Outcomes of the EUniQ project: framework & policy papers

IMINQA, WG on QA of European Universities

Kick-off Meeting (online), 17 June 2022

Dr. Mark Frederiks, NVAO

Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (EUniQ)

- Erasmus+ – Key Action 3 – Support to the Implementation of EHEA reforms
- Linked with Bologna Peer Support Group on QA
- May 2019 – November 2021
- https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq

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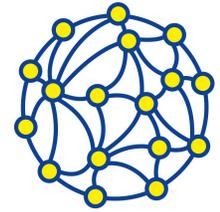
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Partner Organisation, Country, Role in project

1 Flemish Community, Belgium, Applicant, Chair of Resonance Group, Ministry

2 NVAO, Netherlands/Flanders, Affiliated entity, QA agency, Chair Roadmap Group

3 Ministry of Education and Sport, Albania, Resonance Group, Ministry

4 Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, Resonance Group, Ministry

5 Hcerés (representing Ministry), France, Resonance Group, Ministry

6 Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia, Resonance Group, Ministry

7 Ministry of Education, Romania, Resonance Group, Ministry

8 ANQA, Armenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency

9 AAQ, Switzerland, Roadmap Group, QA agency

10 NAKVIS, Slovenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency

11 AIC, Latvia, Roadmap Group, QA agency

12 UKÄ, Sweden, Roadmap Group, QA agency

13 NEAQA, Serbia, Roadmap Group, QA agency

14 ANVUR, Italy, Roadmap Group, QA agency

15 EUA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation

16 ENQA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation

17 ESU, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation

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Main outcomes

- European Framework for the Comprehensive Quality Assurance of European Universities

- 4 pilot evaluations

- Policy papers by Resonance Group:
  - European Universities, legal frameworks and the ESG. Some recommendations
  - Analysis of the proposed methodology

- QA Development Roadmap

European Framework for the Comprehensive Quality Assurance of **European Universities**

Purpose of the QA Framework

- Now starting phase of European Universities, setting up internal QA, possibilities to experiment
- At some point joint provision is likely to be subject to external QA (e.g. accreditation of joint programmes, institutional reviews)
- Multiple, potentially contradictory, less suitable external QA procedures could become problematic
- **Ultimate aim** is that alliances can be evaluated with 1 European QA Framework and 1 QA procedure

Stakeholders involved in the development of the Framework

- Survey on internal/external QA perspectives of first 17 alliances

- Workshop Rome, 23-24 Oct 2019

- Comments on Draft QA Framework by alliances and Resonance Group

- Pilot evaluations and webinars (2020-2021)

- Dissemination seminar (27 Sept 2021)

- Finalisation by EUniQ Roadmap Group

Evaluation criteria

- **Criteria** describe what is expected from a fully developed European University

- **Reference points** indicate for each criterion relevant elements of the European Universities Initiative call

