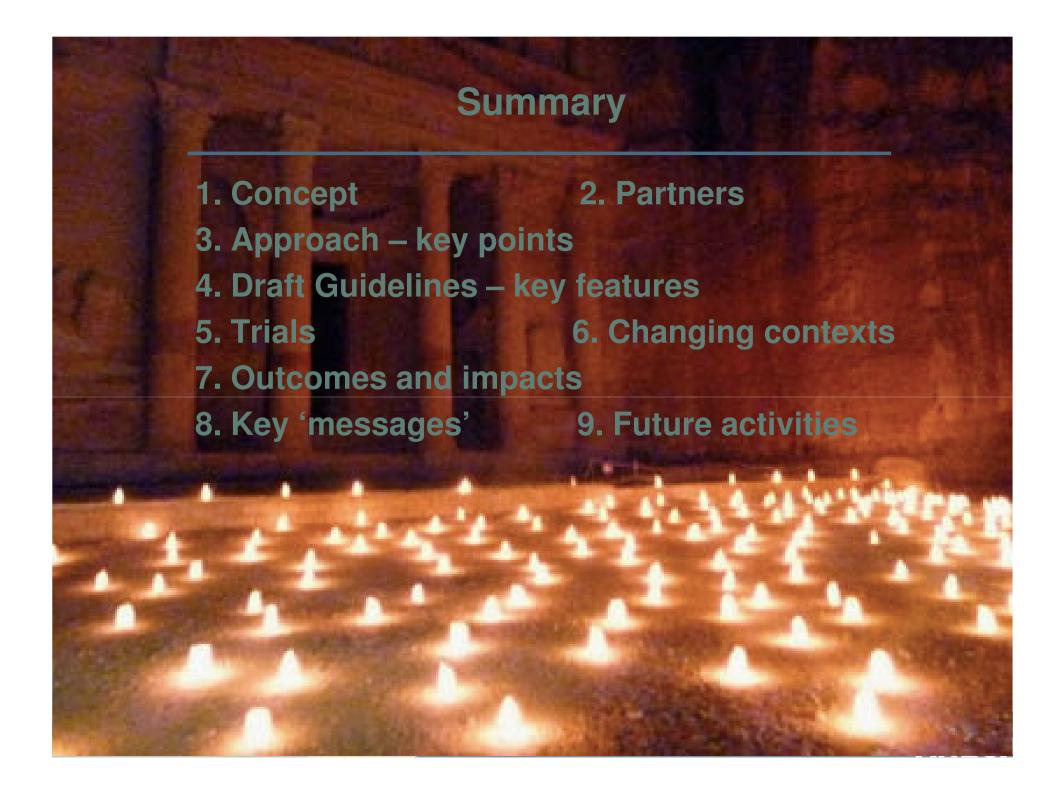# EQUAM:

Enhancing Quality Assurance Management in Jordanian universities

(a European Commission TEMPUS project .. 2012 - 16)

Barcelona 14 December 2015

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Summary

Priority:

Governance Reform in Quality Assurance in JO universities (a national priority), including:

- **modernisation of management / procedures for 'internal' QA**
- **integration of IQA with 'external' national (HEAC) and international expectations.**

Focus and wider objectives

- **to enhance capacity of Quality Assurance Bureaus (QABs), through development of ..**
- **Guidelines - aligned with Jordanian and EU expectations**
  - **to support and promote HEAC Quality label .. and 'Quality Culture'**
- **Identification of good practice to support sustainable QA / QC**

2. Partners

University of Barcelona .. coordinating

in Jordan:

   Princess Sumaya University for Technology   Yarmouk University

   Hashemite University   Mutah University

   Al-Hussein Bin Talal University   Tafila Technical University

   Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

   Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC)

Association of Arab Universities (AAU)

in Europe:

   QA agencies: ENQA, ANECA (Spanish national), AQU (Catalunya)

   University of Tallinn, Estonia,   University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy

   University Montpellier 1, France.

3.i Approach – and key points

from research, workshops, consultations and 'Matching Exercises' between the Jordanian and European project partners …..

- **Develop a (draft) 'model' as Guidelines to support Jordanian HEIs, and their QABs, to improve internal QA in line with (changing) national and international expectations.**

- **Pilot the draft 'model' in Jordanian HEIs ..**

- **Review /revise the 'model' and its Guidelines**

- **Complement by training and capacity building (for sustainability)**

ANECA

it was essential to:

- note the very different *and changing* HEI contexts across Jordan and the different *and changing* European QA experiences

- clarify that the project concerned QA – not accreditation !

