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Proposal

Title: Capacity building in quality assurance through international cooperation: key takeaways from the HAQAA2 initiative for four experts from European agencies

Abstract

"There is no doubt that education plays a fundamental role in the development of nations". (ASG-QA, p.9). The African standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ASG-QA) begin with these introductory words, thus recalling the importance of higher education and making QA a tool to support the development of countries. Cooperation in QA in higher education is an important part of the joint strategy of the African and the European Unions. The HAQAA2 initiative (Harmonisation of African Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Accreditation) was launched within this framework. In this context, four experts from the founding agencies of the French-speaking network of quality agencies for higher education, FrAQ-Sup (AAQ, AEQES, CTI and Hcéres) have participated in consultancy visits and agency reviews of four Francophone African counterpart agencies.

Although QA crosses borders, which facilitates dialogue between countries, each higher education system is unique. This explains the diversity of practices among agencies worldwide. The four European experts involved in the consultancy visits and agency reviews were able to learn from such cultural differences shaping QA tools, the diversification of agencies' missions and the involvement of stakeholders using a "fitness for purpose" approach. When engaging in such international projects, agencies continue to learn about QA, as if it was a dedicated lifelong learning tool and are encouraged to take a reflexive approach to their own practices. This paper thus aims to present the results of a capacity-building experience in QA through international cooperation and its takeaways for four European agency representatives.

1) INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND TO AFRICA-EU COOPERATION

Quality assurance in higher education is recognised as a key strategic area in the African Union's Agenda 2063. Cooperation on quality assurance in higher education, and its harmonisation in general, is also an area for cooperation under the joint Africa-European Union (EU) strategy. This is the background to the Harmonisation of African Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative, which was set up to support the development of a harmonised quality assurance system at institutional, national, regional and continental Pan-African levels. It is funded by the EU.

The first phase of the initiative (HAQAA1), implemented from 2016 to 2018, resulted in the development of the ASG-QA and a peer review methodology for external quality assurance agencies. It was coordinated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the Association of African Universities. The working group drew on existing standards developed by regional quality assurance networks in Africa, which were compared with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and adapted to the African context.

The second phase (HAQAA2), from 2019 to 2022 aimed to build on, develop, and promote the results of HAQAA1 and led to one evaluation and six consultancy visits to several African agencies. In particular, HAQAA1 and HAQAA2 aimed to strengthen intra-African regional coordination and the capacity of quality assurance agencies to implement the ASG-QA. In the context of HAQAA2, four European experts were invited to participate in the expert panels, which carried out one evaluation and three consultancy visits to existing, young or emerging African agencies.

The four authors of this article work for the agencies that founded the French-speaking network of quality assurance agencies for higher education (FrAQ-Sup) and participated as experts in the HAQAA2 initiative.

By participating in the HAQAA2 initiative, the authors learned from the diverse contexts, the different reviews of four African agencies (see appendix 1) and the way their stakeholders are involved in them. These societal and cultural specificities relied on the experimentation of African tools (ASG-QA) and required the implementation of a 'fit for purpose' evaluation methodology.

The aim of this article is therefore to present the results of an experience of capacity building in quality assurance through Africa-EU cooperation, based on the takeaways of four European experts.

2) METHODOLOGY

The article is based on two key materials: the observations of the four European experts following their consultancy and evaluation processes in four African agencies, which form the core of this study, and documentary analyses (grey literature and some scientific articles).

ENQA coordinated the consultancy and evaluation processes carried out as part of HAQAA2. Each panel had two African and one European expert. The European experts work for European agencies that have already undergone several ENQA reviews during their development. Regardless of the type of process (Table 1), the evaluation reports submitted by the panels aimed at continuous improvement and the development of the four African agencies through peer or "critical friend" support (Costa & Kallick, 1993).

