



# Report on the dissemination Projects of HAQAA2



## Part A

**Report: The Dissemination Projects of HAQAA2 in anglophone and lusophone countries** written by Prof. Kethamonie Naidoo



## Part B

**Report: The Dissemination Projects Of HAQAA2 in francophone countries** written by Mr. Emile Zambo Assembe

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# Report on the Dissemination Projects of HAQAA2

## Part A:

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And Lusophone Countries** By Prof. Kethamonie Naidoo

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## Executive Summary

There were 14 projects funded that were aimed at disseminating the knowledge and skills on quality assurance (QA) in higher education gained during the HAQAA training program more widely in the countries of the participants. A brief overview of the diverse projects from Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia are provided in this report. It is important upon conclusion of such a continental capacity development initiative to consider whether the project has achieved its aims. By having each project coordinator reflect on the completed project in a final report and an interview, it was possible to determine whether the objectives set for each project were achieved. The coordinators provided information on the outcomes achieved against the objectives set, the organisation of the intervention, the challenges experienced and manner in which the risks were managed, the sustainability considerations and their recommendations for future such projects.

The main target group for the majority of the projects was the quality managers in the higher education institutions (HEIs) but many also included other stakeholders such as members of the regulatory bodies, executive management members of the HEIs and students. The most common focus was on the African Standards and Guidelines (ASGs) and other topics included were the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), the Pan African Quality Assurance Framework (PAQAF) and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA). Many projects included a focus on the tools and templates used for external and internal quality assurance.

Countries are at different levels of maturity in terms of their regulatory frameworks, infrastructure and implementation of quality assurance. The COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainty during the planning phase of the project and the six-month window period for the completion of the projects was reported to be too tight.

The HAQAA Initiative has had a significant impact on building the capacity of QA professionals and the dissemination has increased the reach to some institutions. However, it is evident that there is a need for more such training, as well as more in-depth training on specific aspects for those already trained.

## 1. Introduction

The Harmonization of Quality Assurance in Africa (HAQAA) project is a joint initiative between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Union Commission (EUC) to harmonize quality assurance across Africa. It is supported by the German agency, DAAD and OBREAL Global. The project commenced in 2018 and after a successful HAQAA1 phase that focused on external quality assurance (EQA), it was followed by a HAQAA2 phase in 2021 that focused on internal quality assurance (IQA). In January 2022, the HAQAA Dissemination and Capacity Building Project was launched with a call to the graduates of the HAQAA1 and HAQAA2 training courses for project proposals that were related to the broader capacity development on quality assurance (QA). Of the 37 project proposals submitted, 14 projects were selected for receipt of a maximum grant of 12 000 euros and the projects had to be completed within six months.

The HAQAA dissemination project has been an ambitious collaboration that involved many countries across the African continent.

This report provides an overview of the five projects conducted in anglophone countries and the one conducted in a lusophone country. They are the projects from Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia and Mozambique. The projects and contexts in which they were undertaken are diverse and they provide a broad array of insights. A reflection at this point will be useful in informing further HAQAA projects or similar future projects.

In compiling the report, the proposals and the final reports submitted for the projects were considered. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the project coordinators. The report focuses on the objectives, some of the highlights, insights, and aspects of the project management including challenges encountered and good practices that emerged as well as the outcomes achieved.

## 2. Overview of the dissemination projects

### 2.1 Egypt

#### 2.1.1 Context

There are approximately 60 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Egypt with a similar number of public and private universities. A new kind of institution that has emerged is a national public private partnership and this has been a good model for high technology or high demand qualifications, such as medical programmes following the COVID-19 pandemic. Tuition fees are low in public universities but not in private or national universities and the institutions vary in enrolments from between 1200 to 500 000 students. The language of instruction in all universities is either Arabic, English, or French based on the programs but Arabic is used for administration and communication between the Ministry of Higher Education and the universities.

All HEIs are registered by the Ministry of Higher Education in terms of the Higher Education Act. After the first cohort of graduates is produced, the institutions could apply to the quality assurance agency, NAQAA to have

their qualifications accredited. There is a set of regulations requiring HEIs to apply for QA accreditation, but there is no enforcement or penalty for those who do not apply.

### 2.1.2 Background

The project was entitled *ASG DASPA: Dissemination for Arabic Speaking Academics* and its aim was to build the capacity of the staff members working in the QA units at some universities in Egypt by training the QA members on the ASGs for QA, the HAQAA project, the AQRM that is a tool under the PAQAF and CESA. Although there has been a focus on QA by HEIs in the country, the use of continental standards was not known. The view was that by providing knowledge of the outcomes of the HAQAA projects in the Arabic language in an interactive environment of training would advance an understanding of the academic staff members on QA and the ASGs, thereby achieving a positive impact on building or strengthening a quality culture in their institutions.

There were 135 mainly female staff members who worked in the QA units of the universities who participated in the training. The proposal was submitted by the Al-Azhar University and the project coordinator was Professor Amany El-Sharif. Although the ASGs are published in Arabic on the HAQAA website, this was insufficient to adequately acquaint the Arabic speaking QA staff members on the ASGs and its purposes. The workshops were intended to address the need for face-to-face training using an interactive approach to disseminate and promote the adoption of the ASGs by academics and QA units more effectively.

### 2.1.3 Objectives

Three objectives were set for these workshops. They were to:

- I. Support the dissemination, promotion, and utilisation of the outcomes of the HAQAA activities by Arabic speaking academic staff members
- II. Disseminate the ASG-QA as a tool for institutional self-assessment/preparing for accreditation
- III. Build quality cultures in HEIs through the training of staff members from the QA units

### 2.1.4 Organisation

There were a number of activities that needed to be completed prior to the workshops. Among them were the designing of the training materials in Arabic which involved translation services; to establish a learning management system (LMS) and then to upload the designed training material onto the LMS; to visit the different universities to invite them to the workshops; to publish certificates of participations with the logos of the HAQAA Initiative' strategic partners and coordinators; and to assign staff members to the organisational activities such as translation, project logistics, communications, and graphic content development of training materials.

The people involved in the organisational tasks included the project coordinator, information technology personnel, translators, administration staff and an international QA expert who reviewed the material.

#### 2.1.5 Risk management

The proposal was submitted during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic which prohibited physical training events. The primary concern therefore was whether face- to -face physical workshops would be permissible. This risk was mitigated by the preparations made to be ready to shift to an on-line mode at short notice. Fortunately, this was not necessary as the restrictions were lifted by the time of the workshops and the on-line platform was made available to participants who were unable to physically attend the workshops.

#### 2.1.6 Challenges

There was limited time for the project to be implemented after the grant had been awarded and the activities had to be completed within six months. Many of the complex activities had to be completed prior to commencement of the workshops, such converting the translated materials into training materials and setting up a learning management system (LMS). This was further complicated by the timing of the project as the workshops were to take place during the period of final examinations and the summer vacation, and this affected the number of participants available to participate in the face-to-face engagements, although the number of participants exceeded the target participation rate.

Some staff members reported having a busy work schedule at this time of the year and they could not attend the physical event which would have been preferable but were able to join the training online.

Another challenge was that the budget had been underestimated. Translation services and translation software, print outs, taxes and meals during training had to be covered for participants from distant cities within the budget limit.

#### 2.1.7 Sustainability

The availability of the customised training modules in Arabic on the locally designed LMS ensured sustainability of the dissemination by increasing the accessibility of the programme and materials to current participants and future academic and administrative staff members in the QA units who would need to understand and use the ASGs. Further, the link of the LMS of this project to HAQAA website enhanced the visibility and sustainable usage of the material. Another sustainability measure was to upload training sessions onto the YouTube channel.

#### 2.1.8 Outcomes

An important outcome was that workshop participants acquired a common language and frame of reference for IQA based on the ASGs, as well as a better understanding of the purpose of the HAQAA Initiative and its

capacity development initiatives. Another significant outcome was the design and production of training material in Arabic developed for the academic staff. This development also enabled customisation of the of the resource material to the Egyptian context. The establishment of an LMS for resources of the HAQAA published tools in Arabic is an important outcome as this will enhance sustainability of the utilisation of the resources. The videos of the materials were also available in Arabic. A further outcome was the creation of a database for Arabic speaking academics in the field of QA.

Harmonisation of quality assurance across Africa requires inclusivity of all languages so this project has contributed to this goal of HAQAA by producing the documentation and training material in the Arabic language in an easily accessible format that could be used by other Arabic speaking university staff members across the continent.

### 2.1.9 Recommendations

The HAQAA Initiative activities need to be inclusive for all language groups across Africa, viz., English, French, Portuguese and Arabic. Further, there should be more time allocated for the projects so that there is sufficient time to reach more university staff members with such training.

## 2.2 Kenya

### 2.2.1 Context

The HAQAA dissemination project in Kenya was managed by the Commission for University Education (CUE) which is the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Kenya. The CUE regulates the 77 universities in the country, the majority being public and a few private. There is a broad distribution of institutions with a university in every region and also a specialized University of Defense. The enrolments in the large universities range from 30 000 – 70 000 students and there are also some smaller HEIs. From 2012, all universities had to be accredited and then audited after five years. New programmes also needed to be accredited.

### 2.2.2 Project Background

The dissemination project in Kenya was to build the capacity of members of the CUE and the QA directors from higher education institutions (HEIs). The aim was to develop and apply quality assurance tools for accreditation and the monitor open, distance and e-learning (ODEL) centers and academic programs in universities. The CUE had previously developed a self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) for ODEL institutions and programs but the self-assessment reports (SARs) submitted by the universities indicated a need for improved self-assessment and reporting skills. There was an indication that the existing universities' standards and guidelines (2014) for ODEL for HEIs that had been developed were not being effectively utilized. Therefore, one of the aims of this project was to identify the reasons for the sub-optimal application of the previously developed SAQ and t19o promote the alignment of a revised instrument to the ASG-QA and the AQRM as tools for self-assessment and accreditation of ODEL academic programs and institutions.

The project entailed workshops for the CUE staff members to develop and revise the evaluation and self-assessment tools for the accreditation and monitoring of ODeL programs and HEIs. Thereafter a capacity development workshop was conducted for the quality assurance directors from HEIs in Kenya. The aim was to improve the quality of the self-assessment reporting by HEIs and to harmonize the evaluation and self-assessment tools for ODeL by aligning them with the ASG-QA and the AQRM. This would also then lead to the promotion of the ASG-QA and the AQRM and their incorporation into the tools for EQA and IQA in Kenya.

