

Survey of Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education: Survey Results and Analysis



Table of Contents

- Table of Contents 2
- Foreword 3
- Participants in the scoping study survey on the QA of CBHE..... 4
- Acronyms..... 5
- Executive Summary 6
- List of surveyed countries: 7
- Results and Analysis of the Survey 8
- Part I - Basic data about CBHE in the respondents' countries 8
- PART II - Issues and challenges of quality and QA of CBHE 20
- Part III - Regulatory & QA Framework..... 25
- PART IV - Collaboration with QA agencies/HEIs and the role of international collaboration 41
- Conclusions and Recommendations: 44

Foreword

Participants in the scoping study survey on the QA of CBHE

Country	Agency/Entity	Respondent
Lebanon	Directorate General of Higher Education	Dr. Ahmad JAMMAL
Oman	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Dr. Tess Goodliffe
Jordan	Higher Education Accreditation Commission	Prof. Bashir Al Zu'bi
Libya	National Centre for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Educational & Training Institutes (NCQAAETI)	Dr. Osama Fezzani
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment	Prof. Abdullah Almusallam
Tunisia	Arab Governance Institute (answered on behalf of INEAQA)	Dr. Sofiane Sahraoui
Bahrain	The National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training	Dr. Jawaher Al Mudhahki
United Arab Emirates	The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA)	Prof. Badr Aboul-Ela
Yemen	Council for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education	Prof. Abdullateef Haidar Al Hakimi
Egypt	National Authority for Quality Assurance un Education	Dr. Youhansen Eid

Acronyms

ANQAHE: Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

APQN: Asia-Pacific Quality Network

CBHE: Cross-Border Higher Education

HE: Higher Education

HEI: Higher Education Institutions

QA: Quality Assurance

QAA: Quality Assurance Agency

MOOC: Massive Open Online Course

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

DAAD: The German Academic Exchange Service (German: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst)

Executive Summary

The objective of this study was to collect information from quality assurance agencies and authorities across the 22 States of the Arab region for the purpose of

- Assessing the situation of Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) across the Arab Region;
- Assessing the situation of Quality Assurance in Cross-Border Higher Education (QA-CBHE) in the Arab region (legal framework, criteria and procedures used, how they differ from those used for traditional HE delivery forms);
- Assessing the role of national QA agencies in QA-CBHE;
- Identifying good practice in existing collaboration between agencies and in collaboration with provider country QA agencies and institutions;
- Identifying the main obstacles and challenges in QA-CBHE and elaborate ways of addressing these issues

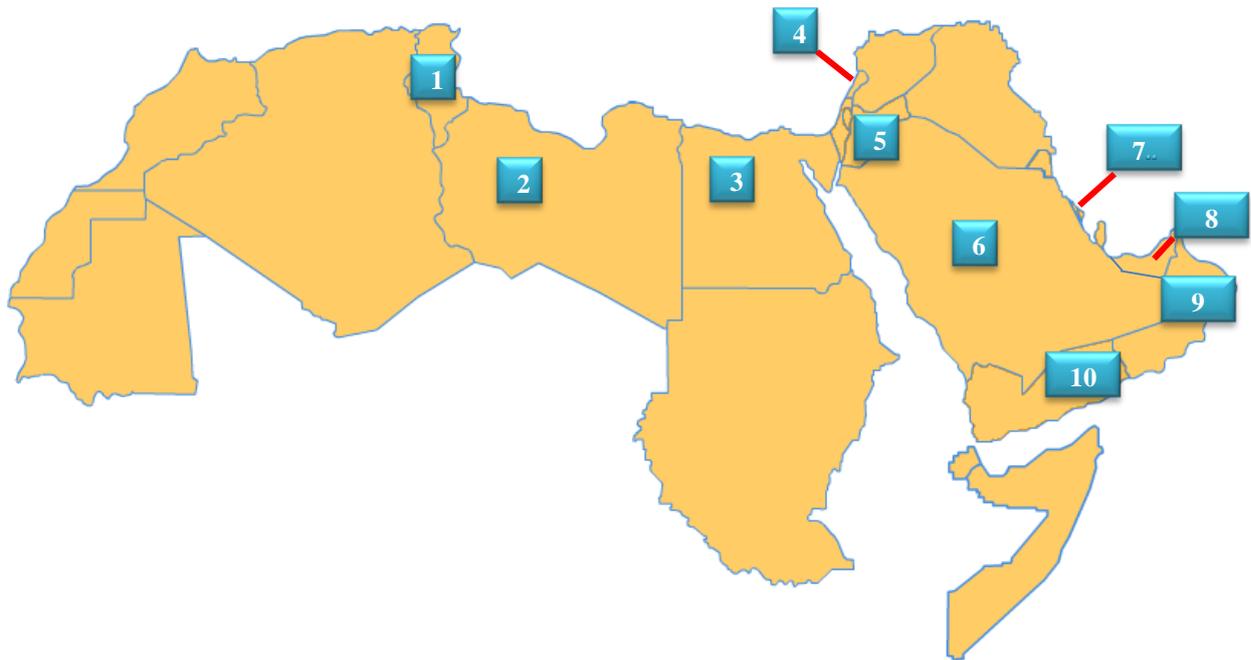
However, only 10 countries participated. These are the most active members of the ANQAHE Network.

In relation to the objectives above, one can conclude the following:

- CBHE is a fledging phenomenon in the region but has not reached the critical mass where it would become very significant as a segment of HE provision;
- QA systems in the region try to cope with CBHE first by adapting their local HE regulation but also by recognizing explicitly CBHE as a different mode of HE provision that requires a specific QA approach. However by far and large, no proper QA frameworks or regulations are in place to manage this phenomenon.
- QA agencies are in the process of developing idiosyncratic approaches to QA for CBHE and it is expected that this will soon accelerate as the volume of CBHE increases and the threat of diploma mills likewise increases.
- Some good practices in QA for CBHE have already emerged such as the joint QA exercises between the provider and host country QAA's but there are very few around. An enhanced sharing of experiences through networks like ANQAHE and INQAHE would be very beneficial in this respect;
- The obstacles and challenges for QA for CBHE are many and will slow down the progress of quality CBHE in the region; thereby increasing the risk of diploma mill proliferation. Regulation and capacity building are the two critical avenues for coping with this risk.

This study; the first of its kind in the region, makes a first assessment of the situation and should be complemented with a sustained strategy to enhance cooperation between QAAs, especially from Europe, with their counterparts in the region.

List of surveyed countries:



- 1) *Tunisia*
- 2) *Libya*
- 3) *Egypt*
- 4) *Lebanon*
- 5) *Jordan*
- 6) *Saudi Arabia*
- 7) *Bahrain*
- 8) *United Arab Emirates*
- 9) *Oman*
- 10) *Yemen*

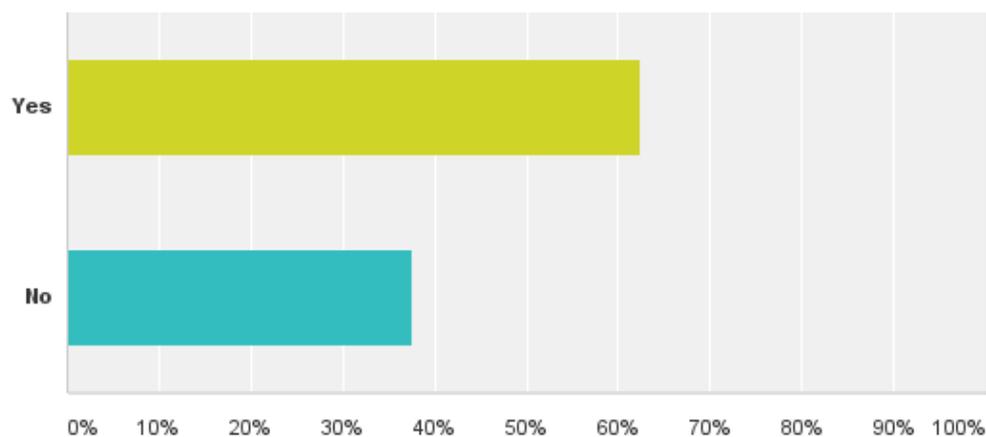
Results and Analysis of the Survey

The first two questions were designed to define the participant's affiliation, organization of activity and contact details, whereas the third one asked for permission to publish the respondent's answer by ENQA. As expected, all organizations were affiliated to ANQAHE and of the 10 respondents, 4 were reluctant to be identified in ENQA final report.