Table 1. Description of the four HAQAA2 processes

Country	Mauritania	Mali	Guinea	Ivory Coast
Agency name	Mauritanian Higher Education Quality Assurance Authority (AMAQ-ES)	Malian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Scientific Research (AMAQ-ES)	National Quality Assurance Authority of Guinea (ANAQ-GN)	Directorate General for Quality and Assessment, Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research (DGQE)
Agency creation date	2016	2018	2017	No agency during the HAQAA2 process (directorate created in 2016). Decree to create an agency in September 2023
Type of process	Consultancy visit	Evaluation	Consultancy visit	Consultancy visit
Dates of the procedure	13-16 June 2022	28-30 June 2022	20-22 July 2022	25-28 July 2022
ASG-QA standards considered	B2/ C1/ C2/ C3/ C4/ C7	All 16 standards of parts B&C of the ASG-QA	B2/ C1/ C2/ C3/ C4/ C7	B2/ C1/ C2/ C3/ C4/ C7

This article was also written based on a comparison of the ESG and ASG-QA, a study of a number of articles in the scientific literature to support the authors' thinking, and the websites of the African and European agencies involved.

Participating in HAQAA2 and performing quality assurance activities in foreign contexts and different cultures was an opportunity for the four authors to practise the notion of "fitness for purpose" that already underpins quality assurance in Europe. The aim of harmonising (rather than standardising) quality assurance in Africa through HAQAA2 is to achieve "interoperability" between different systems at institutional, national, regional and pan-African continental levels. Respect for diversity is a kind of prerequisite for trust, recognition and mobility, and thus for cooperation. Respect for diversity is made

possible by the concept of "fitness for purpose" (Harvey&Green, 1993) quality assurance to determine whether the methodological arrangements put in place meet the needs of the higher education sector and, above all, the needs of the institutions themselves. In other words, participating in HAQAA2 and writing this article required the authors to "leave behind [their] own baggage" as Fiona Crozier put it during the HAQAA2 training seminar (April 2022).

3) WHAT KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE HAQAA2 INITIATIVE TO INFORM THE THINKING AND PRACTICES OF STAFF AT FRENCH-SPEAKING EUROPEAN AGENCIES?

3.1 Similarities and regional specificities of the ASG-QA and ESG – a comparative analysis

Within the framework of HAQAA2, the European experts were given the opportunity to use the ASG-QA to carry out consultancy or evaluation procedures in counterpart African agencies. As European agencies have more experience in using the ESG, the ASG-QA proved to be a new tool, rich in learning and putting their own practices into perspective. To date, there has been no in-depth analysis of the comparison between the African and European standards. To the authors' knowledge, only the article by Tia Loukkola (Loukkola, 2019) provides an overview of the similarities and differences between these two regional frameworks. This subsection provides a summary comparison of the ASG-QA and ESG, and a detailed table is available in appendix 2.

A study of the introduction to the two frameworks shows that their objectives (developing mutual trust, fostering quality assurance and enhancement) are similar although the ASG-QA includes three additional objectives related to Africa's development and international competitiveness. For both the ESG and ASG-QA, the standards and guidelines are not prescriptive and need to be adapted to national contexts. The European framework also proposes a definition of quality assurance and points out that its two inseparable objectives are accountability and enhancement.

Both the ESG and ASG-QA are divided into three main parts. The first deals with the internal quality assurance of higher education institutions, the second with external quality assurance procedures, and the third with the organisation of quality assurance agencies.

In the first part, the ASG-QA take a broader view of the quality of an institution compared to the ESG. While the ESG focus on teaching and learning, the ASG-QA take a broader approach including a focus on institutions' research activities, internationalisation and community engagement, also known as its "third mission" (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). They also look more closely than the ESG at institutions' governance, financial resources management and infrastructure. However, the ASG-QA do not devote much space to internal and external evaluation mechanisms, whereas the ESG have two specific standards (1.9 and 1.10). In addition, the quality policy is mentioned in its own right in the ESG (1.1) but is mentioned more briefly in the ASG-QA (A.2), which focuses more on the link between the quality assurance system as a whole and strategic planning. Lastly, student-centred learning is an essential component of the ESG (1.3), where its contours are very detailed, whereas the concept is not explored as much in the ASG-QA.