- build an 'adaptive / responsive' Model – not 'one size fits all' ! that can**:**

  - accommodate

    - different (HEI) management approaches / structures

    - changing priorities, and external 'expectations' (standards)

  - promote constructive QA relationships within and between HEIs, and their 'external' QA agency / agencies

  - [lead towards a Quality Culture]

4. Draft Guidelines – key features

The project started with a comparison of European and Jordanian approaches to internal QA, and the external evaluation of HEIs.

It quickly became apparent that 'contexts' and QA methodologies vary enormously (particularly in their detail) .. and change ! … but ..

.. when discussions focused on the 'purposes' of HE, and its QA, (both 'internally' and externally by QA agencies)

.. a set of underlying (shared) 'Principles' were quickly identified.

These became the basis of a 'model' for internal QA, irrespective of an HEI's context, management structure, and priorities (each of which can change).

5. Trials

It was ESSENTIAL to ensure that the trials focused on:

- **the (draft) Guidelines ..**

[and were NOT (and not perceived as) a test of the HEI and its QA]

To ensure this the 1st trial (Yarmouk University) was held on 'neutral ground' (a hotel) with NO self evaluation document and no site visit

Subsequent trials (Tafila TU and PSUT) involved both SER and site visit BUT the focus was on .. the applicability of the Guidelines

For EQUAM the Outcomes focused on the Guidelines

- **NO 'judgement' was made about the university or it QA**

for the universities - QA ACTIONS resulted from the Pilot exercises

6. Changing contexts

at the specific level

- the EQUAM Guidelines draw heavily on the HEAC Quality Standards and the European Standards and Guidelines (Part 1)

During the project BOTH have undergone substantial revisions !

but … the 'principles-based' EQUAM Guidelines remain relevant

at a more general level

- At national and international levels there is a discernable change in the approaches to QA in HE with
- A greater emphasis on 'outputs' and 'process' than 'inputs
- (see in focus on 'learning outcomes' and 'student experience')
- A move away from repeated 'external' *ex post* programme evaluation to ongoing external monitoring on HEI's 'internal' QA

the EQUAM Guidelines are designed with this in mind ('future proofed')

7. Outcomes and impacts

a 'comprehensive' document:

> **Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Jordanian Universities (1st draft)**

was produced (2014) and has been successfully piloted (2014/15)

The Guidelines are being edited to:

- reflect changes to HEAC QA and European Standards and Guidelines
- provide 'audience-specific' Quality Handbooks (e.g. academic staff).

The project has had significant impacts within collaborating partner universities and influenced policy development

and - by the way in which the project developed - made many friends !

the Guidelines are for 'today' but can provide basis for 'the future'

8. Key 'messages'

asking 'how?' (and 'what?') was not a sound approach

[e.g. during project both the ESG and HEAC Quality Standards changed]

asking 'why?' and 'who for?' identified shared 'principles'

[although with different (current and context-related) priorities]

Importantly, the Guidelines:

- are based on shared 'principles'

- can be applied irrespective of HEI's 'management model', and (current) priorities

- include summaries of 'responsibilities' .. and 'reasonable expectations' .. for each group involved within the university

- emphasise the importance of collecting *only-relevant data* – collating (and using) relevant *information* - reporting 'impacts'

9. Future activities

The Guidelines

- the full Guidelines are not a 'day-to-day' document for all !
- (currently draft) 'QA Handbooks' for specific groups (e.g. QABs, academic staff, students) need to be finalised .. translated .. AND USED

Capacity Building .. must be continued (EQUAM is just the start !)

- within and between Jordanian universities and key 'internal' groups
- between universities and key 'external' partners – especially HEAC
- between Jordanian and international partners

Developing and promoting a Quality Culture

- the Guidelines are designed to promote a Quality Culture
- Capacity Building should progressively move to this – with HEAC

Developing QA that reflects/priorities vision, mission and success

The EQUAM project and its undoubted success to date

and the opportunities it offers for Jordanian HE

has only been possible because of

the considerable work and enthusiasm

of its many contributors

- in particular those in the Jordanian universities and UB -

and the continuing support from the Ministry and HEAC

and a personal

shukran !