Part I - Basic data about CBHE in the respondents' countries

This part is composed of 12 questions (from Q4 to Q12) that aim to assess the state of affairs in Cross-Border Higher Education in the respondent's countries.

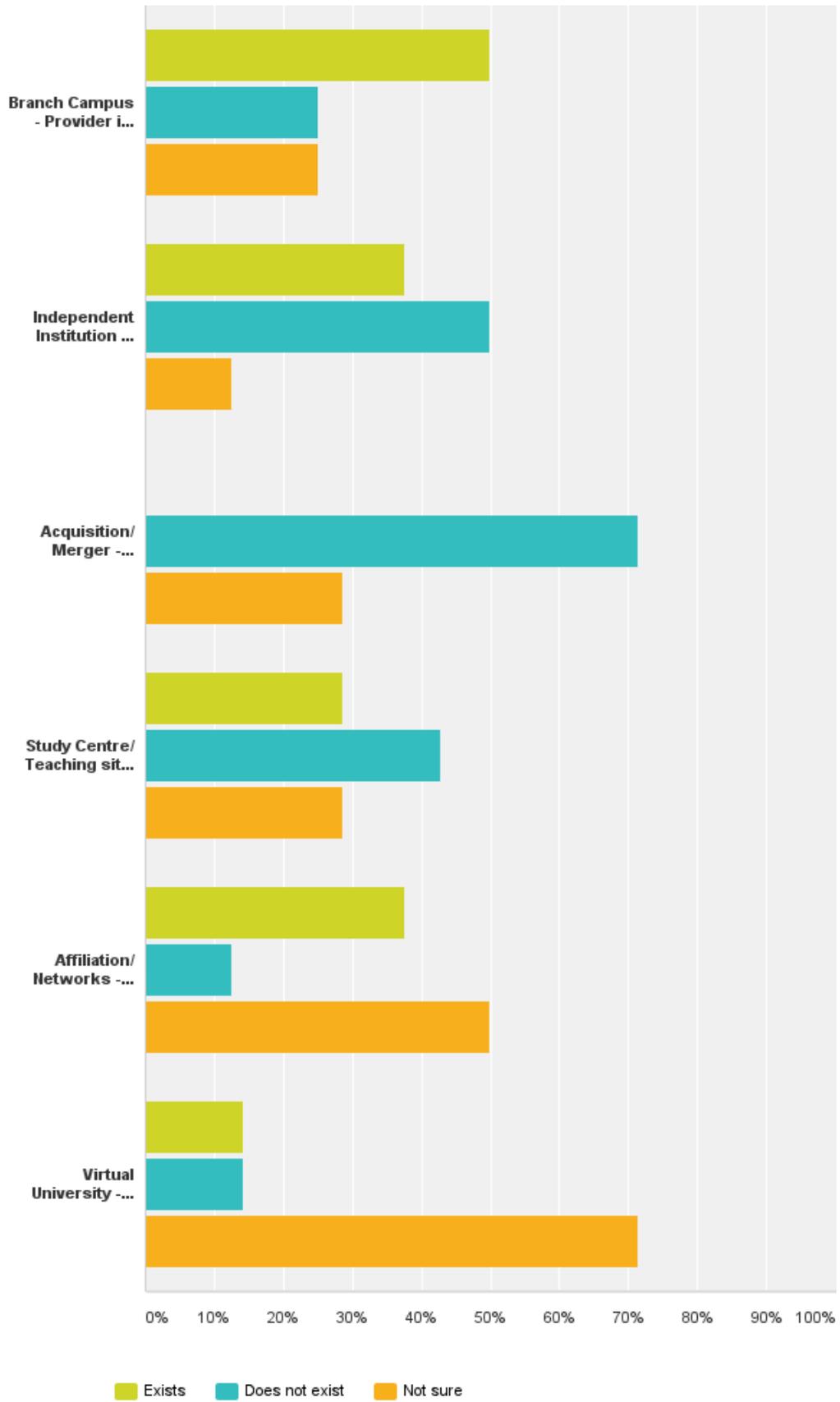
Q4: Is there any CBHE provision currently available in your country or territory?



While 2 skipped the question, 62.5% (5 of the remaining 8) of those who answered it confirmed the presence of CBHE delivery in their countries or territories. This illustrates the growing presence of cross-border educational programs in the Arab region.

Q5: Use the Provider mobility table [Knight, 2005] below to indicate which categories of imported education exist in your country:

This question explores the type of CBHE presence in the region.