The second part of the ESG and ASG-QA is very similar and the standards follow the same order. Each framework allocates seven standards to this second part. The main difference is that the African framework introduces a standard on the periodic review of institutions and programmes (B.6) in order to ensure that evaluations are carried out on a cyclical basis, preferably every five years. The European framework gives agencies more freedom in presenting the criteria for the outcomes of the external quality assurance process (2.5), whereas the ASG-QA provide a list of essential elements that agencies must include in their procedures.

The third parts of the two frameworks contain several differences. The African framework includes specific standards on agencies' governance (C.3), on the link between parts B and C of the ASG-QA (C.5) - which creates a form of redundancy with standard B.3 - and on the internationalisation of agencies (C.8). The order of the standards differs between the ESG and ASG-QA: the African framework

first looks at the legal status of the agencies (C.1), before assessing their vision and mission statement (C.2), while the ESG takes the opposite approach. As another example of a difference in the order of standards, the ESG address the agency's resources (3.5) before assessing the way in which they are used in its activities, particularly in relation to quality assurance (3.6).

Finally, a comparative analysis of the ASG-QA and ESG shows that, although the former was partly inspired by the latter and the two frameworks share common objectives, they sometimes adopt different lenses. This impacts the fields covered, especially in the first part devoted to the higher education institutions. The ASG-QA mirror the accountability of the institutions (part A) and that of the agencies (part C), which are subject to the same types of standards as the institutions (on their vision, governance and management, human and financial resources, and international collaboration). In particular, this allows the African framework to emphasise the notion of "integrity", which is mentioned more frequently, in the evaluation of both institutions (A.1, A.2, A.8, A.9) and agencies (B.5, C.3, C.6) compared to the ESG (1.1 and 3.6). The ASG-QA make explicit reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). Indeed, the African framework addresses disability, the reduction of inequalities, "disadvantaged groups" and "gender mainstreaming". Standard A.10 of the African framework, dedicated to "community engagement", also covers several Sustainable Development Goals, by making institutions part of a non-academic ecosystem and giving them a third mission.

In addition to familiarising themselves with the ASG-QA, the European experts observed differences in approaches to quality assurance between the two continents, due in particular to the different missions assigned to the agencies. This is the subject of the following sub-section.

3.2 Extended and more diverse missions for the African agencies

The four African agencies involved in HAQAA2 seem to have broader missions than their European counterparts. Indeed, the agencies are mandated to train the internal quality assurance units of higher education institutions. This mission makes it possible to establish a real link between internal and external quality assurance, as recommended by standard B.1 of the ASG-AQ, and pushes the African agencies into a role that goes beyond what is done in Europe. Indeed, the training of European higher education institutions by their agencies could be perceived as an infringement of their autonomy and create conflicts of interest (EQAR, 2020). To carry out this training mission, the African agencies organise awareness-raising workshops, targeted capacity-building training, round tables, debates, and even provide direct technical support to institutions, as in Guinea and Mali. Indeed, Law No.2018-034 stipulates that AMAQ-SUP must "provide training and research on national and international quality standards" and "support higher education and research institutions in the development and implementation of their internal quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures".

In addition to this training mission, the four African agencies visited by the European experts have also been mandated to evaluate research, and research bodies in particular. Until now, European agencies' missions have focused more on teaching and learning, which is the scope of the ESG.

3.3 Stakeholder involvement through the prism of cultural and contextual differences

Quality assurance is by definition contextual, embedded in the society and culture of the countries, regions or even continents it serves. The European experts involved in HAQAA2 therefore witnessed the differences between the EHEA and the African countries concerned. In two countries in particular, the significant contribution made by students' parents surprised the authors of the article. In Ivory Coast and Mali, parents are considered genuine stakeholders in external quality assurance. At the DGQE, a representative of the students' parents' organisation participates in the evaluation as an observer. In Mali, a representative of the "Parents' and Students' Association" sits on the AMAQ-SUP Board of Directors.