- Evaluation of the **stage of development** allows to adapt expectations to reality of current early stage
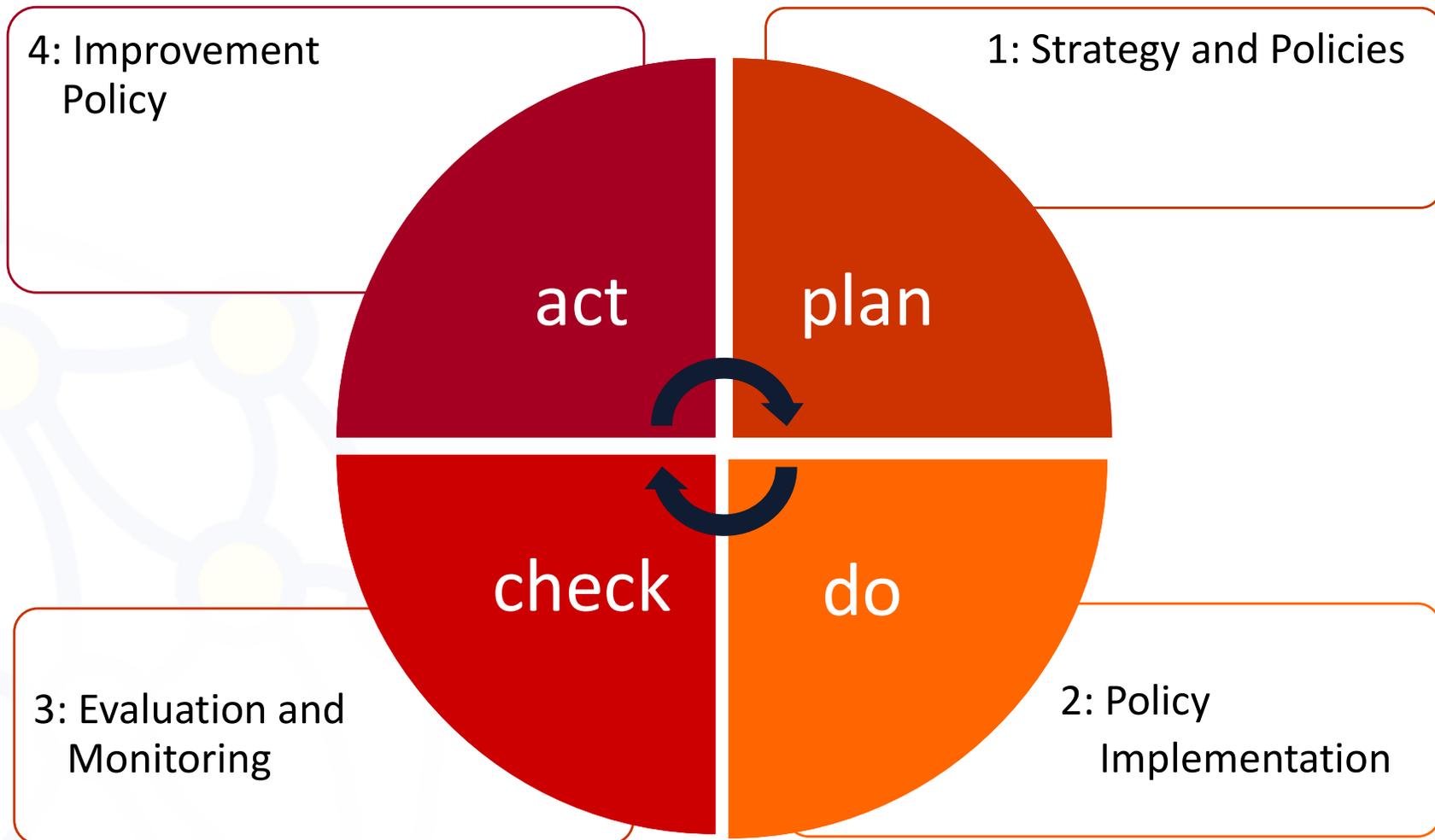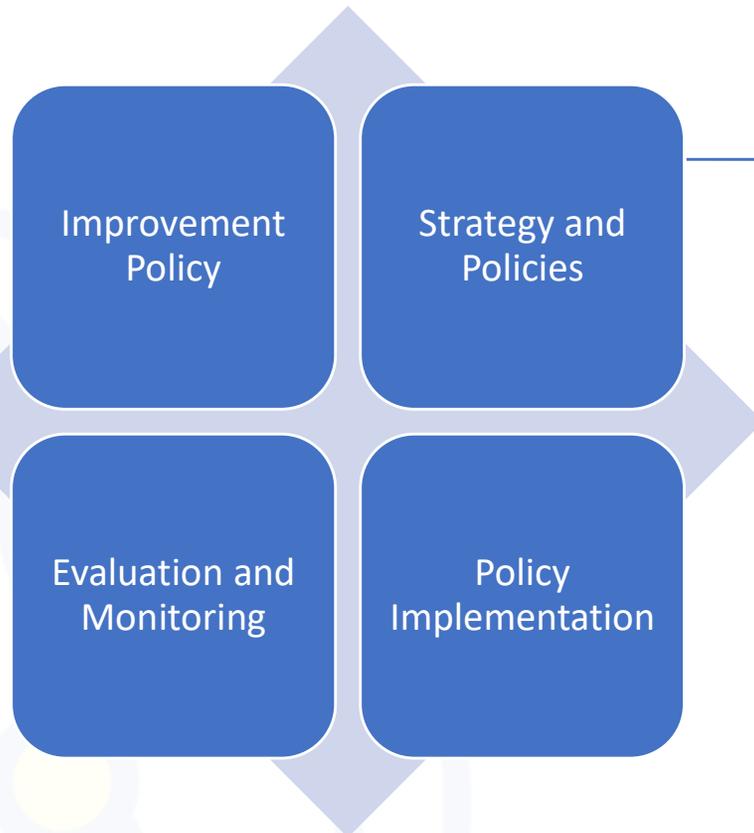
Criteria based on evaluation questions

- What is the European University's **vision** on the quality of its education and, where possible, the links to research, innovation and service to society?

- How will the European University **realise** its vision?

- How does the European University **monitor** to what extent its vision is actually realised?

- How is the European University working on **improvement**?

- How is the quality of the European University's provision assured in an internationally accepted manner (**ESG**)?

