

# INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice: intricacies of the IQA for EQABs



**Presenters:**

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**June 1st**

**13:00 – 15:30 (London time)**

**2021**

**30**

**INQAAHE**

Since 1991

# A brief into the content: what to expect

- The workshop offers an interactive platform for setting a scene for establishment and operationalization of an internal quality assurance system for a quality assurance provider/accreditor in response to the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP) and beyond.
- It will offer a methodology, including a suite of tools for a QA body to productively integrate, make use of and benefit from the GGPs in a real-world scenario while at the same time unpack the intricacies crucial for success for any QA – diversity of contexts, human and resource capacity and uniqueness each culture prides of.

Expected learning outcomes in specific:

By the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Interpret the key international norms and trends related to QA of QA bodies and HE in general
- Initiate design of a robust QA system for success in both enhancement and external reviews
- Know-how on IQA to take the QA body to the next level of success, international recognition and trust.

A robust internal quality assurance is a guarantee for any quality assurance/accrediting body to ensure alignment with internationally recognized norms. It also supports and promotes organizational enhancement, efficiency and, therefore trust and success.

# The External Quality Assurance Evolution and Landscape

## INQAAHE Since 1991



### Evolution:

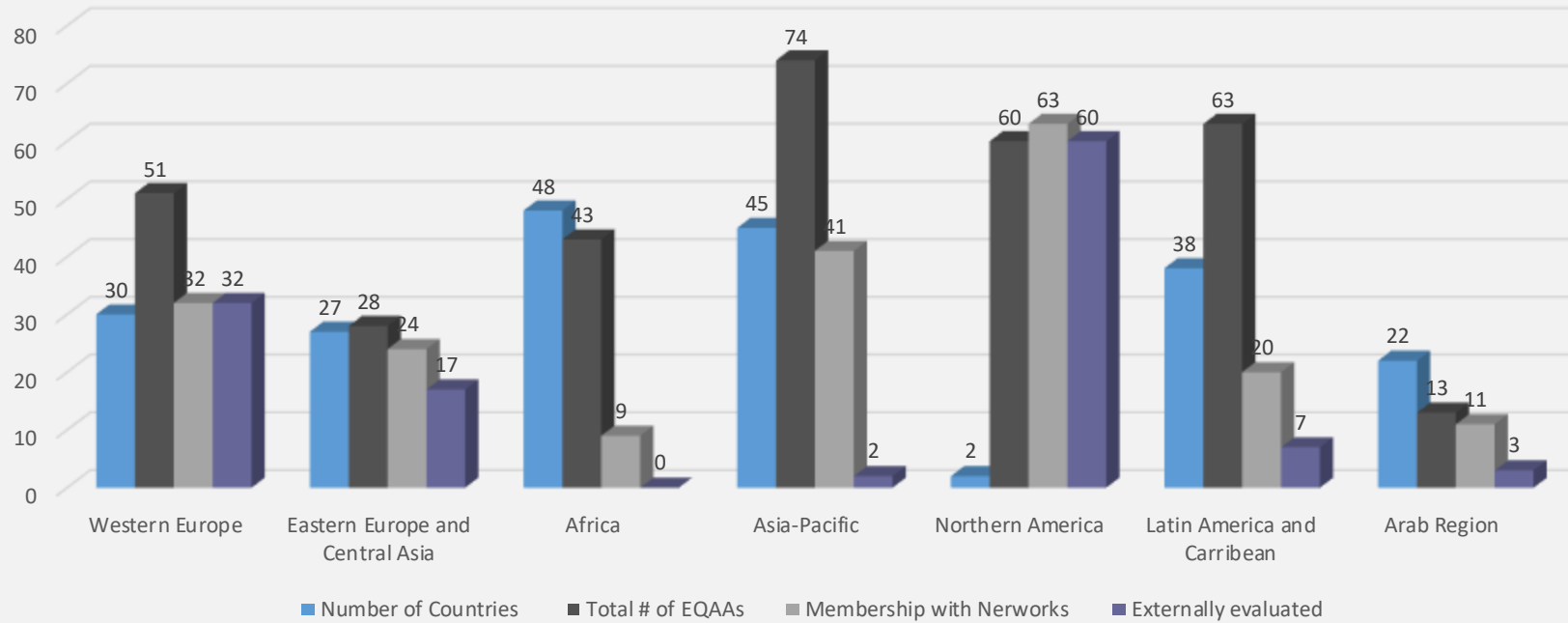
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> century: the USA
- 1960<sup>th</sup>: the UK
- 1980<sup>th</sup>: massification globally
- 1965: evaluation of evaluators in the USA by US Department of State
- 1991: first global network establishment

### Types of Networks:

- International
- Regional
- Special Interest
- Subject Specific

# QA: the landscape

Based on INQAAHE Global Study 2017-2019 (published 2020)



