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للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب  
National Authority for Qualifications &  
Quality Assurance of Education & Training



AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN  
DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN



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# Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education–Views from Asia Pacific

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# Outline

- Brief introduction to QA in Asia Pacific and role of APQN
- Snapshots of QACHE survey
- Key lessons emerging from initial analyses of survey in Asia Pacific
- Networking among networks – An example of Good practice

# Quality Assurance in Asia Pacific

- Many QAAs in Asia- Pacific are in developing stage.
- QAAs vary in size, scope and maturity levels.
- Self study and Peer Review are the key element of QA across the region.
- APQN Membership Criteria and Chiba Principles provide common frame of reference for QA activities in Asia pacific.
- Asia Pacific Quality Network- APQN is the voice of QA community from over 50 countries in Asia pacific with about 52 QA bodies as it's member.



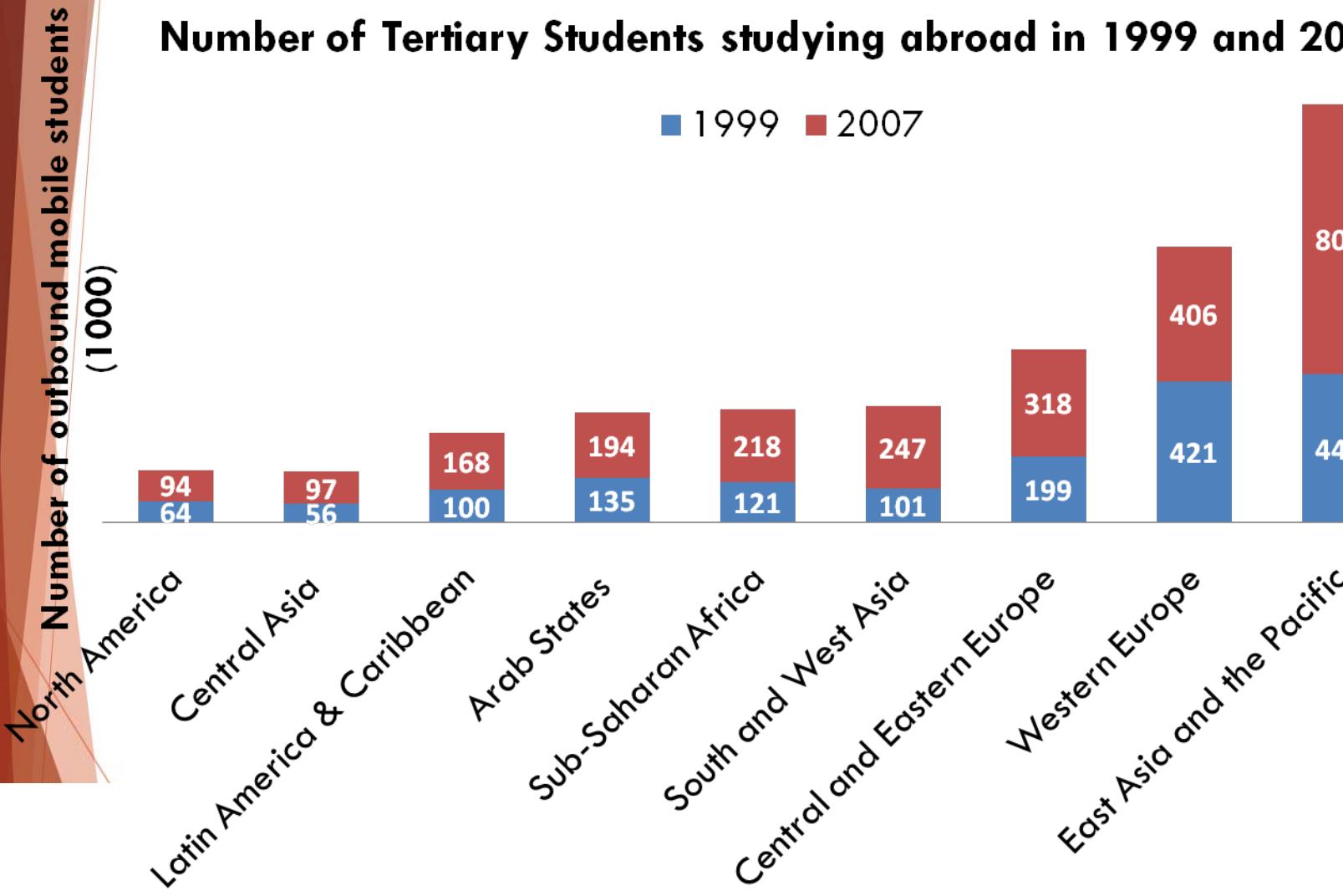
# Asia – Key player as market for Internalization. QA is challenge



