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Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education

UNESCO-Shenzhen Project update June 2020

Welcome to the update of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust Project on Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa.

This periodic update features highlights of the implementation of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, to facilitate sharing of information and best practices in quality assurance in the 10 project countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, and Zambia. We hope you enjoy reading the update and we look forward to your continuous collaboration on the implementation of the project.

UNESCO-Shenzhen Project team

About the project

In 2016, UNESCO and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government of China joined hands with 10 African countries, and initiated the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, with an aim to strengthen higher education systems by developing quality assurance mechanisms. The three-year project implemented since 2017 represents the commitment of UNESCO to the realization of Target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to "ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" and the Education 2030 agenda.

Stay in touch

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Workshop for the implementation of component 3: strengthening African networks in quality assurance and recognition of qualifications

18 - 20 February 2020



The Workshop for the Implementation of Component 3 of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, was held from 18 to 20 February, in Dakar. Experts, managers and government officials from national quality assurance agencies, regional quality assurance networks, and ministries of higher education, attended the workshop and discussed the strengthening of continental networks in quality assurance, and the development of tools for mutual recognition of qualifications in Africa. Mr Honghao Zhang, Cultural Counsellor of the P.R. China to Senegal, attended the opening ceremony, and highlighted the importance of south-south cooperation in promoting academic mobility with the internationalization of higher education. Mr Dimitri Sanga, Director of the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office in Dakar, emphasized the importance of national quality assurance systems in enhancing the quality of higher education and in promoting mutual recognition of diplomas to enable the mobility of graduates. Mr Lamine Gueye, Executive Secretary of the National Authority for Quality Assurance in Higher Education of Senegal (ANAQ-SUP), indicated that the partnership with the UNESCO-Shenzhen project fostered mutual understanding for the harmonization of the means of evaluation between the African countries in the sub-region.

The implementation of Component 3 was officially launched in November 2018 at the UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting on Quality Assurance in Higher Education for Anglophone and Lusophone Countries in Africa (Johannesburg). Following the launch, UNESCO conducted a survey with the participation of regional quality assurance networks and quality assurance agencies in Africa. The workshop at Dakar obtained baseline information in quality assurance systems in African countries, identified best practices in recognitions of qualifications, and facilitated discussions on the development of tools for mutual recognition of qualifications in Africa. During the workshop, the Network of National Quality Assurance Agencies for French-speaking Africa (RAFANAQ) was established with the adoption of its constitutive texts by the founding members.

Malawi

Capacity building of quality assurance professionals on guidelines and standards for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

24 - 26 February 2020



Malawi organized a capacity building workshop on Guidelines and Standards for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) in Higher Education Institutions from 24 to 26 February, 2020. The workshop took place at Mangochi, bringing together about 75 quality assurance professionals, among them, deans, quality assurance officers, curriculum coordinators and education administrators from both public and private higher education institutions (HEIs). Also, in attendance were representatives from the Ministry of Education, external regulatory bodies such as the Medical Council of Malawi and the Malawi Accountancy Board. The workshop focused on fostering mind-set change and inculcating a culture of quality that values internal quality assurance in HEIs. The workshop also facilitated dialogues on IQA, emphasizing on the concept, objectives, guidelines, tools and standards for IQA. During the workshop, participants collaboratively developed an IQA framework for HEIs. A taskforce was established to facilitate the creation of a network for quality assurance professionals in higher education.

MALI

Benchmark for the evaluation of training programmes validated

12 February 2020



The higher education reform in Mali, currently underway, aims to improve the performance and quality of higher education and research system in Mali. In this perspective, the creation of the Malian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Scientific Research

(AMQA-SUP) is an essential step. Significant work on awareness raising and training on quality assurance has been conducted so far, in particular through, among others, the UNESCO - Shenzhen project, and the benchmark for evaluating higher education training programmes has been developed. To validate the benchmark, a workshop was held on 12 February at Bamako with higher education actors in Mali. The presentation of the development methodology, guidelines and content of the standard was followed by discussions and feedbacks from the participants. A pilot evaluation will be launched based on this benchmark to test the relevance of the standard, and to identify necessary adjustments before the generalization of the procedures for evaluating training programmes of all public and private higher education institutions in Mali.

