



Policy Dialogue

Jakarta, 24-25 August 2015

Quality Assurance in the ASEAN Region

State of Affairs and Development Needs

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Agenda

- Rationale of the Study
- Theoretical and Methodological Approach
- Data & Outcomes of the Field Work
- Preliminary Findings
- Preliminary Recommendations to the SHARE-Project



Rationale of the Study

- Stock-taking of the current regional state of the art in the field of QA
- Enable evidence-based SHARE activities in the field of (external) QA
- Foster opportunities and challenges for the implementation of regional QA
- Direct SHARE activities in the field of QA to specific stakeholder needs



Theoretical and Methodological Approach

- Theory
 - Organisational Theory
 - Talk-Decision-Action (Brunsson, 1992)
 - Talk Level: communication of plans and strategies by policy-makers
 - Decision Level: establishing structures for the implementation of these strategies
 - Action Level: actual modes of implementation
 - ➔ Talk – decision – action are loosely coupled
 - ➔ Universities follow their own rationality (autonomy)
 - ➔ How to couple talk – decision – action for successful QA?



Theoretical and Methodological Approach

- Methods
 - Desktop Analysis
 - Talk Level: What is the national strategy and legal framework?
 - Sources: policy papers, legal documents
 - Field Work
 - Decision & Action: What do actors “on the ground” do?
 - Sources: expert interviews, focus group discussions
 - Focus on CLMV countries
 - 4/6 countries in the sample for the case studies: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam



Data

- Desk research on QA on all 10 ASEAN member states
 - Publicly available documents (either engl. or translated)
 - Prior Research (SEAMEO study, 2012 and national studies)
- 26 Expert Interviews from 6 countries with representatives of
 - Universities (13)
 - QA agencies (9)
 - Ministries (4)
- 5 Focus Group Discussions with University staff (32 QA officers from 8 countries)

..and some more to come.



Outcomes of the Field Work

- Country Fact Sheets for all ASEAN member-countries
 - Document analyses of policy papers, etc.
- 6 Case Studies (expert interviews, focus group discussions)
 - Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam

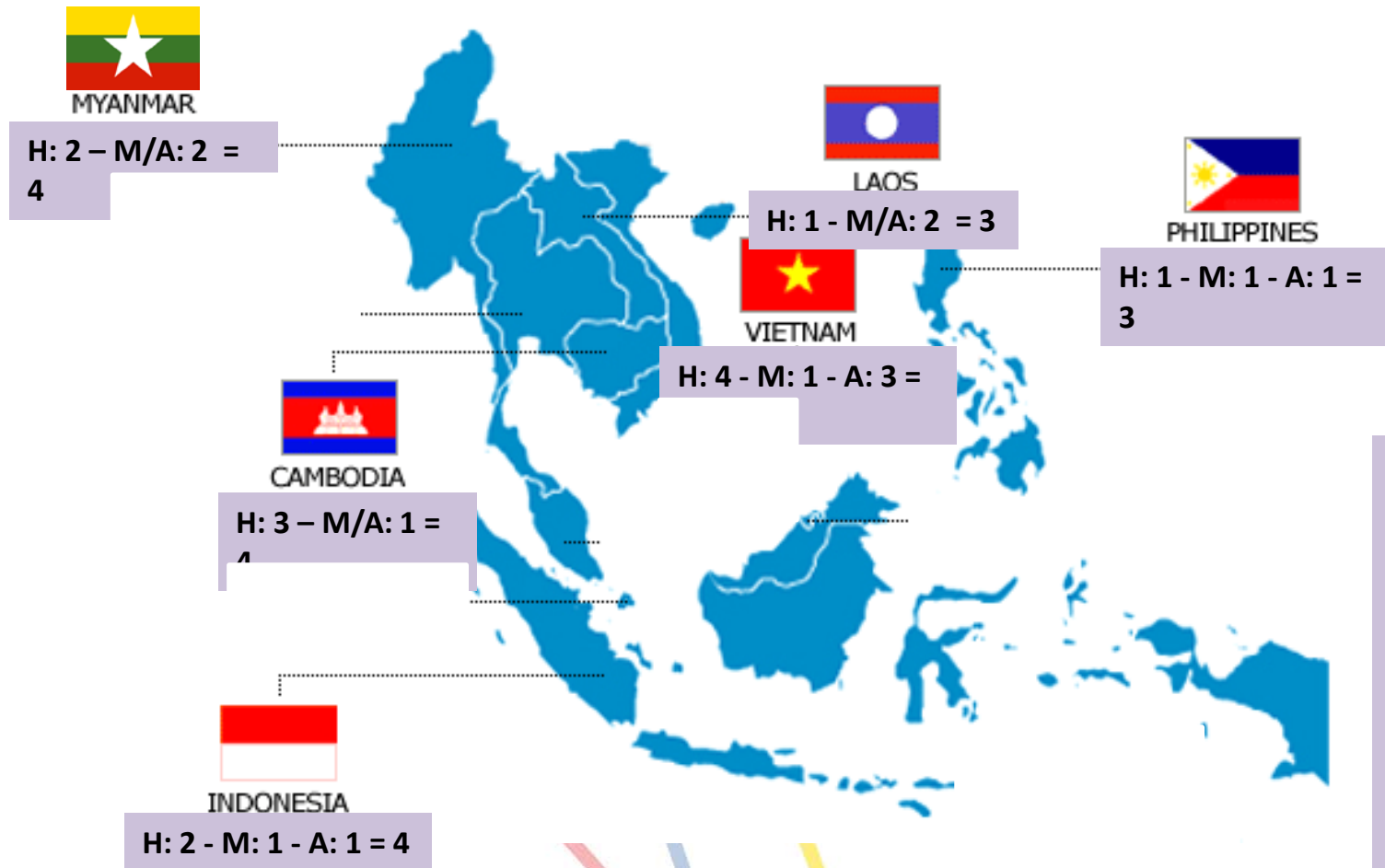
Interviews



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National case study interviews, total: 26 in 6 countries





State of Affairs of National QA Systems

- EQA systems are diverse and at different stages of development, many are currently in transition:
 - Consolidated: Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore,
 - Consolidated in transition: Indonesia
 - New in transition: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam
 - New comer: Myanmar

Accreditation is common denominator, although differently practiced (institutional/ programme or both, voluntary/compulsory, QA body independent/part of ministry, multiple authoritative ministries)



Preliminary Findings 1

Example for discrepancies between talk, decision & action

- Acceptance of harmonising regional standards for QA...
 - ...is higher in new-coming countries due to low trust in their own standards (*talk level*)
 - What does that mean for the elaboration of national standards for QA structures (*decision-making level*)
 - ➔ elaboration of national / institutional structures and procedures is in danger to get stuck while waiting for regional policies to be enacted (*action level*).
 - ➔ SHARE: not neglecting national standards and systems in favour of the regional framework.



Preliminary Findings 2

Trend to more autonomy

- HEI and QA-agencies enjoy more autonomy and self-responsibility.
 - Autonomy is “opportunity and challenge at the same time”
 - Need to gather experiences with efficiently managing the university / the QA-agency and respective procedures.
 - Regardless of autonomy: top-down policies are needed to avoid confusion (“Yet another set of standards”).
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- ➔ SHARE: support with clarifying the different functions of EQA and IQA
 - ➔ promote exchange of experiences **within** the region (and beyond):
“What is good higher education governance in the ASEAN context?”



Preliminary Findings 3

Confusion

- Too many different and sometimes contradictory standards
- Procedures are not settled, many different actors in the field
- Functions of the different instruments (e.g. AUN-QA does not replace national accreditation...!)
- Purposes of (national) EQA procedures are unclear.

➔ SHARE: elaborate a synopsis of approaches to QA, what is the common ground? Suggestions for a communication strategy.



Preliminary Findings 4

Urgent Needs EQA

- Support for establishment and implementation of national QA mechanisms (particularly new-comer countries)
- HR and capacity building: assessor training, EQA management
- Professionalisation at the Ministry level: field-knowledge in higher education management.
- Regional exchange of (national) systems.



Preliminary Findings 5

Urgent Needs IQA

- Management capacities (e.g. setting up QA offices)
- Setting up effective IQA structures: involvement of faculty in the process
- IQA not only as a control instrument, rather strategic management (meaning of SAR's)
- Regarding contents: curriculum design, learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategy / quality.



Recommendations to the SHARE Project

- Support Change Management at all levels
 - “Unfreezing”: raising awareness for the need to promote QA harmonisation
 - “Changing”: facilitate trainings on QA, best practices from ASEAN & EU
 - “Refreezing”: consolidation of successful practices
- Support Modernisation of University Governance
 - Uncertainties, redundancies, etc. are a big issue: What standards to follow?
 - QA as a strategic instrument has not yet been discovered by universities and Ministries
- Use the European Experiences
 - Bologna implementation looked pretty much the same in its beginning... (Yerevan communiq )



Thank you very much for your attention!

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