

Road Map For Enhanced West African Quality Assurance Structures in Higher Education

Background

Based on experiences concerning the support of regional quality assurance (QA) structures in various regions of the world, DAAD is cooperating with UNESCO (BREDA, IIEP) and regional partner organisations in Africa (AAU, CAMES, UEMOA) in order to set up and further enhance QA structures in West Africa. The joint Project entitled “Enhancing West African Quality Assurance Structures (EWAQAS)” will be carried out within the frame of the DIES Programme – a joint initiative by DAAD and the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) aiming at supporting the management of higher education in developing countries. DIES is funded by the German Ministry of Development Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The DIES Project EWAQAS takes note of all efforts, instruments and mechanisms in place which have been set up and implemented by partners in Africa, be it on the national, sub-regional or continental level so that consistency with existing QA structures and policies can be ensured.

DAAD and its partners such as the HRK, experts from German Universities, decision makers and resource persons from Europe and Africa, particularly from the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), will bring in and make available experiences from similar DIES Projects, especially in Eastern Africa, in order to promote regional exchange and to feed in results and lessons learnt from ongoing or completed capacity development activities in the field of QA.

DAAD and UNESCO IIEP are committed to orient all activities carried out under EWAQAS towards the demands of the beneficiaries in West Africa and will therefore liaise regularly with their African counterparts. The following Road Map has been elaborated in close interaction with AAU, CAMES, UEMOA and UNESCO BREDA and Abuja Offices, and the governance structures of the Project have been established in a way that expertise and feedback from relevant actors in the field of African HE and QA can be used effectively.

Furthermore, the European-African initiative relies on the trustful and successful collaboration between DAAD, UNESCO BREDA and Abuja Offices and UNESCO IIEP which has been started in 2012 in the frame of the realisation of a high ranking dialogue forum on regional QA hosted by UNESCO BREDA in November 2012 in Dakar, Senegal. During this conference stakeholders from West Africa, including regional organisations, ministerial representatives, university leaderships as well as representatives from QA agencies and regional networks engaged in supporting higher education, have clearly articulated the need for supporting regional QA in both Anglophone and Francophone countries of West Africa.

The methodological design of EWAQAS furthermore formalises the outcomes of a planning meeting which was carried out at the premises of the IIEP in January 2013 in Paris and brought together representatives from the signees of the Road Map as well as international QA specialists.

Overall objectives

The overall objective of EWAQAS is to strengthen capacity in the field of QA in selected West African countries¹, both in the area of internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA). In addition, policy dialogue among the key drivers and stakeholders in the field of QA in West African higher education will be facilitated in order to develop a shared understanding of QA procedures in higher education and to promote a regional framework for QA. In this regard, the collaboration between the Partners is considered a means to support intra- and interregional cooperation in the field of QA between Africa and Europe.

EWAQAS first and foremost aims at imparting knowledge and competencies concerning the set up and implementation of QA mechanisms via practice oriented training courses supplemented by targeted dialogue events for policy makers and university leaderships as well as activities which allow for multiplication and dissemination of hands-on knowledge. Furthermore, the Project intends to contribute to the long term goal of establishing reliable IQA and EQA systems as well as to establish QA standards and guidelines which are comparable on the regional level and in line with international QA principles. In doing so, it is planned to support the recognition of credits and degrees as well as the mobility of staff and students in the West African region and beyond.

Profile of the Partners

The African partners, namely the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), the Commission de L'Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africain (UEMOA), UNESCO BREDIA and UNESCO Abuja Office will make use of their resources and provide their expertise in order to facilitate policy dialogue and capacity building in the field of QA in higher education.