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# The Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

- Founded in Hong Kong in January 2003.
- Since March 2009: Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI):2009
- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA): 2003 – March 2009
- Funding Partners-The World Bank, UNESCO , Aus Aid, GIQAC and many more



## Membership:

140+ members from 50 countries and Territories

5 observers from  
5 countries



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# APQN Observers from Europe



Quality Assurance Agency for  
Higher Education, UK



agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje

Agency for Science and Higher  
Education, Croatia



ASIIN e. V.,  
Germany



qualifications are better understood

UK NARIC, UK



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# Key Initiatives of APQN

- More than 50 workshops and seminars hosted in Australia, India, Vietnam, Laos, Fiji and China and other countries in the region with about 2000 participants including 177 sponsored
- 6 moderated online forums on various QA issues with more than 450 participants from 50 of its member agencies.
- APQN Exchange Programme-12 exchanges in a year
- APQN Quality Awards to recognize good practices of QA bodies and experts, the first of it's kind initiative.
- Mutual recognition of QA decisions project-India, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand
- Student participation in quality initiative
- Quality Hubs across Asia pacific- ONESQA, Thailand is the first Quality Hub of APQN in 2013.



# Key Initiatives of APQN

- Alignment with Chiba Principles and APQN Criteria - Launch of Asia Pacific Quality Register - APQR
- APQN Quality Label
- **UNESCO -APQN Quality Information Toolkit project And proposed Quality Information Portal**
- *APQN- INQAAHE Project on Database of Reviewers and consultants*
- APQN Project on Reviewers' Training Package
- Asia Europe QA Expert Exchange program of APQN and ECA
- Collaboration with UNESCO for toolkit on QA of CBHE



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# APQN initiative for capacity building



UNESCO-APQN Toolkit:  
**REGULATING THE QUALITY OF  
CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION**