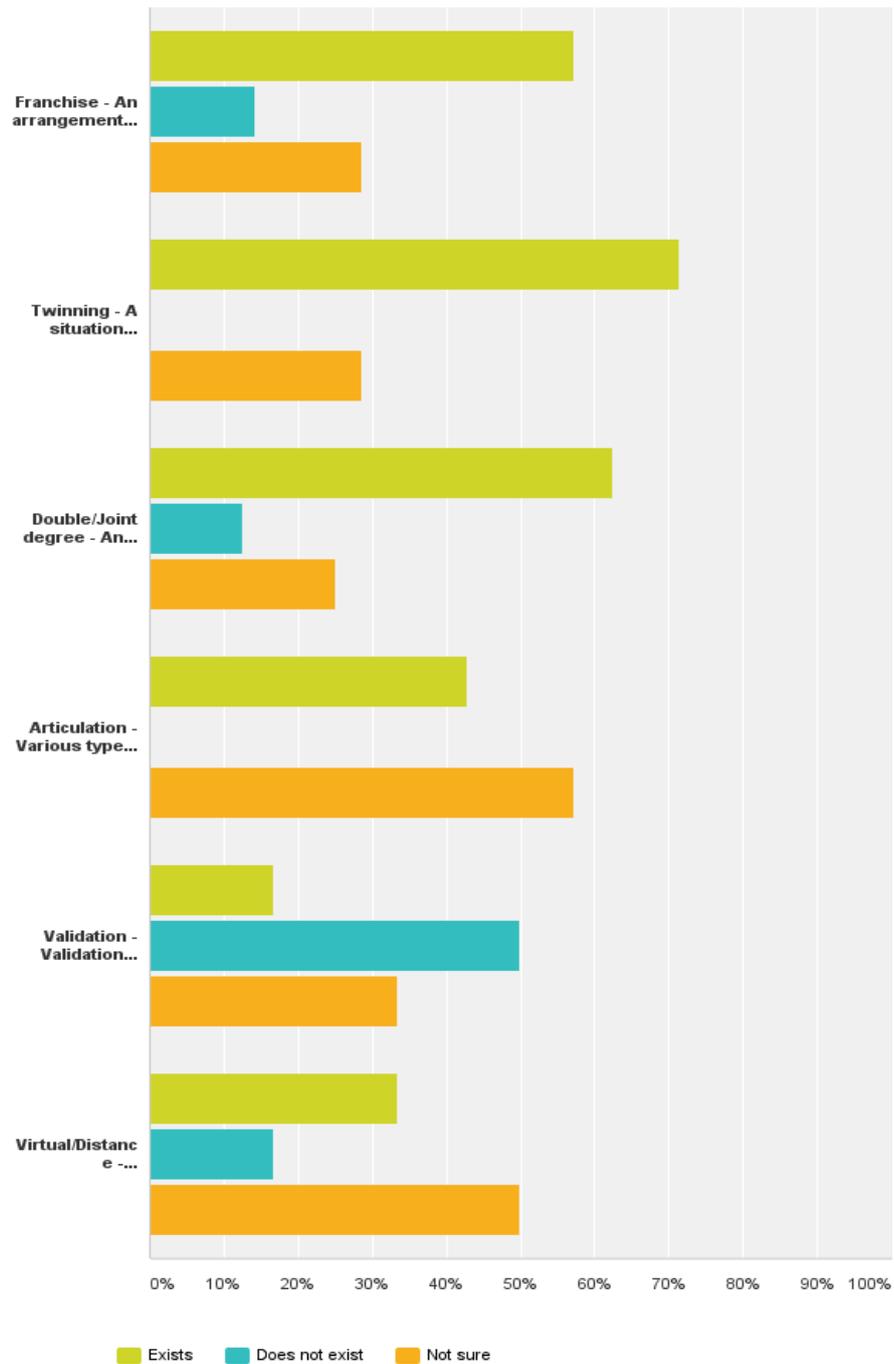


- a. Branch Campus - Provider in country A establishes a satellite campus in country B to deliver courses and programmes to students in country B (may also include country A students taking a semester/courses abroad).The qualification awarded is from provider in country A: Of the 8 participants that answered this question, half acknowledged the existence of at least one branch campus in their countries. Only 25% were sure that this form of CBHE delivery did not exist in their territories.
- b. Independent Institution - Foreign provider A (a traditional university, a commercial company or alliance/network) establishes in country B a standalone HEI to offer courses/programmes and awards: 50% of the respondents did not report the presence of such a phenomenon in their countries while 37.5% acknowledged its presence (3 out of 8).
- c. Acquisition/ Merger - Foreign provider A purchases a part of or 100% of local HEI in country B: This was clearly the least popular form of CBHE delivery in the region as none of the respondents confirmed its presence in their respective countries. While 3 skipped this question, 5 respondents reported the inexistence of such mode of CBHE while 28.57% were unsure (2).
- d. Study Centre/ Teaching site - Foreign provider A establishes study centers in country B to support students taking their courses/programmes. Study centers can be independent or in collaboration with local providers in country B: This form of CBHE delivery is not very present in the region with 43% reporting it as inexistent while 29% acknowledged its presence. An equal number of respondents were unsure about its existence and 3 participants skipped the question altogether
- e. Affiliation/ Networks - Different types of (public and private)/(traditional and new) providers from various countries collaborate through innovative types of partnerships to establish networks/institution to deliver courses and programmes in local and foreign countries through distance or face-to-face modes: while half of the respondents seemed unsure (50%), more than one third (37.5%) confirmed the presence of this type of cross-border collaboration and 12.5% deem it inexistent.
- f. Virtual University - Provider that delivers credit courses and degree programme to student in different countries through distance education modes and that generally does not have face-to-face support services for student: As this form of CBHE generally escapes the gateway control of local authorities and local QA Agencies, more than 71% of respondents were unsure of its availability in their countries. Only about 14%

confirmed its existence while the same number was sure of its unavailability in their country.

Q6: Use the Programme mobility table [Knight, 2005] below to indicate which categories of imported education exist in your country:

This question explores the organizational aspect of the CBHE delivery in the targeted region (a franchise, a joint degree, etc.).

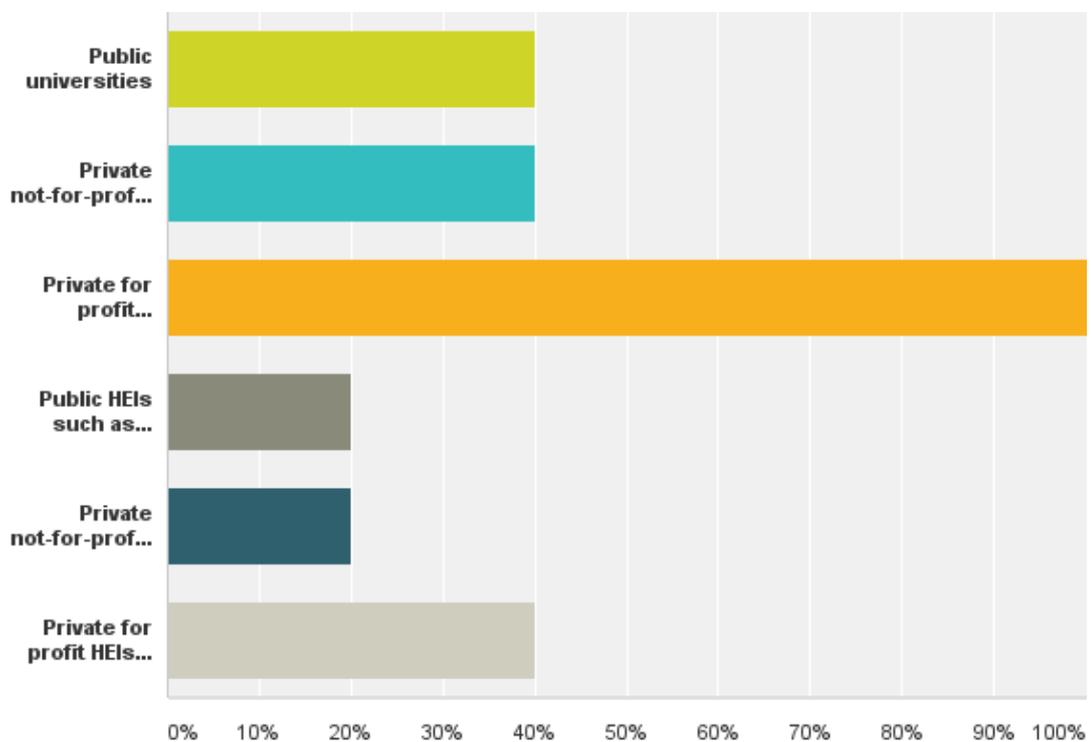


- a. Franchise - An arrangement whereby a provider in the source country A authorizes a provider in another country B to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by a provider in country A. This is usually a for-profit commercial arrangement: While three skipped to answer this question, about half of the total participants confirmed the presence of a franchise system in their countries for CBHE delivery. It seems this type of collaboration is rapidly gaining popularity in the region.
- b. Twinning - A situation whereby a provider in source country A collaborates with a provider located in country B to develop an articulation system allowing students to take course credits in country B and/or source country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the provider in the source country. This may or may not be on a commercial basis: Interestingly enough, this form of CBHE is strongly present in the region as more than 71% confirmed its presence, while about 29% were not sure.
- c. Double/Joint degree - An arrangement whereby providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which a student receives a qualification from each provider or a joint award from the collaborating providers. Normally this is based on academic exchange: This form of collaboration for CBHE delivery also seems to be popular as 62.5% of the respondents confirmed its existence. Only 12.5% did not acknowledge its presence while the rest either were unsure (25%) or skipped the question (2 participants).
- d. Articulation - Various types of articulation arrangements between providers in different countries permit students to gain credit for courses/programme offered/delivered by collaborating providers: Although not as popular as the previous forms, this type of CBHE delivery is strongly present in the region (nearly 43%). Moreover, more than half of the respondents were not sure whether it exists or not in their countries. A further investigation would allow for a better reflection of this form's availability.
- e. Validation - Validation arrangements between providers in different countries which allow provider B in receiving country to award qualification of provider A in source country: CBHE delivery through validation does not seem to be popular as 50% of the respondents reported it to be inexistent and 33.33% were unsure. Apart from those who skipped the question, only one respondent confirmed its availability.
- f. Virtual/Distance - Arrangements where providers deliver courses/programmes to students in different countries through distance and online modes. May include some face-to-face support for students through domestic study or support centers: 33.33%

confirmed the presence of this form of delivery against half who did not. Again, a further investigation is required to get a more accurate depiction as 50% were simply unsure. This is, in fact, in concordance with the results from the previous question (Q5) as 71% were also unsure of the presence of virtual universities delivering cross-border programs in their countries and the region.

Q7: Are the CBHE providers in your country (choose all that apply):

This question explores the nature of the CBHE providers in the respondent’s country (public or private; for-profit or not; etc.).