AAU

The Association of African Universities (AAU) is an international non-governmental, pan-African organisation, founded by the African universities to promote co-operation among each

¹ For the first phase of the Project the Partners have agreed to focus on the following West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. However, opportunities to include also countries from Central Africa will be explored at a later stage.

other and with the international academic community. The AAU, whose headquarters is located in Accra, Ghana, was founded in Rabat, Morocco in November 1967 on the occasion of the inaugural conference of the UNESCO. The mission of the Association is on the one hand to raise the quality and relevance of higher education and to strengthen its contribution to African development; and on the other hand to provide a platform for discussions on strategic questions of higher education. The AAU achieves its goals by conducting a variety of programmes, as far as possible, thanks to the commitment of its member institutions, as well as strategic partners so that engagement and individual responsibility will be initiated. Its programmes are amongst others: University Staff Exchange, the Response of African Universities to HIV/AIDS; the support of Quality Assurance for African Higher Education, the Education and Research Networks etc. In April 2013, the AUA counts more than 360 African higher education institution members from 45 African countries.

CAMES

The African and Madagascan Council for Higher Education (CAMES) is an institution aiming at regional integration in higher education and research, which was founded in 1968. Its activities spread over 19, especially French speaking, country members in Sub-Saharan Africa. Deriving from its charter CAMES coordinates six programme areas related to the promotion of teaching personnel, the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes, the digital governance of programmes and the transfer of research results to society. As part of the Project “Quality Assurance” implemented in 2007, a programme for Quality Assurance in higher education and research has been launched at the 29th session of the Council of Ministers in April 2012, providing a plan of implementation in the regional areas of the CAMES space which are the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) and of the Indian Ocean (Madagascar).

UEMOA

The Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA) is an organisation of regional integration uniting Benin, Burkina, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Its main object is to establish a common market between the member states and to consolidate adequate conditions for the management of a common currency via the harmonisation of economic policies and the coordination of sectorial policies of the member states.

In the field of human resources UEMOA intends to implement the consolidation of public funds in order to offer access to high-quality higher education to a higher number of persons. In this context, the member states have adopted a common guideline to implement the system of Bachelor, Master and Doctor (LMD in short form) inspired by the Bologna process like the framework of certification and the setting of quality regulations in higher education and research.

The guideline entrust the mission to the commission of UEMOA to establish mechanisms of quality assurance to assure the success of the reform LMD. In this framework, the commission endorse the countries in the curriculum reform, in the promotion of regional excellence centres of research and education, in the valorisation of national and regional mechanisms of quality assurance with the significant help of CAMES, AUF and the networks of professional researchers.

The commission of UEMOA also develops programmes to support the planning and implementation of regional and national higher education and research policies as well as the promotion of professional education as a measure against the unemployment of young people, which results as a main challenge for the stability of the member states.

UNESCO BREDA and UNESCO Regional Abuja Office

UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar and UNESCO Regional Office Abuja are supporting African countries in the process of improving the quality and relevance of higher education and increase of funding for higher education in close collaboration with other regional offices in Africa, UNESCO's Headquarter Section on TEP and HED sections, IIEP UNESCO and also regional and international partners (AU, ADEA, AAU, CAMES, Regional Economic Communities and DAAD).

UNESCO Dakar regularly organizes conferences with various stakeholders to better understand the challenges and hence develop joint interventions to better assist the countries and their higher education institutions. The Office implements activities aiming at building policy and technical capacities among the personnel in Ministries of Higher Education, as well as in universities and in tertiary institutions. These are the focus areas:

- 1) Monitoring of the Arusha Convention from 1981 on the recognition of qualifications, accreditation and quality assurance;
- 2) Facilitating the promotion of quality assurance mechanisms and agencies on the national and institutional level;
- 3) Promoting inter-university cooperation, especially the development of centers of excellence, UNESCO Chairs;
- 4) Promoting the use of ICT as a tool to broaden access to information and knowledge, and open new opportunities for education.

UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar is implementing the project PADTICE UEMOA geared toward the use of ICT to promote Quality of Higher Education and the implementation of LMD reforms in the member states.

UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar and UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja are actively participating as a Member of the Steering Committee of the Project EWAQAS in close

collaboration with IIEP UNESCO and DAAD. It will specifically contribute to the coordination and resource mobilization as well as monitoring the implementation of the programme in the member states.

DAAD and UNESCO IIEP

In order to make EWAQAS a joint effort between strong partners in Africa and Europe, the European Partners, i.e. the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) will draw on their know-how in QA capacity development projects in different regions of the world. Furthermore, they offer to share European and international experiences in the field of QA policies and practices, e.g. in the framework of the Bologna Process. This bi-regional dialogue allows for mutual learning, exchange of best practices and facilitates internationalisation of QA.