**Total number of EQAAs in the world: ~350**

**Total number of EQAAs that are members to a Network: 200**

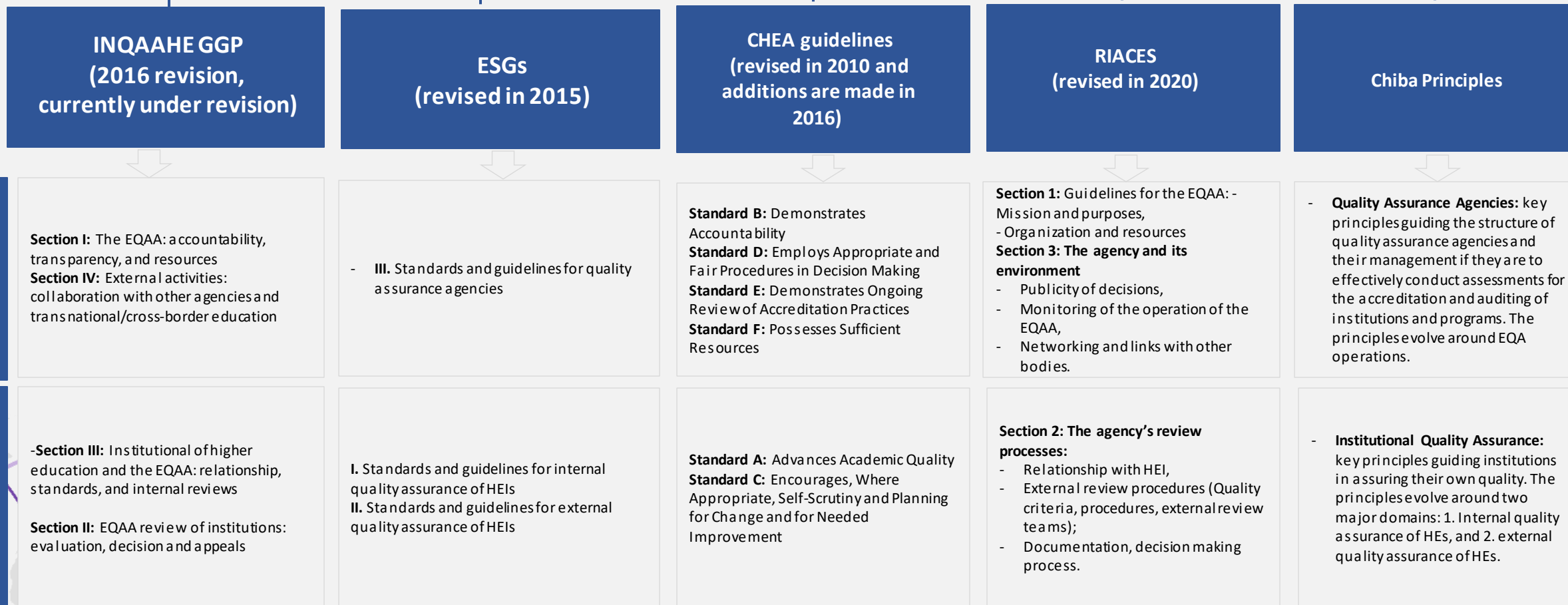
**EQAAs in target for the survey: 200**

**Total number of respondents to the survey: 106 (53%) out of which 28% are engaged in transnational QA.**

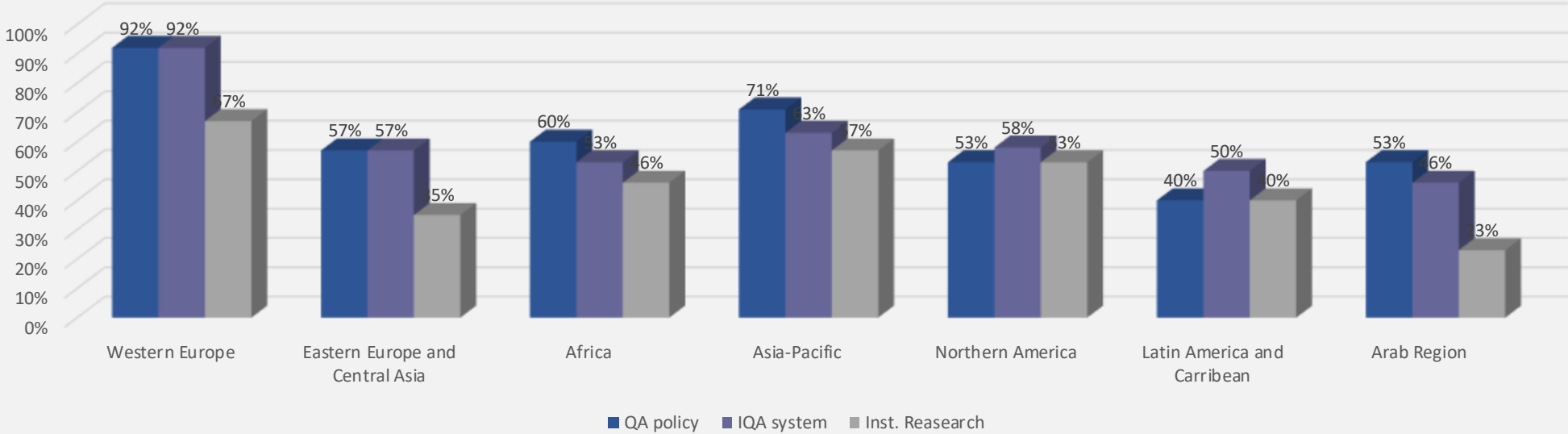
# External evaluation systems: a global overview

|                          | INQAAHE                        | ENQA   | USDE/CHEA  | RIACES                             | APQN                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Coverage                 | Worldwide                      | Europe | USA  | Latin America                      | Asia-Pacific        |
| Year of establishment    | 1991                           | 2000   | USDE/NACIQI<br>(reconvened in 2010)<br>CHEA (1996)   | 2003                               | 2003                |
| Standards/<br>guidelines | Guidelines of<br>Good Practice | ESGs   | NACIQI standards<br>CHEA (Eligibility<br>standards and Principles<br>for HE Internationally) | Guidelines of<br>Good<br>Practices | Chiba<br>Principles |