Collaboration with UNESCO for toolkit on QA of CBHE

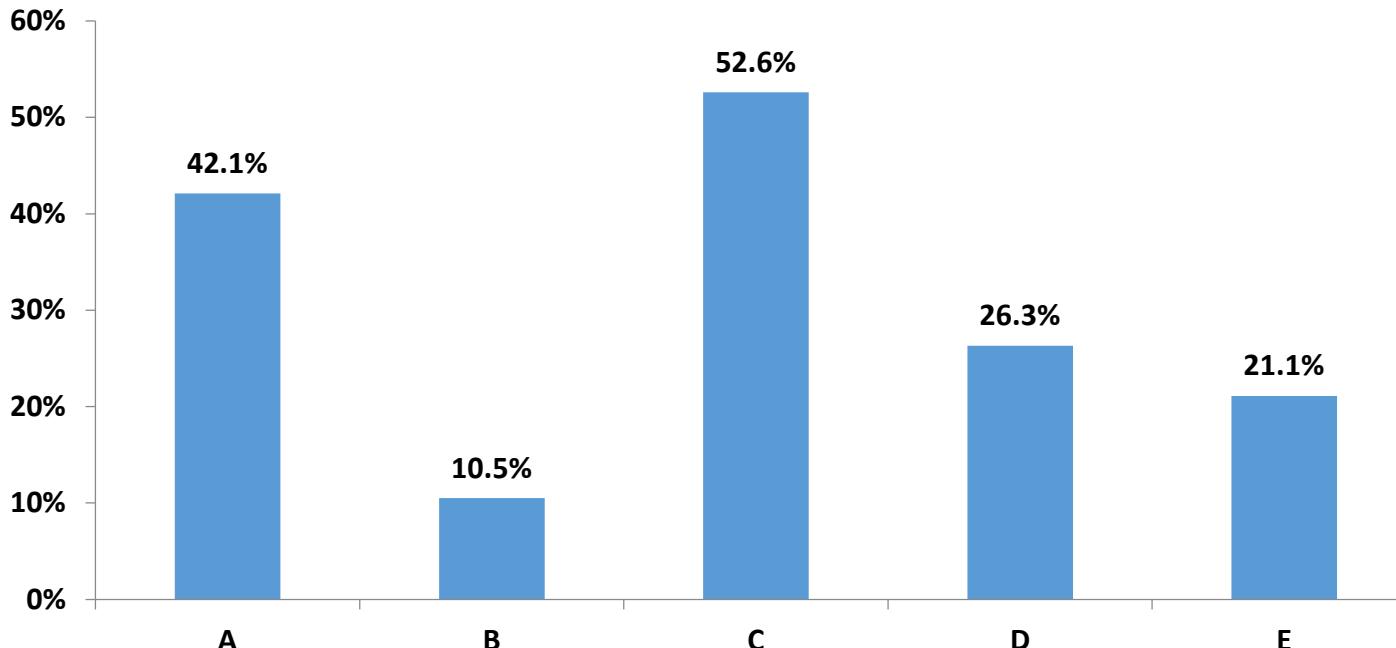


## QACHE Survey by APQN ANQAHE

- Jointly developed common questionnaire for Arab and Asia Pacific region
  - Administered to about 50 agencies in Asia Pacific by APQN
    - Over 50% response rate but 40% responses complete
  - Many countries and QAAs are yet to be exposed to formal system of QA of CBHE



