

ENQA/UNESCO-GIQAC Project
*Capacity building activities for quality assurance
networks in
the field of higher education*
*Kick-off meeting, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan,
December 6-7, 2011*

**CONSISTENCY OF EXTERNAL
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

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Definition:

- *Conformity in the application of something, typically that which is necessary for the sake of logic, accuracy, or fairness.*
- *The achievement of a level of performance that does not vary greatly in quality over time.*

In QA we are using both definitions

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The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)

- „The **consistency** of quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be improved by the use of agreed standards and guidelines.“
- „Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a **consistent** manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.“

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CONSISTENCY OF STANDARDS

- The performance indicators - formulated as to allow HEIs to know the minimum quality requirement that is expected in a given quality domain and also to project and work for higher outcomes and performance beyond that level.
- The sequencing of references for QA - defined in such a way as to provide a framework for developing an institutional culture of evidence based quality.

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Possible risks (*CONSISTENCY OF STANDARDS*):

- ***Quality is a contextual and cultural concept: there can be various ‘qualities’***
- ***Diversity will not be encouraged enough (not just one path to quality assurance - institution specific paths encouraged)***

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CONSISTENCY OF PROCEDURES AND METHODS

- *The processes and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. In the same time the procedures must be clearly explained*
- *There must be follow-up procedures*
- *Appeals procedures very important: must be clear in “what can be the subject of the appeal”*

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**Possible risks (*CONSISTENCY OF PROCEDURES
AND METHODS*):**

*High level of formalism and ritualism in quality
assurance practices*



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CONSISTENCY OF EVALUATORS IN THEIR JUDGMENT

- To test the level of understanding of the QA procedures of the agency of all the external evaluators (academics, students, representatives of the labour market), local and from abroad, who expresses the wish to take part in evaluation of study programs and higher education institutions.
- To respect a Code of Ethics

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Possible risks (**CONSISTENCY OF EVALUATORS IN THEIR JUDGMENT**):

- *A diversity in understanding quality assurance amongst the external evaluators.*

Niels Bohr „An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field.“



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"I know nothing about the subject,
but I'm happy to give you my expert opinion."

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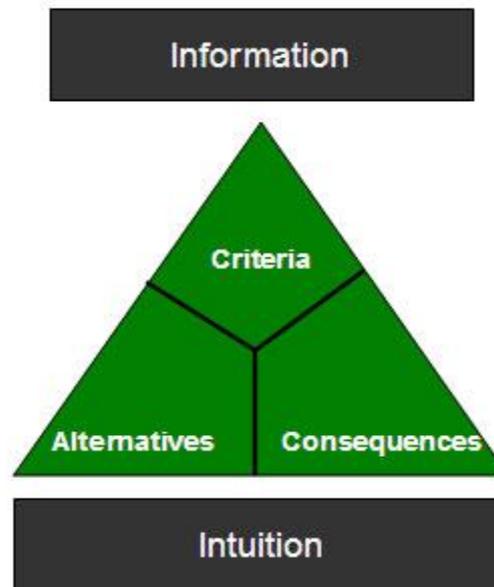
CONSISTENCY OF DECISIONS

Wikipedia description

- „- Objectives must first be established*
- Objectives must be classified and placed in order of importance*
 - Alternative actions must be developed*
 - The alternative must be evaluated against all the objectives*
- The alternative that is able to achieve all the objectives is the tentative decision*
 - The tentative decision is evaluated for more possible consequences*
 - The decisive actions are taken, and additional actions are taken to prevent any adverse consequences from becoming problems and starting both systems (problem analysis and decision making) all over again*
- There are steps that are generally followed that result in a decision model that can be used to determine an optimal production plan.“*

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Possible risks (*CONSISTENCY OF DECISIONS*):



The Process of Decision Making: I C A C I, Zeger Degraeve. Source: www.HoteleMarketer.com

Intuition: not as such but « informed intuition », the evaluator is familiar with context, takes into account public (confirmed!) information available from other sources (resist to « gossip »!)

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CONSISTENCY OF REPORTING

- Publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes
- Public reports: means of confidence building for the agency and the university

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Possible risks (*CONSISTENCY OF REPORTING*):

- *Reports are often addressed to specialists and are not understood by all stakeholders*
- The Agency must be prepared for “challenge of the report” !
- The report should be supported by data, facts and arguments
- **NO DOUBLE MEASURE!** in interpreting data and findings – main danger!

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Conclusions

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"If the key to effective classroom management is consistency, I guess I'm an effective classroom manager. I am consistently exhausted at the end of the day."

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH!