UNESCO-13th Session of the Regional Committee on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific in conjunction with the Regional Workshop on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Presentation by

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‘Facilitating Regional Convergence of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Experience from APQN ’

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Outline

• Diversity of HE and QA in Asia-Pacific
• APQN - the facilitator of Asia Pacific QA community
• APQN initiatives for quality promotion and convergence of QA in Asia Pacific
• APQN UNESCO Partnership
• Possible collaborations between UNESCO and APQN
Diversity of HE and Quality Assurance [QA] in Asia-Pacific

- Asia Pacific is the fastest growing region in terms of higher education expansion.
- It also boasts of huge diversity terms of languages, culture, economy and political contexts
- Many Quality Assurance Agencies [QAAs] in Asia-Pacific are in developing stage
- QAAs vary in size, scope and maturity levels
- APQN Membership Criteria and Chiba Principles provide common frame of reference for QA activities in Asia Pacific.
- Asia Pacific Quality Network - APQN is the voice of QA community from over 40 countries in Asia Pacific with about 52 QA bodies as it’s member.
Student mobility and Asia Pacific

• Asia Pacific is the hottest region when it comes to international student mobility.

• Among the total foreign students in OECD area in 2009, above 17% were from China, 7% from India and 4% from Korea.

• As per 2007 OECD data out of total foreign students in OECD area 51% were from Asia.

• North America, Europe and Australia-New Zealand continue to receive highest numbers from Asia as compared to Africa and Latin America.
Mobility and need for mutual recognition

- International mobility within Asian region is also very high.
- China- Japan- Korea and ASEAN is one area and Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh students moving to India in South Asia is another example.
- These trends of mobility highlight importance of mutual recognitions of qualifications and QA of qualifications across the region.
Asia Pacific Quality Network [APQN]

- The largest regional QA Network that covers two continents comprising over half of the world’s population.
- Set up in 2003 with mission of 'enhancing the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them'
APQN Membership:
140+ members from 40 countries and Territories
5 observers from European countries
intermediate members
APQN Observers from Europe

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK

ASIIN e. V., Germany

Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatia

UK NARIC, UK
Initiatives  Asia-Pacific Quality Network

- More than 50 workshops and seminars hosted in Australia, India, Vietnam, Laos, Fiji and China and other countries in the region with about 2000 participants including 177 sponsored.
- 7 moderated online forums on various QA issues with more than 500 participants from 50 of its member agencies.
  - APQN Exchange Programme - [and Now Asia Europe Exchange Program]
  - APQN Quality Awards to recognize good practices of QA bodies and experts, the first of its kind initiative.
  - Database of consultants in collaboration with INQAAHE and ANQAHE
  - Several Projects under WB and UNESCO GIQAC
  - Quality Hubs across Asia pacific -ONESQA, Thailand is the Quality Hub of APQN in 2013 and AKKORK, Russia is APQN Quality Hub in 2014
  - APQN MoU with ECA
  - APQN as part of consortium with ENQA, ANQAHE and other QA bodies in Europe for project on QA of Cross border Higher Education
  - MoU with COL, Canada for QA of OERs and MOOCs
  - First regional network to have own QA Journal in collaboration with HEEACT
APQN and Chiba principles

• APQN cooperated with Senior Officials Working Group of the broader Asia Pacific initiative chaired by the government of Australia to develop the Framework for Higher Education Quality Assurance Principles in the Asia Pacific Region (Chiba Principle).
Framework for Higher Education Quality Assurance Principles in the Asia Pacific Region

(Chiba Principles)

A: Internal Quality Assurance

B: Quality Assessment

C: Quality Assurance Agencies
Alignment with Chiba Principles and APQN Criteria- proposal of Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Register

• Chiba principles are considered as merely a starting point for enhancing quality assurance policy and practice. The principles provide a broad overview, however there is much detail under each principle that could be further developed to reflect the particular circumstances of each national system
• In 2012 APQN launched initiative of external review of its members agencies with APQN Criteria and Chiba Principles as reference points.
• QAAC of UGC Srilanka became the first Member QA agency to undergo external review and benchmarked itself against APQN Criteria and Chiba Principles.

• Now APQN is in process of considering such alignment reviews across the region and to set up Asia Pacific Quality Register.
UNESCO – APQN Partnership

• APQN and UNESCO have been close partners in various initiatives that aim at convergence of QA in Asia pacific
• APQN has been recipient of GIQAC funds from 2009 till 2012 and series of projects have been undertaken for QA capacity building in region
• Besides serving needs of QAAs in region many APQN projects with UNESCO as partner have served the needs of QA community across the globe.
APQN Project on Reviewers’ Training Package-

• Project aimed at consolidating existing materials of various QAAs and use them to prepare a comprehensive training package which can then be made available to members electronically through the website or other electronic means.