## What drives the development of CBHE ?

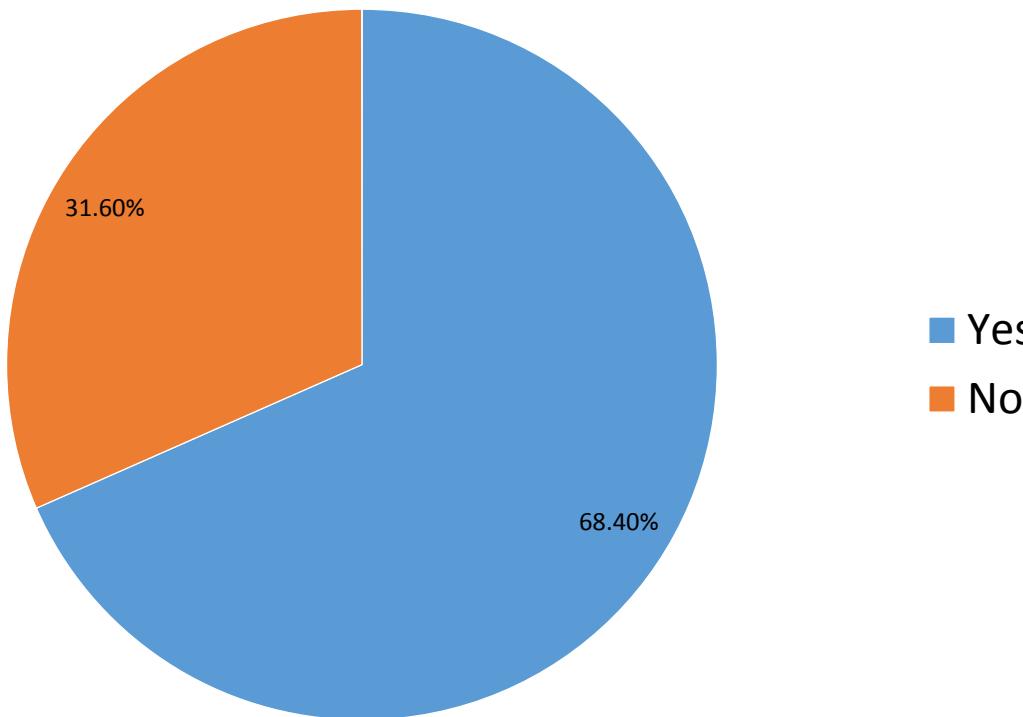


### Legend:

- A = Increased access to higher education and insufficiency of local HE provision
- B = Insufficient or decreasing quality of local HE provision
- C = Decreasing outbound student mobility (due to increasing cost of studying abroad, access/visa restrictions, etc.)
- D = Facilitating regulatory framework (e.g. privatisation, CBHE regulation)
- E = Other

