



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2004–2005**

Asia-Pacific Quality Network Inc.

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# ANNUAL REPORT

Asia-Pacific Quality Network Inc.

Trading As APQN



**Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region**

APQN Annual Report 2004–2005

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
MISSION.....	2
VISION.....	2
VALUES.....	2
OBJECTIVES .....	2
METHODS .....	3
<b>REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>REPORT FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY / TREASURER.....</b>	<b>5</b>
SECRETARIAL ACTIVITES .....	5
FINANCIAL ACTIVITES .....	6
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	7
COMMITTEES .....	7
<b>PROJECT GROUPS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
IDENTIFY CONSTITUENCY (PROJECT GROUP 1) .....	9
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (PROJECT GROUP 2).....	10
QUALITY ASSURANCE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION/E-LEARNING (PROJECT GROUP 3) .....	10
INDICATORS OF QUALITY (PROJECT GROUP 4) .....	11
WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND TRAINING (PROJECT GROUP 5).....	12
STAFF SECONDMENTS AND EXCHANGES (PROJECT GROUP 6) .....	12
SURVEY: MONITORING OF TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES (PROJECT GROUP 7).....	13
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES (PROJECT GROUP 8) .....	13
BEST PRACTICES DATABASE (PROJECT GROUP 9) .....	14
QUALITY LITERACY (PROJECT GROUP 10) .....	14
TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION (PROJECT GROUP 11).....	14
ACCREDITATION (PROJECT GROUP 12) .....	14
STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE (PROJECT GROUP 13).....	15
<b>EVENTS 04/05.....</b>	<b>16</b>
HONG KONG, PR CHINA .....	18
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND .....	19
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA .....	20
MANILA, PHILIPPINES .....	21
ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA .....	23
PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA.....	24
<b>TIMETABLE FOR FUTURE EVENTS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>DATABASE OF CONSULTANTS AND REVIEWERS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
CONSULTANCY .....	26
<b>MEMBERS (GENERAL COUNCIL).....</b>	<b>27</b>
FULL MEMBERS.....	27
INTERMEDIATE MEMBERS .....	28
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS .....	28
PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS.....	28
OBSERVER STATUS .....	30
<b>SUSTAINABILITY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
BUDGET .....	31
WORLD BANK .....	31
MEMBERSHIP FEES.....	31
<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>33</b>

BUDGET AND ACTUALS .....	33
PROFIT AND LOSS .....	34
<b>APQN AND ITS SUPPORTERS .....</b>	<b>35</b>
BUSINESS ADVISORS .....	35

## Tables and Figures

FIGURE 1: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE .....	7
FIGURE 2: COUNTRY REPRESENTATION AT APQN EVENTS .....	17
FIGURE 3: SUPPORTED PLACES AT APQN EVENTS .....	17
FIGURE 4: DELEGATES AT THE FIRST APQN MEETING IN HONG KONG .....	18
FIGURE 5: APQN BOARD ELECTIONS VOTING PROCESS IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND .....	19
FIGURE 6: GANESH HEGDE (NAAC) WON THE AUQF2005: BEST POSTER AWARD.....	20
FIGURE 7: TRAINERS AND ORGANISERS IN MANILA.....	21
FIGURE 8: TRAINERS AND LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL APQN DELEGATES .....	23
FIGURE 9: SENIOR OFFICIALS AND ORGANISERS IN CAMBODIA .....	24
TABLE 1: 2005/2006 PROGRAM (CURRENT AT 30 SEPTEMBER, 2005).....	26
TABLE 2: MEMBERSHIP FEES .....	31
FIGURE 10: CASH FLOW STRUCTURE .....	32
TABLE 3: EXTERNAL FUNDING BODIES AS APPROACHED BY THE BOARD .....	32
TABLE 4: BUDGET AND ACTUALS – OCTOBER 1, 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2005 .....	33
TABLE 5: PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT – OCTOBER 1, 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2005.....	34

## Introduction

*Asia and the Pacific Rim is a fast-growing region, characterized by cultural, linguistic, social, political and economic diversities. With a few exceptions, the majority of Asia-Pacific nations are developing ones. The economies of many of these developing countries are growing rapidly, and are under pressure to support that development with skilled human resources.*

*Governments in these growing economies recognise the direct relationship between high-quality higher education and a prosperous domestic economy, and therefore, are investing more in higher education. With more taxpayers' money being spent on higher education, governments also want assurances that the recipients are both efficient and proficient. As a direct result, higher education reforms are beginning to give quality-assurance mechanisms a central role in increasing national capacity to provide improved educational opportunities. The growing need for more and improved higher education has implications not only within the nation, but also across national borders.*

Excerpt from 'Cooperation in Quality Assurance: Developments in Asia and the Pacific' by Dr Antony Stella

(<http://www.wes.org/ewenr/05oct/index.asp> accessed 01-12-2005)

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), formed in January 2003, is a regional network of higher education quality assurance associations and professionals that includes members from among 51 countries and territories across Asia and the Pacific regions.

APQN has defined its region by taking into consideration the definition of regions listed by UNESCO. In addition to UNESCO's definition, APQN has included Singapore and the Pacific Islands. For further details, go to <http://www.apqn.org/membership/region/>.

Version no. 2 of the Constitution was ratified electronically by the 'potential' (as no formal members existed at that stage) membership, and APQN was formally registered as a legal entity within the state of Victoria, Australia on 1 December 2004, thereby making it an independent non profit association.

The World Bank's Development Grant Facility (DGF) is a source of seed money to help important capacity-building initiatives emerge and grow in developing countries throughout the region. This funding is limited to a maximum of three years.

The capacity-building activities of APQN recognise the differential needs of the member agencies. For example, in new small systems like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Laos PDR, capacity development efforts will help the countries establish a quality assurance agency. In the year 2004–2005, efforts were initiated for these purposes. Representatives from these countries were invited to participate in APQN meetings and training events in an effort to assist them in establishing quality assurance agencies.

Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and China have emerging quality assurance systems. APQN has helped to train the agency staff in good quality assurance practices, through training the trainers for external review, and through consultancy services.

The needs of India, Indonesia and the Philippines are to bring in reforms and to introduce new elements in their practices. They have been supported through training workshops.

Workshops and consultancy services can address the national requirement of an agency or a group of agencies. Even in the case of a national approach, the workshops are open to member agencies from other countries/territories that may have a similar need or may benefit from the workshops.

In addition to the programs mentioned above that would address the differential needs of the member agencies, the annual meetings of APQN and INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) also contribute to capacity development,

through sharing of experience and discussion on emerging issues. Knowledge-sharing is multidirectional, not a unidirectional activity, and therefore, every quality assurance (QA) system can learn from another. APQN aims to build regional or worldwide partnerships and leverage knowledge-sharing to the benefit of developing countries.

APQN's first year as a legally incorporated, fully functioning network has been rewarding for all concerned. The Network has without a doubt matured as a result of the significant contributions of its Board and event hosts, and through the dedicated participation of its members and other interested parties.

APQN now embraces the second year of World Bank funding (FY06), and planning is already underway for events in the remainder of 2005 and in 2006.

## Mission

To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

## Vision

To be a self-sustaining Network by 2010, in which it will come naturally to members to use APQN as a first point of reference for advice or support.

## Values

APQN is:

- committed to high quality higher education
- supportive of quality agencies in the region
- efficient in its operations
- open in its information sharing

## Objectives

The purposes of APQN are:

- to promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region
- to facilitate research in the region into the practice of quality management in higher education and its effectiveness in improving the quality of higher education in the region
- to provide advice and expertise to assist the development of new quality assurance agencies in the region
- to facilitate links between quality assurance agencies and acceptance of each others' decisions and judgements
- to assist members of APQN to determine standards of institutions operating across national borders
- to permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region
- to assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes to enhance the mobility of students between institutions both within and across national borders
- to enable members of APQN to be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organisations
- where appropriate, represent the region and promote the interests of the region, e.g. vis-à-vis other networks and international organisations

## Methods

APQN achieves its purposes through a range of methods, including:

- dissemination of information through newsletters, documents, journals and books, whether in paper-based or electronic form
- training and development through seminars, workshops and conferences
- reference to the databases and other resources of INQAAHE and other organisations
- other appropriate means as determined by the General Council or the Board

## Report from the President



The Asia-Pacific region contains over half of the world's population. Expansion of educational opportunities is high on any government's agenda. There has been increased government input, some assistance from international organisations and a growth in general of private providers, some across national borders. But it will be a long time before there is enough to go around; so authorities will have to make choices.

There is a need for prioritising, such as making a policy on allocation of resources, or for discrimination, such as setting up regulation regimes over private or transnational provision of educational services. For these essential decisions, my argument is that there is simply no better or fairer way than differentiation on the basis of quality.

This is why quality assurance must be given regard *a priori* at both the national and the international levels.

Given the highly diverse stages of development of the countries and territories in this region, there is no doubt that some efforts at the transnational level to help new agencies grow, to facilitate information exchange, to encourage mutual help, and to achieve a degree of uniformity in approaches, are desirable. This is what has led to the birth of APQN under the auspices of INQAAHE, and this is probably the reason for the APQN being a recipient of a Development Grant Facility (DGF) from the World Bank.

Within the year, APQN has refined its Constitution and reconstituted its governance structure. A Board was elected and a Finance Committee was established. It also expanded its potential membership list, which contains agencies with which the APQN has established, or will establish, a working link. From this list, 10 agencies from seven different countries and territories have become full members; three have been registered as intermediate members and four as associate members. These figures might not look very impressive at first sight, but APQN is new and there are rather rigorous application procedures to go through before membership is approved. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that in this transition period, even before agencies complete their registration procedures, they are invited to take part in all APQN activities, with eligibility for financial subsidies if their countries fall into the 'developing' category.