### 2.2.3 Objectives

Four specific objectives were set for this project, viz. to:

- I. Develop evaluation tools for the accreditation of ODeL academic programs and institutions that were aligned to the ASG-QA and the AQRM;
- II. Review the SAQ for ODeL academic programs and institutions, and to align them to the ASG-QA and the AQRM;
- III. Develop an evaluation tool for the self-assessment report for ODeL academic programs and institutions for use by peer reviewers/experts; and
- IV. Train directors of QA from the HEIs on the preparation of the SARs and the accreditation of ODeL academic programs and institutions

### 2.2.4 Organisation

The project coordinator was Dr Beatrice Odera- Kwach and a project team was constituted to include the key role-players from the CUE such as the Heads of Planning, Accreditation and Libraries. Three activities that took place were the sensitization meetings for the staff members from the CUE, working retreats for the CUE staff members and the participation of five experts for the development of evaluation and self-assessment tools.

The systematic process undertaken to identify that the SAQ improvements needed is noteworthy. Of the 77 HEIs that should have submitted their reports, 37 institutions did so, and some reports had to be returned to the institutions for improvement. An in-depth analysis of six reports and physical verification of the practices at the institutions indicated that the reporting was inaccurate, and the conclusion was that one of the reasons for this was that the items in the SAQ were unclear and that improvements to the instrument were needed. The analysis revealed gaps in the phrasing and understanding of the content, especially in the areas of technology infrastructure and media, student and staff support, and assessment. In addition, there were gaps in understanding the principles and practices of self-assessment. The gap analysis report was reviewed by experts in the various thematic areas and modifications were suggested in specific areas of the SAQ, and it was aligned to the ASG-QA and the AQRM. The revised SAQ has been internally approved by the CUE and will be gazetted soon.

The major event was a capacity development workshop for the directors of QA from the HEIs and CUE staff members. A total of 37 people participated in the capacity development workshop on the preparation of the SARs and the accreditation of ODeL academic programs and institutions. This involved 29 directors of QA, Registrars, peer experts and six CUE staff members. The workshop included a discussion on the HAQAA initiative, ODeL standards in the university standards and guidelines (2014), and evaluation criteria for ODeL institutions and centres. Participants shared their experiences in offering ODeL programs and the engagement between the CUE staff members and the HEIs on the accreditation of ODeL institutions and academic programs enhanced the training.

An evaluation tool for use by peer reviewers and experts during the accreditation of ODeL institutions and academic programs was also developed and this was thereafter validated by the peer reviewers. Training on the use of this evaluation instrument will need to be done for the peer evaluators and the CUE staff members.

### 2.2.5 Risk Management

Some of the risks anticipated were that the budget could be insufficient as the costs of the conference facilities at the time of the workshops were uncertain, that there could be conflicting activities between the CUE and HEI's schedules that could affect the planned project activities. Further, if there was a delay in the development of the tools, it could result in a delay of the training workshop. The way these risks were mitigated included having a budget plan, incorporating the project activities into the CUE workplan during the project, and closely monitoring the costs and evaluating the progress on the development of the tools.

### 2.2.6 Challenges

Despite the steps taken to mitigate the identified potential risks, some of the project activities conflicted with the activities in CUE's annual workplan and this led to postponements and delays in the implementation of activities as set out in the project timelines. Limitations in funding of the CUE led to a revision of the project activities and a reduction in the number of QA staff members and HEI staff members who were trained in ODeL. The anticipated additional funding from the CUE that was to supplement the grant was not received due to budgetary constraints of the CUE due to the reprioritization of funding by government for Covid related expenses. There was a high demand for attendance of the workshop by the QA directors who were not accommodated.

### 2.2.7 Sustainability

The CUE took the two documents produced from the project through its internal approval system which enhanced ownership and commitment for implementation. There is a plan to have an annual QA forum on ODeL to increase dialogue on QA for ODeL that would involve the CUE staff members and the directors of QA at the HEI's. The aim is for the institutionalization of ODeL and a regular review of the developed quality assurance tools in the higher education sector. The plan is also to have the SAQ automated and the CUE will incorporate the HAQAA activities into its core activities to monitor developments in QA and to harmonize its evaluation tools for ODeL.

### 2.2.8 Outcomes

There are several achievements reported from the project. The project team analyzed the use of the SAQ for the universities which entailed a content analysis of the responses submitted by the universities in their SARs and the criteria set for the SAQ tool and revised them. The revised SAR document was renamed Guidelines for Preparing a Self-Assessment Report for an ODeL Centre in Kenya. It is awaiting the internal approval by the CUE before it can be implemented.

The project team developed a training program for the preparation of the SARs and accreditation for ODeL academic programs and institutions, and invited directors of ODeL from HEIs for the training. Due to budgetary constraints, only 37 of the 77 directors were trained. They are expected to have a better common understanding of the Kenyan universities' standards and guidelines and their nexus with regional and continental standards such as the ASG-QA and AQRM as tools for harmonized QA. This means an increase in the pool of trained QA peers who would be able to cascade the understandings gained to universities and to serve as peer evaluators and reviewers for the QAA. The development of an evaluation tool for the accreditation of ODeL institutions was another significant achievement. Further, the IQA and EQA mechanisms for HEIs in Kenya on ODeL is likely to improve because of this project. In addition, a holistic approach to QA and accreditation of ODeL programs and institutions in Kenya that is aligned to the AQRM has been made possible, and there is a wider appreciation and acceptance of ODeL in Kenya.

The project has been completed within a realigned budget and scope after the anticipated additional funding from the CUE was not received. The overall objective of strengthening the capacity of the CUE and HEIs in Kenya for enhanced quality of ODeL was achieved.

### 2.2.9 Recommendations

The analysis of the SARs has proved to be a useful method to identify the capacity development needs of HEIs, to critically examine and revise the tools and to provide clarity where necessary with respect to institutional and program accreditation for ODeL. The project activities had already been mainstreamed into the institutional predetermined work plans and this facilitated the rollout of the project. This is a good practice model that will be adopted for future such projects. It is also recommended that there should be more frequent forums on ODeL.

## 2.3 Mauritius

### 2.3.1 Context

Higher education in Mauritius is governed by the Higher Education Act (HEA), the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has oversight responsibility for higher education, and the Quality Assurance Association (QAA) is responsible for quality assurance. There is also the Mauritian Qualifications Authority (MQA) that manages the National Qualifications Framework. The HEC and QAA are fairly new structures, emanating from the former Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) of 1988, following the promulgation of the HEA in 2017 and

therefore the management of quality assurance at a national level is in a transition phase. HEIs are audited about every five years and the programmes need to be accredited.

There are four public universities, each governed by its own Act as well as private institutions and specialized universities, such as the Academy of Design and Innovation. At a national level, Mauritius is focused on strengthening the quality assurance system of its higher education sector.

### 2.3.2 Background

The dissemination project proposed by Mauritius was a five-day capacity development workshop entitled *Capacity Building for a Shared Understanding of IQA Systems Based on the ASG-QA in Mauritian HEIs*. A joint project proposal was developed by three public universities for the capacity-building activity on IQA and EQA for stakeholders operating at different levels and functions in the HEIs in Mauritius. The joint submission was made by the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM), Open University of Mauritius (OUM) and the University of Mauritius (UOM). The Head of Quality of the Université des Mascareignes (UDM) and the Head of Quality Assurance of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) were also invited to provide their inputs to the project proposal.

The topic selected for the workshop addressed the common need expressed by the three institutions to probe further the selected ASG-QA standards and for participants to acquire a deeper understanding of the standards. The view was that enhanced training is essential to build the skills and knowledge necessary to develop a robust IQA system that is aligned with the EQA requirements for Mauritius.

### 2.3.3 Objectives

The workshop aimed to develop a shared understanding of the ASGs and their relationship to the EQA standards of Mauritius. The ASG's would assist universities streamline the standards they use for IQA and to align these to the EQA requirements and the ASGs, thereby promoting the continuous improvement of the IQA systems of universities.

The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- I. Guide participants to apply the available standards and guidelines effectively at national and regional levels
- II. Strengthen the assessment practices of stakeholders of their quality through regular internal quality audits/self-assessments
- III. Promote quality improvement and enhancement through external peer reviews, continuous monitoring of quality and the sharing of good practices
- IV. Support the achievement of quality standards at academic and administrative levels through continuous training of relevant staff members in order to promote a quality culture within institutions

#### 2.3.4 Organisation

Mr Devarajen Venethethan, Head of Quality Assurance of the University of Technology was the project coordinator and the chairperson of the project committee. The project committee met several times through face-to-face and online meetings to finalize the arrangements and program for the workshop.

A conference website constructed by UTM provided easy access to information about the event. The venue selected was in the centre of the island, and therefore easily accessible to all participants so they could travel daily, and accommodation costs were saved. An international QA specialist was selected as the resource person to facilitate the workshop.

The project received high prominence at national level with the opening ceremony addressed by the Minister of Education and other dignitaries, and news of this training was covered on national television.

The workshop program commenced with an overview of the QA terrain in higher education, with particular emphasis on the continental initiatives through the HAQAA Initiative and the EQA context of Mauritius. The main focus of the workshop was on strengthening the IQA system and the integrated quality management system (IQMS) of universities. This included a discussion of commonly used terminology. Each of the first four days of the workshop focused on one or more of the ASG 7 – 12 standards and guidelines and included an interactive group session on the practical application of the standard/s and guidelines discussed. At the beginning of the workshop, groups were assigned a task to create a poster that reinforced the aspects covered in the workshop. The group posters were presented on the fifth day of the workshop.

The profile of the academic and administrative staff members from the six participating public HEIs and the six private universities was stipulated. They had to be directly involved in leading and managing the IQA and EQA audits at the institution, be responsible for or be the QA representative of Departments/Schools and provide input to the QA Unit for the Self-Evaluation Report (SER.) In addition, one student representative was invited from each public institution to provide the student perspective on quality assurance in higher education institutions. More students would have been invited had the budget permitted this.

The regulators, i.e., the HEC, QAA and MQA were invited to participate in the five-day conference as they were considered important stakeholders.

#### 2.3.5 Risk management

The COVID -19 pandemic restrictions were in place when the project proposal was formulated. This made the plan to bring an international facilitator and many participants to a physical meeting a risk, so the contingency arrangement was to have an online conference. Fortunately, the restrictions were lifted prior to the workshop and a physical event was held.

#### 2.3.6 Challenges

A serious challenge was the financing of the workshop. All payments had to be made upfront, but OBREAL Global provided 80% of the budget so obtaining the remaining 20% prior to the event was huge challenge

and a source of anxiety. The UTM finally provided the required amount in due time. Another budget related challenge was that only six students could be invited from the public universities as there was insufficient money to invite more students.

The website sub-project had not been budgeted for but was sponsored by the UTM.

### 2.3.7 Sustainability

The website will remain as a testimony to this project and the resources made available and discussed during the workshop will be available to the public.

During the closing session of the workshop, the idea was mooted for a QA forum. It is commendable that the Higher Education Quality Society (HEQAS) has already been established and membership is open to officers/students of higher education institutions, post-secondary education and vocational/training institutions in Mauritius that have an interest in QA. It is also noteworthy that a member of the QAA is an office bearer of the society indicating the support of the regulator and its support of this QA community initiative.