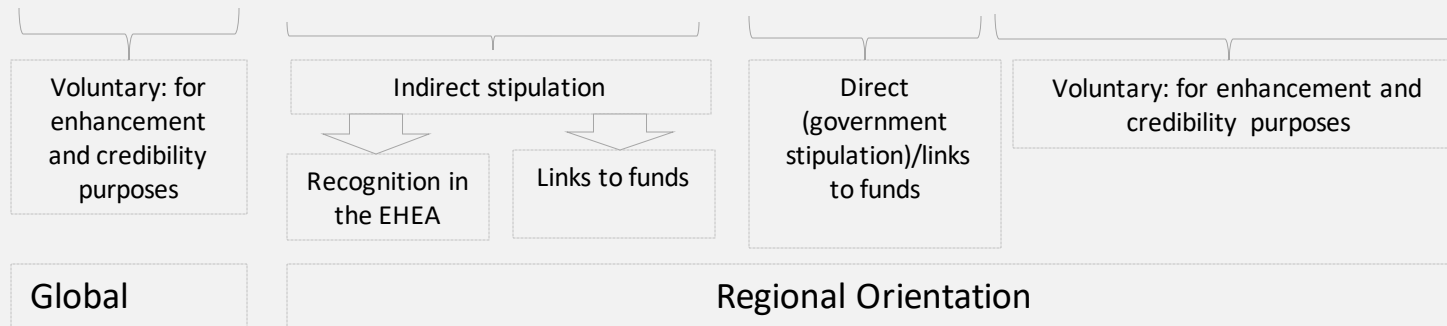
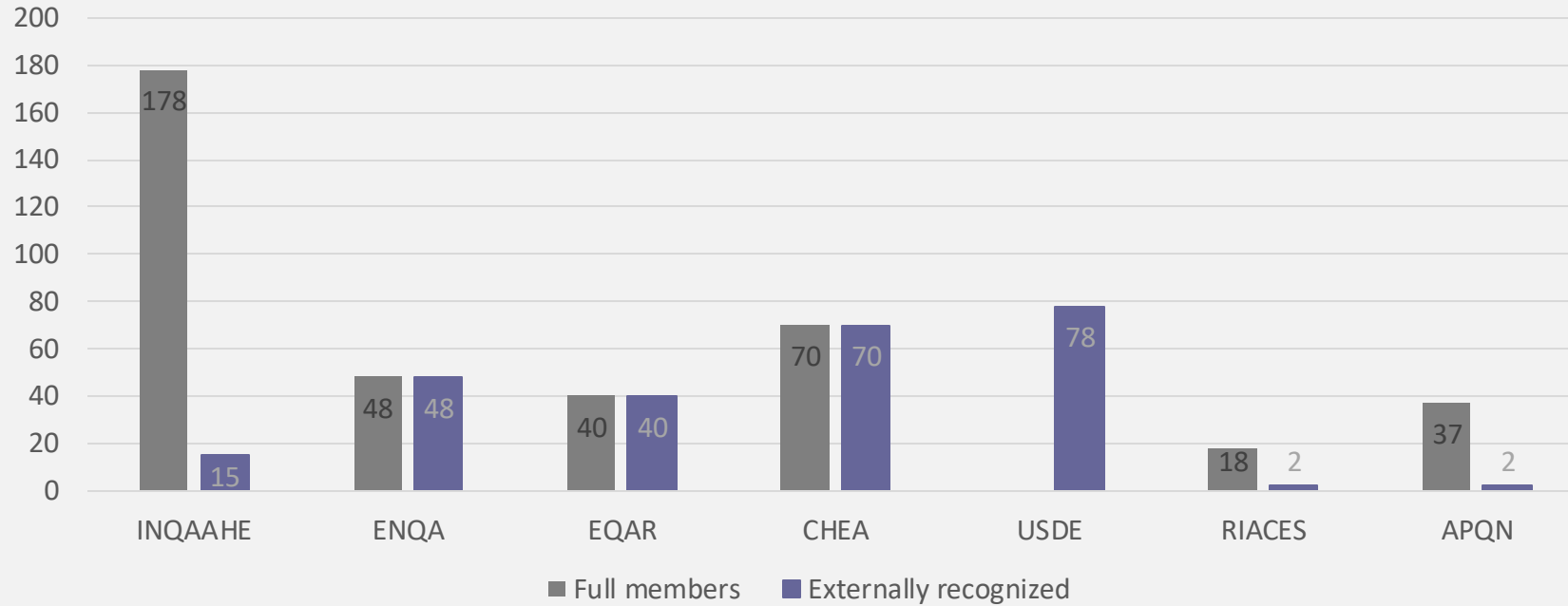
## OVERARCHING STANDARDS/GUIDELINES



# Internal quality assurance of EQAs: data as of 2018



# External quality assurance of EQAs: data as of 2018



**Different approaches to full membership: inclusive vs. exclusive**  
**Need to link to consequences to ensure the critical mass follows the procedure**



## Internal

Providing a firm platform for the quality assurance agencies in their daily operations and enhancement  
A self-reflection tool to improve and enhance the EQAA performance  
Professionalization of the EQAA  
Maintaining relevance of the EQAA  
Ensuring the EQAAs readiness to external scrutiny  
Encouraging and supporting good practice, thus, expanding potentials for collaboration with appropriate peers  
Promoting transparency in EQAAs operations worldwide

## External

- Safeguarding systems from bogus providers, thus, benefiting HE institutions, their students and societies at large
- Public assurance of the quality of the reviews at HEIs
- Mutual recognition of EQAA reviews
- Trust in operations and, therefore, more opportunities for meaningful and productive cooperation