Continued efforts are made in capacity building. Activities organised include conferences and seminars, workshops, project groups, consultancy visits and the creation of a regional reservoir of experts and reviewers for common use. Under APQN, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, opening the way for further mutual cooperation amongst member agencies.

One noteworthy feature of APQN is that much of its work is done on a pro bono basis. Agencies responsible for organising events normally do not charge for the input. The Secretariat and Treasury functions are discharged by AUQA, but only the cost of one part-time staff member is from the APQN's account. Individual experts get an honorarium for their direct involvement, but there has never been any case of the organisation to which these experts belong asking for the full cost of their release.

There is much more to be done in the years to come. One of the priority projects for APQN is fund-raising. It has not been easy but the Board of the APQN has taken on itself to make preliminary contacts. The organisations we have approached include:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)
- South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
- Asia Development Bank (ADB)
- European Commission
- Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
- UNESCO Paris (global)
- UNESCO Bangkok (regional)
- UNESCO country staff (national)

First indications are that most of the organisations would be willing to consider cooperation or sponsorship on a project basis, but many would also require that the projects be closely related to their ambit or their particular geographical coverage. The first joint APQN/UNESCO project to be launched in 2006 is a toolkit on cross-border education for the policy makers, and it should set a useful precedent. We shall continue to make determined efforts.

## Report from the Vice-President



The Vice-President has oversight of project groups. The Board developed criteria for them and the Board must approve any proposal submitted to the Secretariat. The project groups must advance APQN's objectives, be sponsored by a member agency, and be led by someone associated with that member agency.

APQN has initiated projects on common areas of interest to members of APQN. The current project groups include:

- qualification frameworks
- quality assurance of distance education/e-learning
- indicators of quality
- mutual recognition of quality assurance agencies
- student participation in quality assurance

Project groups on some areas like 'best practices database', 'quality literacy', 'transnational education' and 'accreditation' are in pipeline. These project groups were identified based on the APQN survey.

APQN may provide a small amount of funding to assist project groups in achieving their goals by providing seed money for the project operations not exceeding US \$2,500 per each project.

The focused activities of these project groups, it is hoped, will help in capacity-building of quality assurance agencies of the region.

For detailed information about APQN project groups, see full reports by project group leaders on page 9.

## Report from the Secretary / Treasurer



In 1991, the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was formed at a conference in Hong Kong. Since then, INQAAHE has held a conference every two years, and since 1998 a workshop every alternate year. In the late 1990s, as more countries were looking to set up quality agencies, INQAAHE initiated 'regional meetings' at its workshops and conferences, so that participants could discuss matters of relevance to their respective geographical regions. In 2001, the participants from the Asia-Pacific region decided they would like to form a regional network. In January 2003, coincidentally again at a meeting in Hong Kong, the regional participants decided to create the Asia-Pacific Quality Network. It set up a steering committee, led by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA), and the first project groups. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) provided the Secretariat.

In May 2003, a report to the World Bank recommended regional funding for capacity-building in quality assurance (QA) in higher education (HE), and that the funds be channelled through the APQN. This funding eventually began in October 2004.

### Secretarial activities

A draft Constitution was developed for APQN and discussed at the INQAAHE workshop in Oman in April 2004. In August 2004, the Australian government provided extra funds to AUQA for work in international education. From these funds, AUQA funded a part-time APQN Administrator, Liesha Northover (located in the offices of the Secretariat), who assisted in establishing and maintaining the Network and designed and created the APQN website.

The website is extensive and useful and provides the central contact point and resource for the Network (Activity 3 in the DGF agreement). The website is constantly being enhanced.

APQN staff time increased from one part-time staff two days per week to one part-time staff four days per week to complete program activities, to transition APQN to independent administration, and to satisfy the sustainability plan. Staff increases at the Australian Universities Quality Agency mean that APQN is now in a position to take over the management of the Network (Activity 6 in the DGF agreement).

Following the start of the World Bank funding, APQN re-doubled its work in identifying and contacting QA agencies and potential members throughout the region, and began listing them on the APQN website. In November 2004, APQN carried out an extensive survey of agencies in the region to identify the needs they see as the highest priority.

The first APQN Meeting of the Network took place, again in Hong Kong, in February/March 2005. The first Annual General Meeting (AGM), at which elections for the Board took place, was held in Wellington in April 2005 in association with the INQAAHE conference.

Other achievements in the year to 30 September 2005 (FY05) include:

- membership criteria were finalised (go to <http://www.apqn.org/membership/criteria/>)
- agencies were encouraged and assisted with their membership applications (APQN has 10 full members, 3 intermediate members, 4 associate members, and 37 prospective members)
- an observer category was introduced (nil observers at 30 September 2005)
- a database of reviewers and consultants was established
- staff movement for capacity-building has taken place with 18 individuals being sponsored to attend the APQN Meeting in Hong Kong; 22 individuals funded to attend the INQAAHE conference in New Zealand with post-conference study events in New Zealand and Australia; eight individuals funded to attend the Australian annual QA conference (AUQF2005) and carry out post-conference study visits in Australia

- workshops were held in the Philippines, Cambodia and Mongolia, see workshop reports on page 16
- a consultancy agreement was made between the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) and Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), see further details on page 26
- project groups were supported, see project group reports on page 9

There were also ancillary capacity-building activities in India.

### Financial activities

While APQN and its members are the clear beneficiaries of the DGF award, at the time of the initial grant application, APQN was just being established and lacked the legal capacity to administer the flow of funds and coordinate its proposed activities. Although APQN was a strong, long-standing regional special interest group of quality assurance professionals linked through their membership in the worldwide association known as INQAAHE, APQN was not a legal entity at the time of the initial DGF application and did not have an official governance structure in place, nor did it have an independent, self-sustaining administration. Prior to the DGF award, APQN functioned regionally with a modest voluntary secretariat operating from the offices of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in Melbourne, Australia. Generous financial and in-kind contributions from AUQA and other associated quality assurance agencies in the region maintained APQN and its activities.

APQN has built its own managerial and administrative capacity and is functioning effectively as a free-standing regional professional association with support from its members, and through the publication of a 'Proposal for Funding' is working towards targeting support from donor agencies, foundations, and other funding sources. Whilst APQN is independently strengthening its management and financing structure to become a self-sustaining entity, DGF funds are still needed to support the development of quality assurance capacity-building activities of APQN members from developing countries.

The first year's World Bank grant (FY05) was made through the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) in Washington DC, so during 2005 the accounts have been run by CQAIE. This was a year of gradually identifying the most efficient and helpful ways of approving and providing funding, and accounting for and reporting on its use (see Finance Committee report on page 7).

It is anticipated that the DGF funds, currently managed by CQAIE, will be managed by the Secretariat by the third year of DGF funding (FY07).

### Workshops

For the year 2004–2005 (FY05), the APQN Administrator has provided a high level of individual support to foreign participants attending APQN workshops; this has been very time-consuming. It is intended to make the cut-off dates slightly longer before future workshops so that participants have plenty of time to arrange visas, travel etc. In relation to international travel, APQN has been well-served by Dan Wexman of Outer Cape Travel.

### Documents published

- Constitution ([http://www.apqn.org/virtual\\_library/](http://www.apqn.org/virtual_library/))
- Project Group Guidelines ([http://www.apqn.org/project\\_groups/](http://www.apqn.org/project_groups/))
- Finance Manual (available on request)
- Proposal for Funding (available on request)

## Organisational structure

The APQN structure has the General Council, comprising all APQN members, at the top. The office bearers—President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer—along with four elected members, plus co-opted members, make up the Board. APQN has five current project group leaders. Three committees have been established, each with a Chair, and having 11 members spread across the committees.

The DGF Administrator works in conjunction with the Board (for further detail, see Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) under 'Business advisors' on page 36. The APQN Administrator operates out of the Secretariat and is directly answerable to Dr David Woodhouse and the APQN Board at large.

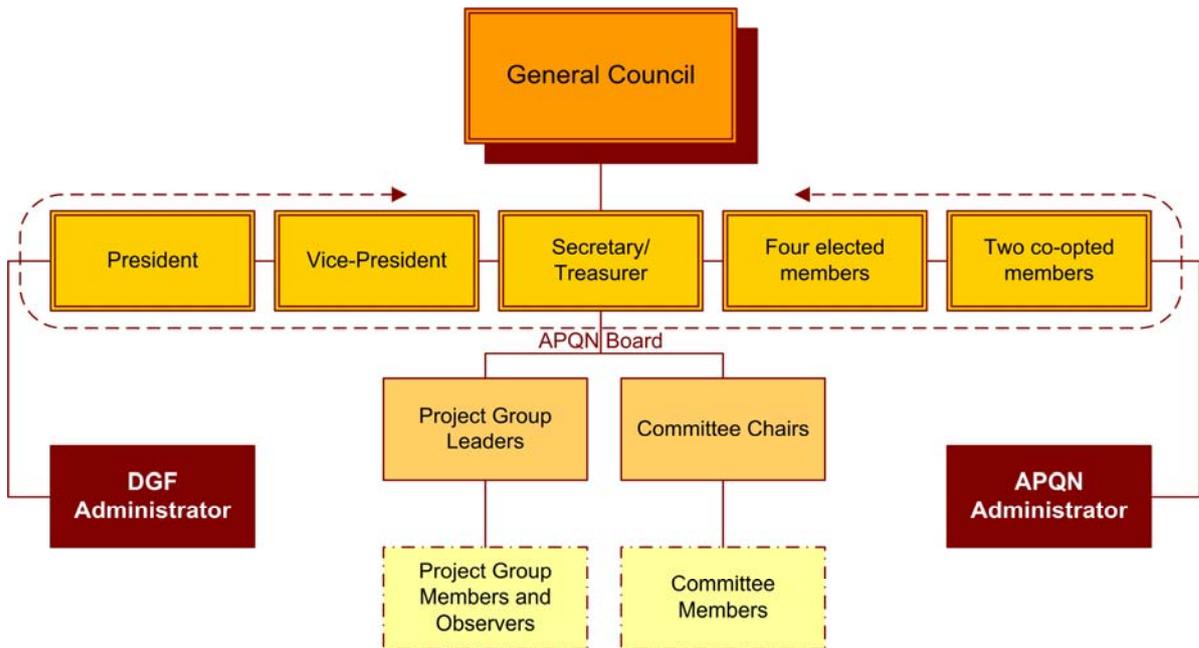


Figure 1: Organisational structure

## Committees

### Finance Committee

APQN has constituted a Finance Committee with representation of APQN members. Membership consists of: Vice-President (Chair), President, Secretary/Treasurer, one member of APQN on the Board, and one member of APQN not on the Board but appointed by the Board. Presently the Finance Committee consists of:

**Chair:** Prof. VS Prasad

**Members:** Peter PT Cheung, Concepcion Pijano, Prof. MK Tadjudin, Dr David Woodhouse

The terms of reference are to:

- advise the Board on financial and risk-related matters
- review the end-of-year accounts
- recommend a budget for the subsequent year to the Board for approval
- propose to the Board of APQN criteria for provision of grants and other financial support
- develop a Finance Manual which includes all matters relating to the DGF and its relationship to APQN
- set out APQN policies and priorities for funding

- consider applications from members for grants and other financial support in the light of the criteria established by the Board

The parameters for APQN funding decisions are as follows:

- the APQN Board decides from time to time what types of activities it is willing to fund, and to what extent, and it advertises this willingness on the APQN website
- APQN members can apply for funding at any time (a form has been provided for this)
- applicants are required to set out in detail the purpose of the activity
- applicants should indicate the wider value of the activity to the Network, indicate whether they are willing to open the activity to participation by other APQN members, and suggest ways in which the activity can be extended to include other APQN members
- applicants are required to indicate how much they can contribute towards the cost of the proposed activity (APQN aims to meet 50% of the cost of the activity, but the actual amount is considered in relation to the applicant's circumstances and, if the funding is from the DGF, the World Bank's parameters)
- applications are considered every three months (end March, June, September and December) by the APQN Finance Committee which makes recommendations on funding to the APQN Board
- the APQN Finance Committee also recommends on the wider utility and enlargement of the activity
- a report of at least one page on the activity must subsequently be provided by a successful applicant (a pro forma will be provided for this) – no funding will be provided for any subsequent application unless such a report had been provided

APQN has developed a Finance Manual for the operations of the Finance Committee. The participatory mode of decision making, based on approved procedures of financial allocations, is ensuring the smooth operations of financial management of APQN. In the allocation of funds the needs of emerging quality assurance institutions in developing countries is given priority. In all the APQN supported workshops and training events, participation of members from different quality assurance agencies is ensured to enable the cross fertilisation of ideas, practices and experiences.

### AGM Organising Committee (2006)

**Chair:** Prof. MK Tadjudin

**Members:** Jordan Cheung, Dr Manuel T Corpus, Jin Tongkang, Dr Takahiro Saito, Dr David Woodhouse, Dr Zhang Min Xuan

In March 2005, the Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI) formally offered to host the APQN AGM and Conference in Shanghai in March 2006. The APQN Board accepted this offer and established the AGM Organising Committee 2006, chaired by John Jennings of New Zealand. Unfortunately, Mr Jennings had to resign, from this position, and Prof. MK Tadjudin of Indonesia took over.

The AGM Organising Committee (2006) proposed, and the board agreed, that the theme of the event should be 'Regional Mobility: Cooperation in Quality Assurance', which primarily aims to enhance participants' understanding and awareness of this growing and important subject. In May 2005, the APQN Secretary, another Board member, and a representative of the President of APQN made a preparatory visit to Shanghai to view potential venues and to assist the local organising committee led by Mr Jin Tongkang of SEEI.

Planning for the event was well advanced by 30 September, with a budget approved, a program devised and some speakers invited.

The Conference will take place in the City Hotel, Shanghai, and 30 places are available for eligible participants. Invitation for registration and paper contribution has been sent by email to the membership and registration is available on the APQN website at <http://www.apqn.org/events/>. It is expected that a collection of Conference papers will be published after the activity. By and large, the preparation is in good progress.

### APQN DGF Liaison Committee

**Chair:** Peter PT Cheung

**Members:** Dr Marjorie Peace Lenn, Prof. VS Prasad, Dr David Woodhouse

While the Development Grant Facility (DGF) exists there is need for a formal channel of communication between the Board and the World Bank. It was therefore decided that an APQN DGF Liaison Committee be established.

The terms of reference are to:

- provide a channel of communication between APQN and the World Bank
- advise the Board of APQN on policies for the funding of APQN projects from the DGF, including priorities
- advise the Board of APQN on World Bank preferences for areas of development and parameters for funding support
- propose to the Board of APQN criteria for the provision of grants and other financial support from the DGF
- draft applications for extension of the DGF

#### Note:

This committee (or an agreed alternative communication mechanism) will exist as long as the World Bank is providing a DGF to APQN via CQAIE.

## Project groups

Numerous project groups have been established; each consists of a project group leader, members and observers.

Project groups have been established to:

- focus work on matters of relevance to quality and quality assurance agencies
- facilitate joint work on such matters by a range of people and agencies
- permit flexibility as issues assume greater importance (and hence merit attention) or recede

Progress reports on project groups are available at

[http://www.apqn.org/project\\_groups/current/](http://www.apqn.org/project_groups/current/).

As in all honorary/volunteer organisations, work on these projects depends on people giving their time freely. Project groups and volunteers are as follows:

### Identify constituency (project group 1)



**(completed)**

**Leader:** Liesha Northover

**Members:** Nil

**Observers:** Nil

#### The project

The constituency has been established in principle to include the countries outlined in at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/region/>. The initial work has been completed, but contact details and additional contacts are continually being updated. An online mailing list has been established and subscription is available at [http://www.apqn.org/tools/mailling\\_list/](http://www.apqn.org/tools/mailling_list/).

The formal membership application process has brought additional agencies and interested parties to the attention of the Secretariat.

## Qualifications frameworks (project group 2)



**(current)**

**Leader:** Dr Manuel T Corpus

**Members:** Felix Leung, Dr Antony Stella

**Observers:** Nil

### The project

The expected outcomes of the project group on qualifications frameworks include

- description of some qualifications frameworks within and outside the region, highlighting similarities and differences
- sharing information on problems encountered in establishing and implementing frameworks, together with solutions identified

The project group is mapping the work which is being done in the region with regards to such frameworks. A large number of countries / territories outside the region are also developing or revising their frameworks and therefore the project group aimed to draw on experiences from other countries / territories. 'Qualifications frameworks' was taken as the main study topic at the APQN meeting in Hong Kong in January, and extensive presentations from several countries were given. Issues covered included

- definition of QF
- national motivation to adopt QF
- classification levels
- descriptors
- implementing bodies
- obstacles preventing adoption of QF
- participants in the formulation of QF
- mode of legislation or authority to create QF

In the longer term, a possible outcome of the work of the group is a mapping between various national qualifications frameworks, to facilitate cross-border mobility and recognition. Thus, the work supports that of Project Group 4 (Indicators of quality) and Project Group 8 (Mutual recognition). The group may finish its work by the end of 2005.

## Quality assurance of distance education/e-learning (project group 3)



**(current)**

**Leader:** Dr Takahiro Saito

**Members:** Dr Takayuki Hayashi

**Observers:** Sanae Maeda

### The project

Project group 3 (PG3) targets the distance education (DE)/e-learning quality assurance, and is working to:

- share information on the latest quality assurance systems of DE/e-learning in the Asia-Pacific quality assurance agencies
- make the list/matrix of DE/e-learning qualities to easily understand the multidimensionality and multiple perspectives of DE/e-learning quality assurance among the Asia-Pacific quality assurance agencies
- promote the development and improvement of the DE/e-learning quality assurance in each Asia-Pacific quality assurance agency

As the first step, PG3 had a plan to collect the information on the latest quality assurance systems of DE/e-learning conducted by the Asia-Pacific quality assurance agencies through questionnaire survey, and to construct the list/matrix of DE/e-learning quality assurance systems based on the results and open it to the public.

The questionnaire survey entitled 'Preliminary Survey on Quality Assurance of Distance Higher Education' was implemented in March 2005. The questionnaire used in the main survey was finalised by taking into consideration some fruitful comments from APQN members and e-learning researchers and experts. They were delivered to all of the APQN members via email and a request to complete the questionnaire was made at the APQN meeting in New Zealand. Only six members, however, responded to the survey and most of them answered that the criteria special to DE/e-learning does not exist in their quality assurance mechanism.

The group examined their criteria for DE/e-learning in their websites and found that most quality assurance agencies in APQN do not have effective criteria special to DE/e-learning.

In the first plan the group explained the definition of quality assurance of DE/e-learning and made clear the differences and similarities among the DE/e-learning guidelines used by APQN members based on the responses of the questionnaire survey. Even if the enough number of responses were not collected, some good practices were expected to be found and shown in the APQN website. But the plan had to be replanned because the expected information was not apparent among the APQN members.