### 2.3.8 Outcomes

The outcomes for the workshop were met in that participants indicated their greater understanding of IQA, EQA and the ASGs. A tool for programme review was provided that would improve the quality of the evidence-based self-evaluation reports, if effectively used.

At the end of the workshop, the participants were requested to complete an online feedback form. The feedback was anonymous, and participants' responses were positive. Participants indicated that they found the sessions to be practical and instructive. The duration of the conference was found to be appropriate, and participants indicated looking forward to follow-up events and wider dissemination. To facilitate this process a WhatsApp group named the QA Practitioner's Forum was set up and the participants of the workshop were invited to join to share their concerns and queries on QA matters and get responses from other participants.

### 2.3.8 Recommendations

Participants recommended that more regular workshops be held. There was also a need expressed for practical examples of the application of the standards in a review.

## 2.4 Mozambique

### 2.4.1 Context

There are approximately 56 HEIs in Mozambique consisting of both public and private institutions, and with many of the universities existing for less than 20 years. For example, the Pedagogic University was restructured into five new universities. Most universities offer undergraduate degrees, with only a few that

offer postgraduate qualifications at the Master's and Doctoral levels. There is strong collaboration between the national quality assurance agency, CNAQ and the universities, with every university having a QA unit.

Prior to an external quality review, there is a self-assessment commission (SAC) set up within the university to conduct an internal quality review.

### 2.4.2 Background

The title of the dissemination project of Mozambique was *Building the Culture of Quality and the QA system in Universities*. The project was a joint submission by the Universidade Rovuma and the Universidade Licungo, and the partner institution was CNAQ. The project coordinators were Dulce João Nunes Langa and Geraldo Vernijo Deixa.

Managers of quality departments from universities from all regions of the country were invited. There was a good response to the workshop invitation and approximately 200 people attended the event either in person or online. Participants included members of project teams, QA managers, members of the National Council for Evaluation, quality course directors and self-evaluation committee members as well as HEI managers who showed an interest in participating in the workshops.

### 2.4.3 Organization

The project was organized by a small project team and consisted of various capacity development activities. Following the launch of the project, a capacity building workshop was held for QA managers. The intention was to include QA managers from as many universities as possible and this was achieved by having the workshop open to participants in face-to-face and online modes. Thereafter, the course directors and members of the self-assessment teams of the two universities that submitted the proposal were trained and the training included the following four aspects:

- African Quality Rating Mechanisms for Institutional Improvement
- Political Framework - Towards a Harmonized Higher Education Area on the African Continent
- Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions
- Evaluation as an Integral Part of Quality Assurance

A seminar was held following the training workshops to close the project. This activity provided an opportunity for the project team members to meet and critically analyse the management and outcomes of the project.

### 2.4.4 Risk Management

The biggest risk was the insufficiency of funds for travel and a subsistence allowance for those having to monitor universities' readiness for the external review, following the training.

#### 2.4.6 Challenges

Organising the project with members of the project team working at a distance was difficult at times as there were different tasks to be assigned and coordinated, such as procurement, writing reports and information technology responsibilities. There was a small team set up at each participating university to manage the finances and reporting. However, it was not possible to include all the national HEIs in the project's dissemination and capacity building event.

Further, the delays in receiving the funds due to bureaucratic errors were the cause of anxiety. The universities and CNAQ provided the additional necessary funding and marketing of the events.

#### 2.4.7 Sustainability

The team is willing and would like to continue the training both in their universities and other HEIs as it is relevant to further boost the culture of quality within the institutions. An idea is to establish regional QA networks in order to involve more universities. The point was made that creating a culture of quality takes time and therefore expanding the training and encouraging collaboration among universities, e.g., on curriculum design would strengthen the quality culture. There is also the idea of requesting the QA managers who were trained to replicate the training in their own university and/or other universities.

Many people have expressed interest in having a formal qualification in quality assurance and therefore the possibility of designing a postgraduate diploma or a Master's programme on quality assurance, and even some short courses is being explored.

#### 2.4.8 Outcomes

This was a high-profile national QA project which was attended by the President of the national quality assurance body (CNAQ) in Mozambique who praised the initiative. It was a successful project that has had a positive impact as most of the national higher education institutions in the country participated in the training workshops. The quality managers had the opportunity to share good practices, challenges and QA experiences with the group and a network of QA managers has been created through the project. Importantly, there has been a raising of awareness on quality issues as the training of different levels of the university management created a link between the executive management and the QA managers.

The project coordinators believe that the impact of the project has been far greater than reported because each manager who attended the training was required to replicate the training within their institutions. Following the workshops, the project coordinators are receiving invitations to train the quality managers from other universities who were not invited to or who did not attend the workshop.

#### 2.4.9 Recommendations

The one recommendation is to improve the funding arrangements so that there are no delays in the receipt of the funds to avoid this adversely affecting the progress of the project.

### 2.5 Uganda

#### 2.5.1 Context

There are about 32 HEIs which include both public and private institutions, and chartered and unchartered HEIs distributed across the regions. The Ministry of Education and Sports oversees education at all levels and determines the institutional charter status. The Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is responsible for accrediting all HEIs and programmes at the end of every cycle which could range from five to seven years. HEIs are required to do a stakeholder engagement and consultation with professional bodies during program development or program review. Evidence of this activity is a requirement for accreditation.

The Uganda University Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) is a registered non-profit organisation for QA managers and practitioners which organises capacity development workshops and offers advice and support. Members meet physically three to four times a year and actively interact through a Whats App group and a website. Members of the UUQAF are also members of the regional forum, the East African Quality Assurance.

#### 2.5.2 Background

Since 2017 members of the Uganda Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) have participated in HAQAA Initiative. The dissemination project planned was to disseminate the learnings to other QA managers in the country. The topics for dissemination included the ASG-QA, the AQRM and the HAQAA Initiative. The project also included a benchmarking activity and policy dialogue and aimed at expanding the understanding and application of the continental QA systems and standards across the Ugandan higher education sector. The intention was to have the trained QA managers align their own standards and guidelines used at their universities to the continental ASGs. The project was led by Dr Richard Ouma, the Higher Education Officer at the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and Ms Elizabeth Birabwa from the Busitema University.

#### 2.5.3 Objectives

The objectives of the QA training workshops with the QA managers were to:

- I. Increase their awareness, understanding, and appreciation of IQA systems, ASG-QA and the AQRM
- II. Enable them to develop relevant instruments for assessing IQA systems and procedures in terms of the AQRM
- III. Build their capacity to evaluate IQA systems and procedures in their HEIs and other HEIs in Uganda

IV. Empower them to design appropriate IQA policies and procedures for their HEIs

V. Enable them to benchmark their IQMS with that of Ndejje University that participated in the initial study that operationalised the AQRM

VI. Equip them with competencies to initiate and implement sustainable IQA systems, and develop institutional reports after reflecting on knowledge and skills gained from awareness training workshop and the benchmarking activities in HEIs in Uganda

#### 2.5.4 Organization

This training of the HAQAA2 dissemination projects was organized and funded by the Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF), in partnership with OBREAL GLOBAL, and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. It was conducted by both national and international QA experts who engaged the trainees in the national, regional (East African) and international (European Higher Education Area) QA frameworks. Two on-site awareness/sensitization training workshops were conducted and these were supplemented by an online workshop for monitoring purposes. The workshops consisted of presentations by experts, open discussions, sharing of experiences by participants and policy dialogue sessions in which the experts participated. The ASG-QA was comprehensively covered in the workshop, with a particular focus on IQA. The AQRM was also included in the training program as well as a policy dialogue on aligning national standards to continental standards. A benchmarking visit was undertaken to Ndejje University as part of the first three-day workshop. Further, a project evaluation tool was developed to assess the level of attainment of the learning outcomes. The participants were also required to develop institutional reports relating to the sensitisation workshop proceedings and the planned institutional action plan to align their institutional standards and guidelines to the ASGs.

During the monitoring workshop that was conducted online, participants' progress on their institutional reports and plans were discussed, and clarification, advice and support were provided.

#### 2.5.5 Risk Management

The organisers were aware that post the COVID-19 pandemic, universities in the country followed different academic calendars and therefore some members would not be able to attend on the set dates for the workshops. Another risk identified was that the attendance of the potential participants could be affected by universities not having sufficient funds to cover their travel costs.

#### 2.5.6 Challenges

The timing of the workshops in the last quarter presented the challenge of not all participants being available to attend. Therefore, participants who attended the first workshop did not necessarily attend the second one and instead sent other people in their places.

There is also a high turnover of QA staff members and so by the time of the last workshop, some members had moved to new positions both inside and outside of the institutions.

The way in which this challenge was addressed was to share the training material and videos on the Forum's website with new members and those who missed the training.

#### 2.5.7 Sustainability

Sustainability was ensured by having the workshop attended by the QA managers, academic registrars and lecturers to ensure continuity. The main aim was to share the knowledge gained with others in the institutions and this was achieved through the organization of faculty QA dissemination workshops, planning of IQA self-assessments based on the AQRM and implementation of the ASG-QA and the AQRM. Another plan was to increase awareness and sensitisation about QA through the Uganda Vice Chancellors Forum and for the QA departments in universities to work in close collaboration with the Vice Chancellors to ensure support for the activities.

#### 2.5.8 Outcomes

All workshop outcomes were achieved, although the last workshop had to be completed outside of the project timeframe due to financial constraints. In the institutional reports, participants demonstrated awareness and understanding of IQA systems, ASG-QA and the AQRM. They indicated that they would be reviewing the standards and guidelines used at their universities and aligning them to the ASGs. However, participants indicated that there were very few significant differences between the standards and guidelines they used and those stated in the ASGs. ASG standards 9, 10 and 13 were those from which most information was used to strengthen the Ugandan standards. They also reported feeling more confident to evaluate the IQA systems and procedures and to design appropriate IQA policies, as well as to benchmark their IQMS against that of Ndejje university.

#### 2.5.9 Recommendations

For Uganda, it would be easier to implement such projects in the first quarter of the year because the last quarter is extremely busy with examinations and graduations.

### 2.6 Zambia

#### 2.6.1 Context

There are approximately 62 registered universities in Zambia which includes nine public and 53 private universities.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the main regulator of HEIs in Zambia. It is responsible for the registration of HEIs as well as the registration and accreditation of learning programmes. However, the registration and accreditation of qualifications which come from these learning programmes is done by the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA).

The institutional capacity to offer programmes is checked by the HEA and there are also spot checks done to check conformity to standards. Institutions are graded into tiers based on their capacity to offer various levels of qualifications. For example, Tier 1 institutions would be permitted to offer doctoral degrees and would need to demonstrate that they have an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff. There are also a number of professional bodies that have legislative authority and oversight over professional qualifications offered by the universities for example the Nurses and Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ) and the Health Professionals Council of Zambia (HPCZ) are in charge of regulating health related programmes before the HEA considers the program for accreditation. This means that before an HEI can submit its health program for registration with HEA, HPCZ and or NMCZ will first have to approve that program, only then can an HEI send it to HEA for registration. EQA is a peer driven system.

### 2.6.2 Background

The dissemination project of Zambia comprised of a three-day workshop for staff members at various levels who are stakeholders in QA at the universities. The proposal was submitted by the University of Lusaka and the project coordinator was Mr Oscar Mwale, a participant of HAQAA2.

A total of 45 participants included QA officers, a CEO, vice-chancellors, deputy vice- chancellors, registrars and deputy registrars, deans, lecturers and five administrative staff from public and private universities. The ZAQA was invited to the workshop and would have participated but it was hosting a workshop during the same period. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Ms Sarah Lang from DAAD participated in the opening ceremony.

### 2.6.3 Objectives

The main aim of the workshop was to increase participants understanding of IQA and the objectives were to:

- I. Build capacity for QA evaluation, project management and program development
- II. Create a network of quality assurance officers to collaborate and share ideas
- III. Raise awareness about the HAQAA project and PAQAF
- IV. Contextualize quality assurance activities and functions to the Zambian higher education environment

### 2.6.4 Organization

A committee was established to plan and organize a three - day workshop. Tasks and responsibilities were distributed among the members, and they played an important role in planning the activities and implementing them. There was a large amount of work to be done prior to the workshop and this included the designing and preparation of materials such as invitation letters, certificates, banners, and customized folders. External facilitators were invited, presentations were developed, and the venue was prepared.

The sessions of the workshop included IQA, IQA evaluation, project management and program development.

### 2.6.5 Risk management

The main risk was the uncertainty about whether it would be possible to run a physical workshop due to the COVID- 19 restrictions. Fortunately, all restrictions were lifted by the time of the workshop.

### 2.6.6 Challenges

The volatility in the value of the Zambian kwacha had a negative effect on the financial management as its strengthening resulted in decreased funds for the project. This was exacerbated by the organizers not including the taxes to be paid in the budget submitted for the grant. It was fortunate that money had been set aside for contingency costs.

Another challenge was that the project had to be completed within a short space of time.

### 2.6.7 Sustainability

Although this was a single activity, the QA managers are using this network as a platform to raise issues that are affecting their institutions and they receive assistance from other institutions that have experience and expertise in these areas.

QA is a fairly new concept in the country and many of the QA managers have not been trained so this workshop covered a broad range of issues. The plan is to have more training on specific issues that are identified as needs by the institutions.

### 2.6.8 Outcomes

The participants' understanding of IQA increased and the University of Lusaka has been able to offer support to other universities. There has been increased collaboration between the departments of the universities with their quality assurance departments. The University of Lusaka has agreed to appoint a staff member from the HEA to teach on its Postgraduate Diploma in Quality Assurance program to include the perspective of the regulators. Overall, there has been an increased understanding of QA initiatives at the continental level and of PAQAF.

### 2.6.9 Recommendations

Better planning of the dates for future workshops would increase participation. In the case of this workshop, the colleagues from ZAQA and some colleagues from the universities could not attend because they needed to attend the workshop that was organized by ZAQA.

Capacity building projects such as this one should continue as trends in QA keep improving on a daily basis. QA personnel need to keep developing their knowledge and skills in institutional QA so the institutions are kept abreast with current processes, procedures and policies on the management of QA in HEIs.

### 3. Discussion of the projects

The six projects reported on are different from each other and are undertaken in diverse contexts but some themes that emerged are briefly discussed. Among the differences are the levels of QA maturity, the regulatory environments, voluntary and compulsory programme accreditation, qualification types, qualification awarding and non-awarding status, enrolment sizes, fee paying and free HEIs, and the mix in institutional types such as private and public HEIs, specialised universities and international institutions.

Despite the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, all projects were successful in that they were executed according to plan and achieved their purpose in disseminating the knowledge about the continental QA initiatives more broadly within their countries and HEIs. Fortunately, Covid restrictions relating to physical events were lifted by the time of the workshops and therefore the preferred mode of physical workshops which enhanced dissemination was possible. Although there were project teams set up, it was mainly due to the commitment and drive of the project coordinators who were graduates of the HAQAA Initiative and in some cases one or two of their colleagues who ensured that the projects were implemented and completed. This clearly demonstrated that these project coordinators had served as ambassadors for the HAQAA Initiative in their countries, which was one of the aims of the HAQAA Initiative. The universities to which these project coordinators belonged also played an important supportive role, such as providing additional funding and technical expertise to set up websites and an LMS system.

In some countries the events received national prominence and prestige. Examples of this were the attendance by ministers of education, vice-chancellors and directors of QAA's at opening ceremonies and even coverage of the event on national television. There was also participation of staff members of the higher education and quality assurance regulatory bodies as well as students which enhanced the discussions in the workshops. The main target group was the QA managers from institutions and the one common topic was training on the ASGs and to a lesser extent, on the AQRM. The virtual participation of a member of the implementing consortium of the HAQAA2 Initiative (Ms Sarah Lang from DAAD) in the opening and closing ceremonies was acknowledged with appreciation by the project coordinators.

Noteworthy was the review in some projects of the instruments and templates used for EQA and IQA and a refinement of them to improve clarity and guidance for the institutional users. This signals the need for the QA managers in the institutions and national QA agencies to critically examine, and improve where necessary, the quality of their communication, practices and instruments used.

The unintended positive consequences of the dissemination projects were the frequent creation of a network of QA practitioners. In some cases, they were organized into formal groupings such as a Whats App group or a formal society. There were also the informal networks which resulted in members reaching out to each other for further training and support. In the evaluation of the projects, all of which were positive, the knowledge, understandings and insights gained from participants' interaction with each other was specifically mentioned as a positive outcome of the training workshops.

There were a few common recommendations made for future projects of this kind. The timeframe of six months that was allocated for completion of the projects was a challenge for many institutions and the

recommendation was that more time needed to be given for organizing and implementing the projects. For example, the calendar of one country was different in that the project had to be implemented over the period of the final examinations and the commencement of the summer vacation. The projects also differed in nature as some involved more complex organizational tasks that had to be completed prior to the actual training, such as the creation of an LMS.

Students are important stakeholders in higher education QA and their inclusion in a few workshops is indicative of good practice. Inclusivity in terms of language is an integral component of harmonizing quality assurance across Africa. English and French are the dominant languages and in the future it needs to be ensured that Portuguese and Arabic are given equitable attention for projects and resources.

## 4. Conclusion

The dissemination projects have proved highly effective in disseminating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that underpinned the EQA and IQA capacity development projects of HAQAA1 and HAQAA2. There is evidence of collaboration, support, networking, information sharing and innovative practices in the various reports.

The HAQAA Initiative consisting of a first and second phase followed by a call for dissemination projects has proven to be a successful useful model to be considered for future similar projects. A limited number of QA practitioners could be trained during the two phases of the HAQAA Initiative and therefore the dissemination project is an effective and efficient mechanism for cascading QA capacity development throughout the higher education sector. However, reports from the dissemination projects indicate that wider dissemination is still needed and that there is also a need for more in-depth, specialized and focused QA training and development. Aspects such as open distance and e-learning (OdeL) and compiling self-assessment/reflection reports are examples of more specialized aspects of training. There is also further discussion needed on common terminology, such as the terms audit and accreditation that are applied differently in some countries, if harmonization of QA across Africa is to become a reality.

## Conclusion

It should be noted that the projects were conceptualized during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic which had devastating consequences for countries, institutions and individuals and which gave rise to uncertainty about their implementation.

The HAQAA Initiative has been the catalyst for a continental QA movement which needs to be strengthened going forward. The question then is whether to build on the capacity of those who participated in the first two phases of the HAQAA Initiative or to expand the training to a new cohort in a possible future phase of HAQAA. There could also be consideration of a combination of the two approaches. Whatever the decision is for the future of the Initiative, it would be beneficial if the valuable resources from the HAQAA1, HAQAA2 and the HAQAA2 dissemination projects would be made available on the HAQAA website and be accessible to the public as an outcome of the knowledge production and knowledge sharing of this exceptionally successful international and continental collaborative initiative that has had a high impact on building capacity on EQA and IQA in the higher education sector in Africa.

# Report on the Dissemination Projects of HAQAA2

## Part B:

**Report On The Dissemination Projects Of Haqaa2 In  
Francophone Countries** By Mr. Emile Zambo Assembe Naidoo

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## 1. Overview of the dissemination projects

This section presents an overview of the projects carried out by country, highlighting the project context or initial problem, the objectives of the activities held and the overall aims. The outcomes achieved by each project are summarised in a box at the end of each project description.

### 1.1 Burkina Faso

The HAQAA2 dissemination and skills- and capacity-building project in Burkina Faso was hosted by Nazi BONI University (UNB) in Bobo-Dioulasso and coordinated by Dr Seydou Golo BARRO. The project context highlights, within the education sector, an enormous increase in numbers at variance with a limited number of places and limited resources. In the absence of an autonomous, independent national structure dedicated to quality assurance, the intention was to address this problem through the dissemination and skills- and capacity-building project within the framework of the HAQAA2 initiative. To this end, the overall aim of the project was to promote the African Standards and Guidelines (ASG) with a view to the institutional accreditation of the UNB and to establish a national structure for quality assurance in Burkina Faso. The first specific objective was to improve the skills and capacities of the UNB personnel with a view to preparing for the institutional accreditation of the university. The second specific objective was to bring to the attention of the higher education authorities in Burkina Faso (the ministry, the universities...) the need to establish an autonomous national quality assurance structure.

In order to achieve these objectives, four actions were planned: the organisation of a workshop on the adoption of the ASG-QA by Nazi BONI University's quality assurance hubs; the organisation of a workshop on the implementation of the plan to improve self-assessment divergence drawn up by the UNB in 2020; the organisation of an ASG-AQ awareness activity; and advocating to the higher education and research institution (HERI) leadership the need to establish a national quality assurance structure.

#### Box 1: Outcomes achieved in Burkina Faso

Three outcomes were achieved:

1. The skills and capacities of HERI managers were improved in the field of African quality assurance norms and standards;
2. In preparation for the UNB's accreditation, the self-assessment recommendations were implemented with the aid of the ASG tool;
3. The authorities have been made aware of the need for a national quality assurance structure.

### 1.2 Burundi

The project **Using the ASG-QA to Improve Quality Procedures at the University of Burundi** was coordinated by Professor Jean Chrysostome NDAMANISHA and hosted by the University of Burundi (UB). The context out

of which this project emerged was the implementation of a quality culture promoted by both the African Union and the Burundian education authorities. The overall aim was to foster understanding of the ASG-QA and to harmonise them with the national minimum norms as applied at the University of Burundi. Specifically, the project was aimed at imparting a proper understanding of the ASG-QA to those concerned at the University of Burundi, at comparing the University of Burundi's benchmarks with the ASG-QA, at performing an institutional audit of the University of Burundi using the ASG-QA and at harmonising the University of Burundi's quality benchmarks with the ASG-QA.