DAAD is the largest funding organisation in the world supporting the international exchange of students and scholars. It is a registered association and its members are German institutions of higher education and student bodies. DAAD supports the internationalisation of German universities, promotes German studies and the German language abroad, assists developing countries in establishing effective universities and advises decision makers on matters of cultural, education and development policy. Within the DIES Programme DAAD has gained vast experience in supporting partners to set up effective regional quality assurance systems in different regions of the world. As quality assurance is regarded as a major factor to build trust between countries and institutions and to facilitate recognition of credits and degrees this project is also very much in line with DAAD's mission to promote internationalisation and higher education cooperation between German and foreign universities.

UNESCO IIEP is an institute of UNESCO specialized in the area of educational planning and management. IIEP's mandate is capacity development in its areas of specialization. Since its creation in 1963, the IIEP has been running residential, in-country and DE programmes in several domains. IIEP is organising capacity development activities to support the governance and management of higher education and EQA structures worldwide. In particular, IIEP has prepared a DE programme on EQA in higher education which consists of five instructional modules. IIEP has also produced a wide range of publications on higher education governance, planning and QA.

Additional Partners

Drawing on the expertise of its member institutions, DAAD will identify a German university as a key partner which coordinates training activities aiming at supporting IQA structures at the

university level. The main responsibility of the German university includes the development of training materials adjusted to the regional needs, the subsequent implementation of multi-part IQA courses together with a European-African team of experts as well as the organisation of supplementing dialogue events.²

Action lines of EWAQAS

The Partners have identified the following action lines to be carried out for the realisation of the overall objectives of the Project:

1. Training For Policy Makers on EQA

Under the leadership of the EWAQAS Steering Committee the IIEP organises a first set of capacity building activities, which consist of two blended learning programmes on EQA. They consist of a Distance Education course (DE) on EQA followed by a face to face seminar in Senegal in order to discuss and share the results of the group works during the DE course. The DE course makes use of existing training materials and an online learning platform hosted by staff of the IIEP. It has been set up to help national decision-makers and managers in charge of QA in higher education to put in place a new national mechanism for QA, develop their existing systems and evaluate their current practices. The course will be carried out in two batches and addresses participants from in total nine West-African countries as well as representatives from the African partner organisations AAU, CAMES, UEMOA. Each national team consists of policy makers from ministries/commissions or accreditation agencies and of senior managers from universities.

2. Training for higher education managers from universities on IQA

Based on newly designed training materials which will be jointly developed by a German university together with International, European and African QA specialists, a multi-part training course on quality management comprising different modules on issues related to IQA will be offered for QA officers from universities in Western Africa. A first course which includes workshops in Germany and the African region will be piloted for Anglophone countries in 2014.

Thereafter a second batch of QA officers from universities in Francophone countries will undergo the same type of training in 2015. It will be ensured via joint curriculum planning meetings that the contents delivered in the IQA course on the one hand refer to the West African

² Taking the context factors in Francophone countries into account further expertise can be provided by French partner organisations such as the Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) and the French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES).

higher education context while on the other hand European experiences with the set up of QA mechanisms in the frame of the Bologna Process will be made available.

3. Dialogue events for leadership at political, intermediary and university level

As the effective implementation of QA mechanisms at the institutional level highly depends on the back-up and support of the university leadership dialogue events mainly directed at Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVC) will be carried out prior to the start of the IQA training course in order to sensitise decision makers for the training process. To this end seminars and/ or delegation visits for DVCs and further representatives of national bodies in charge for EQA shall be organised in order to share good practice in Europe and Africa and to raise awareness for the challenges related to the establishment of accountable and sustainable QA structures which comply with external and internal requirements.

4. Multiplication and dissemination activities

In addition to the above mentioned dialogue and training activities, provisions shall be made for multiplication and dissemination of the outcomes of the Project as well as of materials used and developed under EWAQAS. Special emphasis shall be placed on adapting and making available the QA Handbook which was developed with and adopted by partners in the East African region. Such a Handbook is meant to give guidance on how to assure and enhance quality of the training within the institutions; it shall furthermore develop a shared understanding of QA principles and practices and in the long run pave the way to develop a QA framework in West Africa.