PG3 is now conducting research on quality assurance systems of DE/e-learning throughout the world and has plans to make a guideline of quality assurance systems of DE/e-learning for APQN members. This is because the Asia-Pacific region, especially Asia itself, is the largest market for higher education trade. Some guidelines, or at least statements, are needed for this region in order to protect domestic students from low-quality providers of education in the world, including domestic ones.

#### Future action

In the coming year PG3 will invite two experts to operate the more difficult task; Dr Insung Jung, a professor of the International Christian University who has many experiences of e-learning research, and Dr Kenji Hirata, the former working group leader of quality assurance matters in the Asia e-learning Network, now ISO/IEC 19796-Part3 Co-project editor.

#### Indicators of quality (project group 4)



**(current)**

**Leader:** Dr Antony Stella

**Members:** Concepcion Pijano, Chuluuntsetseg Dagvadorj

**Observers:** Nil

#### The project

The quality assurance agencies (QAAs) in the region differ greatly in the definition of quality they adopt and the methodologies they put in place for quality assurance. The difference stems from the national context and the mandate given to the quality assurance agency. From the notion of quality, the quality assurance agency develops its procedures for making quality assurance decisions. A critical element in quality assurance is the use of an evaluative framework against which the agency can make decisions.

Agencies use this in many ways—some develop standards and criteria, others agree on a set of parameters and indicators, and some others define benchmarks. In these developments, the terms 'criteria', 'standards', 'parameters', 'performance indicators', 'indicators of quality' and 'benchmarks' are often used. Some of these terms are used interchangeably in some contexts; sometimes the same term is used to mean different things by different agencies. This project addresses the way 'indicators' are used.

### Objective

To identify the practices followed by the APQN membership with respect to denoting quality of higher education—both quantitative and qualitative—and using them for making quality assurance decisions.

### Expected outcome

All QAAs need to be clear on what they mean by quality, what they use to indicate quality, and how they use that understanding to take quality assurance decisions. To permit international collaboration and development, there needs to be a shared understanding of these indicators and processes. In stage 1, the project will establish this common understanding and identify the differences that have to be noted. As QAAs learn to work together, there is likely to be greater convergence in the many critical components of quality assurance systems, and an enhanced understanding of 'Indicators of Quality' should strengthen this convergence.

In the longer term, this project will lead to a better understanding of the quality assurance decision making of the QAAs. It could pave the way for subsequent policy formulation for regional cooperation as well as result in system-wide improvements. Significant issues in regional cooperation are mutual recognition of quality assurance outcomes (see Project group 8) and facilitating academic mobility. The project on Indicators of Quality has the potential to contribute to these areas that are in great need of attention.

### Progress

The project group met twice (February 2005 in Hong Kong and April 2005 in New Zealand). A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data on indicators of quality, and it was discussed in the APQN meeting held in New Zealand. Discussions revealed that the basic understanding of the terms used in relation to quality and indicators vary greatly among the APQN membership. Although the variations were expected features of the APQN membership, the discussions brought to light the difficulties some members would have in providing relevant information. It was felt that before collecting data on the pattern of use of indicators of quality, it is essential to facilitate a common understanding of the terms for which a background note, called 'Understanding Quality Assurance Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region: Indicators of Quality' (available at [http://www.apqn.org/project\\_groups/reports/](http://www.apqn.org/project_groups/reports/)), about the various terms has been developed. This background note addresses many doubts that were raised during the April 2005 meeting.

### Future action

A discussion on the common understanding in the March 2006 meeting in Shanghai will help the APQN members to provide relevant details. To avoid sending too many surveys to APQN members, data collection on indicators of quality will be included in the next comprehensive survey to be done by APQN. Based on the survey, stage 2 of the project will present the analysis of common understanding and differences among the QAAs of the region in the usage of indicators of quality.

## Workshops, seminars and training (project group 5)

### (reallocated)

Workshops, seminars and training are now carried out through individual host agencies with the support of the APQN Secretariat.

## Staff secondments and exchanges (project group 6)

### (reallocated)

Staff secondments and exchanges are now carried out through individual host agencies with the support of the APQN Secretariat.

## Survey: monitoring of transnational activities (project group 7)



**(completed)**

**Leaders:** Dr David Woodhouse, Dr Karen van Rooyen

The Transnational Education Survey was completed and the results are available for viewing at

[http://www.apqn.org/preview/virtual\\_library/surveys/](http://www.apqn.org/preview/virtual_library/surveys/).

## Mutual recognition of quality assurance agencies (project group 8)



**(current)**

**Mutual recognition of transnational education reviews**

**Leader:** Dorte Kristoffersen

**Members:** Assoc. Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi, Dr Antony Stella

**Observers:** John Jennings

### Purpose

The purpose of this project group is to look at mutual recognition of decisions in transnational education reviews in the context of the Asia-Pacific region. It is the expectation that mutual recognition will have a number of benefits. It may help diminish the duplication of effort for educational institutions offering courses in more than one country as mutual recognition would have the implication that it is only necessary to go through a review in one country. It may equally diminish the workload for quality assurance agencies in both the home countries and the foreign countries charged with checking the quality of these institutions. Closer cooperation between quality assurance agencies may also increase the understanding of the various educational systems and thus facilitate cooperation in the long run.

Originally the outcome of the project was intended to be a paper on good practice when setting up arrangements of mutual recognition of transnational education decisions. The paper would be based on an analysis of barriers related to the introduction of mutual recognition, the advantages of mutual recognition arrangements, and the parameters that need to be in place for arrangements to be set up between one or more countries/territories.

### Project group

The project group members have met twice, i.e. in Hong Kong after the APQN meeting in March 2005, and in New Zealand after the INQAAHE conference in April 2005.

At the New Zealand meeting a paper from the project group was discussed with a group of APQN members. The discussion was very useful and illuminating and identified a number of issues that need to be clarified for the project to proceed.

### Issues identified for further exploration

1. Can and should mutual recognition of decisions in reviews of transnational education be separated from recognition of degrees?
2. One of the key questions asked by universities that operate outside their home country, and that are evaluated either by the quality agency in their home country or by the quality agency in the foreign country in which they are active, is whether the degree offered is comparable to the degree in the home country. Methods for establishing comparability need to be explored.
3. What aspects of the methods applied by one quality assurance agency could easily be applied by another quality agency?

4. Another interesting question to explore in regard to comparability, is what areas or activities covered in an evaluation need to be comparable?

#### **Proposed future working method**

Rather than pursuing the objective of preparing a paper, it is suggested to organise a workshop as part of the APQN AGM in Shanghai in March 2006 (for example, in place of a paper session) and have members discuss the issue of comparability on the basis of case studies, e.g. real life examples.

Experience elsewhere in the world shows that mutual recognition is a difficult project, and not easily attainable. In the USA, the regional accreditation commissions recognise each others' decisions, but accreditation has a history of more than 100 years. In Europe, progress appears as though it may be faster, but a good deal of EU resources have been put into it. The Washington Accord between engineering accreditors from a range of countries in different parts of the world is often quoted, but firstly it is easier to agree on common needs in a professional area, and secondly even in professional areas there is nothing else as extensive as the Washington Accord.

There is a high intensity of transnational education in the Asia Pacific region. Especially the number of importing countries is high and some of the major exporters of education are in this region. This is the context for the project. While there is a high level of interest in and willingness for collaboration between quality agencies in the region, it will be necessary to investigate the details of various systems to see if mutual recognition is feasible. In the short term it will only involve the quality assurance agencies. In the longer term it will be necessary to involve institutions, and not least governments as mutual recognition will most likely involve areas which are part of national legislation.

It is suggested that a small working group be set up consisting of representatives from those member countries that are already moving towards mutual recognition of their evaluation activities with the purpose of developing a practical approach to mutual recognition. The Project Group believes that more efficient progress can be made through the means of physical working groups rather than electronic discussion groups.

#### **Best practices database (project group 9)**

**(proposed)**

Interest has been expressed in this project group, but no proposals have been submitted.

#### **Quality literacy (project group 10)**

**(proposed)**

A proposal to lead this project group was received by the Secretariat. The proposal was then reviewed by the Finance Committee which did not approve the submission. It was found that there was a significant overlap with project group 13, so the proposer was encouraged to join project group 13 as a member. Project group 10 is still open for proposals.

#### **Transnational education (project group 11)**

**(proposed)**

Interest has been expressed in this project group, but no proposals have been submitted.

#### **Accreditation (project group 12)**

**(proposed)**

A proposal to lead this project group was received by the Secretariat. The proposal was then reviewed by the Finance Committee which did not approve the submission. The project group is still open for proposals.

### Student participation in quality assurance (project group 13)



**(current)**

**Leader:** Dr Jagannath Patil

**Members:** TBA

**Observers:** Nil

#### The project

The project group on Student Participation in Quality Assurance (SPQA) is the most recent initiative, with formal clearance being communicated on 18 August 2005.

The project is in preparatory stage. Advice is sought from senior experts for enrolling members in this new project group.

#### Progress

Steps initiated so far are listed below:

- data collection and literature review on the issue of student participation in quality assurance has commenced using secondary sources
- a desktop study by web-based search is being done to capture data on SPQA from available websites of QAAs and sample institutes
- a format for collecting and mapping the data on SPQA is being designed and tested
- a range of programmes on SPQA are planned in India by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and a few promotional publications are on in the pipeline
- a proposal for an international conference to be hosted by NAAC on this theme has been prepared and submitted to APQN for financial assistance

#### Future action

In addition to the continuation of the abovementioned steps, the following schedule of activities has been decided:

- NAAC has planned to observe the year 2006 as the year of Student Participation in Quality Assurance. A brainstorming session is scheduled for November 2005.
- Before commencing the survey, data available about the member agencies at APQN will be accessed and analysed to capture data on SPQA as outlined in the project proposal. The survey would commence after this initial screening of available resources.
- A preliminary report based on the above study will be published in March 2006.
- A study visit and meetings, as mentioned in the initial Project Proposal, will be taken up between April and June 2006.
- An international conference on SPQA is planned in September 2006.
- Based on the preliminary report and inputs from meetings, a publication like a student handbook on quality assurance is planned along with other advocacy measures between July and December 2006.
- The first phase of the project is expected to end in April/May 2007 as mentioned in the Project Proposal.