Criteria follow PDCA cycle

4: Improvement Policy

1: Strategy and Policies

act

plan

check

do

3: Evaluation and Monitoring

2: Policy Implementation

Criteria and reference points

Improvement Policy

Strategy and Policies

Evaluation and Monitoring

Policy Implementation

4 reference points for each criterion, e.g. for Strategy and Policies:

The European University's strategy and policies enable the realisation of an inter-university 'campus' which assures, in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, the quality of a joint provision that responds to societal challenges.

1. Vision on quality of education etc.
2. Involvement of all stakeholders
3. Challenge-based approach
4. QA policies for joint provision aligned with ESG

Stage of development

- Panel evaluates within context of the stage of development of the European University

- For each criterion what still needs/started to be developed, and partially/already developed

- Respecting timelines and choices made

- Findings and recommendations focus on how strengths and further development of internal QA can contribute to successful realisation of alliance's strategy and sustainability

Evaluation procedure: report

- Findings, analysis, conclusions regarding criteria, recommendations

- Confidential report with recommendations for further development

- Public summary

https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq-pilot-evaluation-reports

Note: these were pilot evaluations but ESG require publication of full reports

Pilot evaluations

- Evaluation of alliances, testing the Framework, and evaluation of pilots

- Online evaluations (instead of site visits-COVID measures) with 4 alliances and their stakeholders

- Alliances participating in the pilot evaluations:
  - EUTOPIA
  - UNA Europa
  - UNITE!
  - YUFE

Evaluation of the pilots

Elements of Framework	Evaluation of pilots	Implication for Framework
Criteria	Suitable but early days, especially for evaluation of Improvement Policy	Keep criteria but plan site visit preferably after setting up internal QA system
Reference points	Focused on long-term development; focus of alliance more on current EU project	Clarify long-term perspective; flexibility regarding reference points
Stage of development	Starting phase, different timelines (EU project, strategy 2025, 2050,…) can be confusing	Include first meeting between alliance and panel to clarify development stage of alliance and mutual expectations

Preliminary meeting (online)

Information provided to the panel (SER)

Composition of the panel (at least 5 trained experts)

Site visit (at 1 location for at least 2 days, involving partners and stakeholders)

Evaluation report (public, in English, collegiate advise)

Select at least one QA agency that is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

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Analysis by Resonance Group of proposed methodology

- Possible obstacles:

  - Unequal QA treatment of HEIs in or out of alliances ("lighter touch?")

  - In some countries accreditations by a foreign EQAR-registered agency are not accepted

  - Procedures and accreditations must be in national language: translation from English

- Answer to question "Could the EUniQ framework be used in your country" varies according to legislation

- Relationship with European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes and QA of online learning/micro-credentials
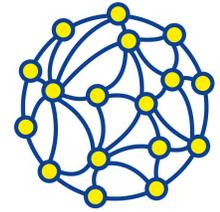
European Universities, legal frameworks, ESG: some recommendations by Resonance Group

- Focus on the level of the alliance
- Take the complete remit of each European University alliance into account
- Respect and strengthen Bologna key commitments
- Define a clear focus of the quality assurance process
- Facilitate collaborations and support trust among actors

Roadmap for the implementation of the **European Framework**

Principles for implementing QA for European Universities

- Internal and external QA for European Universities compliant with ESG

- European University primary responsible for QA of its provision

- Evaluations of European Universities should respect internal QA, diversity, academic freedom and autonomy

- Evaluations should include all missions, respecting choices made

- Evaluations should focus on joint provision of alliance (not assessment of each HEI/programme/course)

Principles for implementing QA for European Universities

- Evaluation could support and simplify assessment with European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

- Flexibility and openness in applying European Framework needed

- European Universities can choose 1, 2 or more EQAR-registered agencies

- National authorities to consider using evaluation results for national QA

- Ultimate aim is evaluation through 1 QA procedure with European Framework instead of multiple QA frameworks and procedures

create a short list of EQAR-registered agencies

start of the evaluation

evaluation report published by the coordinating agency

discuss & decide on main benefits of using European QA Framework

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Stakeholders involvement crucial for implementation of European Framework

- EQAR and QA agencies could give information on European Framework and experiences/approaches of agencies

- European Commission could co-fund more evaluations with European Framework and promote peer learning, also with initiatives of BFUG, ENQA, EQAR, NARIC Network

- QA agencies and European Universities could develop new projects to provide additional guidance and QA tools

Stakeholders involvement crucial for implementation of European Framework

- Evaluation results could inform national recognition authorities when making recognition decisions on European University qualifications (European Degree?)

- National authorities and QA agencies could consider how positive evaluation results according to European Framework can be used nationally to prevent multiple assessments of same joint provision

Thank you for your attention

More information:

https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq-project