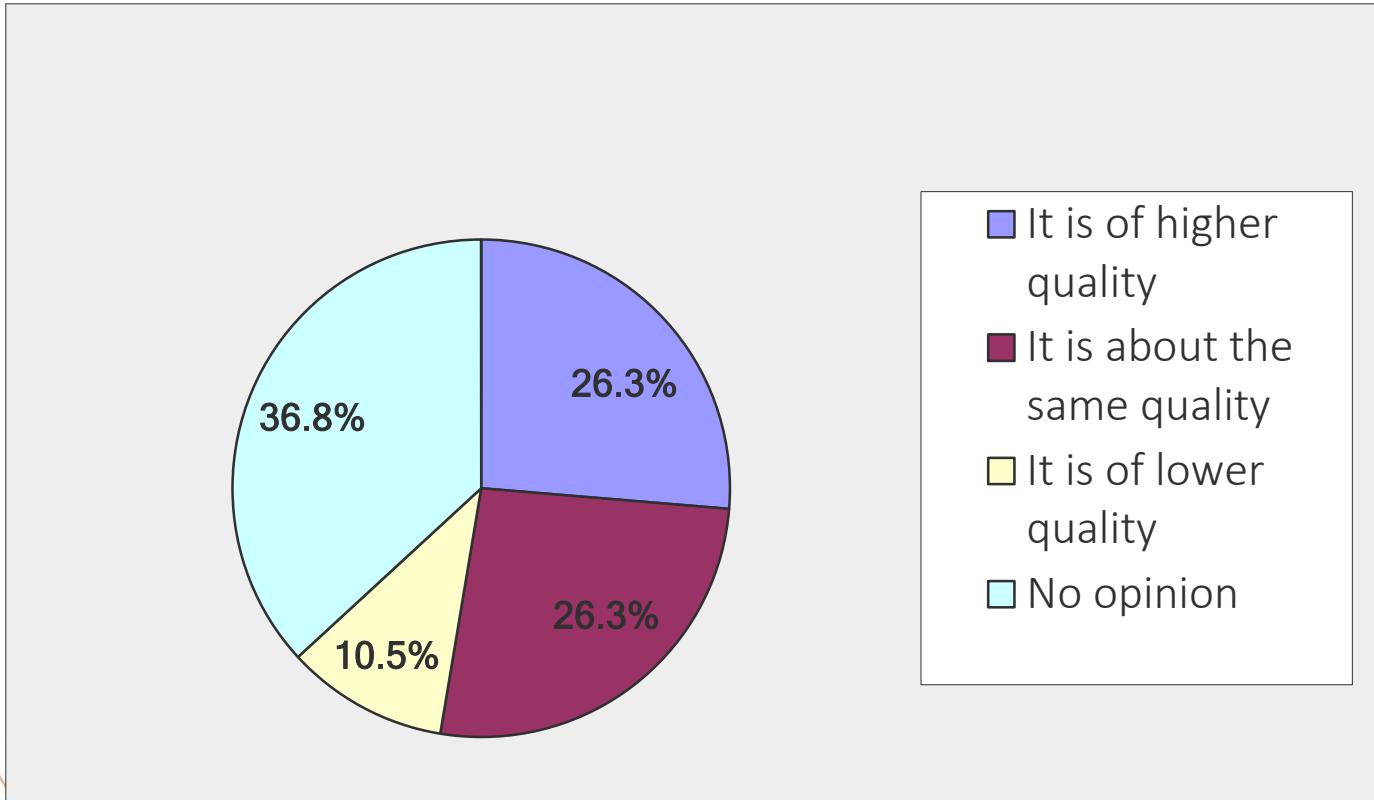


## Is comparability of qualifications a major concern for QA of CBHE ?



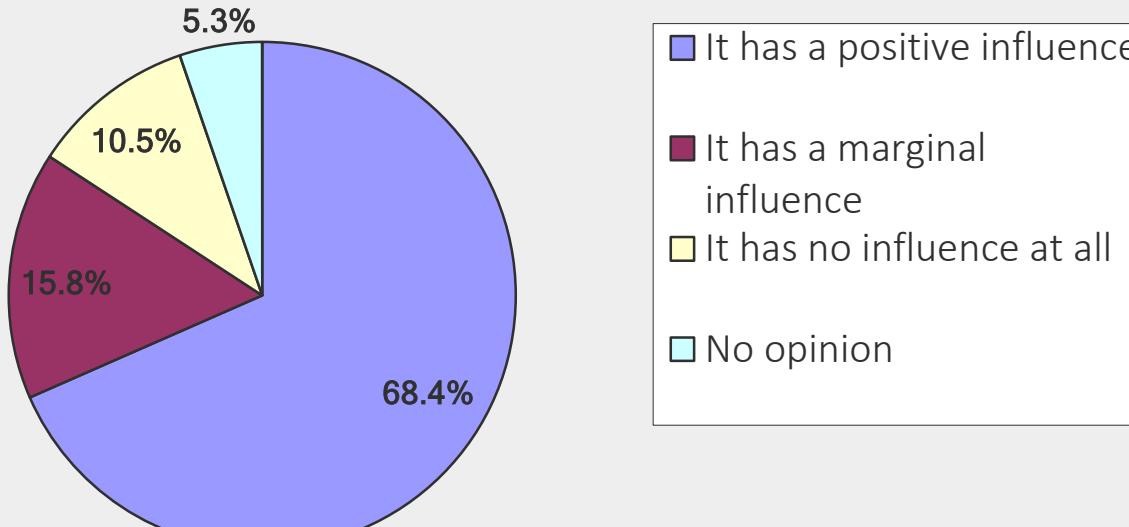


## Overall perception of imported CBHE compared to local HE provision?



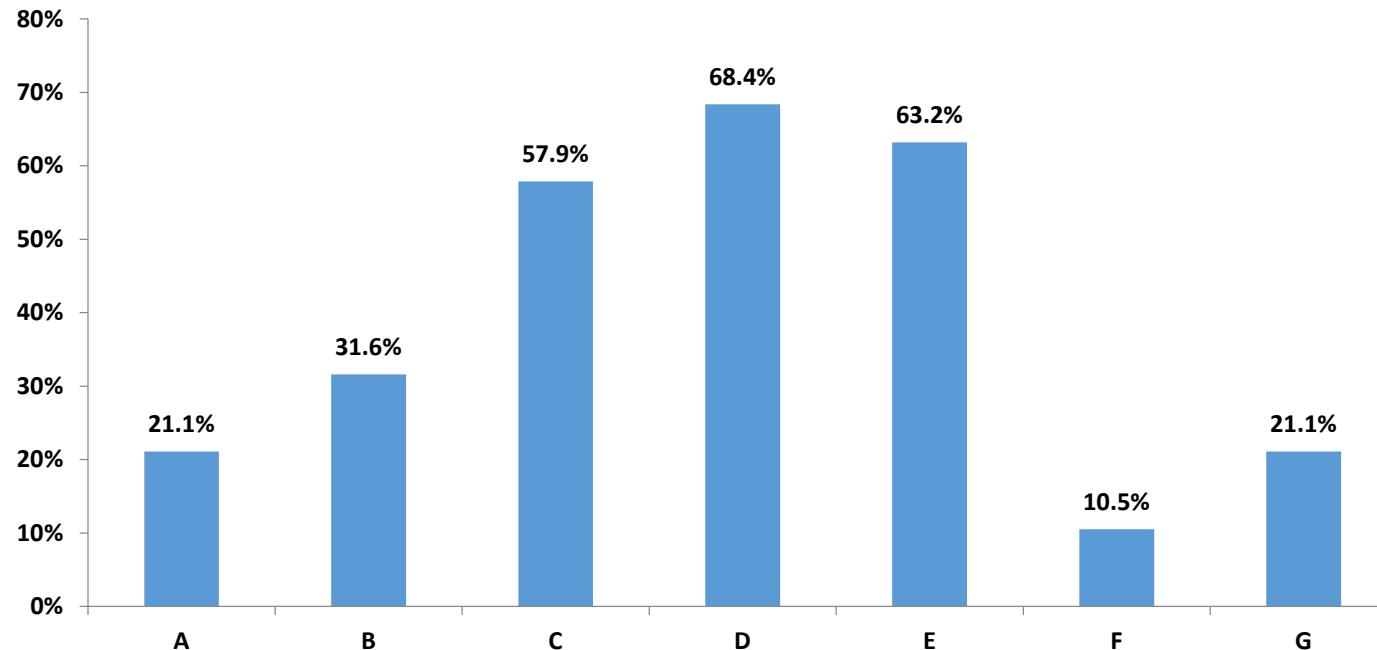


## Influence CBHE has on the national system of HE, in terms of academic standards, HE access, etc.





## Key challenges of CBHE



### Legend:

- A = Risk to the reputation of the institutions (profit driven)
- B = Difficult recognition of qualifications
- C = Balance of responsibility between provider and receiver countries and/or between the different actors within your country (institution, government, QA agency, etc.)
- D = Quality assurance processes (conflict of standards between local/provider QA systems, absence/lack of coordination between the 2 systems, etc.)
- E = Consumer protection issues – proliferation of “diploma mills”
- F = Attracts criticisms of ‘cultural imperialism’
- G = Marketisation / Commercialisation of HEIs



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### CBHE Profile -

- CBHE provision is currently available in most of the respondent countries / territories and it is growing.
- In terms of the number of students, the role of CBHE provision in Asian countries seems to be marginal.
- Branch campus and Affiliation/ networks appear to be major form of provider mobility . It is followed by forms /categories like virtual university and independent institution .
- Articulation, twinning and double/joint degree are most popular types of program mobility in respondent countries.
- Australia , UK and USA emerge as clear topers as main providers in Asia Pacific region.
- UG programs are the ones to take major share of program and provider mobility as compared to Graduate and Doctoral programs.



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### CBHE Profile – Continued

- Decreasing outbound student mobility (due to increasing cost of studying abroad, access/visa restrictions, etc.) comes out to be the main reason for development of CBHE at most places.
- Level of awareness and participation of higher education stakeholders in implementing UNESCO-OECD guidelines is low among various stakeholders.
- Comparability of qualifications is noted as a major concern for QA of CBHE in most [ 68%] Asian countries .
- A large section of respondents [ 68%] have legal and other issues related to the recognition procedures and requirements of higher education delivered by foreign providers and/or leading to a foreign qualification.