To sum up, the project is on track as outlined in the initial Project Proposal approved by the Board and Finance Committee, and will meet the determined deadlines with projected outcomes.

## Events 04/05

APQN continues to achieve its goal of capacity building throughout the region, and the workshops and meetings have been a major vehicle for this (Activity 5 in the DGF agreement). As the first year of World Bank (DGF) funding closes, we can reflect on how APQN has used the funds to help achieve its mission of enhancing the quality of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies.

APQN events are open to all member agencies throughout the region. Interested members register using an online registration method. The registration form then enters an approval process within the Secretariat; if the application is successful, the applicant is issued a formal invitation of attendance.

Approximately 69 quality assurance staff and quality assurance commissioners from APQN member countries/territories have registered and been supported to participate in conferences and two-day regional training programs on selected topics.

Attendance at all workshops has proven favourable and feedback has been exceedingly positive from participants, trainers and hosts. Everyone involved has both received and added value through sharing these experiences.

*Each country has a unique context for quality assurance:*

- *country size (geography, population, etc.)*
- *variations in economic capacity*
- *variations in higher education systems*
- *variations in quality assurance needs*

Fifty-nine percent of APQN foreign delegates who participated in the four workshops conducted in Sydney, Manila, Ulaanbaatar and Phnom Penh completed and returned feedback forms. Of that 59%, the following questions were asked and responses received:

- How would you rate the service provided by the Secretariat prior to attending this event?  
Excellent (75%), Good (25%), Fair (0), Average (0), Poor (0)
- How would you rate the service provided by the host agency while attending this event?  
Excellent (75%), Good (25%), Fair (0), Average (0), Poor (0)
- How would you rate the service provided by the workshop trainers over the duration of this event?  
Excellent (35%), Good (65%), Fair (0), Average (0), Poor (0)
- How would you rate the relevance and usefulness of the information provided over the duration of this event?  
Excellent (45%), Good (55%), Fair (0), Average (0), Poor (0)

Figure 2 shows a representation of attendance at various APQN events by country (not including local participation).

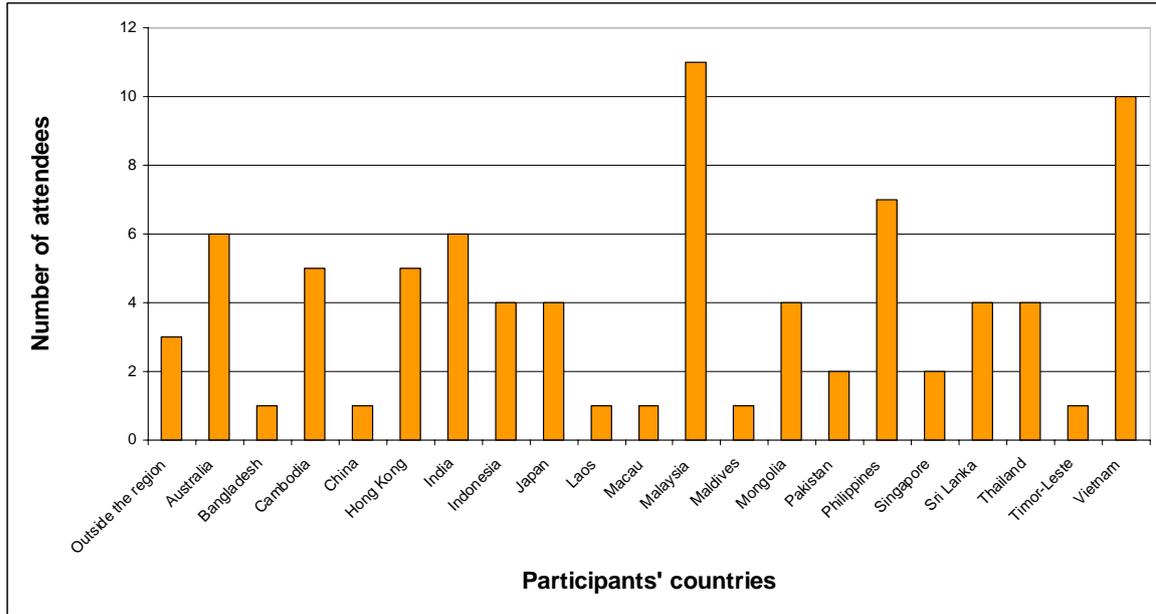


Figure 2: Country representation at APQN events

Figure 3 shows the event locations and the total number of APQN supported places (not including local participation).

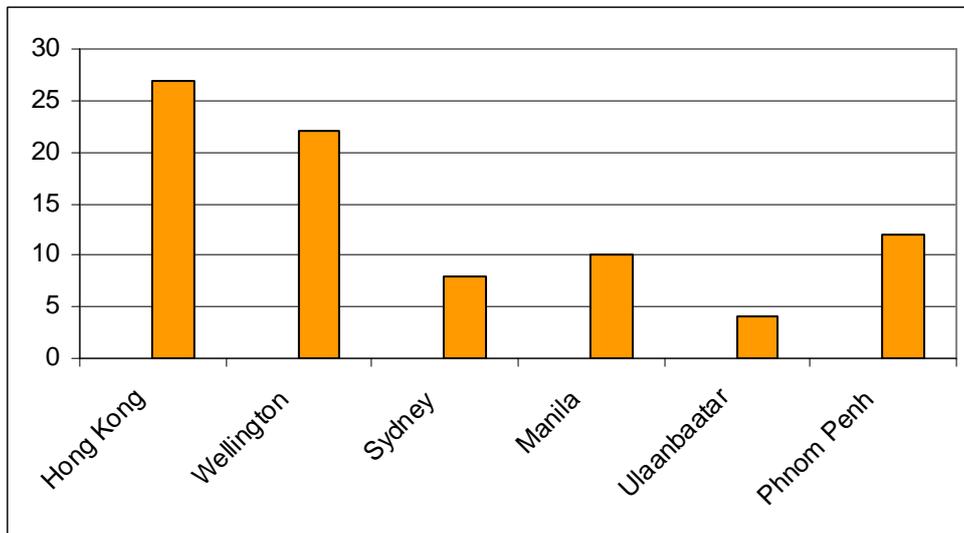


Figure 3: Supported places at APQN events

APQN has put a cap on how many DGF sponsored participants are permitted at each event, and this is determined by the budget constraints.

APQN events have drawn attendance from 20 countries within the region; a favourable turnout. From the 20 countries, 83 participants registered through APQN. Of the 83 participants, 69 were eligible for support and 14 were ineligible for support.

Several events have been combined with visits by agency staff to other agencies to be briefed on their operations. This is a partial achievement of Activity 4 in the DGF agreement (staff exchange), but further specific attention will be paid to this in the next year.

APQN has sponsored attendance at the following events in 2005:

### Hong Kong, PR China

**APQN Meeting (18 sponsored participants attended; 9 unsponsored participants attended)**

Meeting host: **Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)**

January/February 2005

There was a meeting on 30 January, 2005 solely for the Board of APQN. Similarly, there was a meeting on 31 January, 2005 solely for APQN members (minutes are available at <http://www.apqn.org/events/past/>).

Judy Forsyth of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) led a workshop on the topic of qualifications frameworks.

The World Bank and the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) met with the Board for a working meeting on the afternoon of 1 February, 2005.

Project group leaders were invited to be part of the Board's discussions.



*Figure 4: Delegates at the first APQN Meeting in Hong Kong*

## Wellington, New Zealand

**INQAAHE Conference: AGM, Workshop and Board Meeting (22 sponsored places available; 22 attended)**

March/April 2005

APQN held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Wellington, New Zealand on Thursday 31 March, 2005, in conjunction with the annual INQAAHE conference. Four additional Board members were elected—Varaporn Seehanath, John Jennings, Dr Takahiro Saito, and Dr Antony Stella—by democratic vote of the ‘potential’ membership.

Unfortunately on 17 May, 2005 John Jennings resigned as Board Member. The APQN Board—in accordance with the Constitution—appointed a new member to the Board, Prof. MK Tadjudin.



*Figure 5: APQN Board elections voting process in Wellington, New Zealand*

## Sydney, Australia

**AUQF2005: Engaging Communities** (10 sponsored places available; 8 attended)

Workshop host: **Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)**

July 2005



*Figure 6: Ganesh Hegde (NAAC) won the AUQF2005: Best Poster Award*

### Report by Ganesh Hegde

The fourth Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF) took place in Sydney from 6–8 July 2005. The theme of this year's forum was 'Engaging Communities'. The forum was organised by a Joint Steering Group (JSG) under the Australian Universities Quality Agency. More than 250 delegates attended the conference from various countries, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. The Honourable Jenny Macklin MP, Deputy Federal Labour Leader and the Shadow Minister of Education, Training and Research inaugurated the conference and she stressed upon the role of government and its support to the academic community and in turn the research output in the university system. While delivering the keynote address, Dr Barbara Holland, Director of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC), USA, spoke about a 21st century model of education system with intention, coherence, focus, integration and responsiveness.