The four action lines as well as the expected outcomes are described in more detail in annex 1.

Decision-Making and Project Management

All decisions concerning content, financing and overall management of EWAQAS lie at the responsibility of the **Steering Committee (SC)**. The SC is responsible for the coordination and supervision of the four action lines as described above. It consists of representatives from the organisations which are funding, coordinating or directly involved in conducting or hosting activities within the frame of the Project, i.e. DAAD or a delegated German university partner, UNESCO IIEP, UNESCO BREDIA and Abuja Offices. This committee will meet face to face at least once a year which might be complemented with meetings via teleconferencing/ online. The members of the SC are mentioned in annex 2.

The **Advisory Board (AB)** includes the members of the Steering Committee as well as representatives of African stakeholder organisations, i.e. AAU, CAMES and UEMOA and selected IQA and EQA key experts/ trainers. The AB will be consulted by the SC in terms of defining the overall objective of the programme (Road Map), adjusting its contents to the needs

of the African region and the definition and recruitment of the target group. It receives regular updates on the progress of the Project as well as key reports and evaluation results. The list of the persons who are members of the AB is annexed (annex 2) and might be altered.

Time Frame

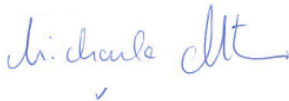
The Road Map outlines the overall objectives and scope of activities for the first phase of EWAQAS which stretched over a period of around two years. However, it is envisaged to continue the cooperation from 2015 onwards, depending on the results of a mid-term evaluation which shall be carried out at the end of phase one.



DAAD



AAU



UNESCO IIEP



CAMES



UEMOA



UNESCO BREDA



UNESCO Office Abuja

Annex 1 – EWAQAS Action Lines

1. Training For Policy Makers on EQA

The EQA training course targets decision-makers and higher education managers from selected Francophone countries in West Africa working in the area of QA located in a ministry of education (or higher education) or an agency in charge of EQA (existing so far only in Senegal) and universities. Participants will work in a team of four to five colleagues. The team ideally consists of 1) the director general of higher education and a colleague in charge of quality development in the higher education sector and 2) two senior managers from national universities, which would be typically the DVC for academic affairs and the person in charge of IQA at the university.

The first batch will be attended by participants from Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal and smaller teams from the regional Partners organisations, i.e. AAU, UEMOA and CAMES. The second batch will bring together participants from Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Mali and Togo.

The two blended learning courses will be organised in the period of September to December 2013 (first batch of workshops) and February to May 2014 (second batch of workshops).

They will cover the following four modules: (1) Making basic choices for external quality assurance systems, (2) Understanding and assessing quality, (3) Conducting the process of external quality assurance, (4) Setting up and developing the quality assurance agency. In addition a closing seminar will be carried out in order to discuss the results of the group works (suggestion of a national EQA system). At this three day seminar, participants will present the road maps which they have prepared for their national QA systems.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the training course, participants should:

- have an overview on various concepts, tools and options to establish, develop, sustain and benchmark their EQA systems;
- have gained an understanding concerning the implications of these different options and be able to adapt them to different institutional contexts;
- be able to draw lessons on ‘good or desirable practices’ so that teaching, learning and research practices in the national higher education system can be improved;

2. Training for higher education managers from universities on IQA

QA officers from universities in West Africa will be trained on issues related to the management of QA at institutional level in order to promote the effective and sustainable implementation of respective instruments and mechanisms. The training sessions will be sequenced in three parts taking place both in Germany and on site and will be facilitated by a team of African and European trainers. To this end training modules on concepts and methodologies in QA, options for the set of IQA systems at institutional level, data management, curriculum development and accreditation, etc. will be jointly developed taking into account the external requirements and needs of the beneficiary countries.