From a European perspective, this may seem surprising and raises questions about the autonomy and independence of students, who are generally of age when they enter higher education. For the African

colleagues the authors met in Ivory Coast and Mali, this was self-evident: culturally, the family plays a central role in African societies, respect for elders is fundamental and the community is considered more important than the individual. This cultural difference between the two continents is naturally reflected in the practices of the agencies. In other words, from a quality assurance perspective in several African countries, who better than parents to ensure that all young people have access to quality higher education? The presence of students' parents is one way of ensuring that procedures are followed and that the different institutions are treated fairly. They also have the advantage of representing society as a whole, with a wide range of professions and occupations.

This predominance of students' parents seems to overshadow the students themselves, who are less represented in Africa than in the EHEA. The European experts were also surprised by the absence of student experts on the HAQAA2 panels, since student participation on expert panels is an essential element of external quality assurance. It is also a condition for ENQA to recognise a European agency (ESG 2.4). Indeed, since 2015 and the publication of the second version of the ESG, the EHEA has undergone a paradigm shift towards student-centred teaching and learning, which promotes the use of student expertise (EQUIP, 2018).

Finally, it should be noted that, as far as we know, students have not been systematically involved from the outset in all aspects of the work of the European agencies. As a reminder, in the context of HAQAA2, the agencies visited are only at the beginning of their activities. As Tia Loukkola points out (Loukkola, 2019), "the European experience shows that it takes time to reform higher education systems and institutions to align them with regional aspirations. The importance of investing in awareness-raising and capacity-building activities should not be underestimated". These last two points are addressed in the next two sections.

3.4 Dissemination of the results of external quality assurance – an important step in both Africa and Europe

Transparency is one of the pillars of quality assurance, as stated in both the ESG and ASG-QA and ensures accountability.

Individually, the four African agencies evaluated were invited to publish their self-evaluation and external evaluation reports on their websites. One of them has already done so. Some of them have also organised conferences to disseminate the evaluation results and discuss them with their stakeholders, such as in Guinea, where the results of external quality assurance are used as decision-making tools by the Minister who announced: "The orientation and also the subsidy of public higher education institutions will be subject to the results of [ANAQ-GN] evaluations after 2024" (ANAQ-GN, 2023).

In addition, at continental level, the two editions of HAQAA have enabled a comparison of each agency's positioning in relation to the ASG-QA standards, based on the reports of consultancy and evaluation processes. This comparison enables each country to see where it stands and where the challenges lie in relation to regional and continental trends, and to collect examples of good practice. The HAQAA2 final conference, held in Accra, Ghana, from 6 to 9 December 2022, was another example of dissemination practices at continental level that gathered various stakeholders (representatives of international organisations, of the African Union and the EU, agencies, experts…).

These examples of dissemination and awareness-raising activities are not exhaustive and are limited to those of which the four experts from French-speaking European agencies had direct knowledge. Dissemination of quality assurance results also exists in Europe and is fostered by the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR). It is mainly the intensity and scope of the dissemination through HAQAA2 that has been a source of learning for the authors.

3.5 Developing skills through international cooperation

The visits to the four African agencies revealed a strong desire for internationalisation, in particular to ensure capacity development through cooperation agreements with foreign agencies, particularly

European agencies, networks of agencies (African Network of National Quality Assurance Agencies – RAFANAQ; 5+5 Dialogue), and international bodies (UNESCO/Shenzhen, World Bank, Francophone University Agency, French Agency for Development…). AMAQ-ES included international partnerships with its counterparts in its action plan as a tool for "capacity building in the field of quality assurance" (AMAQ-ES, n.d).

This international appeal has been supported by the ASG-QA standard 3.8, which encourages benchmarking, networking, and collaboration. These activities provide opportunities for learning and professional development opportunities for agency staff seeking training in quality assurance.