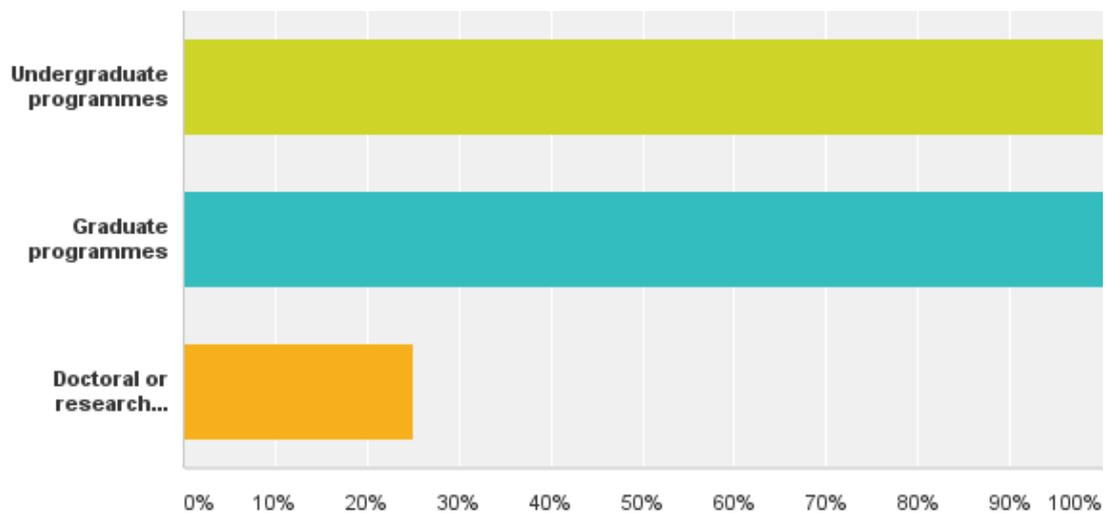
All the proposed formats were chosen but with various percentages: the “public universities”, “private not-for-profit universities” and “private for profit HEIs such as university colleges, applied universities, etc.” were equally mentioned in 40% of the time. The “public HEIs such as university colleges, applied universities, etc.” and the “private not-for-profit HEIs such as university colleges, applied universities, etc.” were also equally mentioned 20% of the time. The single format that was mentioned by all the respondents (100%) is the “private for profit universities”. This suggests that the private universities are actually more active in delivering CBHE programs.

Q8: Which countries are the main providers of CBHE in your country? Please select the three most important ones.

The answers collected from the respondents show that the main countries that provide CBHE in the region are (in a decreasing order of importance):

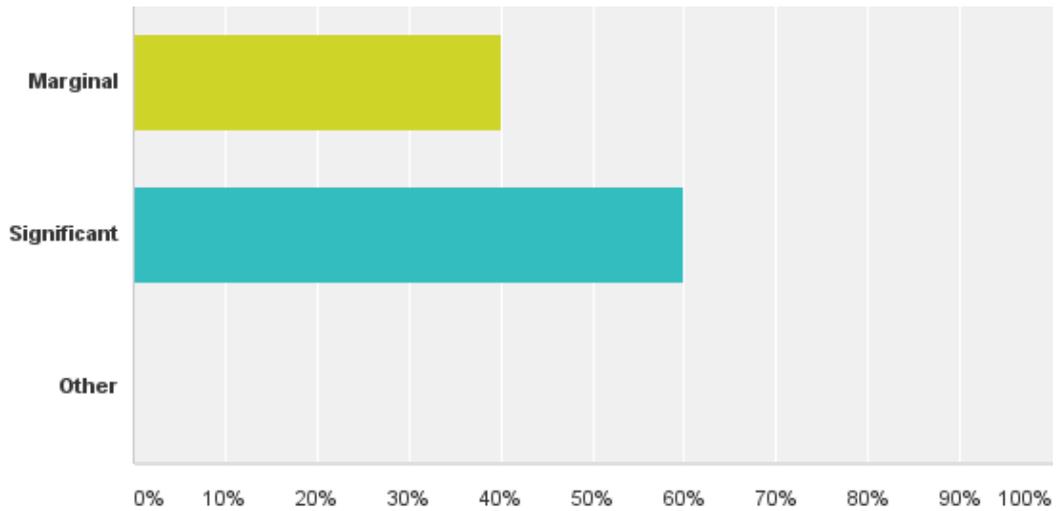
1. USA
2. France
3. Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, India and Philippines.

Q9: The mobility of programmes and providers mostly affects:



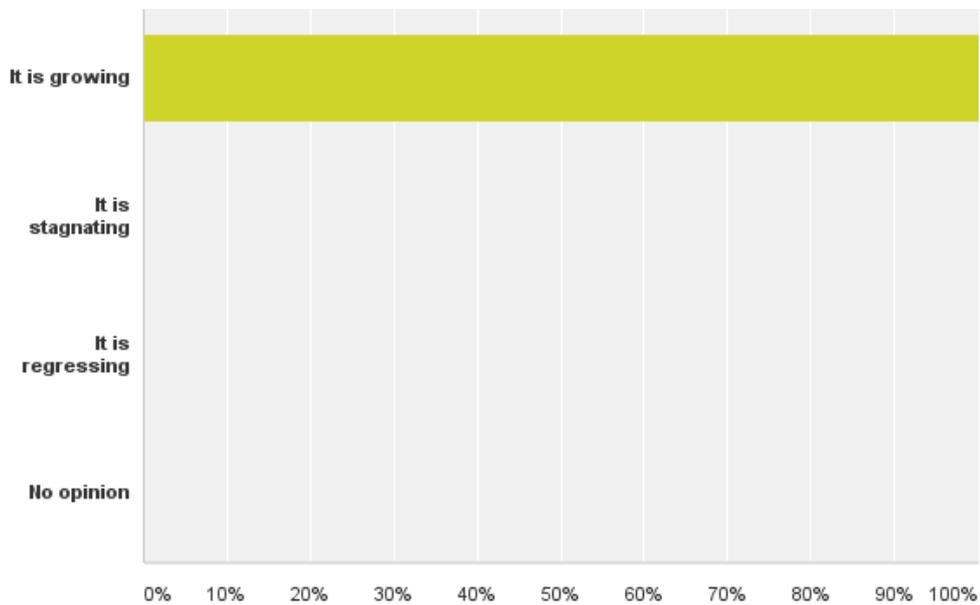
All of the respondents agreed that both undergraduate and graduate programs are the most subjected to CBHE while fewer (25%) mentioned doctoral or research programs.

Q10: In terms of the number of students, would you describe the role of CBHE provision in your country as:



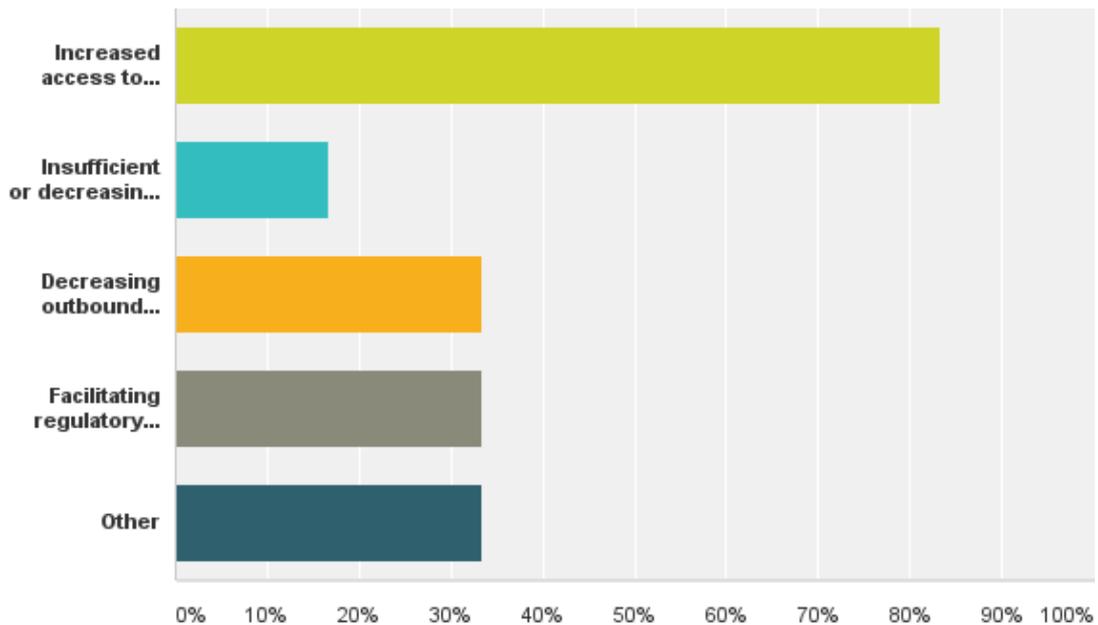
More than half of the respondents (60%) considered that the CBHE provision in their respective countries in terms of student numbers is rather significant than marginal. This consolidates the earlier deduction that CBHE programs are steadily gaining popularity in the region.