To this end a number of activities were selected, namely the identification of the quality assurance hubs (in every faculty and management office of the UB); the creation of a group comprising the quality assurance hubs; explaining the ASG-QA to the quality assurance hubs; a comparison by the quality assurance hubs of the ASG-QA and the benchmarks used by the UB; explaining the ASG-QA to the heads of the administrative services, the executive assistants and the unit heads; explaining the ASG-QA to the deans and the heads of the masters programmes and research centres; where necessary the harmonisation by the quality assurance hubs of the ASG-QA with the benchmarks employed by the UB; the conducting by the quality assurance hubs of an internal quality assurance audit using the ASG-QA; the production by the quality assurance hubs of an internal audit report and the organisation of a workshop at which the results of the audit were to be presented.

### Box 2: Outcomes achieved in Burundi

Six outcomes were achieved:

1. Quality assurance hubs were established in all the faculties and institutes of the University of Burundi;
2. The ASG-QA were adopted by the quality assurance hubs of the University of Burundi;
3. The ASG-QA were adopted by heads of the administrative and technical services of the University of Burundi;
4. The ASG-QA were adopted by the deans and the heads of the masters programmes of the University of Burundi;
5. The ASG-QA were used in a quality assurance audit at the University of Burundi;
6. An internal quality assurance audit report was produced in conformity with the ASG-QA.

## 1.3 Cameroon

Held jointly in Cameroon and Chad, the project **Building Quality Assurance Skills and Capacities among Higher Education Personnel** was coordinated by Professor Jean Baptiste BIKE MBAH of the University of Ngaoundéré in Cameroon. This project emerged out of the context of an increase in social requirements in conjunction with developing needs within the higher education sector. The aim was to improve the quality and harmonisation of higher education in Africa and to support the employability and mobility of students across the continent. The specific objectives were to promote a quality assurance culture within the higher education establishments and institutions of Cameroon and Chad; to build skills and capacities among higher education personnel in the implementation of the ASG-QA and PAQAF as harmonisation and accreditation tools; and to promote the development of harmonised quality assurance mechanisms.

In order to achieve this, the project comprised four phases. The initial phase, dedicated to training, was carried out at an institutional level (University of Ngaoundéré) and involved working with the university's various departments (National School of Agro-Industrial Sciences, University Institute of Technology, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Arts, Letters and Human Sciences, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Faculty of Economic Science and Management, École Normale Supérieure, School of Geology and Mining Engineering, School of Chemical Engineering and Mineral Industries, Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, School of Science and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Education). The second phase was carried out at a national level and involved working with a number of Cameroonian universities (University of Ngaoundéré, University of Maroua, University of Yaoundé I, University of Bamenda and University of Dschang). The third phase took place at sub-regional level and in addition to the Cameroonian universities mentioned under the second phase, included the universities of N'Djamena, Saar and Abéché in Chad. The fourth phase brought together all the participants at institutional, national and sub-regional level. The map of participating bodies comprises the universities of Ngaoundéré, Yaoundé I, Bamenda, Dschang and Maroua in Cameroon and N'Djamena, Saar and Abéché in Chad.

### Box 3: Outcomes achieved in Cameroon

Three outcomes were achieved:

1. The participants were familiarised with the higher educational landscape in Africa and with harmonisation and evaluation tools such as PAQAF, ASG-QA, AQRM etc.;
2. The contextualisation skills of regional and international QA managers were developed;
3. Awareness was increased of the current QA situation in Africa (shared challenges and needs)

## 1.4 Comoros

The project **Creation of a Quality Assurance Department at the University of Comoros** was led by Dr Soulé Hamidou Hamada, dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, UDC. The context from which it emerged was characterised by the adoption of quality procedures by the Union of the Comoros. The main aim was to train a group of UDC managers in quality procedures in relation to education. Specifically, the project was aimed at forming a core of expertise in the field of quality assurance and to engage the university in a more global approach to quality assurance.

To this end, four activities were undertaken: the organisation of a workshop aimed at raising awareness of the different quality assurance structures; the organisation of a workshop aimed at training those concerned in the adoption of quality assurance; spreading the message in the national press as well as among the stakeholders concerning the importance of the UDC quality assurance unit; and the organisation of a signing ceremony marking the decision to establish a Quality Assurance Department. The target groups were the Ministry of National Education and the Central Administration of the UDC along with its departments and partners.

#### **Box 4: Outcomes achieved in Comoros**

Four outcomes were achieved:

1. The various bodies concerned (the Ministry of National Education, the Central Administration of the UDC and the UDC's departments) were familiarised with quality assurance procedures;
2. Internal and external personnel were trained in quality assurance with regard to education, research, organisation, management and evaluation;
3. The importance of the internal QA unit and understanding of its role were promoted, not least through the organisation of surveys;
4. An internal quality assurance unit was established at the University of Comoros under decision no. 22-010/UDC/ADM/CAB/CJ.

### **1.5 Madagascar**

The title of the project held by the University of Toliara in Madagascar is The Development of a Quality Culture in Madagascar's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through the Adoption of the ASG-QA for the Establishment of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Systems. The project coordinators were Professor Hanitra Sylvia ANDRIAMAMPIANINA, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toliara, and RAZAFINTSALAMA VAHINALAHAJA, Associate Director of Research and Director of Research and Innovation at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESUPRES). This project arose out of the context of an alarming economic situation in Madagascar. The Madagascan state has been working on the development of innovative administration and management policies for a number of years. This innovation is based on the Initiative for the Emergence of Madagascar (IEM) and the desire for a high-quality higher education system against the background of the Madagascan policy of education for all. The general aim of the project was to help Madagascar's HEIs, through the dissemination and multiplication of the results of the HAQAA2 training activities and by establishing quality assurance and accreditation systems based on ASG-QA, to acquire the necessary skills and capacities to realise their mission of instituting a higher education system to the benefit of national development.

The project had five specific objectives: (1) to foster awareness among HEI leaders, senior educational staff and stakeholders in the main public universities of the need for general understanding and adoption of the ASG-QA benchmarks and guidelines concerning quality assurance in higher education; (2) to foster awareness among HEI leaders, senior educational staff and stakeholders in the main public universities of the need for general understanding and adoption of the ASG-QA benchmarks and guidelines concerning quality assurance in higher education; (3) to establish an inter-university quality assurance consortium affiliated with the HAQAA (represented by its ambassadors) in order to implement the outcomes of the HAQAA2 training activities; (4) to foster a quality culture by formalising the implementation of the continental norms promulgated by the ASG-QA; and (5) to draw up a quality framework document with a view to reforming the existing norms and frameworks as stipulated by the regulatory texts in force in Madagascar, taking into consideration the quality assurance benchmarks and quality guidelines developed by the ASG-QA. The achievement of these

objectives is based on three activities: a workshop marking the launch of the project; an audit of the state of internal quality assurance within the HEIs; and a workshop aimed at the dissemination of the ASG-AQ. The target groups consisted of stakeholders drawn from MESUPRES and six public universities: • the University of Toliara • the University of Fianarantsoa • the University of Antananarivo • the University of Toamasina • the University of Mahajanga and • the University of Antsiranana (UNA).

### Box 5: Outcomes achieved in Madagascar

Five outcomes were achieved:

1. The university leaders, senior educational staff and external stakeholders were made aware of the need for understanding and adoption of the ASG-QA;
2. Teamwork was established among the main HEIs;
3. The Inter-university Consortium, led by the HAQAA ambassadors, was established;
4. The quality assurance norms have entered into force within Madagascar's public universities;
5. The quality benchmark document has been published, formally approved and distributed.

## 1.6 Mali

The project hosted in Mali, coordinated by Dr Solomani Coulibaly of the Abderrahmane Baba Touré National School of Engineering (ENI-ABT) and Dr Fatoumata Keita of the University of Arts and Humanities (ULSHB), both in Bamako, was **The ASG-QA as a Tool for the Implementation of a Policy of Internal Quality Assurance in Mali's Institutions of Higher Education**. The context out of which this project emerged was the disparity between quality assurance initiatives and their effective implementation. The overall aim consisted in developing and reinforcing internal quality assurance skills in the HEIs via the introduction of the ASG-QA and PAQAF, which constitute a package of benchmarks and guidelines for the introduction of good practice in matters of quality assurance while complementing the existing practices.

This project breaks down into five specific objectives: spreading the message about the ASG-QA and encouraging their use by the HEIs; making the ASG-QA a barometer of quality within Mali's HEIs; employing the ASG-QA as a tool for self-assessment in matters of internal quality assurance; assisting with the creation of internal quality assurance committees (IQACs) by those HEIs still without one; and supporting the process of making existing IQACs operational. Ten or so activities were necessary: a launch workshop with video conference; initial contact with, and inviting of, the eventual participants in the activities; a workshop for the training and improving of quality assurance and ASG-QA/PAQAF skills and capacities among the teaching and administrative staff; an institutional self-evaluation by ENI-ABT; a seminar on the ASG-QA and the national institutional evaluation benchmark highlighting shared experiences and differences; the drafting of the final report; the distribution of the final report and the publication of an article on the experience gained from the ASG-QA implementation. The project's target groups were the teaching and administrative personnel.

### Box 6: Outcomes achieved in Mali

Six outcomes were achieved:

1. Around a hundred participants were trained in using the ASG-QA in HEIs in Mali;
2. Use of the ASG-QA in periodic self-assessment by the HEIs is effective;
3. A self-assessment report was produced;
4. A better knowledge and understanding of the ASG-QA was achieved;
5. Successful collection and analysis of the data in the article on the experience gained from the ASG-QA implementation;
6. The quality culture in the HEIs was reinforced

## 1.7 Niger

The project carried out in Niger was **Building Quality Assurance Capacity at the Universities of Niamey and Tahoua**. It was coordinated by Professor Haoua SEINI SABO of Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey and Dr Abdoulaye HAMADOU of the University of Tahoua, and emerged against the background of the demand for international harmonisation of quality assurance practices within the higher education sector. Its main aims were to raise awareness of quality assurance and its requirements at the Ministry of Higher Education and among the faculties' administrative and technical staff, members of the IQACs and CellaAQ, the teacher-researchers and the student representatives; to develop the skills and abilities of the members of the internal units and CellaAQ in the evaluation of course programmes; and to promote the adoption of the course programme evaluation framework of the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES).

The specific objectives were to deepen their knowledge of quality assurance; to contribute to the implementation of quality assurance within their respective institutions; to adopt the CAMES framework for the evaluation of course programmes; and to prepare participants for the evaluation of course programmes within their respective entities. These objectives were to be realised through a series of workshops designed to improve skills and capacities among all quality assurance personnel at both ministerial and university level. The project's target groups were representatives of the ministry responsible for higher education, the teacher-researchers, the administrative and technical staff of the designated faculties, members of the university quality assurance unit (CellaAQ), members of the faculties' internal quality assurance units (IQACs), the heads of department, the subject coordinators and the student representatives (course delegates).