This capacity building through international cooperation also exists in Europe, thanks to the activities of ENQA, the Bologna Follow-up Group and the European Consortium on Accreditation in Higher Education, among others. These activities came later in the life of the European agencies, whereas the African agencies we observed relied heavily on international cooperation as soon as they were created, and even before they were set up as independent agencies.

4) CONCLUSION

In the end, it seems that quality assurance is a language shared across continents albeit with some dialects. The HAQAA2 project has brought together people from two continents and different backgrounds in search of mutual understanding. In a logic of *fitness for purpose,* adaptation to the diversity of practices that make up the richness of higher education is therefore a key concept to emerge from the consultancy visits and evaluation procedure carried out as part of HAQAA2. The experience of this "fitness for purpose" approach was therefore a rich source of learning for the authors, enabling them to take a step back and reflect on their own practices. In addition to the use of a new regional framework, they were able to learn about the impact of African cultures on quality assurance, such as the type of stakeholders involved, the diversity of missions of African agencies, and their enthusiasm for capacity building through international cooperation.

The international cooperation experienced in HAQAA2 is therefore one of the driving forces behind quality assurance, whether at individual, institutional, national, or regional level, making the practice of quality assurance a continuous learning process for agencies. Quality assurance can thus be part of a kinaesthetic approach ("*learning by doing*"), the impact of which can be multiplied tenfold in the context of international cooperation.

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APPENDIX 1: THE AFRICAN AGENCIES REVIEWED BY THE AUTHORS OF THIS ARTICLE

AMAQ-ES - Mauritania. The "Autorité Mauritanienne d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur'' (AMAQ-ES) was set up in 2016. It is an autonomous structure, placed under the aegis of the National Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research, and responsible for periodically

evaluating public and private higher education institutions, their study programmes and research bodies.

AMAQ-SUP - Mali. The "Agence Malienne d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique" (AMAQ-SUP) is a public scientific and technological institution with legal personality and management autonomy, placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The agency was set up in 2018 to assess the quality of higher education institutions, study programmes and research.

ANAQ-GN - Guinea. The "Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de Guinée" (ANAQ-GN) is a public administrative body set up in 2017 to evaluate and, where appropriate, accredit the quality of education and research provided by higher education, scientific research and technical and vocational education institutions. It is a public administrative institution under the administrative and technical supervision of the Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research and the financial supervision of the Minister for Finance and State Holdings.

DGQE – Ivory Coast. The "Direction Générale de la Qualité et des Évaluations" (DGQE) was created within the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2016 in Ivory Coast. It was responsible for the transitional period leading up to the creation of a future quality assurance agency. The DGQE was responsible for designing and implementing the quality assurance, certification and accreditation policy for private and public higher education and research institutions. In September 2023, a decree set up the creation of an Ivorian agency.

APPENDIX 2: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF ASG-QA AND ESG BY PART AND STANDARDS

Appendix by Sophie Guillet

The ASG-QA and ESG share similar objectives. Both aim to facilitate the internationalisation of higher education and mobility between countries and have four common objectives although the ASG-QA set specific three additional objectives related to Africa's development and international competitiveness.

ASG-QA- Introduction	ESG - Context, scope, objectives and principles
The ASG-QA are described as an important tool to facilitate the "mobility of trained people with accredited qualifications". The 4 main objectives of the ESG are repeated and three specific to Africa are added: "promoting international competitiveness of Africa's higher education system", supporting the development of a "sustainable quality culture" in institutions and "supporting the production of relevant teaching and learning resources". The ASG-QA "are not meant to be prescriptive but they rather provide a mechanism for quality attainment in African HEIs and QAAs". They constitute minimum standards, which must be adapted to national contexts. The introduction does not provide a definition of quality or quality assurance, but clearly explains the objectives of the three parts of the ASG-QA and how they are interrelated.	The ESG are presented as a tool for international cooperation within the European Higher Education Area. The ESG have 4 objectives: to define a "common framework", to "enable the assurance and improvement of quality", to support "mutual trust", and to provide information on quality assurance. The ESG "are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented". They are intended to provide "guidance" in the areas designed to assure the quality of teaching and learning. It is also important that they remain fairly "generic" and constitute the highest common denominator facilitating adaptation in each country. Quality is defined as resulting primarily from "the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment". "Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose". It can also encourage the development of a quality culture. Its two main objectives are accountability and enhancement.