Q11: How would you assess the development of CBHE in your country?



Confirming the earlier deduction, respondents were unanimous that the CBHE programs in their countries are growing.

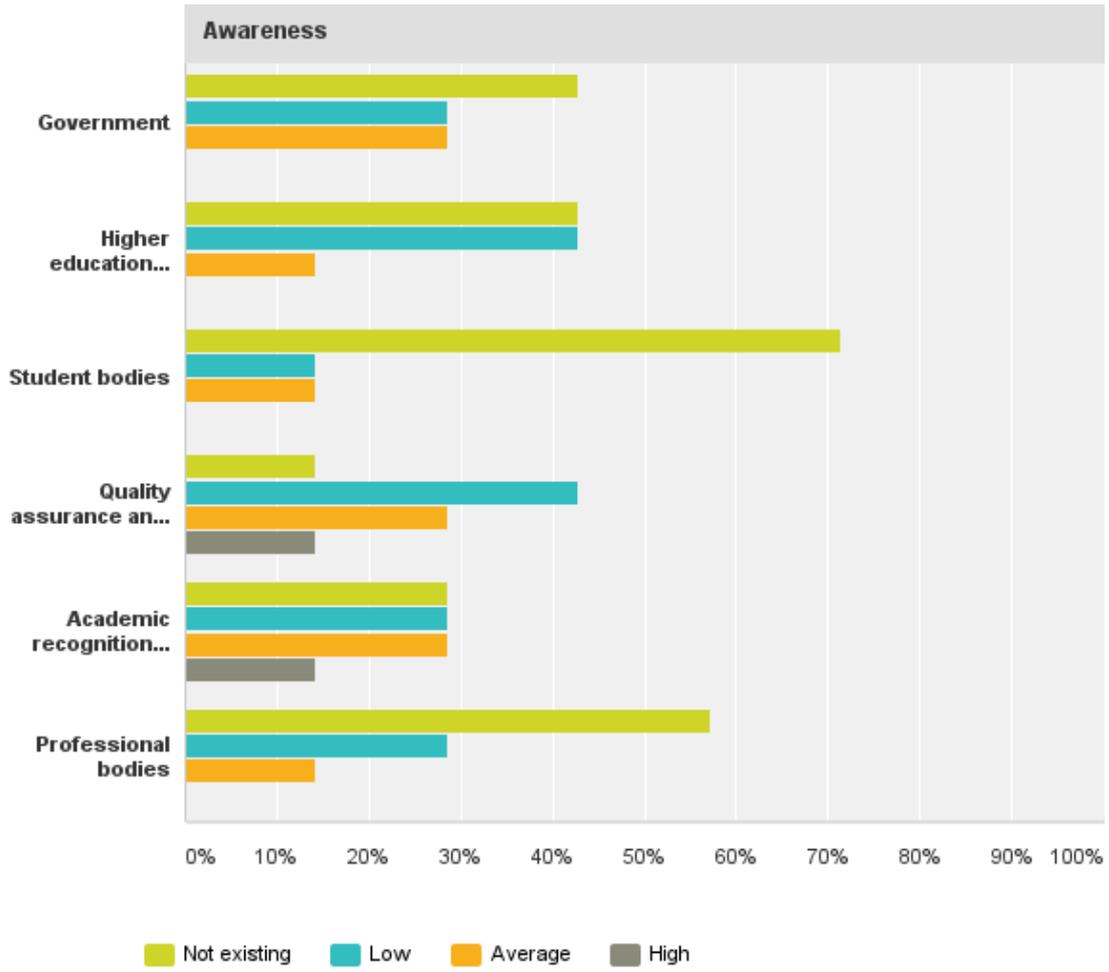
Q12: What drives the development of CBHE in your country?



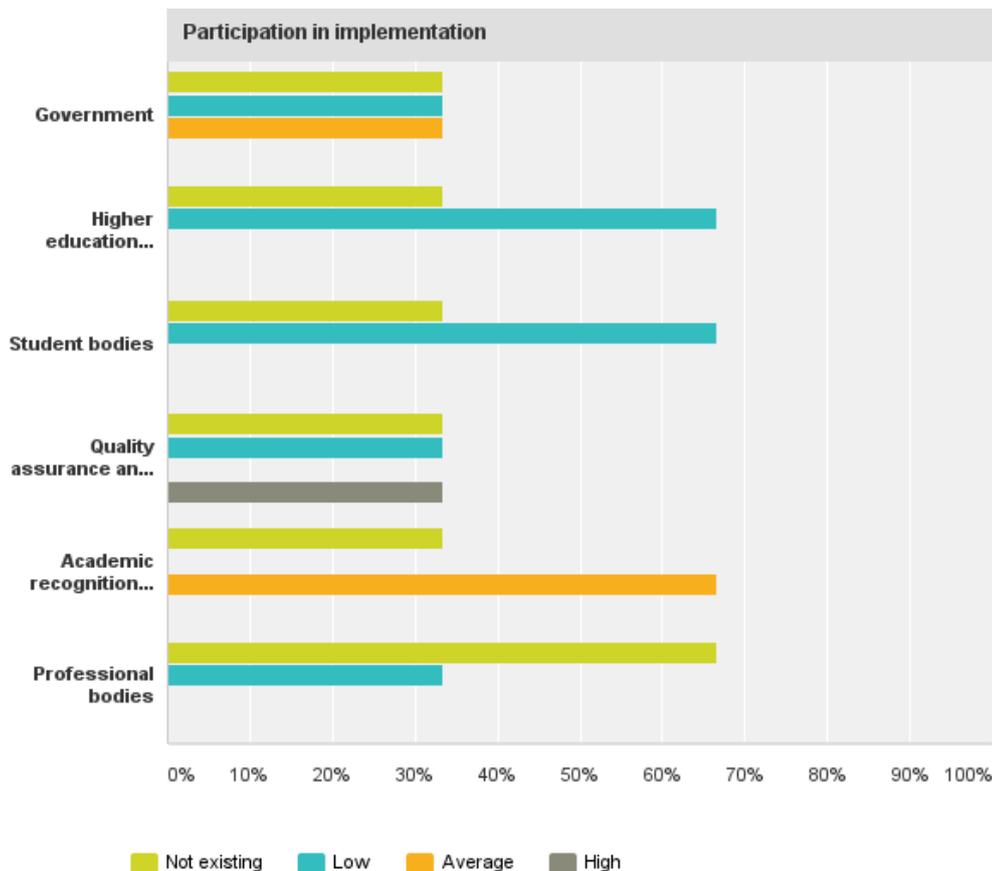
The most evoked reason that drives the development of CBHE was “*Increased access to higher education and insufficiency of local HE provision*” (all respondents). The other reasons are “*Decreasing outbound student mobility (due to increasing cost of studying abroad, access/visa restrictions, etc.)*” and “*Facilitating regulatory framework (e.g. privatization, CBHE regulation)*” (both 33.33%) and finally “*Insufficient or decreasing quality of local HE provision*” (around 17%).

Q13: Please indicate your views on the level of awareness and participation of higher education stakeholders in implementing UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE in your country.