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### Issues and challenges of quality and QA of CBHE

- Just about a quarter of respondents feel that overall perception of imported CBHE is of higher quality as compared to local provision while another quarter says it is of same quality.
- About 36% respondents feel that overall perception of imported CBHE by European providers is of higher quality as compared to local provision while about 26% says it is of same quality.
- Majority of the respondents [ 68%] agree that CBHE has a positive influence on the national system of HE in your country, in terms of academic standards, HE access, etc .
- Quality assurance processes (conflict of standards between local/provider QA systems, absence/lack of coordination between the 2 systems, etc.) is pointed out as key challenge to CBHE.
- There is increased need for some public source of information (in own national context) from which students and other stakeholders can find out whether a cross-border provision (programme or institution) is recognized, licensed and/or quality assured by your national authorities.



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### Regulatory and QA framework-

- About 57% respondents note that their country or territory has a specific regulatory framework on QA of imported CBHE
- In case of 58% respondents imported CBHE is subjected to compulsory QA procedures
- As is evident , CBHE categories like Branch Campus, Independent Institution and Acquisition/ Merger are more likely to be subjected to QA procedures . This is on lower side for categories like study centre/ affiliation or virtual university.
- CBHE categories like twinning , Double/joint degree or articulation are subject to QA procedures by respondent Agency in majority cases. Whereas categories like Franchise, validation and virtual/distance education are subjected to QA by respondent agencies in a fewer cases.
- Local regulations, Locally developed guidelines for CBHE and international guidelines like OECD/UNESCO Guidelines 2005 or UNESCO & APQN Toolkit, Regulating the Quality of Cross-border Education, 2007 are being used as model/frame of reference do you use for QA-CBHE procedures in most cases.



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### Regulatory and QA framework - continued

- Using Both the agency's "home" and foreign country's EQA framework seems to be most popular approach in assessing imported CBHE provision.
- Over 62 % indicate that criteria and procedures used in assessing imported CBHE do not differ from those used for QA of local HE provision.
- Majority [ 87%] of respondents agree that QA criteria and procedures take into consideration country needs (e.g. knowledge and technology transfer, infrastructure development, localisation of research, capacity building, etc.).
- **The scope of QA of CBHE largely includes portability of qualifications and Student protection issues .**
- Need for capacity building for development of QA-CBHE processes in many respondent countries is stressed besides need to establish National Information Centres and collaborations.



## A few key messages emerging from initial analyses of survey

### Collaborations

- A good number of agencies [ 58%] have some kind of collaboration with provider country QA agencies and/or HEIs for the purpose of QA of imported CBHE
- Collaboration largely cover issues such as information sharing and Joint QA exercises .
- Lack of dialogue, information sharing and issues like cultural / sovereignty concerns are some of impediments in collaborations.
- Language barriers , lack of NICs, absence of multilateral agreements , etc are some of the key challenges noted for collaborations
- Respondent agencies fully appreciate and support the need for collaboration and networks in sharing of experiences and good practices on QA-CBHE



## Limitations of survey and analyses

It needs to mentioned here that this survey and analyses have some limitations as any such survey might have. A few are given below.

- APQN has over 52 members which are QA bodies. About 19 responses used in this analyses may not be a good sample to draw generalizations.
- Many of the responses are based on opinions and views
- Data given by respondents is not subjected to cross check
- Survey analyses is not supplemented by research and other secondary sources

Despite these and other limitations, it is hoped that survey points to status and some key trends of QA of CBHE across Asia and pacific regions.



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## Key lessons from survey and beyond

- Strengthening Quality information systems [NICs, UNESCO Portal, etc],
- Trust and capacity building,
- Avoiding duplications –strengthening existing tools,
- Focus on multilateral agreements,
- Working together to deal with degree mills and accreditation mills
- Need for increased collaborations among QAAs and networks across the region



## Coming together is Beginning- An example of good practice of networking among networks

- APQN, INQAHE and INQAHE Collaboration for global Database of Consultants and Reviewers for QA in higher education
- Database hosted by APQN on it's website
- Screening committee of ANQAHE, INQAAHE and APQN to review the expert list
- About 100 selected experts Arab region, Asia, Europe, etc featured on searchable database.

<http://www.apqn.org/services/consultantsdb/>



# Thank You



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