A study of the first part of the African and European frameworks shows that of the 13 standards in the ASG-QA, only 8 are covered by the ESG (A.1, A.2, A.3, A.6, A.7, A.8, A.11 and A.12). Conversely, only 2 ESG standards (1.9 and 1.10) are not covered by the ASG-QA. This reflects the difference in the scope between the two frameworks, and in particular the fact that the ASG-QA have a broader scope.

ASG-QA Part A	ESG Part 1
A.1. Vision, mission and strategic objectives The standard aims to ensure that the institution has clear, aligned and publicly accessible "vision", "mission" and "strategic objectives". The internal quality assurance system must take these elements into account and promote continuous improvement. The standard ensures that "collegial" procedures are adopted and that stakeholders are involved. **A.2 Governance and management** The standard makes the link between the internal quality assurance system and the institution's governance by drawing up a list of elements that ensure good institutional management ("QA policy and structure; management of a quality culture", student involvement, importance of "academic integrity", "non-discrimination", etc.).	**1.1. Policy for quality assurance** The standard aims to ensure that the institution has a quality policy that meets a set of criteria, which guides its "strategic management" and is "made public" for accountability purposes. This should foster the development of a "quality culture", promote academic freedom, and combat fraud and all forms of discrimination. The standard ensures that stakeholders are involved.
A.3 Human resources The standard ensures that an "inclusive human resources policy" is implemented, that it is sensitive to gender equality and adapted to the institution's missions, in particular by ensuring "student-faculty ratios that promote student-centred learning".	**1.5. Teaching staff** The standard focuses on the process of recruiting teachers and encourages institutions to provide them with a working environment that supports "student-centred learning" and promotes the "professional development of teaching staff".
A.4 Financial resource management The standard is used to test whether the school's financial resources are in line with its missions and objectives.	
A.5 Infrastructure and facilities The standard provides a list of infrastructure and facilities that enable institutions to carry out their teaching and research activities and to be accessible to people with disabilities. The standard also includes criteria for facilities to ensure the quality of e-learning.	

A.6. Student recruitment, admission, certification and support services The standard focuses on the development and transparency of policies covering all phases of study (admission, progression, recognition, certification and employability) and details a series of measures that can help the institution to carry out these phases successfully. The "needs of a diverse student population", the flexibility of their learning pathways, and their "welfare" are all taken into account.	**1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification** The standard focuses on the development and transparency of policies covering all phases of study (admission, progression, recognition and certification). This includes collecting information to monitor student progress and working with relevant partners, such as the ENIC-NARIC centres, to ensure the recognition of qualifications, including non-formal and informal learning.
A.7. Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of study programmes The standard details the criteria for the development and approval of programmes, taking into account the achievement of learning outcomes, the involvement of stakeholders and the immersion of students in the professional world through "internships". It recommends that "programmes are approved by the relevant national QAA". The standard also adapts these criteria to the case of open and distance learning.	**1.2. Design and approval of programmes** The standard details the criteria for the development and approval of programmes, taking into account the achievement of "learning outcomes", the involvement of students and their immersion in the professional world through work placements. Programmes must be compatible with national and European qualifications frameworks.
A.8. Teaching, learning and assessment The standard specifies the contours of a teaching and learning policy that is aligned with the institution's missions and takes into account the specific needs of open and distance learning. Great importance is given to the quality of "student assessment". Student-centred learning is also mentioned.	**1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment** The standard provides a list of elements to ensure that students take an "active role in creating the learning process". The role of quality assurance in this process is also detailed.
	1.6. Learning resources and student support The standard emphasises the importance of "appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities", in particular to support a "diverse student population".
A.9. Research and innovation The standard focuses on the institution's research policy and structures and encourages links between research and teaching activities, particularly for 3rd cycle programmes. It also looks at whether "the institution promotes innovation in its teaching, learning and research". Attention is given to "academic integrity", "ethical research" and "intellectual property".	