Results related to awareness:



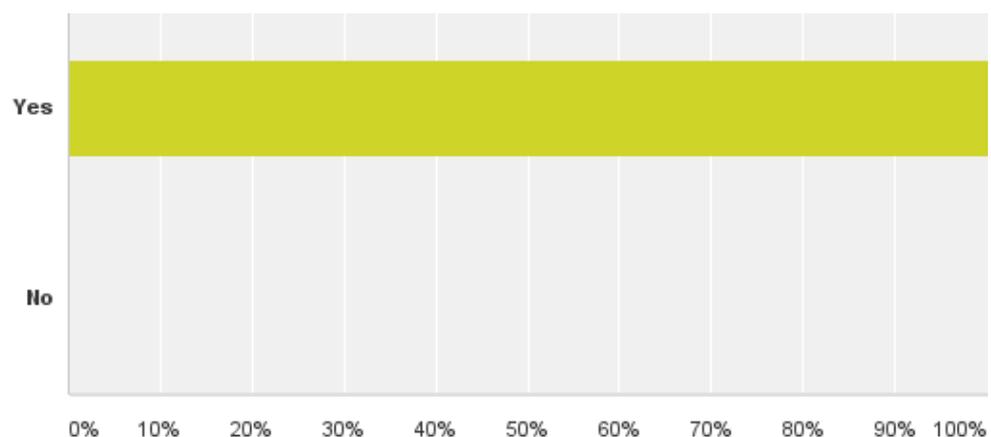
Results related to implementation:



- a. *The government*: none of the respondents think of the government's awareness to be high while nearly 43% think it does not exist at all. The rest of the respondents think that the government's awareness of the UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE is either low or average (around 29% equally). As for the participation in its implementation, they are evenly split between nonexistent (33.33%), low (33.33%) and average (33.33%).
- b. *The HEI/providers*: Awareness of the UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE does not seem to be high amongst HEI/providers as only one respondents thought of it to be average while the others evenly thought it to be either not existent or low (43% each). The same can be said for the participation in implementation as 66.67% thought it was low and 33.33% thought it did not exist.
- c. *Student bodies*: awareness of the UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE seems to be very limited among student bodies (71%) with only 14% thinking it is either low or average. As for participation in implementation, 66.67% of the respondents think that it is low and 33.33% think it is not existent.

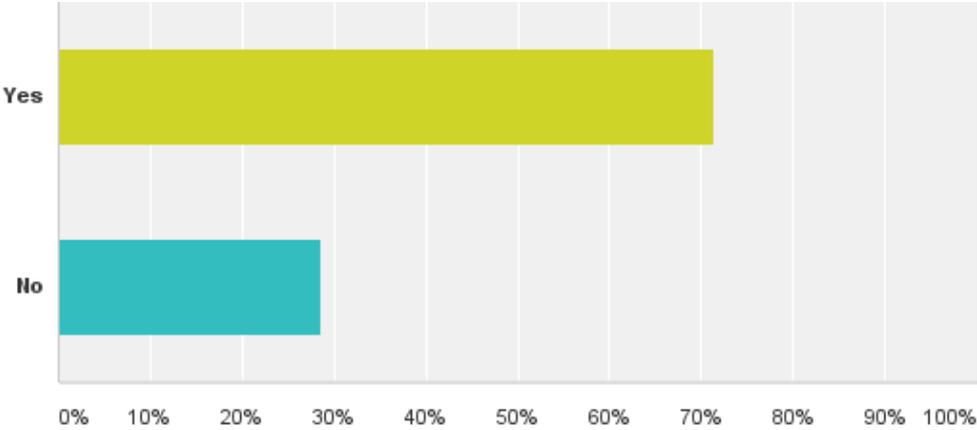
- d. Quality assurance and accreditation bodies: As expected, awareness seems to rise a little with the QA and accreditation bodies as around 14% of the respondents think it is high and about 29% think it is average. Yet, about 43% think it is low and around 14% think it is non-existent. As for participation in implementation, opinions were evenly split between “non-existent”, “low”, and “average” (33.33% each).
- e. Academic recognition bodies: Only around 14% of respondents think that awareness of UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE among academic recognition bodies is high, while the rest evenly think of it to be “not existing”, “low” or “average” (about 29% each). For the participation in implementation, 66.67% think it is high while 33.33% see it not existent. There is some sort of contradiction here as participation in implementation is higher than awareness. Nonetheless, this can be explained by the absence of formal regulatory frameworks for CBHE in most countries and hence the issue arises only during implementation.
- f. Professional bodies: the professional bodies do not seem to be that aware of the UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE as about 57% think it is not existent, about 29% think it is low and only about 14% think it is average. The same holds true for the participation in implementation as 66.67% of the respondents think it is not existent and 33.33% think of it to be low. More generally, professional bodies are not too involved in the QA of higher education, hence their lack of awareness of the UNESCO-OECD guidelines.

Q14: Is comparability of qualifications a major concern for QA of CBHE in your country?



As expected, respondents to this question unanimously agreed that the comparability of qualifications is indeed a major concern for QA of CBHE in their respective bodies.

Q15: Do you have any legal and other issues related to the recognition procedures and requirements of higher education delivered by foreign providers and/or leading to a foreign qualification?

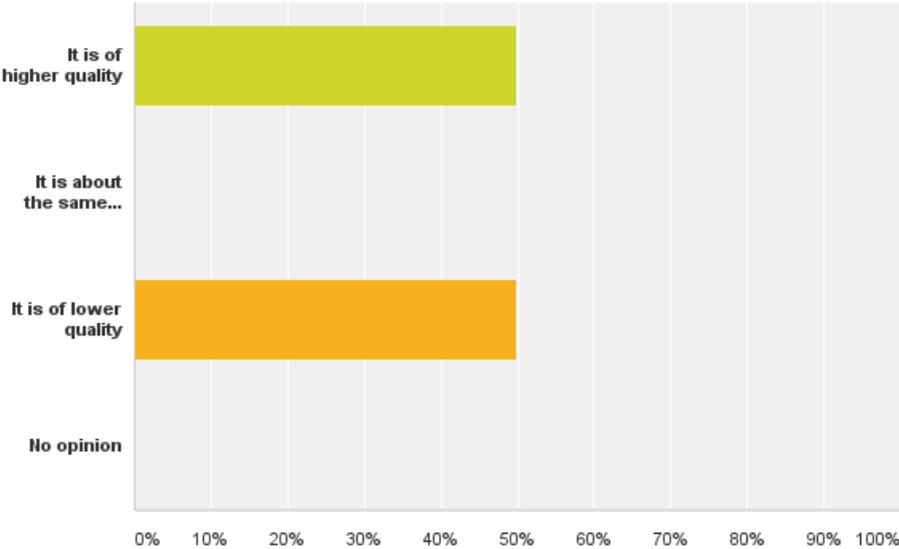


More than 71% of the respondents recognize the existence of some legal or other issues related to the recognition procedures and requirements of HE delivered by foreign providers and/or leading to a foreign qualification, with only 29% thinking otherwise.

PART II - Issues and challenges of quality and QA of CBHE

This part is composed of 8 questions (Q16 to Q23).

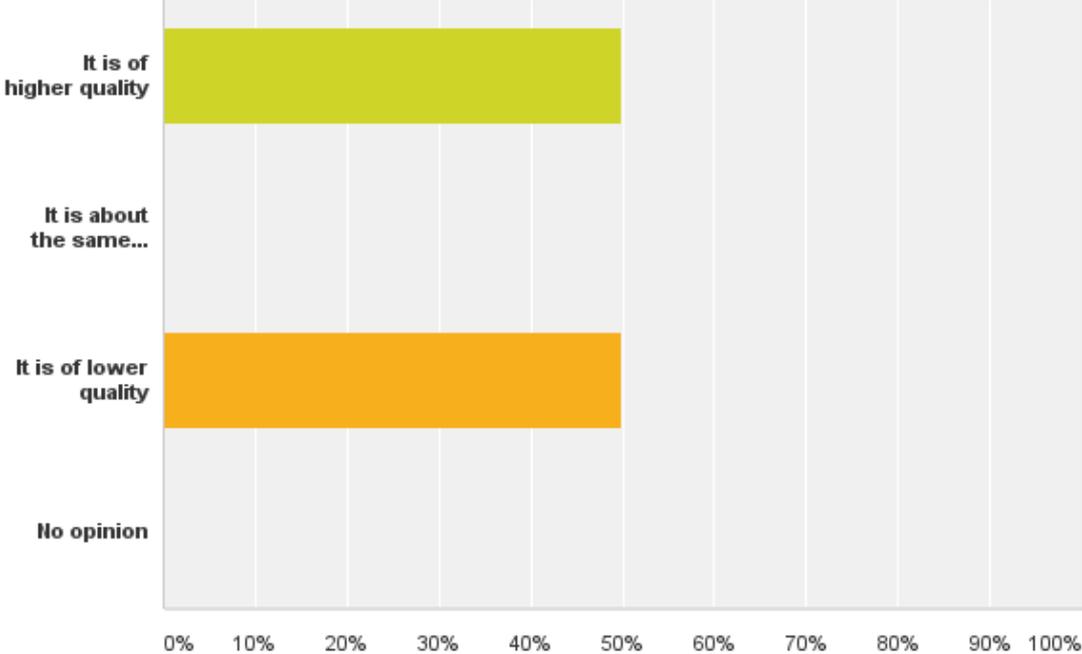
Q16: What is your overall perception of imported CBHE compared to local HE provision?
Please provide reasons for your assessment in the comment box.