She said that the world higher education scenario has been proactively involved with the various communities it serves, like the communities of discipline, interest, locale or different internal and external stakeholder groupings. The higher education institutions should be autonomous in the context of mission, based on their accountability. Community development in the university system should help research. The universities may focus on global research such as production of good researchers, trans-disciplinary research, etc. The new tradition of excellence will consist of intentional approaches and strategic perspectives.

The conference consisted of paper and poster presentations from various delegates, and parallel sessions with a focus on 'Engaging Communities', with special emphasis on engaging communities in participation, industry engagement, transforming good intention to good practice, etc. The undersigned was given an opportunity to present a poster on 'Lessons from Audits – Experience of NAAC'.

The JSG has awarded the poster presented by the undersigned titled 'Lessons from Audits – Experiences of NAAC' as the 'Best Poster' for the year 2005. Participation in the conference was very helpful in understanding the international perspective and importance of involving

communities for the overall development of the existing higher education system. It was wonderful to share the Indian experience of assessment system with an international audience.

## Manila, Philippines

**How to Conduct Institutional Accreditation, (10 sponsored places available; 8 attended)**

Workshop host: **Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCU)**

July 2005



*Figure 7: Trainers and organisers in Manila*

### Letter to the Secretariat from Dr MS Shyamasundar (Trainer)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for your excellent coordination of various people from different parts of the world. Your marvellous coordination has become a conspicuous reason for the grand success of the workshop.

I received very good encouragement and cooperation from Prof. Phil Meade for organising and finetuning the workshop schedule from beginning to the end. I am highly thankful to him for accommodating all my random thoughts.

*"It was a good deal of edutainment and infotainment for me in a fentabulous way."*

*Dr MS Shyamasundar*

I also received very good support from Dr Manuel Corpus and his dedicated and friendly staff. They really catered to all the participants depending upon their needs. I am extremely very happy and comfortable with them. I am grateful to them for all the necessary assistance.

Participants have been exposed to institutional accreditation of Indian and Australian models vis-à-vis the Philippines programme accreditation model. They have discussed thoroughly in a comprehensive manner about Indian and Australian tools, instruments and practices of institutional accreditation vis-à-vis those of the Philippines programme accreditation.

At the end of the workshop, we had enriched the competencies (knowledge, skills, desirable attributes) of the participants from various countries viz., Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. This workshop has enabled all the participants to conduct institutional accreditation in their respective countries, with minimum guidance. Some positive observations raised were: the inspiring, motivating and challenging

qualities of the topics and sessions handled by two international experts, very well-prepared materials for the high-tech presentations; and the delegates' active participation.

The pros and cons of the local applicability in the Philippines of the Australian and Indian institutional accreditation models were reviewed and discussed thoroughly.

In total the workshop went on very well as per our schedule and benefited all the participants through professional multidimensional insights. Since it was a thought-provoking workshop, it leads to an additional amount of further thinking in the institutional accreditation context.

I once again thank you profoundly from the bottom of my heart for all the cooperation extended for the successful completion of the workshop.

#### **Letter to the Secretariat from Emeritus Prof. Phil Meade (Trainer)**

First I endorse the comprehensive report from Shyam. I wish to warmly thank Shyam for working together with me in the team situation and for his energetic contribution throughout the entire exercise.

Dr Manuel T Corpus and his staff are to be congratulated on their rigorous and detailed planning and support for the exercise throughout. Manuel arranged for Shyam and myself to meet with his team prior to the workshop commencing, and to debrief with us as the workshop progressed. I do not believe it would have been possible for the local team to make a better contribution to the event. Every eventuality had been thought through and covered. I noted that Manuel gave special encouragement to the overseas participants. He arranged additional meetings with them to maximise the benefit of having them visit the Philippines.

The workshop participants worked hard and engaged in the workshops and exercises throughout. When asked to contribute, every one of them responded in a positive and productive manner.

I noted that participants were asked to evaluate the exercise via a feedback form. In plenary discussion led by Manuel it was agreed that the next step for the Philippines is for them to develop their own audit manual. The thorough analysis of the Indian and Australian models will facilitate this work.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of yourself [Liesha Northover] to supporting the whole exercise. You have been thorough and attentive. The travel arrangements organised by Dan Wexman were entirely satisfactory.

On a personal note I wish to thank Manuel for his warm encouragement and friendship throughout. Through his leadership, Shyam and myself were 'made to feel comfortable' and welcomed.

I am sure that Shyam will join with me in confirming that the money spent on this exercise has been well worthwhile and most effectively utilised.

## Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**Workshop: Quality Management of Quality Assurance Agencies, (5 sponsored places; 4 attended)**

Workshop host: **Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA)**

August 2005



**Figure 8: Trainers and local and international APQN delegates**

### Report by Chuluuntsetseg Dagvadorj

Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA) held the APQN workshop on ‘Quality management of quality assurance agencies’ on 29–30 August, 2005 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The workshop was predominantly financially supported by APQN with the purpose to enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance agencies in the region through exchanging best practices in quality management and accreditation processes in higher education.

Therefore the objective of the training workshop was formulated as follows:

*“To enhance the effectiveness of the Mongolian quality assurance agency and other quality assurance agencies in the region, through presentation, discussion and exchange of good practices in quality management of quality assurance agencies and their higher education accreditation processes.”*

The workshop achieved its objective. The workshop featured a comprehensive program on new developments in quality and higher education and Australian and American models of quality assurance processes. It was an important gathering time for APQN four foreign participants from Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, 35 local attendees, and the facilitators Dr Jean Avnet Morse, Executive Director, Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), USA; Dr David Woodhouse, Executive Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), Australia; and Mrs Chuluuntsetseg Dagvadorj, Senior Officer, Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA) to consider current issues. The workshop was characterised by the sharing of information and experience among the participating countries and institutions. It provided an excellent opportunity to establish networks with others facing similar challenges in quality assurance.

APQN participants were provided with booklets of the workshop materials and handouts of presentations, and local participants were provided with the translated versions. After the workshop, there was a one page article, interviews with the participants, and news published in local newspaper *Today* (September 12, 2005 No. 214 (2563) Monday). Dr Prof. Rochman

Natawidjaja, the workshop participant from Indonesia, has expressed his impressions after the event saying, 'I have been sound and safely home with sweet memories and rich significant personal, academic, and professional experiences resulted from the Ulaanbaatar Training Workshop this week'.

As a result of the workshop, the follow-up trainings have taken place at some of the affiliated institutions such as the University of Humanities and the University of Education. MNCEA's members and staff started its planned review on the Council's foundation documents, reflecting some good practices regarding accreditation criteria, self-evaluation and evaluators' teamwork, and appeal procedures. The Council is also going to organise a two-day training of external evaluators (including new evaluators) in November 2005.

### Phnom Penh, Cambodia

#### Workshop: Training of External Reviewers (10 sponsored places; 9 attended)

Workshop host: **Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC)**

September 2005



*Figure 9: Senior officials and organisers in Cambodia*

#### Report by Dr Antony Stella

The two-day training programme for external reviewers went on well as planned. Dr VS Prasad from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India and Dr Antony Stella from the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), were the trainers. Brief feedback on the training programme follows.

#### *Involvement of ACC*

The enthusiasm of the officials of Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) was very significant. Efforts of Dr Chet Chealy deserve appreciation. The presence of high ranking officials, such as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, was ensured by ACC.

#### *Capacity building at ACC*

Since ACC is yet to finalise some of its procedural details and instruments, the training sessions mainly focused on the core principles of EQA. At the same time, the practices of two quality assurance agencies—AUQA and NAAC—were presented appropriately wherever necessary to give the participants a flavour of how practices differ. Blending the two

approaches did not pose any problem since the trainers had adequate time to discuss, on day-0 of the training programme, what would be useful to ACC. Most of the programme was built around simulations and reflections where the reviewers and ACC officials actively participated. Based on this programme, when the finer details of the instrument and processes are finalised, ACC will be able to train its reviewers on its own.

#### **Capacity building for overseas participants**

For most of the overseas participants this training programme might have been useful. But this aspect has to be revisited when choosing participants for funding, given the fact that many of them did not do their homework well.

#### **Selection of participants by ACC**

The choice of the Cambodian participants needs a mention—the participants had the right attitude and awareness about their role in quality assurance. Although ACC is still developing its processes, the participants had the knowledge of the developments that had taken place in Cambodia.

#### **Preparatory work**

Most of the overseas participants and many Cambodian participants as well had not done the preparatory work, and that resulted in the trainers simplifying the group task for the simulations. Although the preparatory material had been sent to most of the overseas participants ten days in advance (except for the last minute inductions) many did not take it seriously. For future programmes, this issue may be tackled in two ways – requiring the participants to send a part of their preparatory work to the trainers before they come to the training programme, and emphasising that there would be an evaluation of their participation at the end of the programme.

#### **Language factor**

English as the language of the training sessions did not seem to pose any problem for the Cambodian participants. Although some of them had some difficulty in expressing themselves effectively, that did not deter their active participation in group work. Choosing a new Chair and a rapporteur for each session gave them an opportunity to stand before the group for reporting-back sessions, and that gradually increased the enthusiasm of the participants. More involvement could be observed in the sessions of day two.

#### **Logistics**

Operational support provided by ACC for the sessions was appreciable. Material distribution, venue arrangement for LCD projection, seating arrangement for small group discussions, meals arrangement and transport arrangement were managed very effectively. Before the closing session, the list of participants was made available to all. Participation certificates were awarded to participants during the closing session. ACC and the Secretariat have also collected feedback from the participants.

## Timetable for future events

The APQN Finance Committee has approved proposals to offer financial support to APQN delegates to attend two training events in 2005 and two early in 2006, and some proposals for support have been submitted for the remainder of the 2006 program.

