



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

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1. Background

Some Challenges of HE in Africa

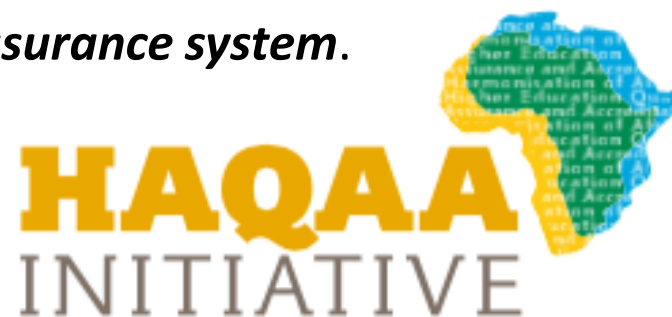
- Increasing access and ensuring relevance & quality of provision
- Governance issues – Good governance and succession
- Inadequate Funding – judicious use of resources
- Number and Qualification of academic staff
- Research capacity
- A shift to market and consumer demands – programs focused to meet these demands
- Globalisation and internalisation and competition



Addressing the Challenges for Improved Quality

Some of the ways of addressing the challenges include:

- ***Strengthening good governance*** – the hallmark of success of HEIs,
- ***Judicious use of resources - collaboration*** and ***sharing of resources*** - between institutions (locally & internationally).
- ***Student and staff exchange*** and international cooperation for benchmarking on best practices.
- Development of ***common agendas, harmonising QA systems*** in HE – for improved quality.
- Taking advantage of ***technological*** development for improved services,
- ***Collaboration*** on ***research*** for finding solutions to common challenges.
- Developing a ***culture evidence-based quality***.
- Developing quality assurance system that meets the needs of Africa's higher education - So ***harmonised quality assurance system***.



2. Status of QA in HE in Africa

Overview

- QA HE in Africa was introduced in the form of ***affiliations*** of HEIs with international institutions in the colonial powers (e.g, Britain, France).
- Post-independence – Countries established ***state organisations***, through Ministries of Education, to provide oversight of HE to:
 - Regulate the ***quality*** of education being delivered for the rapidly growing number of students.
 - Focus was on ***quality of lecturers, curricula and teaching facilities***,
 - Later focus included ***quality and relevance*** of graduates - relevance of skills for the developing economies.
 - Developing a ***competitive Africa HE systems***.
- ***Approaches to QA in HE different*** depending on local context.



QA Systems and Models

Quality Assurance Agencies

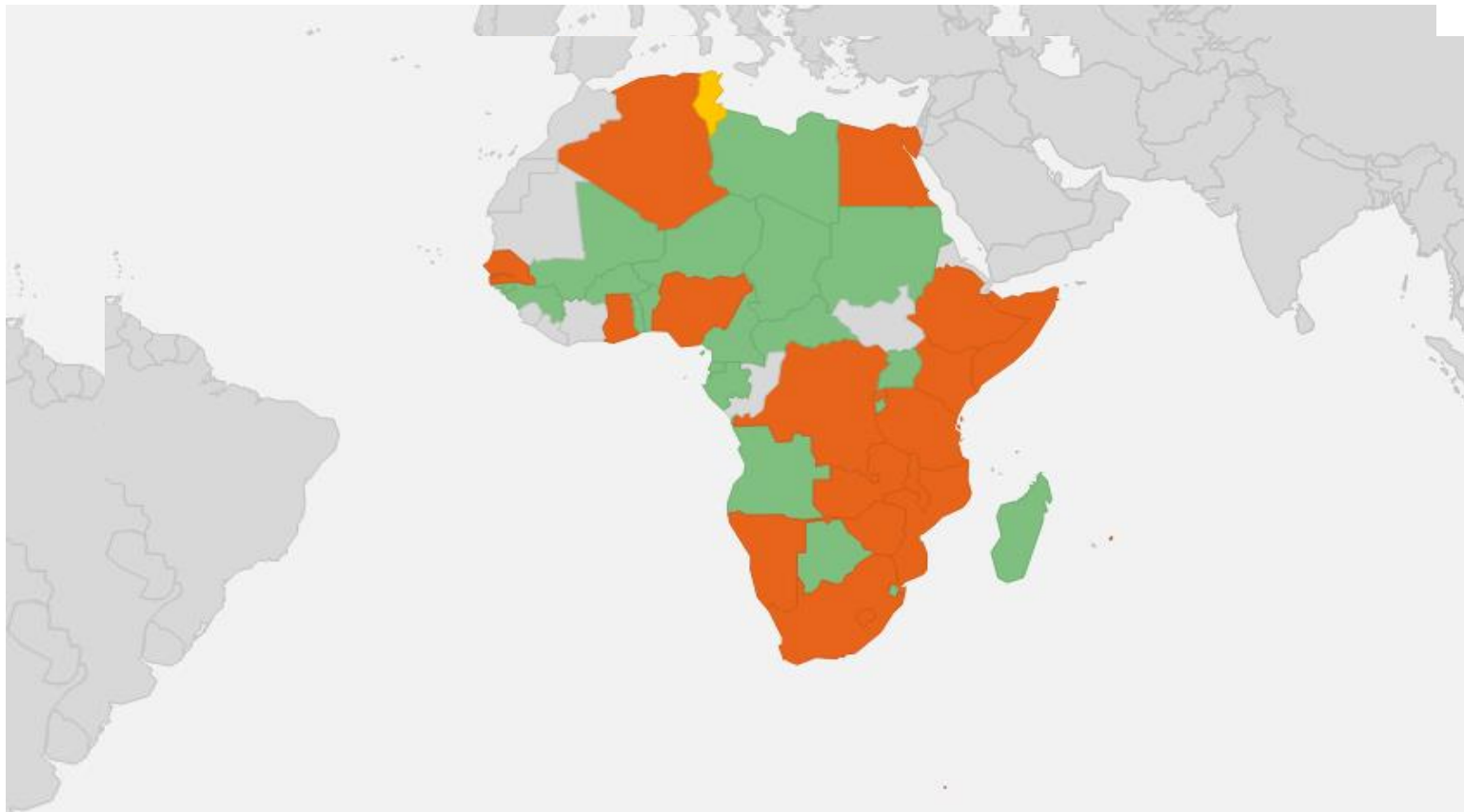
- Most QA systems in Africa are borrowed either from USA or Europe.
- Majority of QAAs in Africa are dependent on government funding.
- Most QAAs have programme accreditation and institutional quality audit as the main mechanisms of QA.
- Currently 28 countries out of 54 countries in Africa have established QAAs.
- Of the remaining 26, half are in the process of establishing QAAs. In these QAAs the Ministries responsible for HE usually provide oversight on its quality.



Regional QA Bodies and Networks

- A number of regional QA bodies have been established - to **harmonise QA systems** in the region - Examples:
 - **East Africa:** The Inter-University Council of East Africa (**IUCEA**, under EAC). , and East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN).
 - **Southern Africa:** Southern Africa Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), Association of Southern Africa Universities (SARUA) - under the auspices of (Souther Africa Development Corporation (SADC).
 - **West Africa:** Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'enseignement superieur (CAMES),
 - **North Africa:** Association of Arab Universities (AArU).
 - **African Continent:** Association of African Universities (AAU), African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN).
- IUCEA, CAMES, SADC have developed and documented standards and guidelines for QA used or being benchmarked by individual countries in the region .





<https://haqaa.aau.org/activities/mapping-report/> (Goran)

Red: Countries with QAA and have Standards and guidelines for IQA

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

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

3. Why Harmonised QA System in Africa?

- **Rapid growth of HEIs & graduates** and hence - focus on employability – quality assurance central topic in HE.
- **Diverse systems of HE** – issue of recognition of degrees – constrains academic integration & student mobility.
- Increased **attention** given to **quality & quality assurance** in HE.
- Growing realisation globally for the **need for harmonised HE systems** to facilitate **mobility** of trained people with accredited qualifications.
- **AU vision** of an integrated Africa requires harmonised education system – hence **intra-Africa mobility & skills portability**.
- **Continental Strategy for Africa** (CESA) recognises that “harmonised education & training systems are essential for realisation of intra-Africa mobility and academic integration through regional integration and cooperation.



- The AU **Agenda 2063** – “the Africa We Want” - has called for harmonisation and strengthening of quality of HE in Africa – ***make it locally relevant*** and ***globally competitive***.
- ***Africa’s Heads of States and Governments*** have expressed their ***commitment*** to setting up a mechanism for harmonization of quality assurance processes and mechanisms – ensure comparable HE.
- ***AUC is therefore promoting harmonisation*** of QA in HE in Africa in collaboration with AAU with support from EU and stakeholders in Europe.
- **Note:** Harmonisation:
 - Does not mean uniform system for each country.
 - Means shared viewed on quality, criteria, and standards in an equivalent way.
 - Is the basis for continental QA Framework
- Hence the HAQAA Initiative and the development of the **ASG-QA**



The HAQAA Initiative

- The AU and the European have come together to support HE sector in Africa focussing on harmonisation, quality and accreditation with special attention to ***regional collaboration and harmonisation in QA*** – The Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative (**HAQAA**).
- The general ***objectives*** of HAQAA is
 - Contribute and support the harmonisation of HE programmes,
 - Creation of a revitalised, distinctive, and globally competitive education space through intra-African collaboration.
- One of the primary activities is to develop African Standards and Guidelines (ASG-QA) in quality assurance in HE



4. The ASG-QA

- AUC Initiated development of ***Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework*** (PAQAF) to provide a continental platform for enhancing quality in HE.
- ***African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*** in Higher Education (ASG-QA) is one of the instruments for implementing PAQAF.
- ASG-QA can ensure that ***qualifications*** from HEIs ***are consistent with programme requirements***, institutional missions and objectives.



What are ASG-QA?

They are:

- ***Set of standards*** and guidelines for ***internal and external*** QA in HE in Africa.
- ***Standards stated as common minimum*** standards or requirements.
- ***Guidelines*** are stated in ***more specific terms*** to allow for collection of evidence in support of the status of quality at HEIs and QAAs.
- ***Benchmarked*** with existing standards and guidelines, but contextualised
- ***Not prescriptive*** – mechanism for quality enhancement in African HEIs and QAAs.
- ***Not exhaustive*** – Can be adapted to suit context.
- Examples ***of best practice***.
- Are ***broad*** enough to allow for diversity, yet ***safeguarding comparability***.



Purpose of ASG-QA

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

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



Principles and Methodologies

Principles

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

Methodologies

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

Drafting Team / Technical Working Team

- Drafted by a Technical Working Group (TWG of HAQAA)
 - Eastern, Western, Southern, Northern Africa, and Central Africa.
 - QA Agency for French speaking Belgium QA in HE (ENQA) – Coordination - Benchmarking.
 - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) - Benchmarking
 - Advisory Board of HAAQA Initiative (AU) - Provides regular advisory support.
- Language representation - all 4 languages – English, French, Portuguese, Arabic



Drafting Process

- The ASG are generally based on common principles of QA.
- Based on existing standards and guidelines of HE already in use in African countries.
- **Mapping Matrix** for existing standards and guidelines in Quality Assurance of African Countries showed very high level of similarities)
 - Half of the 54 African countries have QAAs - over 90% similarities in IQA Standards. Of the remaining half, half are in development stages.
 - Regional QA bodies and networks have been developed or being developed-
 - East Africa (IUCEA), South Africa (SADC), North Africa (AArU), West Africa (CAMES).
- **Benchmarked:**
 - Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
 - Existing international, standards and guidelines, e.g. INQAAHE,



Consultation of Stakeholders

The ASG-QA – still a Draft - but feedback received from:

- Advisory Board in **May 2017** Accra Ghana.
- Vice Chancellors - presented at the 14th AAU General Conference 5-8 **June 2017** in Accra, Ghana
- Additional feedback - electronic consultations - made between **July and August 2017** (HEIs, National QAAs, Ministries of Education
- Presented at the 9th International Conference and Workshops on Quality Assurance In Higher Education In Africa (AAU), Accra Ghana (18-22 **September 2017**).
- Draft translated into ***French, Portuguese, and Arabic.***
- The Final Stakeholder Consultation - Final Consultative Workshop (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (16-17 **November, 2017**) –



Scope

- ASG-QA Will apply to all types of HEIs in Africa, irrespective of mode of delivery and QAA.
- ASG-QA should be applied taking into account existing standards and guidelines of existing QAAs and qualification frameworks (QFs) and credit accumulation and transfer systems (CATS).

