
LESSONS LEARNT AND NEW CHALLENGES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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The Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

- Founded in Hong Kong in January 2003.
- Incorporated as an association in December 2004 in the State of Victoria, Australia.
- Secretariat is hosted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency.



Membership:

57 members and
6 observers from
27 countries

Mission

To enhance 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.

Objectives

- Promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Provide advice and expertise to assist in the development of new quality assurance agencies in the region.

- Develop links between quality assurance agencies and acceptance of each others' decisions and judgments.
- Assist members determine standards of institutions operating across national borders.
- Facilitate recognition of qualifications throughout the region.
- Enhance mobility of students between institutions and member nations.

Development Grant Facility

In 2004, APQN became the first network to receive a 3-year World Bank Development Grant Facility (DGF) to strengthen its institutional capacity and the technical capacity of its member organizations.

Activities supported by the DGF grant:

- Workshops and conferences to build quality assurance capacity in developing countries/territories.
- Consultancies and external reviewer services to quality assurance agencies in developing countries/territories.
- Regional staff exchanges and secondments for capacity building.

- Project groups and regional information clearinghouse.
- Liaison with other regional organizations working on quality assurance.

Highlights of the Evaluation Review of the APQN

- DGF funding and in-kind contributions from individuals and member agencies have enabled APQN to target the establishment of QA agencies in many countries.
- It has strengthened practices that support the enhancement, reform and renewal of emerging and developed QA assurance systems.

- APQN has well defined procedures and organizational administrative framework and has succeeded in delivering programs and other activities to build QA capacity within the region.
- It has created a critical mass of resources, networks and expertise to ensure that the benefits of the Network are maintained.

Impact

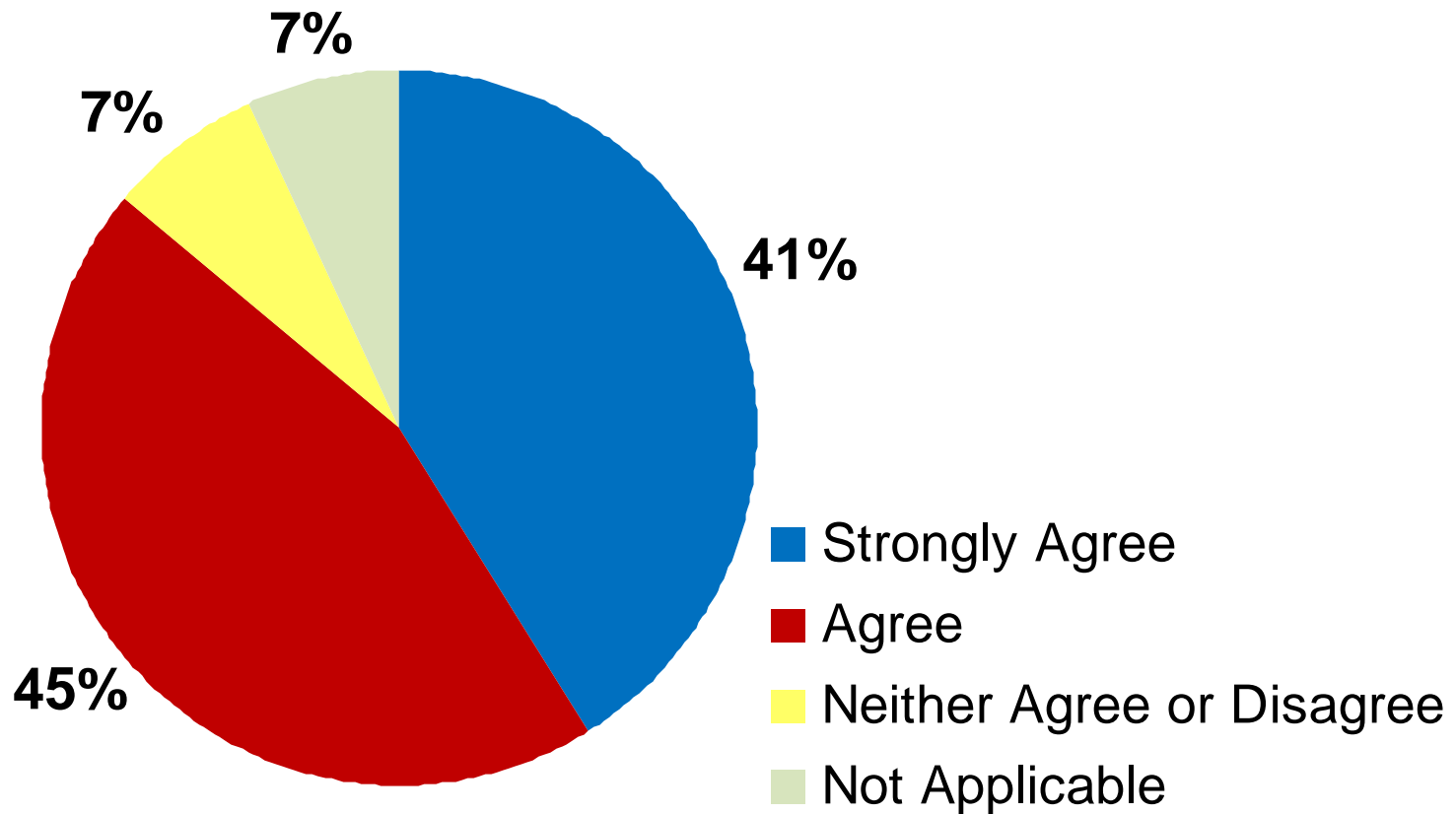
Most impact has occurred:

- in improving QA mechanisms across national systems in various countries,
- in the exchange of ideas and of expertise,
- in enhanced institutional capabilities, and
- in promoting communication and cooperation between agencies and institutions.

Countries where workshops, conferences and training programs were conducted

- Australia
- Bangladesh
- China
- Fiji
- India
- Japan
- Lao PDR
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Vietnam

Extent to which APQN activities have contributed to capacity building



Lessons learnt:

- A regional approach is an efficient and cost effective mechanism to deliver capacity building across a wide and diverse region.
- The regional approach has led to greater capacity to learn and share.

- The regional model serves to develop higher education QA systems more quickly and efficiently.
- The subject of educational quality is global, but the work of QA, for the most part, is local.
- International cooperation and commitment towards building capacity in QA as demonstrated by the World Bank and UNESCO are yielding positive results.

Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC)

a partnership between **World Bank** and **UNESCO** to support capacity building in quality assurance of higher education in developing countries and countries in transition.

Purposes of GIQAC

- To serve as a worldwide vehicle to build capacity for quality assurance in developing countries and countries in transition
- To support regional training and knowledge-sharing activities and engender a coherent global programme of activities
- To assist emerging quality assurance systems in building capacity by sharing information on good practices from around the world, facilitating communication and supporting the production of analyses and guidelines.

Approved GIQAC Projects

- APQN Website: Expansion/Maintenance and Database Development
- Internship and Cross-regional Staff Exchange Programme
- Training Materials and Resource Package
- Chinese Translation Project

New Challenges

- Creating a strong sense of ownership among its members
- Becoming a sustainable network valued by all stakeholders
- Developing other internet-based knowledge sharing and capacity building tools for QA

- Training external reviewers in developing countries to undertake QA exercises in their home countries

Thank you!