A.10. Community engagement The standard stresses the importance of the institution's "social responsibility", which should facilitate collaboration with its community, "address critical societal issues and contribute to public good".	
A.11. Information management system The ASG-QA standard includes the same information as the ESG standard.	**1.7. Information management** The standard encourages institutions to collect and analyse data in order to inform and monitor their activities. It lists the useful data that should be collected.
A.12. Public communication The standard is based on that of the ESG and also details the information that must be included to describe a study programme.	**1.8. Public information** The standard specifies that clear and objective information about the institutions' activities must be published and made available to the public.
A.13. Collaboration, staff and student mobility The standard insists on the internationalisation of the institution so that it promotes the mobility of students and staff through collaboration with other higher education institutions and research institutes.	
	1.9. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes The aim of the benchmark is to ensure that the institution evaluates its programmes, with the involvement of stakeholders, to ensure that they "respond to the needs of students and society".
	1.10. Cyclical external quality assurance The standard ensures that institutions periodically undergo an external "ESG-compliant" review and that they implement the recommendations.

In the second part of the frameworks, all the ESG standards are covered by the ASG-QA. The main difference is in the introduction of a standard on periodic evaluation of institutions and programmes in the African framework (B.6).

ASG-QA Part B	ESG Part 2
B.1 Objectives of external quality assurance objectives and considerations for internal quality assurance The standard insists on the "link between internal and external quality assurance", lists the important elements of their articulation and returns to the importance of a "quality culture" and accountability to its stakeholders, the "general public and international community".	**2.1. Consideration of internal quality assurance** The standard emphasises the link between internal and external quality assurance by making the connection between parts 1 and 2 of the ESG. It also points out that quality assurance is the primary responsibility of institutions and that agencies should recognise this.
B.2 Developing external quality assurance mechanisms fit for purpose The standard emphasises the importance of adapting external quality assurance methods and processes to the context of the agency and the need to involve stakeholders.	**2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose** The standard is very similar to that of the ASG-QA. It deals with the adaptation of external quality assurance methods and processes to the context of the agency and the necessary involvement of stakeholders. This standard places more emphasis on monitoring the results of the evaluation and taking into account the human and financial costs for the institutions evaluated
B.3 Implementation processes of external quality assurance The standard details the external quality assurance procedures, which consist of 6 stages (self-assessment, external assessment with site visit, oral report at the end of the visit, sending the preliminary report to the institution before finalisation, finalisation of the report, activities to follow up the recommendations) and is part of the idea of accountability.	**2.3 Implementing processes** The standard is similar to that of the ASG-QA and summarises it in 4 stages (self-assessment, external assessment with site visit, assessment report, consistent follow-up). It emphasises that these stages ensure that the report its "acceptance" and "impact".
B.4 Independence of evaluation The standard mentions the involvement of student experts and recommends the use of international experts. It also stresses the need to ensure that there is no "conflict of interest" and to check this with the institution being evaluated.	**2.4. Peer review experts** The standard focuses on the involvement of student and international experts, the absence of "conflicts of interest" and the training of experts.

