



RED IBEROAMERICANA PARA LA ACREDITACIÓN
DE LA CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

Global and Regional Networks for Quality Assurance

ACE 2008 Annual Meeting

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GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS OF QA AGENCIES





The Global Network: INQAAHE

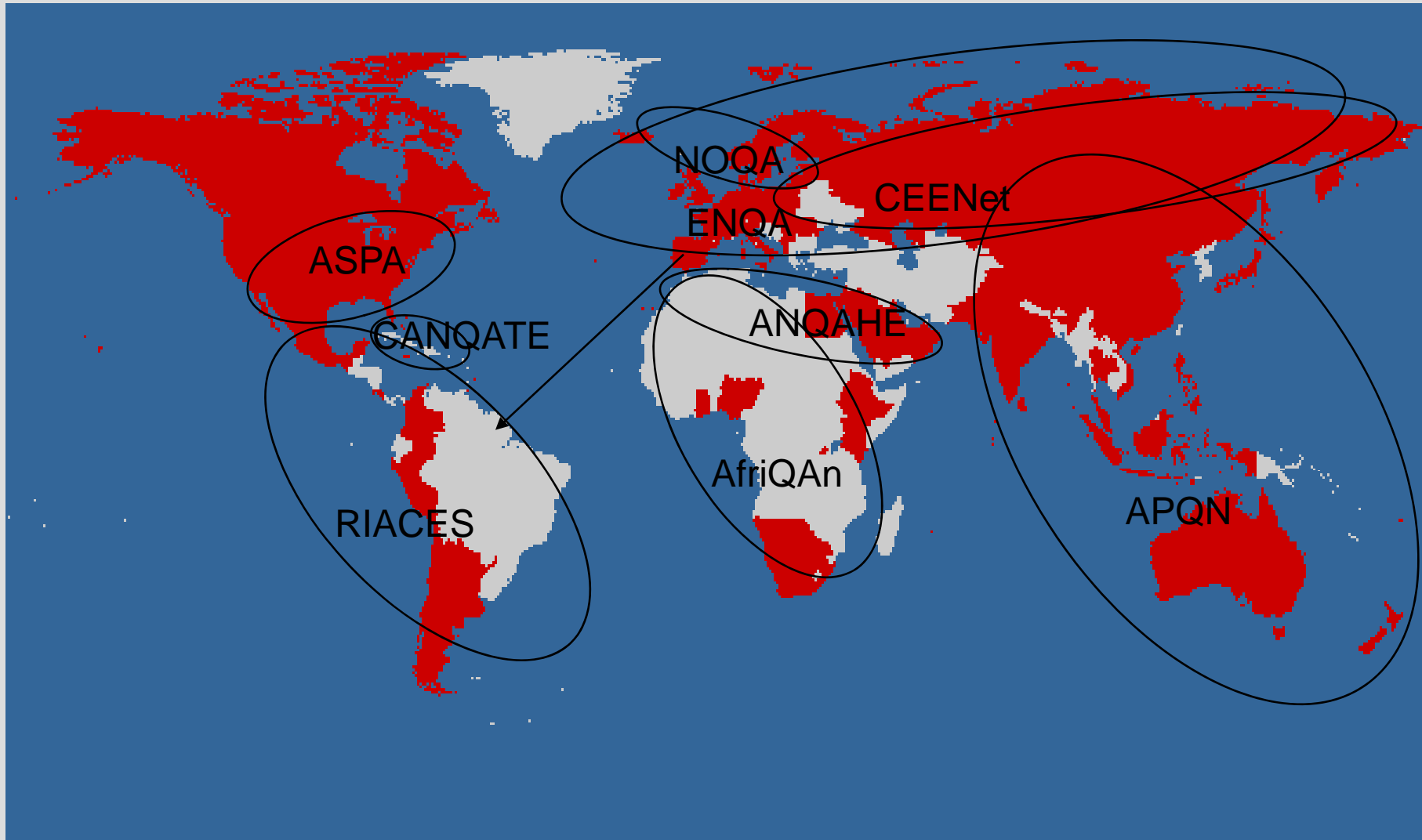
Established in 1991, with a handful of members.