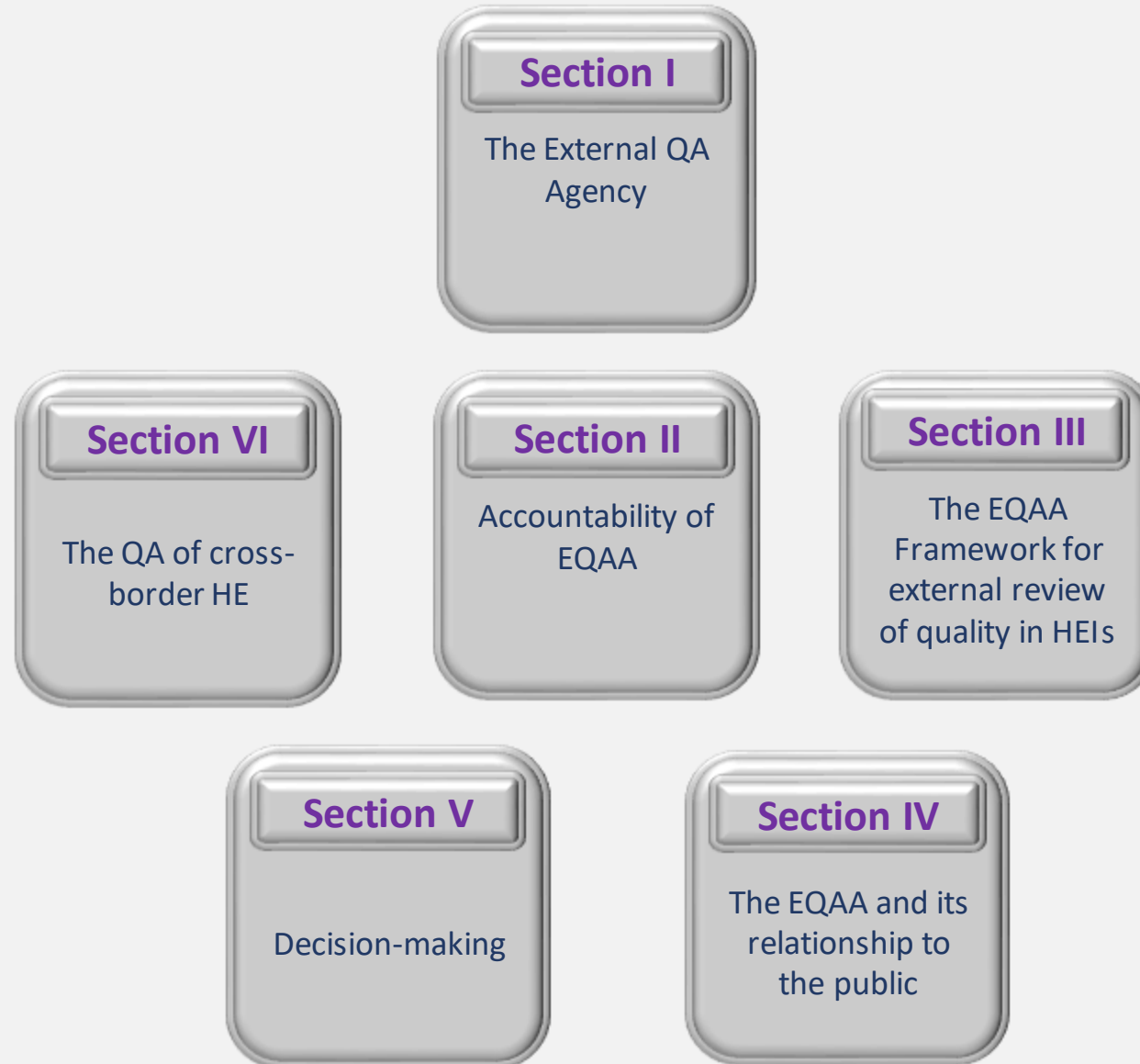
## GGP coverage

*“It helped big time to mold the DNA of our organization, keep finger on the pulse, and make the necessary changes to further improve and enhance”*

*“The benefits are multifold: but most importantly GGPs allow you to build on organizational strength from inside, thus ensuring trust and credibility in our operations and international visibility and recognition globally.”*



# The GGP: 2018 edition



# The INQAAHE key principles underpinning the GGP review:

An assessment matrix



|                        | Decision-Making Body | Secretariat/QA Body | Review Procedure | The Founding Body |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Legitimacy             | High                 | High                | Medium           | High              |
| Autonomy               | Medium               | High                | Medium           | High              |
| Accountability         | Medium               | Low                 | Low              | Medium            |
| Independence           | Medium               | Low                 | Low              | High              |
| Relevance              | Medium               | High                | High             | High              |
| Efficiency             | No                   | No                  | Medium           | High              |
| Transparency           | No                   | No                  | No               | High              |
| Stakeholder Engagement | High                 | No                  | High             | Medium            |
| Consistency            | Low                  | Low                 | Low              | Medium            |
| Professionalism        | Medium               | No                  | No               | High              |
| Integrity & Trust      | No                   | No                  | No               | High              |

Degree of alignment with international norms:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- No

# Internal QA of EQA body:

## GGP Section II: the key structure and elements

The EQAA has in place **policies and mechanisms** for its **internal quality assurance**, which demonstrate a **continuing effort to improve the quality and integrity** of its activities, its **response to the changes to the context** in which it operates and its links to **the international community of QA**.

### Intricacies of the IQA

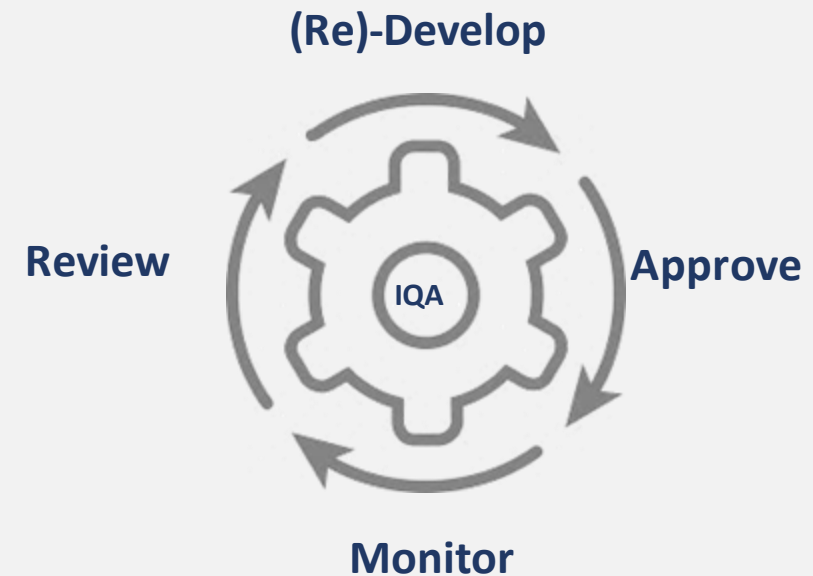
- Robust internal and external procedures in place
  - Public availability of all the governing documents, policies and procedures the EQAB is guided by
  - Links between the strategy, the finances, the QA mechanisms, annual reports
  - Robust operations and operational planning
  - Closure of the QA cycle, follow up on enhancement and improvement.
- SMART KPIs
  - Repository of evidences
  - Robust management information system
  - Database on all the key functions
  - Robust data analytics approach and methodology

# The IQA of EQA functions

## Purposes:

**Enhancement**  
**Accountability**  
**Control**

- Phase 1: Development
  - Standards, procedures, other key functions
- Phase 2: Approval
  - Procedure, decision-making
- Phase 3: Monitoring
  - Biannual and annual (for internal QA)
- Phase 4: Review
  - Cyclical (for internal and external QA)