This question seems to be polarizing as half of the respondents perceived the quality of imported CBHE to be higher than that of local HE provision while the other half thought the exact opposite. The reasons mentioned in the comments' section bring some explanation to that. For those who think highly of imported CBHE, they do so because they believe local institutions would not associate with a foreign institution if it was not for its strong brand and better programs. They also think of the importance of sharing global experiences and all the benefits that come with it. Finally, they tend to think that, even if the imported CBHE programs do not match the quality of the elite local HEI (5-10% of local students intake), they remain better than the rest. As for the other point of view, they complain that the for-profit institutions that offer CBHE usually contribute to the proliferation of diploma mills as they do not maintain rigorous quality measures and only highly reputable institutions try to do so.

Other than the above explanations, CBHE can be grossly categorized as being of two types: quality CBHE and the commercial and mediocre kind; the latter being more prevalent in most countries of the region.

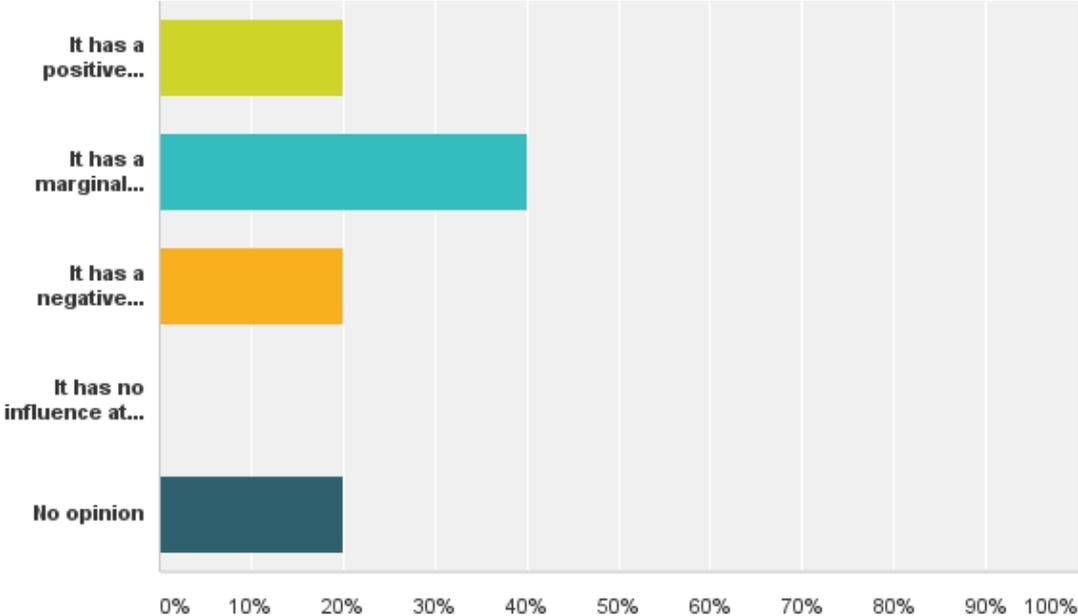
Q17: What is your perception of imported CBHE by European providers compared to local HE provision? Please provide reasons for your assessment in the comment box.



This question is a further precision of the previous one as it targets the European CBHE providers. The results remain the same as the respondents were evenly split between those

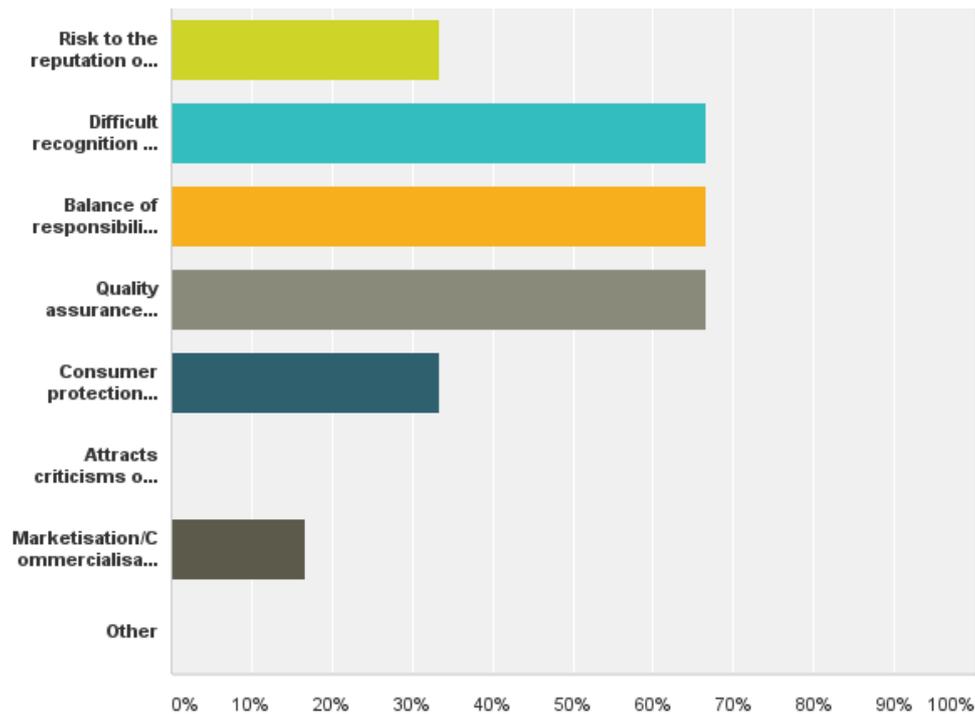
thinking it is of better quality and those thinking it is of a lower quality. In the comments' section, they evoked the same reasons as above.

Q18: Overall, what kind of influence do you think CBHE has had on the national system of HE in your country, in terms of academic standards, HE access, etc.?



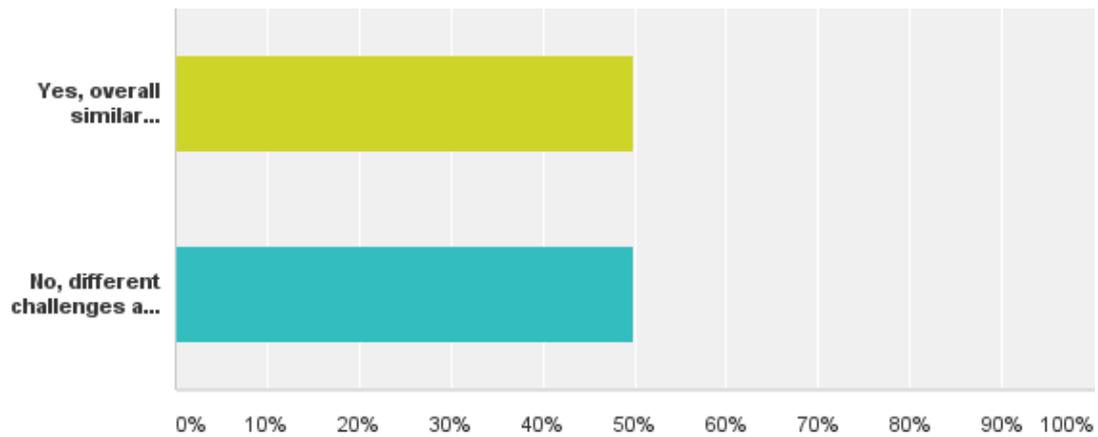
Fifth of the respondents think CBHE has had a positive influence on the national system of HE in their countries while another fifth, on the contrary, think it has had a negative influence. A third fifth remains with no opinion while the rest (40%) of the respondents think it has had a marginal influence. This answer confirms the uncertainty towards the CBHE phenomenon as it strives to establish itself as a significant segment of HE provision in countries of the region. As the phenomenon progresses and expands, it will have a more significant impact on the local HE scene and this could go either way.

Q19: What are the key challenges of CBHE in your country? Please pick the 3 most important ones.



