrance requirements; APS)
- **Structure** (level, i.e. Bachelor/Master/PhD; degrees; duration, i.e. terms/ECTS credits; mandatory student mobility)
- **Content** (discipline(s) involved; aims and objectives)
- **Ownership** (higher education institutions offering elements of the joint programme; staff development; legal implications (property rights))
- **Regulatory framework** (at state level; at institutional level)
- **Funding** (benefits and costs; tuition)
- **Quality assurance** (principles and measures)

In the *2nd and 3rd phase (2007-2009)* all key parts of the programme were assessed in a cycle of check and review followed by concrete actions aiming at improvement in the 4th phase.

Student Admission

- Setting up an admission committee from both universities
- Chinese students enrolled in the CEEBS should have successfully passed the graduate entrance exam, but some places remain available for other outstanding and innovative students;
- Chinese students can now also be awarded a Chinese Master's degree
- Selection instruments: developed jointly by both universities in order to evaluate the applicants' potential and find the best possible candidates.
- English language proficiency
- HWR Berlin provides SWUFE with a computer-based English examination which is compulsory for every student without TOEFL or an equivalent qualification

Funding

- HWR responsible for collecting the tuition fees
- SWUFE will provide an invoice (in EUR) for CEEBS-related costs

Academic quality

- Team teaching is a key to enhancing the partnership; at least two German professors will annually teach in block seminars of 1-2 weeks in China and vice-versa, Chinese professors will teach in Berlin

Grading systems

- The SWUFE conversion table will be applied

Academic Board/Management

- More regular communications (Email; phone; Skype)
- Teachers' conference (incl. administration staff) meets at least once a year at SWUFE in September, when HWR professors are on site during the team-teaching.

As regards to the external **quality assurance**, the joint programme will be accredited by a German accreditation agency. China will have its own supplementary requirements for approval by the Chinese system. The German accreditation agency will not visit the Chinese institution.

After the two introductory presentations, the following issues were discussed:

International cooperation in quality assurance

- Should recognition be based on an institutional review?
- Is it possible to work with the mutual recognition of individual programme accreditation?
- What about mutual recognition of processes and about recognition systems performed by different quality assurance agencies?
- Professional programme accreditation – in some programmes

Internal bodies

What internal bodies are needed to assure quality? Joint committees for admission, teaching and assessment were mentioned.

Impact of cultural differences

What impact do cultural differences have on the programme? It was seen that developing a joint programme and cooperating with the partner is a matter of trust. The participants agreed that diversity should be recognised and accepted.

Bologna instruments

The question arose as to how far the instruments of the Bologna Process could be used. The Diploma Supplement, ECTS, modularisation and the Qualification Frameworks may be useful in developing and running a joint degree programme.

Closing Panel Discussion: Building Mutual Trust – Opportunities for Cooperation in Quality Assurance in Higher Education between Asia and Europe

Chair: Mr Stefan Bienefeld, Head Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation Unit, German Academic Exchange Service

- **Ms Lesley Wilson**, Secretary-General, European University Association
- **Dr Helka Kekäläinen**, Secretary-General, Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council; Member of the Board, European Association for Quality in Higher Education (ENQA)
- **Dr Norma Ryan**, Director, Quality Promotion Unit, University College Cork, Ireland
- **Professor Dr Nantana Gajaseeni**, Executive Director, ASEAN University Network
- **Professor Dr Amelia Guevara**, AUN-Chief Quality Officer, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, University of the Philippines
- **Dr Kittiya Evans**, Deputy Director, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Thailand

The panel, which was composed of representatives of universities, quality assurance agencies and regional university networks from both Asia and Europe, discussed the following two key questions:

How can cooperation in quality assurance in higher education between Asia and Europe be enhanced?

The Bologna Process was seen as an instrument to enhance inter-regional cooperation between Asia and Europe. European universities first look at the opportunity to cooperate with a European partner, but nowadays, universities are increasingly looking for partners in Asia and vice-versa. There are many opportunities to link European universities, networks and agencies with initiatives in the Asia. Europe can use Asia as a benchmark in quality assurance procedures and vice versa. Also cooperation in the training of experts and peers as well as joint peer evaluations were seen as promising examples of inter-regional cooperation in quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, there was a plea for an increased exchanging of experience. The European and Asian networks should work together, e.g. the EUA and AUN, ENQA and APQN, ECA and AQAN.

With the EAHEP initiative closing at the end of 2009, how can the momentum for cooperation be continued? What are the priorities?

The following proposals were drawn up:

- Inviting Asian experts as observers in some European assessment exercises. Such invitations should be organised by the individual players
- A research exercise on what is going on in Europe and Asia. It was said that ENQA already does surveys on external quality assurance processes in Europe and that the AUN-QA manual has a description of accreditation activities in the ASEAN countries, although this needs to be updated.
- The different networks should establish a memorandum of cooperation
- Organising a workshop for the universities about learning outcomes
- Looking for more cost effective and alternative ways of assessment
- All agencies are invited to ensure that the websites can be accessed in English.