# The Art of IQA of EQAA

## Tips from GGP Aligned Members

### *Transparency*

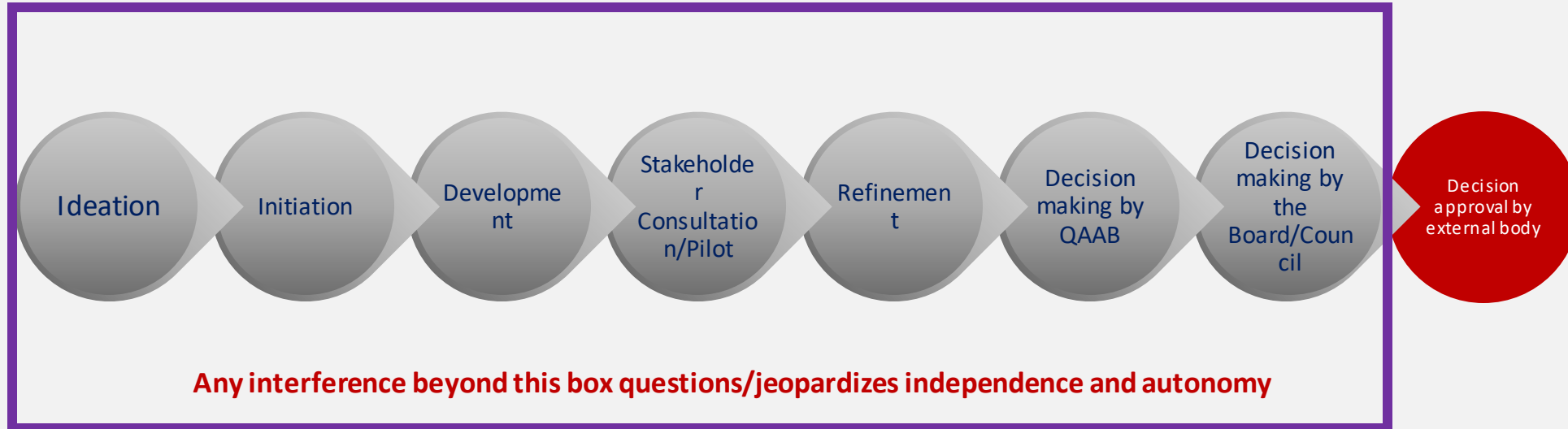
*It has to be clear that the objectives of the EQAAs are improving the quality of the education. Students are also our customers. So, it is very important to be very transparent (e.g. reporting in some way that future students can also understand...) and align the process with the stakeholders requirements.*

*Then IQA, is not only of “internal nature”.... It is “internal” but thinking of an improved performance of the external.*

*IMPORTANT: EQAAS are not organizations that prepare reports that nobody uses! We need to avoid this feeling!!! EQAAs must be organizations without which “HE life” is impossible 😊*

*This concept should be the key! There should be clear links between EQAA and stakeholders (in reality!!), including the ways in which agency reports to the government and the like... it is extremely important to enable the IQA of the QA body to explicitly link and impact the HE performance in general!*

# Approval: phases and units involved





# Annual monitoring: purpose and procedure

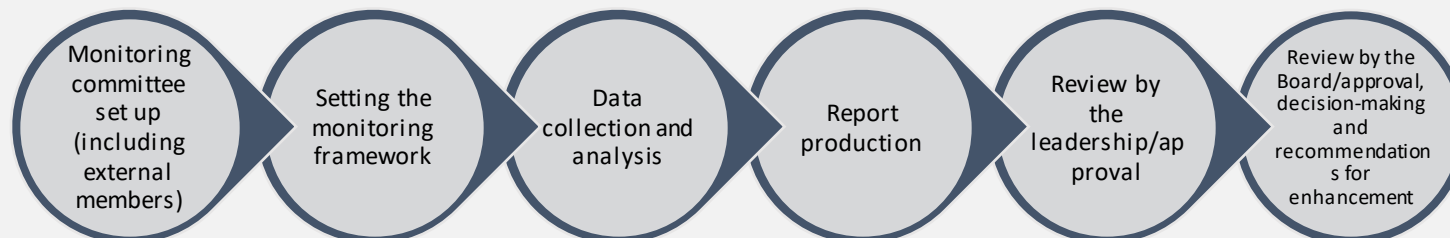
## Purposes:

- ❑ The target KPIs and quality standards are being met;
- ❑ The services offered are relevant to the needs;
- ❑ The measurement tools are relevant and valid;
- ❑ The organization maintains high standards of professionalism;
- ❑ Issues, challenges and potential risks are identified, addressed and mitigation plans are timely developed and operationalized;
- ❑ Analysis linked to follow up and enhancement.

## Potential sources of data:

- ❑ Analysis of internal and external environment and developmental trends
- ❑ Data on procedures/services offered (statistics from MIS):
  - ❑ The results of reviews/services
  - ❑ Analysis of progress since previous reviews/service provision
- ❑ Review of policies and procedures in terms of relevance and adequacy
- ❑ Outcomes of staff performance evaluation,
- ❑ Outcomes of capacity building of the staff
- ❑ Professional achievements of the staff, identification of gaps
- ❑ Financial performance
- ❑ Feedback from stakeholders

## Procedure:



## Tips from GGP Aligned Members

*“I think that the IQA is important for the objective of the company. And the objective is to improve the quality of the education! The students! Then, it is very important to manage the process that linked us with the students, future students, and so on.*

- *How our job is useful for the society?*
- *Which processes am I talking about? For example:*
- *Process for publishing the evaluation results (transparency) in a very compressive way for the students /parents /...*
- *Process for reporting “thematic analysis” or reports for the government in order to improve the quality of the education*

*It is important to discuss and talk about which processes are necessary (process map) for identifying added value for higher education and the external stakeholders at large.*

*Internally, the main ones are the ones that assure the independence of all the process. For example the process to manage the appeals committee or to manage the decisions Board.”*

# On self-evaluation....

## Definition

Self-assessment is an ongoing activity conducted by an organization to assess whether the services provided meet their objectives and socio-economic needs.