*Table 1: 2005/2006 program (current at 30 September, 2005)*

Event	Location	Date
Workshop: AUQA Auditor Training (10 sponsored places)	Melbourne, Australia	November 2005
Conference: The WTO and International Trade in Education Services: The Opportunities and Challenges of Transnational Higher Education (20 sponsored places)	Hong Kong, PR China	December 2005
Workshop: External Review for Higher Education (5 sponsored places)	Hanoi, Vietnam	January 2006
Conference and AGM: Regional Mobility: Cooperation in Quality Assurance (30 sponsored places)	Shanghai, PR China	March 2006
Workshop: Quality Evaluation Units in Universities	Lahore, Pakistan	December 2006
Small Group Working Meeting: Mutual Recognition (proposed)	Jakarta, Indonesia	TBA
UNESCO - Collaboration on the Toolkit	Bangkok, Thailand and elsewhere	Continuing
Conference: Student Participation in Quality Enhancement	Bangalore, India	September 2006

Note: Items marked 'proposed' are yet to be approved by the Finance Committee.

## Database of consultants and reviewers

### Consultancy

APQN sent out a call for nominations for the APQN database of consultants and reviewers. The registered consultants and reviewers are available for targeted appointments with agencies in need across the region. At 30 September APQN had 18 people listed as consultants and 27 as reviewers. Listings are available at <http://www.apqn.org/consultants/>.

A general consultant pool of quality assurance professionals (agency staff) from APQN member countries has also been identified to provide technical assistance on a request basis. As the capacity is developed in each of the member countries, by the end of the year 2005, it would be possible to have around two quality assurance professionals from each of the 26 participating countries/territories.

APQN will support and assist the APQN countries and member agencies with the lowest capacity or the greatest

*APQN's first consultancy occurred in September between the Philippines and Cambodia.*

*Through spreading knowledge and sharing experiences, APQN continues to enhance standards and increase cooperation across the region.*

need for such services. Up to 10 consultants will be supported through APQN and DGF resources each year. Furthermore, sector evaluation specialists can be called upon to provide technical assistance as necessary.

The database, which addresses Activities 1 and 2 in the DGF agreement, will be continually augmented.

## Members (General Council)

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network's constituency spans as far west as Afghanistan, as far north as Russia, as far east as Fiji and as far south as New Zealand according to the UNESCO model.

APQN exists to serve quality assurance bodies within this boundary. Countries/territories included in the boundary are listed on the APQN website at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/region/>.

Members are considered from program and institution level quality assurance bodies, and bodies that accredit other accrediting agencies.

Those members present at the inaugural meeting in Hong Kong were deemed to be Founding Members. There was a grace period of 12 months starting 1 April 2005 during which founding members will move into a financial member category, through a checking process on the basis of the membership criteria.

The membership criteria were drafted with inspiration from European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education's (ENQA's) standards for external quality assurance agencies, INQAAHE's membership application form and guidelines of good practice. The APQN membership criteria are available at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/criteria/>.

A stringent review process for membership applications exists. New applications are submitted to the Secretariat for initial review. If insufficient information is provided, the electronic application is reactivated and the proponent requested to supply the missing content. After passing the strict review process in the Secretariat, membership applications are forwarded with recommendations to the APQN Board who have their own log in setup. Board members then have the opportunity to approve, decline, or offer further recommendations on the submission.

Membership numbers have been steadily increasing, and at 30 September, APQN has 17 official members, one application currently under review with the Board, and 28 additional applications in progress.

*As an APQN member you can embrace what is offered in the region, and share in the delights of learning and expanding your own knowledge base.*

*Membership applications are available online at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/application/>.*

As at 30 September 2005, APQN has three levels of membership (Full, Intermediate and Associate) plus prospective member and observer level.

### Full members

Full members are either organisations responsible for assuring the academic quality of post-secondary institutions or education programs other than their own, or organisations responsible for assuring the quality of external quality assurance agencies, and which meet the conditions for membership as expressed in the APQN membership criteria, as decided by the General Council from time to time.

The 10 full members as at 30 September, 2005 are:

Australia	Australian Universities Quality Agency
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation
India	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
Indonesia	Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi
Japan	Japan University Accreditation Association
Japan	National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation
New Zealand	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
New Zealand	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Philippines	Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
Philippines	Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines

### Intermediate members

Intermediate members are either organisations responsible for assuring the academic quality of post-secondary institutions or education programs other than their own, or organisations responsible for assuring the quality of external quality assurance agencies, but which do not fully meet the conditions for membership as expressed in the APQN membership criteria, as decided by the General Council from time to time.

The three intermediate members as at 30 September, 2005 are:

Mongolia	Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation
Pakistan	Higher Education Commission
Vietnam	General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation

### Associate members

Associate members are organisations with a major interest in evaluation, accreditation and quality assurance in higher education, but without the responsibility for assuring the quality of institutions, education programs, or external quality assurance agencies as described in Section V. Clause 13.1 of the Constitution.

The four associate members as at 30 September, 2005 are:

Iran	The University of Tehran
Vietnam	Centre for Higher Education Research
Vietnam	Center for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development
Vietnam	Hanoi University of Education

### Prospective members

Prospective members are organisations identified by APQN as potential members. Agencies who have not yet become members but who are known to, and benefit from, APQN, are listed on the website as prospective members.

The 37 prospective members as at 30 September, 2005 are:

Afghanistan	Kabul Education University
Bangladesh	Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission
Bhutan	Office of the Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan
Cambodia	Accreditation Committee of Cambodia, Council of Ministers
China	Shanghai Municipal Education Commission
China	China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education, Development Center, Accreditation Department
China	Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council
China	Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute
China	Division of Assessment, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Fiji	Vice-Chancellor's Office, The University of the South Pacific
Hong Kong	University Grants Committee
India	All India Council for Technical Education
India	All India Association for Christian Higher Education
South Korea	Korean Council for University Education
Laos PDR	Department of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education Ministry of Education,
Macau	Higher Education Bureau
Malaysia	Quality Assurance Division for Public Universities in Malaysia, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Malaysia	Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (National Accreditation Board)
Maldives	Maldives Accreditation Board
Maldives	Department of Higher Education and Training, Ministry of Education
Myanmar	Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Nepal	Ministry of Education and Sports
Nepal	University Grants Committee
Papua New Guinea	Commissioner for Higher Education
Russia	National Accreditation Agency
Samoa	Samoa Qualifications Authority
Singapore	Ministry of Education, Higher Education Quality Assurance, Higher Education Division
Singapore	Singapore Higher Education Accreditation Council Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board

Solomon Islands	Ministry of Education and Training
Sri Lanka	Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Taiwan	Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education
Taiwan	Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association
Taiwan	Taiwan Association of Accreditation
Thailand	The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
Thailand	Commission on Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Timor-Leste	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports
Tonga	Ministry of Education
Vanuatu	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth Development and Training

### Observer status

APQN accepts as observers external quality assurance agencies, institutions with a major interest in evaluation, accreditation and quality assurance in higher education but without the responsibility for assuring the quality of institutions, programs or external quality assurance agencies or formal representatives of other regional networks, which are not in the region but which have major interests and strong links with the region.

Currently nil observers (two applications are in progress)

## Sustainability

### Budget

APQN currently derives its income from:

- World Bank funds
- Membership fees
- In-kind contributions

The APQN Secretariat has established a US dollar bank account in Melbourne, Australia. Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and APQN have signed a letter of arrangement stating that AUQA has loaned APQN a sum of US\$5,500.00. APQN has an Australian Business Number (ABN) and a Tax File Number.

Applications for membership opened in April, 2005. The online application form can be found at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/application/>.

### World Bank

The World Bank's Development Grant Facility (DGF) is a source of seed money to help important capacity-building initiatives emerge and grow. This funding is limited to a maximum of three years. The focus is to build regional or worldwide partnerships and leverage knowledge-sharing to the benefit of developing countries.

The APQN and its members from World Bank-specified eligible countries are the beneficiaries of the DGF. The expectation is that by the end of the second year of DGF support, the APQN will be the administrator as well as the beneficiary of the DGF grant. See Figure 10: Cash flow structure on page 32 for a more detailed account.

The APQN is expected to become self-sustaining by the end of the DGF funding period. See cash flow structure shown in Figure 10.

### Membership fees

Members will be considered from either program or institution level Quality Assurance body, or a body that accredits other accrediting agencies. Membership is further broken down into three categories: Full Member, Intermediate Member and Associate Member. Further descriptions of membership level can be found at [http://www.apqn.org/virtual\\_library/?section=membership&referrer=membership](http://www.apqn.org/virtual_library/?section=membership&referrer=membership), and further descriptions of membership criteria can be found at <http://www.apqn.org/membership/criteria/>.

For 2005, membership fees will be charged at the following rates.

**Table 2: Membership fees**

Rights/Categories	Full Member	Intermediate Member	Associate Member
Initial Joining Fee	US\$500	US\$500	US\$500
Member Fee (if INQAAHE member)	US\$200	US\$200	US\$200
Member Fee (if non-INQAAHE member)	US\$300	US\$300	US\$200

APQN expects an estimated income in 2005 from initial joining fees and membership fees of US\$18,000.

Other income Members are also asked to pledge contributions to a development fund, and that a link may be added to the APQN website for such pledges.

External sponsorship is being sought for any identified purpose.



Figure 10: Cash flow structure

The APQN Board and the DGF Administrator have approached numerous external funding bodies. See Table 3 for further details. See also the Report from the President on page 3.