### **Box 7: Outcomes achieved in Niger**

Four outcomes were achieved:

1. The participants were made aware of quality assurance within higher education;
2. The participants were provided with quality assurance tools suitable for a higher education context;
3. Participants were provided with the necessary skills to use the framework for the evaluation of course programmes;
4. Participants were trained to evaluate course programmes within their respective entities.

## **1.8 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

The HAQAA2 dissemination project held by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education and University Sector (ANAQ-ESU) in the DRC arose out of a context of skills and capacities development in quality assurance at both African and national level. The DRC belongs to a number of quality assurance associations, in particular CAMES (a francophone platform) and SARUA (the platform of the SADC nations with a majority of anglophone countries), while various institutions are members of other associations as well, such as Assunicam (the association of Catholic universities and institutes of Africa and Madagascar). Moreover, each of these associations has its own quality frameworks, with the result that the DRC's universities and higher education institutions face an embarrassment of riches. Harmonisation of the guidelines at a pan-African level is a genuine need that the HAQAA2 project was able to address.

The main aim of this project was the transfer of internal and external QA knowledge and skills through the dissemination of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) and the African Standards and Guidelines – Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) within the higher educational landscape of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). To this end, activities were carried out in three phases. The first focused on theoretical training in the key concepts of quality assurance. The second was more practical, involving the concrete implementation of the ASG-QA on the basis of pilot institutional self-assessments carried out in three institutions drawn from the ten that participated in the theoretical training. The third, somewhere between theory and practice, was oriented towards benchmarking. The project's target groups were the managers of the internal quality assurance units, members of the steering committees, the top management of the institutions (vice-chancellor, chief education officer, chief executive officer and deputies) and the students and population of the provinces of Lualaba, Haut-Lomami, Tanganyika, Maniema and Kasai-Central.

### Box 8: Outcomes achieved in the DRC

Three outcomes were anticipated:

1. The drafting of institutional self-assessment reports by the educational establishments based on frameworks inspired by the ASG-QA;
2. The benchmarking report by the ANAQ-ESU has come into effect;
3. It is planned that the presentations will be made available in PowerPoint.

## 1. Purpose and research question

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the realisation and impact of the HAQAA2 dissemination and skills and capacities development project. For heuristic reasons, we intend on the one hand to explain the results achieved and on the other to compare these results with the aims of the initial reference project. Moreover, once processed, the information obtained is to serve as the basis for recommendations for future action. **What was the context within which the HAQAA2 dissemination and skills and capacities development project was realised?** This is the research question examined – in substance – in this report.

## 2. Theoretical and conceptual considerations

Here, we wish on the one hand to invoke the skills-based approach of Gibbens (1984) and Sens (2009) and on the other the stakeholder concept. A skills-based approach in conjunction with the stakeholder concept enables us to understand the behaviour around a project of those involved. In doing so, it allows a light to be shed on the ability of the stakeholders to overcome certain obstacles to be determined and to highlight the elements of success or failure of the project. In fact, certain contexts (certain countries) can foster or inhibit the possibility of becoming a stakeholder. This theoretical, methodological and teleological apparatus has contributed to the formulation of the following specific questions: What are the main issues? What are the main challenges? What are the success factors? Did the project produce the anticipated result? What were the main outcomes? What can be improved?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Methodological approach

In order to answer these questions, we have adopted a holistic-inductive approach. This approach is based on a study involving multiple cases. Thus, with regard to the different contexts, the cases correspond to each of the eight countries selected to host the project. In our analysis of the execution of the different projects by country, we are not starting from a pre-established reality; the reality is revealed on contact with the terrain. It is this that justifies an induction-based argument. Furthermore, this reality relates back to factual rather than imagined elements.

### 3.2 Sources of the primary and secondary data

Given these conditions, this part of the report is based on collated data. This data is drawn from at least four sources: (S1) – activity reports of the national projects describing the implementation of the selected projects; (S2) – the online questions relating to the final reports; (S3) the survey reports; (S4) – the verbatim reports of the semi-structured interviews carried out with each coordinating country. In fact, the primary data has been obtained from a semi-structured guide and the interviews are organised either individually or, in cases where a project involved several parties, in a group. Accordingly, three individual interviews and four group discussions were conducted. Despite certain flaws, the aim behind them was to arrive at an empirical, lived reality on the part of the coordinators, one removed from mere imagination.

### 3.3 Data analysis levels and approach

Within the framework of this study, analysis was conducted on two levels. The first level of analysis helps us to answer the specific questions relating to the context of each country. From this perspective, the information collected is the object of processing based on discourse analysis. This choice of analysis enables us firstly to emphasise elements that reappear in one form or another, those that are absent, those that are repeated, and those that recur in the execution of the projects. In this sense, it enables us to carry out a comparative analysis of the implicit, explicit or empty discourse arising out of the different implementation contexts of the projects. To this end, we needed to turn to an interactional method of analysis in order to highlight the stakes and challenges of the projects: the desired and undesired outcomes, the positive and negative aspects, the good and bad points and so on.

The second level of analysis enables us to then examine the dissemination project in a holistic way. This involves pairing the discourse analysis with an analysis of the secondary sources such as the call for proposals for the DAAD project, the survey reports and the final reports of the various projects. This analysis brings out general considerations relating to the dissemination project, highlighting project coherence, the factors for success, the risks and the recommendations.

We opted for a restitutive and analytical approach. Restitutive because it was a question of faithfully reporting the words of the coordinators. Regarding the analytical approach, we worked with the secondary sources and highlighted the responses of the participants in the survey, extricating the meaning in an inductive manner in order to propose the second level of recommendations. The first level being set aside for the coordinators' recommendations emerging from the interviews and concluding reports.

## 4. Contextual analysis by country of the HAQAA2 dissemination and capacity development projects.

In order to analyse the context of each project, from the interviews and final reports we extracted key benchmarks (concepts) conveyed in the subsidiary research questions including motivation, the challenges, the stakes, the success factors and so on as a prelude to coding them. These codes were drawn up on the basis

of an iterative approach.<sup>1</sup> In light of our aims, we opted for a comparative analysis of certain key elements in this section (Table 1).

Seizing the opportunity offered by the HAQAA2 dissemination and capacity-building project was one of the motivating elements behind the organising of QA activities (Country 1, Country 2, Country 6, Country 8). The coordinators reaffirm that their specific objectives were appropriate to the national context. Institutional instability and resource change (Country 1, Country 6), resistance to change on the part of internal personnel (Country 2, Country 3, Country 4, Country 6) and the need to satisfy a strong demand (Country 1, Country 2, Country 3, Country 4, Country 5, Country 6, Country 7, Country 8) seem to be the main challenges overcome by the different countries. Possible gains associated with the project are: involvement of personnel in the process of continued improvement (Country 1, Country 3), the establishing of a national network of HE personnel in the field of QA (Country 1, Country 3), the facilitating and fostering of academic mobility (Country 3). While the alignment of the ASG with the national or regional framework remains a benefit (Country 8, Country 6, Country 2), it is seen by those concerned as duplication or a loss of sovereignty (Country 8). Administrative burdens (Country 1, Country 6), in particular the transfer of funds and resistance on the part of major institutions (Country 8), seem to have slowed down implementation of the project. Beneficiaries favoured quantitative evaluations of their activities (Country 2, Country 4, Country 8).

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1. Mukamurera, J., Lacourse, F. et Couturier, Y. (2022). "Des avancées en analyse qualitative: pour une transparence et une systématisation des pratiques", *Recherches qualitatives*, vol. 26, no. 1, 110–38.

**Table 1: Comparison of aspects of the national projects based on interviews**

	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Country 6	Country 8
<b>Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seizing the opportunity</li> <li>- integrating RANAFQA</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the HAQAA2 initiative,</li> <li>- embryonic QA system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- problems of academic level equivalence between the students of two neighbouring countries</li> <li>- training and improving of skills and capacities in the field of harmonisation of educational curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new university</li> <li>- aiming for autonomy</li> <li>- significant increase in numbers</li> <li>- researching a framework</li> <li>- internationalisation (alignment with other universities)</li> <li>- creation of a QA unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- university turnaround</li> <li>- reviewing the quality framework (harmonisation)</li> <li>- strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>- gathering data on good practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seizing the opportunity presented by DAAD</li> <li>- developing quality culture</li> <li>- the IQACs are undergoing implementation difficulties</li> <li>- the need to raise awareness among staff and colleagues (democratisation)</li> <li>- training a maximum number of people</li> <li>- information deficit,</li> <li>- units not functional</li> <li>- developing QA skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sharing theoretical ASG-QA training</li> <li>- application of ASG-QA (comparison)</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
<b>Potential risks and benefits of the adopted solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consolidating the knowledge gained by the hubs</li> <li>- framework integrating the ASG and CAMES</li> <li>- signing up to the process of continued improvement</li> <li>- establishing a network of HE personnel</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more benefits</li> <li>- facilitation of qualification compatibility</li> <li>- improving employment training</li> <li>- facilitation and fostering academic mobility</li> <li>- implementing AU vision in the field of QA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quality of resources</li> </ul>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- alignment of the ASG and framework</li> <li>- financial resources for awareness-raising</li> <li>- the project has re-invigorated relations between the agency and the university</li> <li>- awareness-raising</li> <li>- greater openness in the choice of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adoption of a new framework (conflict)</li> <li>- realisation of the importance of self-assessments</li> <li>- enrichment of the national framework</li> </ul>

<b>Challenges overcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- resource change and instability</li> <li>- advocating the establishment of an agency</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- resistance to change on the part of the teaching staff</li> <li>- the short time frame of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- spreading understanding of the role of QA manager</li> <li>- convincing stakeholders of the importance of QA</li> <li>- convincing senior staff to get involved in the project implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ministry acceptance of the project objectives</li> <li>- alignment of the project with university strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- context of the elections</li> <li>- bringing the public universities together</li> <li>- forming a national consortium (federating the six universities around a project)</li> <li>- mobility within the ambassadors' countries</li> <li>- raising awareness among stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of participation of stakeholders in the surveys</li> <li>- mistrust of the interviews</li> <li>- ability to adapt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a strong demand needing to be satisfied</li> <li>- mobility of the teams</li> <li>- QA induction training</li> <li>- non-representative sample for benchmarking</li> </ul>
<b>Catalysts in the implementation of the outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ministry commitment to proliferation</li> <li>- mobilisation of personnel (hubs)</li> <li>- leadership and commitment of the management team (former team)</li> <li>- flexibility of the project</li> <li>- availability of the top manager of the DAAD project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involvement of the management</li> <li>- the support of HAQAA</li> <li>- support from the experts</li> <li>- the drive of the ambassadors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good awareness-raising</li> <li>- training template proposed by HAQAA2 (training model)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the support of DAAD</li> <li>- establishing a unit acts as a stimulus</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognition of authority by the Council of Ministers</li> <li>- involvement of the vice-chancellors</li> <li>- involvement of the HAQAA ambassadors</li> <li>- incorporation of the frameworks</li> <li>- coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- interest of the stakeholders in QA</li> <li>- good involvement of staff</li> <li>- integration of the agency</li> <li>- external support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the project has been supported by the agency</li> <li>- experienced facilitators</li> <li>- the willpower of the leadership</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
<b>Factors inhibiting the implementation of the outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial resources</li> <li>- short time frames</li> <li>- availability of personnel (instability)</li> <li>-</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- difficulties in the releasing of funds</li> <li>- administrative difficulties</li> <li>- mid-term report</li> <li>- rapid disbursement of funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nothing to report</li> <li>- delays in receiving funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nothing to report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the local context</li> <li>- slowness of the release of funds (administrative difficulties) and the consequences of the delays</li> <li>- resource change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financing delay (project delay)</li> <li>- resistance from certain institutions (big institutions)</li> <li>- new institutions more approachable</li> </ul>

