

<b>Subject</b>	External Quality Assurance
<b>Module</b>	Networks Of External Quality Agencies
<b>Topic</b>	3.10 Networks in Africa

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### 1. Introduction



We begin with a brief introduction to the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) and move on to the emergence of the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). You will learn about the aims and mission of CAMES, as well as its initiatives in field of QA for higher education institutions (HEIs).

#### Objectives: Networks in Africa

Upon completion of this topic, you should be able to

- discuss the emergence of the African QA networks: AfriQAN and CAMES
- identify the aims and mission of CAMES

### 2. The African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)

In 1997, there was an attempt to form a southern African network to take advantage of the interest generated by the INQAAHE conference that year in South Africa year. This did not succeed, despite the presence of the pre-existing Southern African Development Council with its mechanisms for international collaboration.

Like Asia, Africa is a region that on the whole has little in common. In addition, the the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) has not provided a firm enough basis for a QA network. To the extent that there is continent-wide QA interaction, it is facilitated by the Association of African Universities (AAU).

In 2004, the formation of the African QA Network (AQANet) was announced, but gained little traction. The African QA network (AfriQAN), announced in September 2007, at a UNESCO Conference in Tanzania, is still a work in progress. Networks are also emerging in East Africa and Southern Africa.

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### **3. Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES)**

The Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur, CAMES (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education) represents 17 francophone African states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

CAMES was established in 2000 as a co-ordinating agency for French-speaking HEIs in Africa. Funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), UNESCO and others. CAMES aims to enhance mutual recognition of qualifications and promote professional and student mobility between its members. Its activities include:

- Dissemination of documentation and research undertaken by French-speaking African universities
- Establishing an online knowledge-sharing network
- Harmonisation of higher education systems to facilitate the transfer of credits between countries.

It is working toward a structure similar to that of the European Union's Bologna Declaration with three, five and eight-year cycles (equivalent to bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees) of higher study.

The broad objectives of CAMES are to:

- Promote and foster understanding and solidarity between member states
- Establish an enduring cultural and scientific co-operation between member states
- Assemble and disseminate university or research documents: statistics, information on examinations, annual reports, records, awards, information on offers of and requests for employment
- Prepare proposals for agreements between the states pertinent to higher education and research, and to assist in implementing such agreements
- Initiate and promote agreements for the coordination of higher education and research systems, so as to harmonise the programs and recruitment efforts of the various institutions of higher education and research, and to encourage co-operation and information exchange between different institutions.

## **4. Discussion**

### **Discussion: QA Networks in Africa**

Consider the following questions:

- There have been a number of attempts to establish a QA network in Africa. Possibly the first was a southern African grouping following on the 1997 INQAAHE Conference in South Africa; AQANet emerged in 2004; AfriQAN was announced in 2007 but by 2009 the membership was not large. What is the reason behind this? Is this a financial issue, a matter of culture, a stage of general development, priorities, or a reflection of the general strength and influence of African national QA agencies?
- QA activities take place through AAU and CAMES, which are HEI networks that seem to have substance. What can be learned from this?
- Are there any other regional networks not mentioned in this topic?

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## 5. Summary

This topic covered the following main points:

- Attempts to create QA networks have gained little traction, as the countries in the African region seem to have little in common.
- The AfriQAN was established in September 2007, following on a UNESCO Conference in Tanzania.
- CAMES was established in 2000 as a co-ordinating agency for French-speaking HEIs in Africa. CAMES aims to:
  - enhance mutual recognition of qualifications; and
  - promote professional and student mobility between its members.