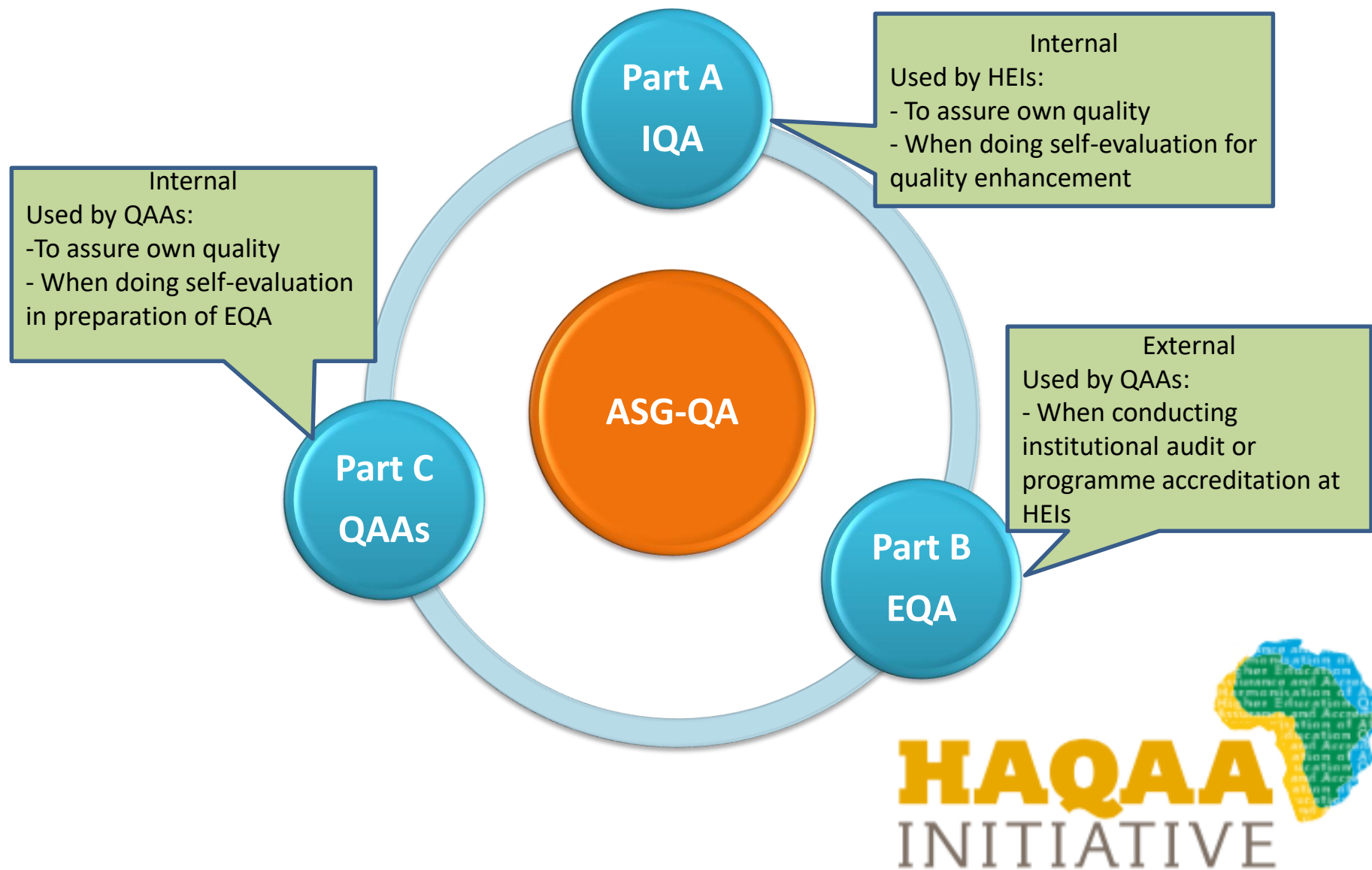
ASG-QA Presented in Parts: 3 Parts

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

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



Fig.1: Inter-linkage



Part A - IQA

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

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



Part B: EQA

Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance - Cover:

1. Objectives of EQA and Consideration for IQA
2. Designing External Quality Assurance Mechanisms Fit-for-Purpose
3. Implementation Processes of EQA
4. Independence of Evaluation
5. Decision and Reporting of EQA Outcomes
6. Periodic Review of Institutions and Programmes
7. Complaints and Appeals

Example of Part B: EQA



Part C: QAAs

Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance of QAAs – Cover:

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

Challenges Faced During Drafting Process

- ODL – Stand alone or Incorporate into IQA (HEIs) – finally incorporated into IQA
- The number of standards – Too many or too few
- Guidelines - level of details
- Translation challenges – words mean different things in different languages
- Gender or / Inclusiveness
- Independence / autonomy of QAA.
- Difference between Part B External Quality Assurance (EQA), and Part B,

Lessons Learned

- Consultation is critical for accountability and acceptability at all stages for acceptability.
- Must allow for diversity of approaches and innovation.
- Inclusion of students as the Panel of experts.
- External Review of QAAs was highly welcome.



What Next?

- a) TWG to address the Feedback received from the Final Consultation Workshop in form Universities, QAAs, and students is required from this workshop for improvement.
- b) ASG-QA will be submitted to AUC for consideration for adoption
- c) TWG is in the process of developing a model for external review of QAAs based on ASG-QA, to cover the following elements:
 - Protocol for reviews
 - Nomination and appointment of panels of experts
 - Self-assessment by QAAs
 - External review by Panels of Peers through site visit
- d) AU – to establish a Coordinating Body.



Thank you and God bless.