<b>Awareness-raising factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creation of a project team</li> <li>- vertical and horizontal awareness-raising</li> <li>- WhatsApp group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- banners</li> <li>- media coverage</li> <li>- awareness-raising by video; YouTube, social network</li> <li>- targeted choice of participants</li> <li>- formal invitation by chief education officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- radio announcements</li> <li>- sending of invitations</li> <li>- creation of banners and handouts</li> <li>- choice of focal points</li> <li>- participation of management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- door-to-door</li> <li>- coming together in workshops</li> <li>- the departments</li> <li>- flyers</li> <li>- the media</li> <li>- the teaching staff</li> <li>- ministry agents</li> <li>- extending to other institutions and discussing with the students</li> <li>- increasing the scale</li> <li>- using expert external consultants to get messages across</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- official ministry communication</li> <li>- door-to-door</li> <li>- involving the vice-chancellors</li> <li>- the university sites</li> <li>- college and teacher reunions</li> <li>- institutional communication</li> <li>- selection of quality frameworks</li> <li>- general meeting of students</li> <li>- apprising partners</li> <li>- communication between vice-chancellors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creation of a dynamic team</li> <li>- department and university WhatsApp</li> <li>- targeted invitations</li> <li>- accessibility difficulties</li> <li>- flyers</li> <li>- banners</li> <li>- partnership with agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- vertical awareness-raising (communication)</li> <li>- presence of agency</li> <li>- selection based on stakeholder interest</li> <li>- (involvement of other players, chief education officer's conferences...)</li> <li>- presence of an international expert</li> </ul>
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## 5. General considerations regarding the project

This section takes into account the perception of the coordinators and content analysis of the countries' final reports. It highlights firstly the coherence of the project as a whole in the light of points of reference in the call for proposals; secondly the convergence points, underlining the issues, challenges, success factors and risks of the project.

### 5.1. Coherence of the overall dissemination project with relation to points of reference.

The coherence of the dissemination project is considered on the basis of specific points of reference. It is a question here of checking whether the objectives of the selected projects are aligned with those of the HAQAA2 dissemination project. Thus the aim of the latter represents the point of reference or benchmark objective. Accordingly, one of the objectives of the dissemination project was to encourage collaboration between all the HAQAA (1 and 2) graduates and the quality assurance personnel, both internally and externally. In this respect, 60% of the projects were approved on the basis of the instigation of a fruitful collaboration between the graduates of the HAQAA1 et HAQAA2 training courses. On top of this comes the strong involvement of the agencies (Country 5, Country 6, Country 8) and senior levels in the ministries of higher education in the awareness-raising and training activities (Country 1, Country 3, Country 4).

The call for dissemination project proposals described 7 topics and 4 activities that could be selected (Table 2). During project implementation, 57% of the proposed topics were covered. Within this framework 5/8 countries (5 countries out of a total of 8) opted for "The ASG-QA as a tool of institutional self-assessment/preparation for accreditation", 5/8 countries chose "Development of a quality culture in the universities and systems", 1/8 countries selected "The ASG-QA as a tool for the creation of national QA systems in conformity with the continental norms", while 2/8 countries chose as a theme "The various tools and fields of action of PAQAF, their implications for the higher education sector and their application".

As for the activities implemented, all the beneficiary francophone countries selected the training and/or capacity-building activities. 1/8 countries proceeded to the benchmarking exercises between universities or QA agencies with the help of the ASG-QA, while 1/8 countries conducted a study leading to the publication of an article and 4/8 countries displayed a pronounced interest in activities relating to the alignment of norms and national or regional directives with the ASG-QA (comparisons).

**Table 2: Topics covered and activities conducted by the countries**

Topics	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3	Country 4	Country 5	Country 6	Country 7	Country 8
The ASG-QA as a tool of institutional self-assessment/preparation for accreditation	X	X				X	X	X
The ASG-QA as a tool for the establishment of national QA systems conforming with the continental norms								X
The ASG-QA as a tool of self-assessment by the QA agencies								
The ASG-QA as a tool for QA reform during the Covid-19 pandemic								
The various tools and fields of action of PAQAF, their implications for the higher education sector and their application			X			X		
Continental cooperation in the field of quality assurance and accreditation								
Development of a quality culture in the universities and systems	X	X		X	X	X		
<b>Activities</b>								
Training and/or skills and capacity-boosting events and workshops	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Publications/research relating to the implementation of the ASG-QA/PAQAF tools and their dissemination						X		
Political debates/round tables relating to the reform of national or regional higher education policy and the place of quality assurance in higher education systems								
Benchmarking exercises between universities and QA agencies with the help of the ASG-QA								X
Alignment of national or regional norms and directives with the ASG-QA	X	X			X			X

Moreover, with reference to the outcomes sought by the project, on the one hand the realisation of all activities by the countries in conjunction with the original objectives of the global project as described in the call for proposals can be noted. On the other, the project risks remained manageable, with strong adherence by those concerned to the goals envisaged by the dissemination project. Overall, the outcomes achieved by the countries correspond to the specific objectives listed by the project, thereby indicating significant cohesion between the individual projects and the outcomes sought by the project in a global sense. Finally, as an indication of this overall cohesion, the benefits of the project are shared by the various parties involved in the project. These stakeholders have witnessed the emergence of a complementarity between their various knowledge and skills. They have encouraged one another and given of their best in order to see the dissemination project through to a successful conclusion.

## 5.2. The various points of convergence of the project in the perception of the coordinators and secondary sources

### 5.2.1. Issues

The different coordinators of, and participants in, the various workshops emphasise the issues, simultaneously structural and cyclical, relating to the implementation of the current project (**Figure 1**).

On the structural level, the ASG are seen as tools that play a long-term role – on a national level – in the consolidation of university governance, in the fostering of academic and research quality, in a growth in the accessibility of higher education, in the implementation of higher education financing mechanisms and – on an international level – in the harmonisation of practices and implementation of the AU vision in the field of QA.

On the cyclical level, and particularly in the short term, the issues are multiple and veer between a desire to preserve national guidelines and an opening up, a desire to widen the field of application of the project and strengthen links with the external stakeholders. Indeed the coordinators and the participants in the project activities underline the dilemma between the national and regional norms and the guidelines. However, they note the need for alignment of the local norms with the ASG in the short term while at the same time preserving their local specificities. Furthermore, the other issue raised as a priority by the project beneficiaries is the concrete and practical implementation of the ASG within all the different higher education fields. They also emphasize the re-invigorating of relations between the agencies, the ministry and the universities and highlight the main short-term issue, namely the improving of skills and capacities of all those concerned with QA in higher education. In order to achieve all this, a number of challenges and risks have been overcome by both the beneficiaries and the organisers of the project.

### 5.2.2. The challenges and the risks

Certain challenges have been overcome within the context of this project. To start with, taking into consideration the financial burden involved in the dissemination of knowledge following the training activities aimed at improving skills and capacities, it would seem sensible to overcome the budgetary constraints that exist despite the approval of DAAD financing as most of the projects have an extended portfolio of activities. Secondly, establishing a quality culture covering routine activities would not necessarily be something shared by all. Thirdly, the question of adopting norms would be one of the main preoccupations in the sense that it is important to make good use of both national and international (AGS) norms. In addition, one of the main challenges would be overcoming the obstacle of resistance to change. As a whole, lecturers do not seem to subscribe easily to quality assurance processes. They prefer to follow the traditional models. Moreover, it is also necessary to deal with the challenge of instability following institutional changes observed at country level and in most universities, both at management level and at the level of the resources who are the repositories of QA skills. Ultimately, not to take account of these challenges exposes the project to the risks inherent in each ignored or neglected challenge.

### 5.2.3. Factors for the success of the project

The success of a project of this magnitude demands great flexibility in the organisation of the activities with regard to the possibility of unexpected internal or external events; reflexivity on the part of the key personnel; and significant awareness-raising among all the stakeholders in the project. Moreover, according to the individual project coordinators, there are two factor types that have contributed to the success of this project, namely endogenous and exogenous factors (**Figure 6**).

#### >> Endogenous success factors

The coordinators emphasise leadership at senior levels (board of education, vice-chancellor, deans), which is greatly valued, in the realisation of the project. They also mention the significant involvement of the agencies, senior university levels and the responsible ministry during project realisation (logistics, human resources). Effective vertical awareness-raising in terms of information and communication is revealed to have been crucial to the success of the project, enabling the various goals to be achieved. Another endogenous factor is the good identification of QA needs, which remains a key source of motivation among the working groups and project organisers. The good understanding of the project environment by the different coordinators is also worth noting, as is the thorough understanding of QA fundamentals and the great complementarity between the HAQAA1 and HAQAA2 ambassadors.