Training workshop for research institutions in internal quality assurance

11, 13 February 2020

A training workshop on the dynamics of quality assurance was organized for higher education research actors in Mali on 11 and 13 February at Bamako. The workshop, organized by the DGESRS (General Directorate of Higher Education and Scientific Research), in collaboration with the AMAQ-SUP, brought together 20 participants, including five from research institutes: the Institute of Human Sciences (ISH), the National Center for Scientific

and Technological Research (CNRST), the Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies and Research Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (IHERI-ABT) and the Malian Academy of Languages (AMALAN).



The training constituted part of the plan for the strengthening of quality assurance in higher education and scientific research in Mali, notably for the operationalization of the Malian Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research (AMAQ-SUP). Following the trainings organized for the higher education institutes in 2019, the AMAQ-SUP aims to

further raise awareness and build capacity for stakeholders involved in scientific research on the dynamics of quality assurance, targeting in particular the managers and representatives from the four research institutes (ISH, CNRST, AMALAN and IHERI-ABT).

Benchmarking study to Morocco

8 - 15 March 2020



To consolidate the operationalization process of the AMAQ-SUP, a benchmarking study mission was organized in March 2020 to Rabat (Morocco). A teams of six representatives from the DGESRS and the AMAQ-SUP visited the national agency for evaluation and quality

assurance for higher education and scientific research (ANEAQ), and other stakeholders in evaluation and higher education in Morocco. The overall objective of the mission was to facilitate the operationalization of the AMAQ-Sup by capitalizing on the experience of Morocco. In particular, the benchmarking study aimed at understanding the functioning of a national quality assurance agency on a daily basis, identifying good practices and points of vigilance in the context of the implementation of higher education evaluation mechanisms, and strengthening exchanges with the Moroccan counterparts and the higher education sector.

Namibia

Building capacity through ISO 9001: 2015 quality management system training

9 - 13 March 2020



The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) embarked on a journey to lead by example by launching the ISO 9001 QMS Capacity Building Training Project. The training was conducted by the Namibia Standards Institute, an agency responsible for standards development in Namibia. A project core team has been established to lead the process towards the certification of the NQA with ISO 9001:2015 standards. To achieve this goal, the team members participated in five intensive trainings that equipped them with expertise and knowledge in the compliance and the certification process. As the initial step, the core team has kickstarted the internal reviewing process to assess the current practices of the processes and procedures in quality assurance. In two years, the NQA will launch the application to the Namibia Standards Institute for audits to determine the level of compliance in its process and procedures in the sector of higher education in quality assurance. Through the process, the NQA aims to improve its processes and procedures in its quality assurance functions, namely evaluation, accreditation, and registration of qualifications based on the National Qualification Framework, which will ultimately contribute to quality assurance in higher education.

Senegal

Study trip to France and Morocco for the implementation of a national qualification/certification framework

22 February - 2 March 2020



A delegation from the National Quality Assurance Authority for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (ANAQ-Sup) visited Paris (France) and Rabat (Morocco), from 22 February to 2 March, 2020. The delegation was led by the Executive Secretary of the ANAQ and attended by the Administrative and Technical Coordinator and the Head of the Division of Private Higher Education Institutions. The objective of study and

benchmarking trip was to allow ANAQ-SUP managers to exchange and learn from experiences and good practices of established quality assurance agencies in charge of developing and implementation of the national qualification/certification framework. The delegation visited the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, France competence, ENIC-NARIC and HCERES in France; and the Moroccan quality assurance agency and the secretariat of professional training and technical education in Morocco. A partnership agreement was signed between the ANAQ-Sup and the HCERES. Following the missions, the participants acquired a better understanding of the practical experiences of these countries in the fields mentioned above. The lessons thus learned have enabled officials of the ANAQ-Sup to better develop and implement a national qualification/certification framework, particularly in higher education and research.



Togo

Progress achieved in establishing the national quality assurance agency despite of disruptions by COVID-19

March - June 2020

The COVID-19 has exerted disruptions to the higher education sector since March in Togo. By intermenstrual press release, all universities and vocational training centers, were closed, as of Friday, March 20, 2020, in Togo. On 29 June, the Minister of Higher Education and Research reminded all higher education institutions to remain closed until further notice. Despite of the challenges, the steering team of the UNESCO-Shenzhen project in Togo endeavored to keep the project on track. The steering committee has completed a proposal for a financing strategy for the National Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and Research (ANAEQES) and submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research for validation. In addition, the team also initiated feasibility studies for the establishment of its national quality assurance agency, update of the cadaster of training programmes, research programmes and establishments to be assessed. Interim reports from these studies are expected to be finalized in July 2020, after which validation workshops will be organized as soon as conditions allow in Togo.