## Purpose

- To improve the intentions (purposes and goals), content, policies, procedures, services, organisational and intellectual environment and performance of the institution under scrutiny.
- To foster commitment by enacting the recommended improvements through participation in the study
- To enhance the capacity of the institution
- To yield the basis for informed decision-making (planning) about the future
- To yield written materials that can be used as the basis of external peer review and review by others within the larger institution or system.

Done with commitment and a wider excellence vision it will lead to the establishment of an organizational learning culture leading to continuous enhancement and excellence in provisions.

# The Self-Evaluation Report

## Self-Evaluation Report

- Should follow the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice outlined in the most recent official edition
- Should be analytical in nature, evidence-based and supported with respective references to the documentation
- A guide to the organizational set up
- A self-critical assessment – not just a description
- Identifying issues for consideration, with proposed actions
- A shared document representing a collective view
- Cross-referenced to sources of evidence

## Who can do it effectively?

### Dedicated team:

- The IQA staff
- A special committee set up for the purpose
- All the staff members
- External stakeholders

vs.

### Hired consultants

But, the desired impact can only be achieved with an inclusive approach of internal and external stakeholders

# Major sources of data and analysis

Performance outcomes (samples) and other evidences

## Performance outcomes

- Available at the EQAB or statistical office
- Existence of a robust MIS is a guarantee of success

## Statistical data

Feedback mechanisms, evaluation groups, which provide for qualitative information, e.g.:

- questionnaires, which are a powerful element if devised the right way
- discussion-oriented team work – “quality circles”, peer-reviewers (external and internal)
- focus groups, individual interviews and the like

## Stakeholder feedback

Provides a firm background for justification of current approaches and aspirations for the future

## Benchmarking

## Tips from GGP Aligned Members

*Sometimes IQMS could be seen as a tool to gather data (e.g. KPI, robust data base, etc...) and evidences. But the key is the capacity to analyze and manage these data!*

*It is better less data and more analysis than a lot of data without analysis.*

*In general, there are 4 levels of maturity of EQAAs and HEIs:*

- a. The ones that don't have any system at all*
- b. The ones that gather a lot of data and evidences... but they don't do any analysis (or very simple) with minimum level of benefit*
- c. The ones that gather a lot of data and evidences... and they do some analysis (and consequently improvement plans.... very long ones), with medium impact level*
- d. The ones that optimize the data to be collected, meaningfully linked to the analysis necessary to make an accurate judgement of the quality of performance..... and, consequently, produce simple and realistic improvement plans.*

*Probably many of the EQAAs are on the second level... so, there is a need to promote a meaningful approach.*

## Tips from GGP Aligned Members

*“ I think that it is much more important to do an in-depth analysis than collect an extensive amount of data that eventually leads to the data fatigue. It has to be clear that they don’t have to lose the time collecting evidences (this is what they usually do) if they are not used to... I am sure that they already have the evidences that they need. It is just the matter of identifying the data that matters and informs decision-making.”*

# Sample format for self-evaluation report

- One page
- An overview including
- A brief description of the arrangements
  - The
  - The

The text should be developed per each GGP and include:

- In-depth analysis of existing policies and procedures and their effectiveness supported by quantitative
- Factual information (reports), cross-refer
- Effectiveness of a pa
  - How this inform
  - enhancement p
  - where possible
  - Examples of the
  - systems and ins
  - SWOT analysis.

Appendices should indicate:

- how this information is used in quality control and assurance processes within the organization , giving examples where possible;
- examples of the effectiveness in the operation of quality assurance systems and instances of particularly good practice;
- The referenced documents (e.g. strategic plan, yearly and other plans, annual report);
- Analysis of surveys and any other study supporting the institutional operations
- Any other attachments/evidences to justify the case.

## Annexures



# Preparation for the external review

## Effective engagement with the external reviewer/coordinator

- Assign a dedicated full time person to liaise with the external reviewer
- Ensure all the items in the contract signed are clear
- Ensure the timelines are kept
- Regular meetings with the external review coordinator
- Clear understanding of all the items/events on the agenda

## Ownership of the Staff

- Dedicate significant amount of time to share, discuss and analyze the SER with all the staff, including the support staff
- Make sure all the staff is familiar with each statement in the SER, has his/her own view on it
- A promotional plan, including human and financial resource allocation, to guarantee the staff buy in would be highly effective

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Dedicate significant amount of time to share, discuss and analyze the SER with the key external stakeholders
- A promotional plan, including human and financial resource allocation, to guarantee the stakeholder buy in would be highly effective
- Transparency is the key for honest and meaningful engagement

## Technical aspects

- Ensure all the technicalities are taken care of for the site-visit, with consideration of respective arrangements for different modes of the site-visit (e.g. face-to-face, online)
- Make all the documents, evidences, portals and platforms easily accessible for the reviewers
- Ensure all the participants identified for the interviews are discussions turn up 30 mins prior to the meeting.

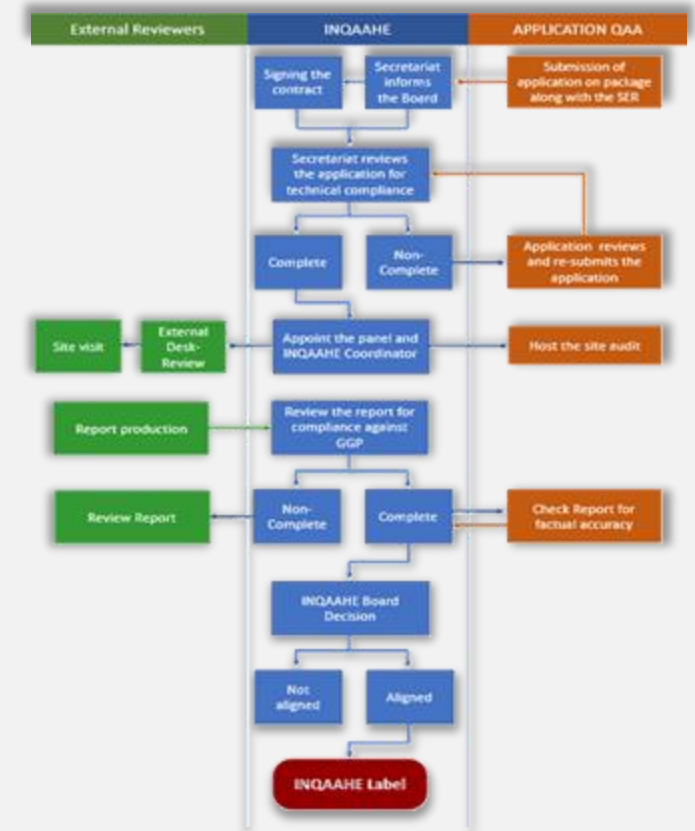
# Modes of reviews: specifics

Turning factors influencing the success of a procedure into key action lines/requirements for a review