B.5 Decisions and reporting of external quality assurance outcomes The standard reiterates the importance of defining and publishing the procedures and results of external quality assurance. It also details the key elements that should be included in the agency's assessment report and gives the assessed entity the opportunity to point out factual errors (which is done in ESG 2.6).	**2.5. Criteria for outcomes** The standard follows the same objectives as those of the ASG-QA, but allows greater freedom in the form that the results of the EQA can take.
	2.6. Reporting The standard details the key elements of an assessment report, which are the same as those contained in standard B.5 of the ASG-QA, and allows the entity being assessed to point out " errors of facts" in the assessment report.
B.6. Periodic evaluation of institutions and programmes The standard aims to ensure that external evaluation procedures are carried out "on a cyclical basis".	
B.7. Complaints and appeals The standard encourages the agency to set up a publicly available complaints and appeals procedure that can be used by the entities being assessed and "the general public".	**2.7. Complaints and appeals** The standard encourages the agency to set up a complaints and appeals procedure that is publicly available and can be used by the entities being assessed.

Out of the nine African standards in the third part, the ESG cover seven of them.

ASG-QA Part C	ESG Part 3
C.1 Legal status The standard states that the agency must be an "autonomous legal entity with a clearly defined mandate, scope and powers". The agency must be recognised by the ecosystem in which it operates.	**3.2. Official status** The standard ensures that the agency has a "legal basis" and that it is recognised by the stakeholders in the higher education system in which it operates.
C.2 Vision and mission statement The standard states that agencies must have a "vision and mission statement or objectives" appropriate to the context in which they operate and the resources available to them.	**3.1. Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance** The standard makes the link between parts 2 and 3 of the ESG and emphasises the definition of the agency's objectives and the relationship of "trust" that it must establish with its stakeholders.
C.3 Governance and management The standard specifies the governing bodies and the budgetary decisions that will enable the agency to carry out its practices with a "sound and ethical governance and management", taking care not to discriminate against its staff and to communicate with the public.	

C.4 Independence of QAA The standard details the 3 types of independence that an agency must demonstrate: organisational independence, operational independence (emphasising the need to avoid conflicts of interest) and independence of official results.	**3.3 Independence** The standard also details the 3 types of independence that an agency must demonstrate. It also emphasises the use of student experts and the fact that experts are called upon in a "personal capacity" and not on behalf of the organisation to which they belong.
	3.4. Thematic analysis The standard encourages agencies to conduct and publish analyses of the overall results of their external quality assurance activities as part of a continuous improvement process. ASG-QA does not have a standard dedicated solely to these thematic analyses; this point is more succinctly mentioned in ASG-QA C.6.
C.5 Policies, processes and activities The standard makes the link between parts B and C of the ASG-QA by creating a redundancy with standard B.3, which is again detailed.	
C.6. Internal quality assurance The standard checks that the agency has procedures for its own internal quality assurance, in particular to ensure "the integrity of its activities". It emphasises the importance of accountability to stakeholders and points out that a balance must be struck to ensure the "institution's autonomy" during its external evaluation by an agency. The standard also details the expectations of an agency's internal quality policy, directing it towards "transparency and public accountability". Thematic analyses (ESG 3.4) are mentioned in this standard C.6 of the ASG-QA as an integral part of an agency's internal quality assurance procedure.	**3.6. Internal quality assurance and professional conduct** The standard also emphasises the importance of accountability to stakeholders, based in particular on "the integrity in the agency's work", and details the expectations of an agency's internal quality assurance policy, which must be published on its website.
C.7. Financial and human resources The standard stresses the financial and human resources needed to carry out an agency's tasks that are "cognisant of gender, disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities ".	**3.5. Resources** The standard is very similar to that of the ASG-QA and deals with the human and financial resources required to carry out an agency's missions.

C.8. Benchmarking, networking and collaboration The standard emphasises the importance of international cooperation between agencies and the sharing of good practices in order to contribute to the "recognition of courses and qualifications".	
C.9. Periodic reviews of the QAAs The standard mentions both the internal and external evaluations that the agency undergoes periodically, "for continuous improvement".	**3.7. Cyclical external review of agencies** The standard specifies that the agency periodically undertakes an external evaluation to demonstrate "compliance with the ESG" in order to "reflect on its policies and activities".