Methodology of the training will be very much practice oriented and shall enable the participants to carry out projects within their home universities aiming at improving the quality of higher education provision.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the training course, participants should

- have an overview on various concepts, tools and options to locate, establish, develop, sustain and benchmark their IQA systems;
- have learned to transfer the international state of the art in higher education QA to their national context and to use it as a reference point for developing a suitable evaluation framework at their institutions;
- have gained a broad understanding of organisational change in higher education institutions enabling them to give advice to their colleagues in the process of establishing QA mechanisms and policies;

3. Dialogue events for leadership at political, intermediary and university level

Decision makers and key drivers in the QA process on system and institutional level, such as DVCs and deans in universities or CEOs of QA agencies (or where they do not exist decision makers responsible for QA in the ministries), will be specifically approached in order to be sensitised and informed about the EWAQAS project.

Prior to the first training module a “sensitisation phase” will be implemented in order to inform the participating universities’ leaderships on the objectives, learning targets and teaching methods of the IQA training course. To this end a delegation visit to Germany will be organised and will familiarise the participants with the European perspective on higher education quality development.

Furthermore regional dialogue events on QA organised by European or African partners shall be used as platforms in order to exchange with policy makers and QA practitioners in order to foster inter- and intraregional dialogue and to feed in the results of EWAQAS into regional policy dialogue in Africa.

Expected Outcomes

After having carried out dialogue events within the frame of the Project

- a broader understanding will be gained by policy makers, EQA representatives and university leadership concerning various options concerning setting up, maintaining and further developing IQA and EQA systems;
- experiences concerning the setting up of IQA and EQA mechanisms made in East Africa and in Europe will be presented and discussed with counterparts in West Africa in order to foster inner-regional dialogue within Africa and to strengthen the cooperation in higher education with Europe;
- back-up and support has been ensured for the trainees of the IQA course in order to be able to apply and implement IQA tools and mechanisms at their home universities;

4. Multiplication, Dissemination

In order to disseminate the knowledge at the participating institutions and to allow for national multiplication outcomes, recommendations and lessons learnt will be communicated via various channels (progress reports, website etc.). Training materials and guidelines will be developed and made available in order to develop a shared understanding of QA in West Africa and to contribute to the set up of a regional QA system. To this end, the QA Handbook which has been developed and adopted in the DIES Project in East Africa has to be translated and adapted to the needs in West African countries. In doing so exchange of experiences and inner-regional dialogue within Africa will be facilitated.

Expected Outcomes

- A website on EWAQAS will be established and maintained which provides IQA and EQA training materials, presentations, good practice examples, recommendations and guidelines which have been developed under the Project;
- The Handbook entitled “Road Map to Quality” which has been developed in the frame of the DIES Programme together with partners from East Africa, i.e. the IUCEA; will be reviewed, adapted to the needs and requirements in West African countries and translated into French language.

Annex 2 – Governance Structures

Members of the Steering Committee

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Mr. Stefan Bienefeld, Head of Division Development Cooperation and Alumni Programmes, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany

Mr. Michael Hörig, Head of Section West and Central Africa, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany

UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Ms. Michaela Martin, Programme specialist, International Institute for Educational Planning IIEP, France

UNESCO BREDA

Mrs. Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director Regional Office Dakar (BREDA), Sénégal

UNESCO Abuja Office

Professor Hassana Alidou, Director Regional Office Abuja, Nigeria

Members of the Advisory Board

All Steering Committee Members (as mentioned above) plus

Dr. Andoh Pascal Hoba, Director Knowledge Management Communication & ICT; Coordinator Europe-Africa Quality Connect project, Association of African Universities (AAU), Ghana

Mr. Bruno Curvale, Senior project leader, Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP), France

Barbara Michalk, Head of Section, Higher Education Reform in Germany and Europe, German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Germany

Professor Patricia Pol, Responsable Europe et international, Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES), France

Professor Bertrand Mbatchi, Secretary General, Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Burkina Faso

Dr. Andrée Sursock, Senior Adviser, European University Association (EUA), Belgium

Dr. Brehima Tounkara, Directeur de l'enseignement supérieur et de la formation professionnelle, Commission de l'Union économique et Monétaire Ouest Africain (UEMOA), Burkina Faso

Dr. Hassmik Tortian, Programme Specialist Higher Education, UNESCO, France