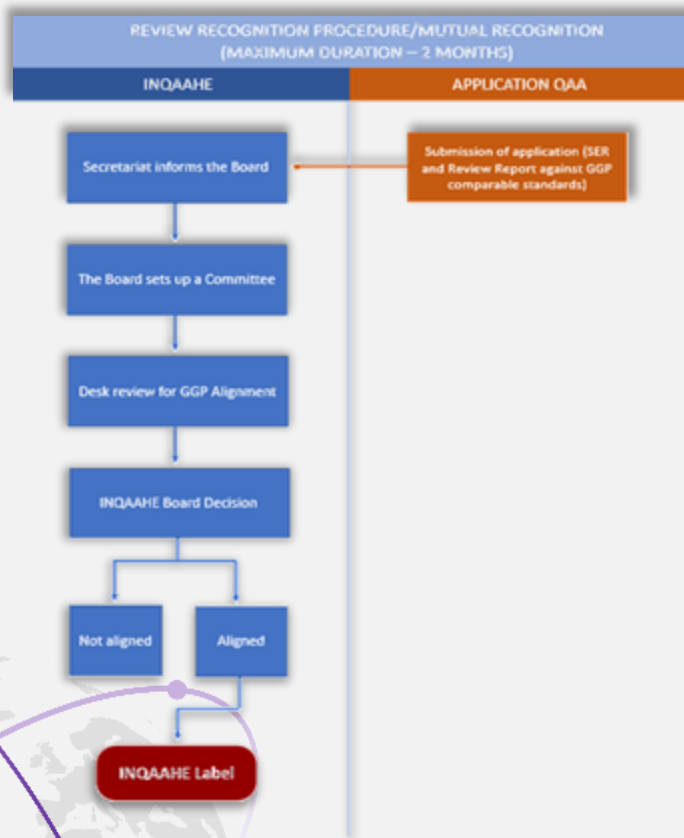
|                               | Face-to-face  | Online   | Hybrid   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Geography                     | International expertise   | International expertise  | International expertise  |
| Time-Zones                    | Same  | Different  | Different  |
| Length of site-visit          | 3-4 days (8 hours per day)                                      | ~10 days (~3 hours per day)  | ~10 days (~3 hours per day)  |
| Setting                       | Physical premises   | Proof of professional setting online   | Proof of professional setting online/physical  |
| Policies and documents        | Content available and accessible in physical and online format  | Content available and accessible in an online format, on the website; policies for regular update of the electronic sources          | Content available and accessible in physical and online format   |
| Technical Facilities          | Hardware & software   | Hardware, software, procedure coordination portals, review/collaboration platforms, other ICT facilities, stable internet connection | Hardware, software, procedure coordination portals, review/collaboration platforms, other ICT facilities, stable internet connection |
| Databases                     | Database of experts   | Database of experts accessible online  | Database of experts accessible online  |
| Management Information System | A portal for data collection, storage, analysis and forecasting | A portal for data collection, storage, analysis and forecasting  | A portal for data collection, storage, analysis and forecasting  |
| Security & Protection         | Data and other confidential information is protected            | Authentication, protection and security of data and confidential information   | Authentication, protection and security of data and confidential information   |
| Technical requirements        | Meeting/conference rooms  | Cameras on, professional setting, proof of resources   | Cameras on, professional setting, proof of resources, physical meeting & conference rooms  |
| Professionalism               | Expertise in the field  | Expertise in the field and facilitation of reviews online  | Expertise in the field and facilitation of reviews online  |

# Path 1: GGP Alignment through Review

- Through an evaluation carried out by INQAAHE
- Self evaluation against the EQAA's mission and the GGP
- An external review organized by INQAAHE
- A decision on alignment
- Award of the INQAAHE label
- Inclusion in the register of GGP Aligned EQAAs



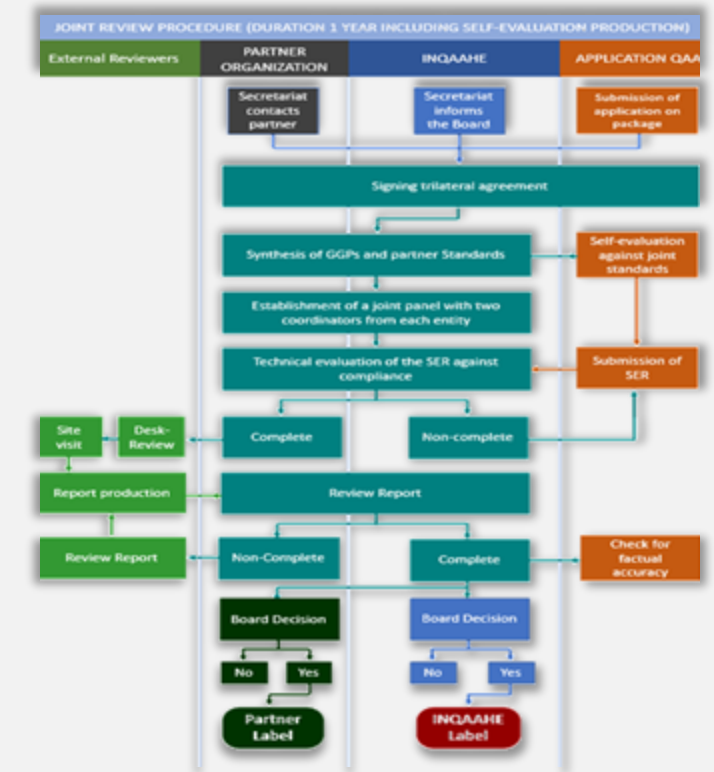
# Path 2: GGP Alignment through Recognition