It has grown to become a global network, with over 180 members in nearly 100 countries.

This shows that

- QA has become necessary in most countries,
- QA practitioners feel the need to link with their partners around the world.

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS OF QA AGENCIES





What do members find in INQAAHE?

- We meet as members of a QA community, with shared interests, a shared view of our work, a common language and an understanding of how things are done with regard to a very specific field of work
- We have the opportunity to learn from what others are doing, both from their successes and their mistakes
- We have been able, in all these years, to set the ground for the development of a 'QA profession'
- We have a forum for the discussion of global issues (such as cross border or on-line education) that go beyond national or regional boundaries
- We have also seen that a global network cannot deal with all of our needs, because it must, unavoidably, give issues a general approach



Regional or special interest networks

- They are a new development, which has really come of age only in the last five or six years.
- Many regional networks, sometimes overlapping:
 - America: RIACES, CANQATE, ASPA
 - Europe: ENQA, CEEN, NOQA
 - Africa: AfriQAn
 - Middle East: ANQAHE
 - Asia Pacific: APQN
- Some agencies do not belong to a regional NW.
INQAAHE then becomes their link to the QA community



Why regional networks?

- Geo-political considerations: governmental national or regional decisions, or a commitment to integration, make it necessary to develop specific arrangements (Bologna and ENQA; MERCOSUR; Central America).
- Geographical or cultural proximity: travel is easier; common language (a RIACES asset); stages of development of HE and QA schemes are more similar within a specific region or sub-region.
- Common interests, such as mobility, recognition of qualifications, credit transfer, the impact of TNE.
- Finally, local priorities: all the above define specific priorities which, even though they may be shared with agencies around the world, acquire a specific meaning within the region.



Relations between INQAAHE and the regions

INQAAHE wants to

- encourage double membership, in order to allow both for regional and global exchange
- coordinate (not direct) the activities of regional networks
- encourage and facilitate communications, between itself and the regional networks and among the regional networks themselves
- sign memoranda of cooperation with the regional networks, dealing both with general issues of global interest, and specific ones, relating to each regional or special interest network



Relations between INQAAHE and the regions

Regional networks want to

- Keep their identity, while enjoying the benefits of global networking
- Focus on specific issues, but not duplicate work which may be of more general interest
- Have their efforts and activities recognized and disseminated through the global QA community
- Find ways of working together towards common goals without losing sight of significant issues and restraints present in the local or specific environment



Specific aspects of the relationship between INQAAHE and the regions

- INQAAHE developed a position paper on its links with the regions and other special interests groups
- Need to coordinate the proposals to the global GIQAC grant from the World Bank for the best interests of QA world-wide: prevent duplication, include the interests of networks not included in the current call, take into consideration the need of agencies not belonging to a regional network
- Formal recognition of regional networks in the different activities organized by INQAAHE
- Formal links between each regional network and INQAAHE



Shared priorities of QA networks

- Capacity building, both for existing and new agencies
- Showing the effectiveness and impact of QA processes; promotion and advocacy of QA
- Dealing with diversity of HEIs, students and social demands – new types of QA mechanisms
- Need to find more efficient methods for QA for increased efficiency and sustainability



Main activities of global or regional networks

- capacity building, (exchange and development of technical staff, support to the higher education staff in charge of QA, training for self assessment and external reviews)
- interaction, publication and translation of documents, other actions leading to an increased legibility and understanding of QA standards and procedures in different parts of the world
- analysis of standards and procedures of programs with a stronger international approach (on-line or distance programs, graduate programs, transnational or cross border higher education), leading to the eventual harmonization of standards and procedures
- studies and research on specific issues: links between program and institutional accreditation, sustainability of QA processes, embedding of QA within HEI



Final comments

The subject of educational quality is global, although the work of QA, in most part, is local.

The QA community as a whole needs to see the symbiosis of both the global and the regional approaches as being both desirable and possible and work towards it as a common goal.



Thank you
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