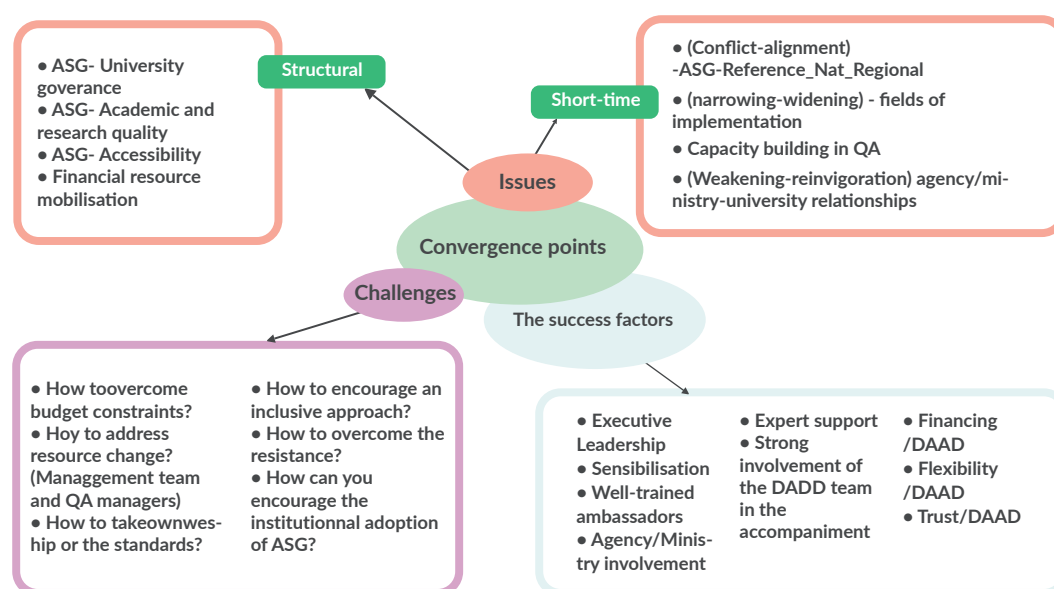
#### >> Exogenous success factors

The different project organisers insist on the support of experts as a factor for success. A number of remote meetings were indeed held between the coordinators and the resource individual in order to fine-tune and support the project. Another success factor is that the project as conceived is in keeping with local demands in terms of skills and capacity building. In addition, the coordinators mention the importance of HAQAA2 finance to the realisation of their project, insisting far more on the significant budgetary flexibility accorded in the implementation of activities in order to cope with the project constraints and risks. Similarly, the coordinators were keen to insist on the strong involvement of the project team, in particular the active, motivating, face-to-face presence of the project leader. This synergy is one of the factors for success emphasised the most by the coordinators. The coordinators repeatedly accentuate the great trust established between project beneficiaries and project team. Analysis of the content of the verbatim reports and final reports reveal, among the factors for success, a high score for the codes *cfi* (trust) and *fle* (flexibility) at 47% of occurrences (Table 3).

**Table 3: Occurrence of the various success factors**

	Code	Occurrence (%)
Trust	cfi	23
Flexibility	fle	24
Leadership direction	lead	23
Good identification of needs	idd	10
Understanding of the context by the coordinators	mec	08
Good training of the ambassadors	bfam	12

**Figure 1: Summary of the various convergence points**



## 6. Discursive conclusion

The aim of the dissemination and capacity-building project was to enable the HAQAA1 and HAQAA2 ambassadors to apply and disseminate their acquired knowledge to the benefit of the African higher education community as a whole. In the 8 beneficiary francophone countries, 32 universities and 3 QA agencies participated in the implementation of the project along with the involvement of the ministries of higher education of the countries involved. The project saw the development of a number of topic areas and the conducting of various activities including the boosting of QA skills and capacities, in which more than 500 internal and external personnel received training or upskilling in the field of QA. Despite the increased risks associated with the contexts in certain beneficiary countries, all the planned activities were carried out within the time frame set for the project and there were more than 1,300 participants in activities aimed at raising awareness of the ASG of the AU (Table 4).

**Table 4: Number of participants in the quality assurance (QA) training and African Standards and Guidelines (ASG) awareness activities**

Country	Capacity-building	Number of women	ASG awareness-raising
Burkina Faso	147	13	147
Burundi	73	10	73
Cameroon	25	08	25
Comoros	100	52	100
Madagascar	100		200
Mali	70		600
Niger	50		50
DRC	100		300
<b>Total</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1,362</b>

Analysis of the various interviews and the content of the reports confirm the significant place of leadership on the part of management; the importance of trust between the participants in the achievement of results; and the support of experts as factors for a successful project implementation. Within the beneficiary countries, the project generated enormous enthusiasm on the part of those concerned, both internally and externally. Thus one of the direct effects of this project in the beneficiary countries is a real awareness on the part of university leaders and ministry personnel, who have committed themselves to the re-invigorating and operationalisation of the IQACs: “we didn’t understand before but now everything is clear” (Country 7). Furthermore, it is now possible to detect renewed interest in QA issues on the part of teaching staff (training, publications) and private institutions.

However, a number of global observations can be made following the realisation of the project at national level. Thus, among other things, we see QA being implemented at different speeds at regional and national level and the non-functioning of internal QA units in universities that are indispensable as the key entities in the follow-up and sustainability of the project.

“Quite honestly, the unit we have here is non-functional. The members of the University Institute of Technology’s (IUT) quality assurance have been selected but they haven’t yet been given an office. They take part in all the training activities organised by the board of education, but I think the managers need to get together to set up quality assurance units in each institute. It has been appointed but it’s not yet operational” (Country 6)<sup>2</sup>.

It remains the case that there is a strong demand for training and support in the field of QA. A significant tendency is emerging for theoretical debate about QA to the detriment of real implementation in most higher education functions. We also observe a strong tendency towards a quantitative approach to the evaluation of activities to the detriment of an inductive approach. The latter is important because it allows for a more effective revelation of sensitivities raised by the project in the different countries than a quantitative approach

<sup>2</sup> Survey report, Country 6

would during the course of evaluations. Finally, we would like to emphasise a weakness in the medium-term and long-term sustainability of the projects. Below we present plaudits and, in the form of recommendations, suggestions for future action.

## 7. Assessments and Recommendations

### 7.1. Assessments and recommendations of the coordinators

The coordinators and participants commend:

- The dissemination and capacity-building project of the HAQAA2 initiative for enabling the acquired knowledge to be put into practice, for raising awareness of QA among the participants and for re-invigorating the QA process in the universities;
- The commitment shown by the project team in holding their activities;
- The involvement of the authorities in the realisation of the project;
- The good degree of flexibility allowed in the conducting of activities in the national projects;
- The HAQAA2 financing;
- The personal involvement of top management during the holding of their activities;
- The final meeting in Ghana, a time of exchange and networking.

The coordinators and participants recommend:

In order to reduce the implementation of QA at different speeds:

- Rerunning the dissemination project of the HAQAA2 initiative;
- With regard to the financial impact, the training, consolidation or enlargement of the entity holding the project, bringing together a number of national universities in the implementation of the national projects;
- The significant involvement of the agencies, the ministries, the commissions of the chief education officer etc. in the implementation of the national projects;

In order to increase awareness-raising and the impact of the QA projects across the universities' functions:

- Support for the national projects by external experts both in person and remotely – before, during and after the project;
- Extending the scope of the project activities to include practical activities relating to teaching (pedagogy) and research;
- Simultaneously vertical and horizontal awareness-raising in order to involve all the relevant parties in the universities.

Finally, from the perspective of sustainability, the coordinators express a wish for the functioning of the internal QA units – responsible for the follow-up and sustainability of the projects – to be supervised on the model of the current dissemination project for a given period (1 or 2 years) with the stipulation that the beneficiary university then takes over the formal funding of the running costs of that unit. The beneficiaries should be chosen from among the alumni of the present cohort on the basis of binding terms of reference. This wish expressed by the coordinators is one of the pathways for project sustainability at institutional level without external financing in the short term.

## 7.2. Expert recommendations

The analysis of the reports and verbatim interview transcripts suggests taking into account the coordinators' recommendations as formulated above and with regard to the future, we recommend:

- Looking into projects facilitating the adoption of QA through joint financing for the sake of the sustainability and durability of the projects;
- Placing more of an emphasis on the sustainability of actions, asking the coordinators to reflect increasingly on the sustainability of the projects and to plan activities that are budgeted accordingly. A commitment from the university leadership that can be recorded at the time of contract-signing;
- Enhanced supervision of projects by experts in order to provide support in awareness-raising and during project implementation;
- Better advice regarding the planning of activities.

The duration of a project is not in itself a problem; rather on the one hand the ability of the project holders to calibrate the activities selected for the project in time and space and, on the other, the ability of the project to incorporate risk occurrence during its implementation. Within the framework of the present project, coordinators were allowed an extension in order to take account of external elements delaying the finalisation of the projects.

Finally, with two exceptions (Country 8, Country 4), analysis of the interview indicates the absence of national quality assurance projects over the coming years. As a consequence, and taking account of this piece of evidence, we recommend that the dissemination project be renewed once the entire HAQAA initiative has concluded.

## APPENDIX

The lessons learned are drawn from three stages of the project, summarised as follows.

### Point 1: Initial and identification stages

This first stage of the project implementation was conducted effectively and the respondents indicate complete satisfaction with regard to the clarity of the budget identification among other things: its objectives, its requirements, the project schedule, the project budget and the adherence of the coordinators (Table 1).

**Table 1: Lessons learned from the design of the project.**

	Lessons learned	Yes	+/-	No	Comments
1	The project objectives were specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and limited in time	X			
2	The project requirements were clear and concise	X			
3	The preliminary project plan and the schedule were well described, with the appropriate structure and detail	X			
4	The project schedule took account of every element of the project	X			
5	The tasks were well described	X			
6	The roles and responsibilities were well defined and drafted and the contracts were signed by the coordinators	X			
7	The project budget was well defined	X			
8	The budget of the different projects was well defined and confirmed in good time	X			
9	The coordinators adhered to the project requirements (objective, budget and schedule)	X			

## Point 2: Project realisation stages

On the one hand, the list of points for this second phase relating to the project realisation indicate a certain satisfaction with the original objectives of the global and national projects and with the realisation of the activities planned by the beneficiaries. On the other, the project risks were manageable, and the pre-approved budgets and powers delegated to the coordinators were adequate. However, the disbursements and time frame for project realisation were areas of greater or lesser satisfaction despite approval for the financial support from DAAD and for the support of the experts.

**Table 2: Lessons learned during the project realisation.**

	Lessons learned	Yes	+/-	No	Comments
1	The original objectives of the global project were respected	X			
2	The original objectives of the national projects were respected	X			
3	The activities planned by the beneficiaries were realised	X			
4	The risks were manageable	X			
5	On the whole, the beneficiaries were satisfied with the project	X			
6	The pre-approved budgets and the powers delegated to the coordinators were sufficient to enable modifications to be made to the national project	X			
7	The planned sums were disbursed on time		X		Delay observed in the disbursement of the seed funding
	The disbursements to the project countries were appropriate		X		The mechanisms in two beneficiary countries were unsuitable
8	The deadlines for project realisation were appropriate		X		The delay observed in the release of the launch funds affected the timing of implementation
	The financial support from DAAD was in line with expectations	X			The size of the consortium had an impact on the quality of the financing
9	The projects' expert consultants were equal to the task	X			

### Point 3: General observations on the project

Overall, a general satisfaction is evident with regard to the achievement of the project objectives and the execution of projects within the budgets approved by the internal and external backers.

**Table 3: Lessons learned from the project.**

Lessons learned	Yes	No	Comments
The projects were executed within the approved time frames			
The projects were executed within the approved budgets	x		
The objectives of the global project were achieved	x		
The objectives of the national projects were achieved	x		
The activities were realised	x		
Communication and awareness-raising at country level were appropriate	x		
DAAD support for the project was appropriate	x		
Support from the internal parties was appropriate	x		
The impact of the project is visible among the beneficiaries	x		