Table 3: External funding bodies as approached by the Board

Approached by	Organisation approached	Date
David Woodhouse	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	April 2005
Takahiro Saito	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)	July 2005 July 2005
Anthony Stella	South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Asia Development Bank (ADB)	July 2005 July 2005
Dorte Kristoffersen	European Commission Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)	July 2005 July 2005
Marjorie Peace Lenn	Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC) UNESCO Paris (global) UNESCO Bangkok (regional) UNESCO country staff (national)	August 2005 August 2005 August 2005 August 2005

## Financial statements

### Budget and actuals

Table 4: Budget and actuals – October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005

Program	Consulting	Training	Goods	Admin	M'ship fees	Budget 2004/05	Actual
1. Training and Development:							
1.1 Conferences							
• Hong Kong: Annual Meeting of APQN & workshop	16,247.57	30,134.97	568.36			32K	46,950.90
• New Zealand: Biennial Meeting of INQAAHE, APQN workshop, & study tour	77,789.98	28,027.59	1,115.43			78K	106,933.00
• Australia: Annual National Conference & visits	4,774.04	16,572.18	211.80			30K	21,558.02
1.2 Workshops							
• Philippines, July	10,480.46	8,368.64	752.23			16K	19,601.33
• Mongolia, August	17,181.30	16,708.00	708.37			21K	34,597.67
• Cambodia, September	10,719.16	17,166.39	793.97			26K	28,679.52
• Vietnam						30K	
2. Staff Movement							
• Cambodia ACC						10K	
• Other - Hong Kong Forum, December 2005						10K	
3. External Reviewers						12K	
4. Advisory Services* (UNESCO Toolkit)	3,999.99		80.00			20K	4,079.99
5. Clearinghouse & Secretariat	17,081.96		17,590.10			40 K	34,672.06
6. Administration, Evaluation and Reapplication				46,000		46 K	46,000.00
7. Other:							
• APQN and INQAAHE Membership Fees	17,600.00					10K	17,600.00
<b>Totals - budget</b>	<b>178K</b>	<b>108K</b>	<b>30K</b>	<b>46K</b>	<b>19K</b>	<b>381 K</b>	
<b>Totals - actual</b>	<b>175,874.46</b>	<b>116,977.77</b>	<b>21,820.26</b>	<b>46,000.00</b>			<b>360,672.49</b>

## Profit and loss

Table 5: Profit and loss statement – October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005

	USD\$
<b>INCOME</b>	
GRANT	362,200.00
Total income	362,200.00
<b>EXPENSE</b>	
ADMINISTRATION	46,000.00
CONSULTANT	
Consultant fee	61,646.04
Lodging	10,089.49
Membership fee	18,300.00
Per diem	1,819.59
Registration	9,222.70
Travel	56,621.91
Travel fee	17,220.14
Website	954.59
Consultant – other	0.00
Total consultant	175,874.46
GOODS	
Bank fee	10.00
Equipment and supplies	3,761.91
Postage	2,658.47
Supplies	129.69
Travel insurance	65.00
Visa	0.00
Website	13,487.88
Wire transfer fee	1,707.31
Total goods	21,820.26
TRAINING	
Lodging	38,532.15
Per diem	2,610.23
Registration	13,634.86
Travel	62,200.53
Total training	116,977.77
<b>Total expense</b>	<b>360,672.49</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>1,527.51</b>

## APQN and its supporters

### Business advisors

The following business advisors have been selected to work with APQN as a direct consequence of their relationship with AUQA or as directed by the World Bank. As the Secretariat lies within AUQA, existing connections were maintained for practical purposes.

#### Milura Pty Ltd



Milura recognises that as business processes, legislative requirements, client expectations and general requirements change, organisations need the flexibility to adopt and adapt services to continue to provide quality outcomes to both external and internal clients.

Milura offers a comprehensive range of services in both the financial and IT areas from strategic consulting and management services through to operational support and scheduled maintenance.

Milura have been handling all of AUQA's accounts since its inception in early 2001 and have been contracted to handle APQN's accounts.

Accountant: Peter Gray

Level 5, Casselden Place  
2 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne, Victoria 3000

AUSTRALIA

ACN: 007 426 495  
ABN: 51 007 426 495

Tel: +61 3 9662 9511  
Fax: +61 3 9662 9811

Email: [peter.gray@milura.com.au](mailto:peter.gray@milura.com.au)

Website: <http://www.milura.com.au>

#### Digital Fusion Ltd



Digital Fusion provides custom database and web development services to the small to medium-size enterprise market. The company specialises in two database environments, FileMaker Pro for business database applications, and MySQL for web-based solutions. Formed in 1996, the company now employs 12 staff all based in Christchurch New Zealand, serving clients throughout New Zealand and Australia.

Digital Fusion is recognised as the largest company specialising in FileMaker databases within the Asia-Pacific region.

The company's overall vision is to:

- provide business solutions with superior usability and task orientation
- be a true partner to clients, through effective communication and accessibility over the long term
- enhance and enable the use of Mac OS based solutions in business

APQN contracts AUQA to provide secretarial services. This includes web development and hosting services. AUQA contracts the bulk of these services to Digital Fusion Ltd (New Zealand). The relationship between AUQA and Digital Fusion has been operating very successfully since it commenced in October 2001.

Web developer: Matthew Rhodes

Level 5, Vero House  
78 Hereford Street  
Christchurch  
NEW ZEALAND

Tel: +64 3 377 3797  
Fax: +64 3 377 3796  
Mob: +64 21 409 898

Email: [matthew@digitalfusion.co.nz](mailto:matthew@digitalfusion.co.nz)  
Website: <http://www.digitalfusion.co.nz>

### Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE)



In 2004, the World Bank published 'Strengthening World Bank Support for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education in East Asia and the Pacific' by Dr Marjorie Peace Lenn (available at [http://www.apqn.org/virtual\\_library/reports/](http://www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports/)). This publication is the basis for national and regional initiatives in quality assurance as supported in the region by the World Bank, including a US\$1.1 million Development Grant Fund (DGF) grant to the Asia-Pacific Quality Network.

Dr Lenn of the Center for Quality Assurance and International Education (CQAIE) is the DGF Administrator responsible for audit administration and evaluation reapplication. She is the liaison between APQN and the World Bank.

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Tel: +1 202 293 6104  
Fax: +1 202 293 9177

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Website: <http://www.cqaie.org>

### Outer Cape Travel Agency Inc.



Agent: Dan Wexman

30 Briar Lane  
Box 1413  
Wellfleet MA 02667  
USA

Tel: +1 508 349 3794  
Fax: +1 508 349 7207

Email: [apqn.travel@verizon.net](mailto:apqn.travel@verizon.net)

### World Bank Group (sponsor)



Contact: Rick Hopper

1818 H Street, NW  
Washington DC 20433  
USA

Email: [rhopper@worldbank.org](mailto:rhopper@worldbank.org)

Website: <http://www.worldbank.org>

### International Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (INQAAHE) (global agency)

Secretariat

26–27 Denzille Lane  
Dublin 2  
IRELAND

Tel: +353 1 6314550  
Fax: + 353 1 6314551

Email: [inqaah@hetac.ie](mailto:inqaah@hetac.ie)

Website: <http://www.inqaah.org/>

### Board members

Mr Peter PT Cheung (President)  
*Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)*

Prof. VS Prasad (Vice-President)  
*National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India*

Dr David Woodhouse (Secretary/Treasurer)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dr Takahiro Saito (Elected member)  
*National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), Japan*

Mrs Varaporn Seehanath (Elected member)  
*Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Thailand*

Dr Antony Stella (Elected member)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Prof. MK Tadjudin (Appointed member)  
*National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), Indonesia*

Dr Manuel T Corpus (Co-opted member)  
*Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP)*

Dorte Kristoffersen (Co-opted member)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

### Project group leaders

Liesha Northover (Leader, Project Group 1)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dr Manuel T Corpus (Leader, Project Group 2)  
*Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCCUP)*

Dr Takahiro Saito (Leader, Project Group 3)  
*National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), Japan*

Dr Antony Stella (Leader, Project Group 4)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dorte Kristoffersen (Leader, Project Group 8)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dr Jagannath Patil (Leader, Project Group 13)  
*National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India*

#### **Project group members**

Felix Leung (Member, Project Group 2)  
*Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)*

Dr Antony Stella (Member, Project Groups 2 and 8)  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dr Takayuki Hayashi (Member, Project Group 3)  
*National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), Japan*

Concepcion Pijano (Member, Project Group 4)  
*Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU)*

Chuluuntsetseg Dagvadorj (Member, Project Group 4)  
*Mongolian National Council for Higher Education Accreditation (MNCEA)*

Assoc. Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi (Member, Project Group 8)  
*Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (National Accreditation Board [LAN]), Malaysia*

#### **Project group observers**

Sanae Maeda (Observer, Project Group 3)  
*Japanese University Accreditation Association (JUAA)*

John Jennings (Observer, Project Group 8)  
*New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU)*

#### **Finance Committee**

##### **Chair**

Prof. VS Prasad  
*National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore, India*

##### **Members**

Dr David Woodhouse  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Peter PT Cheung  
*Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)*

Concepcion Pijano  
*Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU)*

Prof. MK Tadjudin  
*National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), Indonesia*

### **AGM Organising Committee (2006)**

#### **Chair**

Prof. MK Tadjudin  
*National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), Indonesia*

#### **Members**

Dr David Woodhouse  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Jordan Cheung  
*Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)*

Dr Manuel T Corpus  
*Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP)*

Dr Takahiro Saito  
*National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), Japan*

Jin Tongkang  
*Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI)*

Dr Zhang Min Xuan  
*Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (SHMEC)*

### **APQN DGF Liaison Committee**

#### **Chair**

Peter PT Cheung  
*Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)*

#### **Members**

Prof. VS Prasad  
*National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India*

Dr David Woodhouse  
*Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)*

Dr Marjorie Peace Lenn  
*Center for Quality Assurance and International Education (CQAIE), USA*