- Through the provision of independent evidence of the alignment by a credible and reputable external organization
- Presentation of the criteria and procedures applied
- External review report and the decision made by the agency
- INQAAHE recognition
- Award of the INQAAHE label
- Inclusion in the register of GGP Aligned EQAAs

# Path 3: GGP Alignment through Joint Review

- Through an evaluation carried out jointly by INQAAHE and other reputable external evaluator
- Synthesis of the criteria of both the external evaluators
- Single review procedure two separate decisions and awards of recognition
- Award of two labels (INQAAHE and the other evaluator)
- Inclusion in the register of GGP Aligned EQAAs



# External quality assurance of EQAAs: recognition procedure, costs and implications



**Expert panel:** international peers

**Consequence:** Recognition and inclusion in the register

**Cost range:** \$15000 - \$40000

**Frequency:** cyclical

**Cost for alignment of already recognized bodies:** \$3000

# Review Timeline – approx. 6~7 months to complete

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 3 months | between the submission of the SER and the actual site visit  |
| ~1 month | between the site visit and the submission of the external review report to the applicant agency by the review Panel (might take 1 week longer in online and hybrid mode)     |
| 2 weeks  | between the receipt of the site visit report and submission of the agency's response to the report, along with any factual corrections, back to the review Panel             |
| 2 weeks  | between the receipt of the agency's response and the final submission of the Panel's review report to INQAAHE  |
| 1 month  | between the receipt of the external review materials by INQAAHE's Recognition Committee and submission of its recommendations to the full INQAAHE Board for decision-making. |
| 1 month  | between forwarding of review materials and notification of the Recognition Committee's recommendations to the INQAAHE Board and final decision being made by the Board       |

# Break out session

**You have 20 minutes to reveal your best!**

- Break out into four groups
- Pick up a hypothetical QA set up
- Identify key functions and structure for the QA Body
- Design an IQA for the EQA

## Types of QA bodies to explore during break out session

- Government/national
- Private
- Professional association
- University association



# The INQAAHE key principles underpinning the GGP review:

An assessment matrix



|                        | Decision-Making Body  | Secretariat/QA Body   | Review Procedure  | The Founding Body                               |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Legitimacy             | Establishment law, mandate, operations                                  | Legal incorporation, license  | Acceptance by the HE community  | Affiliation                                     |
| Autonomy               | Functional, staffing, financial, organizational                         | Functional, staffing, financial, organizational   | Functional, staffing, financial, organizational                         | Functional, staffing, financial, organizational |
| Accountability         | Accountability balanced with autonomy                                   | Accountability balanced with autonomy   | Accountability balanced with autonomy                                   | Accountability balanced with autonomy           |
| Independence           | No second party interference in the decision making                     | No interference in operations   | No third party interference in the procedure                            | Engagement in the procedure                     |
| Relevance              | Review Standards linked with socio-economic needs                       | Mandate of the body aligned with the needs in the system                                      | Constructive review procedure   | Setting directives                              |
| Efficiency             | Performance to highest quality within specified timeframe and resources | Performance to highest quality within specified timeframe and resources                       | Performance to highest quality within specified timeframe and resources | Engagement in operations                        |
| Transparency           | Functional, regulatory, procedural, operational                         | Functional, regulatory, procedural, operational   | Functional, regulatory, procedural, operational                         | Engagement in operations                        |
| Stakeholder Engagement | Levels and extent of engagement   | Levels and extent of engagement   | Levels and extent of engagement   | Levels and extent of engagement                 |
| Consistency            | Consistency of evaluation across the sector                             | Consistency of evaluation across the sector and ability to cover the system in a single cycle | Consistency of evaluation across the sector                             | Setting directives                              |
| Professionalism        | Capacity and competencies for decision making                           | Competencies for organizational leadership, management and administration                     | Competent coordinators and external expert pool                         | Setting directives                              |
| Integrity & Trust      | Procedural, professional  | Procedural, professional  | Procedural, professional  | Setting directives                              |

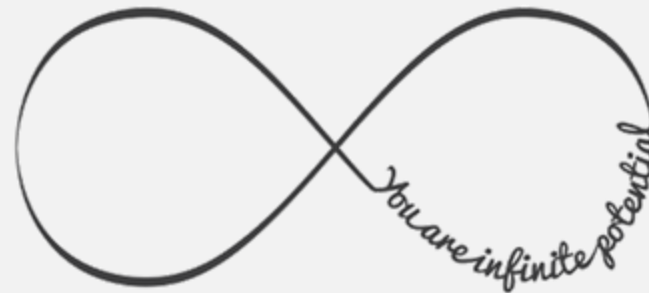
Degree of alignment with international norms:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- No

# Embrace meaningful change: the more you resist it the more it will defeat you

*“To improve is to change;  
to perfect is to change often”.*

— Winston S. Churchill



# Revision of the GGP: International Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

## Generic Standards

Generic standards for all types of QA providers

## Specific standards to tailor to the profile of a QA provider

Institutional

Programs (generic)

Programs (subject-specific)

Transnational

Micro-credentials

## Specifically designed to address maturity level of the EQAP

**Beginner**  
(2-5 years in operation)

**Advanced**  
(10-20 years in operation)

**Mature**  
(20+ years in operation)

The scope of the external review will be defined based on the profile of the quality assurance or accreditation body

Validity of 5 years, renewable



The Book provides a comprehensive coverage of the trends and developments in HE quality assurance as they refer to *legitimacy/trust, efficiency and relevance* across all the regions in the world.

- First ever global study on internal and external QA of higher education;
- Region-specific trends and challenges in internal and external QA;
- Comparative analysis of higher education QA developments across the regions:
  - Africa
  - Arab States
  - Asia-Pacific
  - Eastern Europe
  - Latin America and Caribbean
  - Northern America
  - Western Europe

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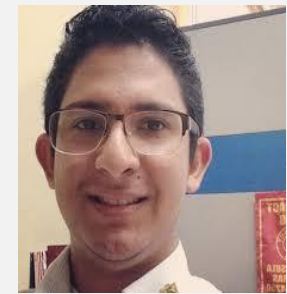
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6/15/2021

# Thank you

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