• The Training Package now includes 7 Modules, namely:

  • *Module 1 - Overview of QA in higher education*
  • *Module 2 - QA Principles and Practices*
  • *Module 3 - IQA and Self Assessments*
  • *Module 4 - EQA and Peer Review*
  • *Module 5 - The Site Visit*
  • *Module 6 - Report Writing*
  • *Module 7 - Good Practices in QA*,

  followed by appendices, Reading material and Acknowledgement of sources.

We hope that this package would be a good open resource for all QAAs
APQN Training Package!
UNESCO-APQN Collaboration

UNESCO-APQN Toolkit:
REGULATING THE QUALITY OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION
## UNESCO -APQN Quality Information Toolkit project and proposed Quality Information Portal-
A snapshot of work in progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International/Regional level</th>
<th>National Level</th>
<th>Institutional Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Information</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. About Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>1. Competent authorities to recognize/permit operations of HEIs</td>
<td>1. Approved name of institution and the sponsoring trust/society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contact details of QAAs and competent authorities concerning higher education in countries/territories in the Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>2. HEIs recognized by competent authorities</td>
<td>2. Competent authority which permitted/recognised HEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Contact details of National Information Centres in the Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>3. Higher education programmes recognized by competent authorities</td>
<td>3. Period of validity of registration and/or recognition</td>
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</table>
| 4. Link to UNESCO Portal on higher education | 4. Information for students planning to study in the country  
  • Visa requirements  
  • Living costs  
  • Language requirements | 4. Registration/recognition/certification numbers, if applicable |
UNESCO@ APQN Forums

UNESCO Bangkok Director Gwang Jo Kim was key note speaker at APQN 2012 Conference at Cambodia.
Stamenka Uvalik-Trumbik from UNESCO HQ, was key note speaker at APQN 2010 Conference at Thailand.
In 2013 Conference at Vietnam, APQN honored UNESCO with Plaque as token of collaboration with APQN for 10 years
and Dr Libing Wang was invited speaker.
Challenges for Asian QA Community

- Very strong national focus, better sub-regional linkages and weak regional harmonisation among QA agencies is a big challenge for coordinated QA policy across Asian region.
- Diversity in terms of languages, modes of delivery, legal systems and socio-political contexts.
- Absence of regional Qualifications framework or interoperability of frameworks.
- Lack of National Information Centres and coordination among existing ones.
- Inadequate resources to protect students from dubious providers.
Decennial Agenda of APQN*

- Develop capacity of APQN members for new challenges like QA of OERs and Borderless education
- Development of Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Register
- Asia Pacific Quality Information Portal on lines of NARIC
- A joint consortium with and European bodies for Asia- Europe collaboration and exchange.
- APQN QA Certification for assessors and staff in collaboration with leading universities in Asia Pacific.
Decennial Agenda of APQN*

• Staff Exchange program within and outside region to promote mutual understanding of QA processes.

• APQN Quality label as Regional / international accreditation.
• Development of Quality Hubs across the region to benefit from experienced and resourceful APQN members.
• Taking Forward Chiba principles so as to move towards Asia pacific Higher education quality region.
• Developing APQN's Quality Resource centre that will undertake action Research projects and capacity building projects with help of dedicated staff

*Adopted by APQN General Assembly on 8th April 2013 at Taipei as proposed by APQN President Dr Jagannath Patil
Possible collaboration with UNESCO and APQN Quality Information Portal

• Asia Pacific Quality Information Portal- a new initiative of APQN aims to collaborate with UNESCO initiative on strengthening NICs

• APQN can work towards capacity building of NICs in collaboration with it’s members QAAs in Asia pacific
Possible collaboration with UNESCO and Asia Pacific Quality Register-APQR

• Asia Pacific Quality Register – A new initiative of APQN can collaborate with UNESCO initiative on promoting Asia and Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

• APQN Quality Register can possibly work together with APARNET in promoting mutual recognition of qualifications based on convention and accreditation decisions of APQN member QAAs
Possible collaboration with UNESCO on ‘Toolkit for QA of OERs and MOOCs’

• APQN can collaborate with UNESCO Asia Pacific Bureau to develop ‘Toolkit of Quality Assurance of OERs and MOOCs’

• This can either be stand alone Toolkit or revision of existing UNESCO- APQN toolkit for Regulating the Quality of CBHE to accommodate OERs and MOOCs.

Aspirations of millions of students in Asia Pacific for a better connected world should be our inspiration to work together and facilitate mobility across the borders
Buddha says...

“In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.”
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