Two thirds of the respondents agree that the most important key challenges of CBHE in their countries are the three following: the “*Difficult recognition of qualifications*”, the “*Balance of responsibility between provider and receiver countries and/or between the different actors within your country (institution, government, QA agency, etc.)*” and the “*Quality assurance processes (conflict of standards between local/provider QA systems, absence/lack of coordination between the 2 systems, etc.)*”. Also are important but to a lesser extent (mentioned by one third of the respondents) the “*Risk to the reputation of the institutions (profit driven)*” and the “*Consumer protection issues – proliferation of ‘diploma mills’*”. Finally, the least important challenge of CBHE was the “*Marketization/Commercialization of HEIs*” (mentioned one time only) while “*Attracting criticisms of ‘cultural imperialism’*” didn’t seem to be an issue at all (0%).

Q20: Are the challenges the same for provision from all countries/regions?

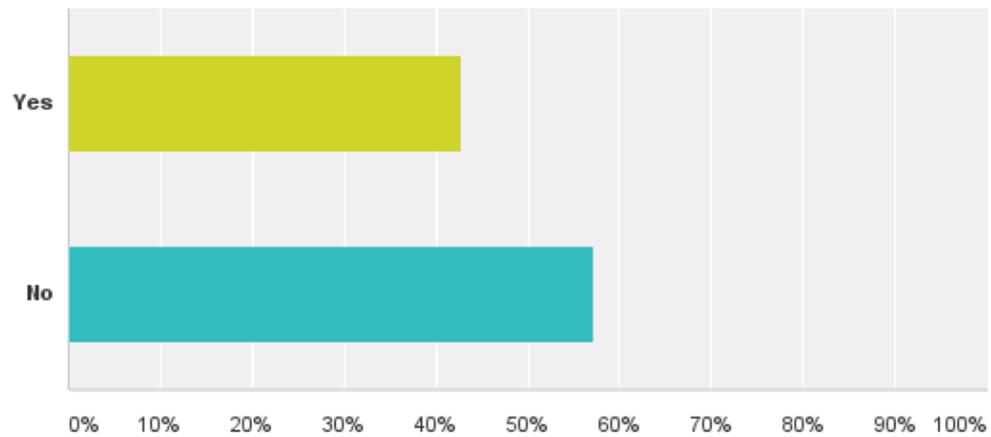


Yet another polarizing question, 50% of the respondents think that the challenges for CBHE provision are overall similar from all countries/regions, while the other 50% think there are different challenges that are typical for different provider countries. In their comments, the respondents mentioned that differences in regulations' between CBHE providers in different countries led to different challenges.

Q21: What could be the strategies to deal with such challenges?

This is an open question answered by 5 out of the 10 participants. Most of the answers revolve around adopting similar (minimum differences) regulations and policies and similar quality measures. One participant suggested the involvement of a universal and transparent QA system while another saw the solution in crafting Memoranda of Understanding between the QA agencies in the different countries.

Q22: Is there any public source of information (in your own national context) from which students and other stakeholders can find out whether a cross-border provision (programme or institution) is recognized, licensed and/or quality assured by your national authorities?



More than half of the participants were not aware of the existence of such source which underlines the urgency of establishing such a public source of information about CBHE programs and institutions in many of the region's countries.

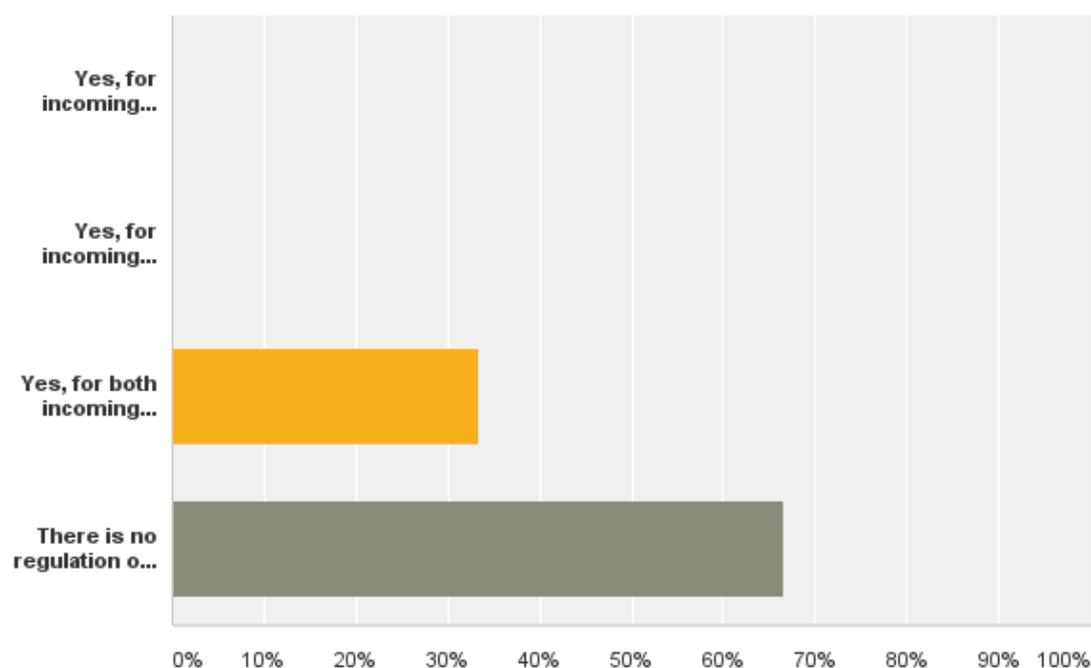
Q23: What are the legal and other challenges related to the recognition procedures and requirements of CBHE in your country?

Most of the answers evoked the absence of a legal framework for CBHE that is yet to be developed and clearly legislated. One respondent, however, suggested that the recognition procedure is rather demanding as it requires a specialized council to thoroughly study the programs and sometimes more than one site visit to approve the program permanently.

Part III - Regulatory & QA Framework

This part is composed of 22 questions (Q24 to Q45).

Q24: Does your country or territory have a specific regulatory framework for QA of CBHE?



Confirming the results collected from the previous open question, the lack of a regulatory framework for CBHE in the region seems to be a real issue as 2 thirds of the respondents said there was no regulation for CBHE in their countries. Only one third answered by: “Yes, for both incoming provider and programme mobility”.

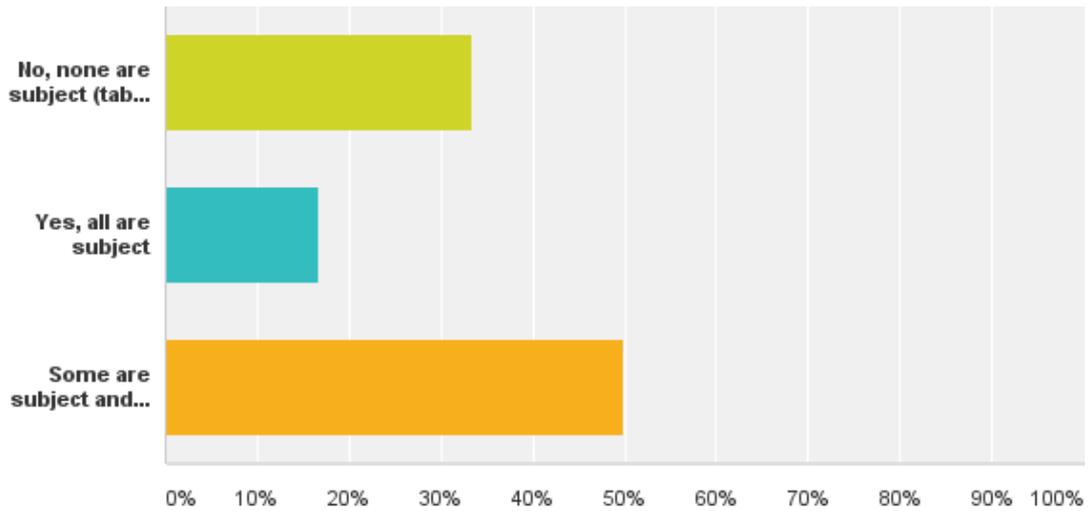
Further explanations to the absence of such a legal framework included the fact that the QAA is still a fledgling entity or the fragmentation of legislation on higher education. Some legislation is being planned to account for CBHE.

Q25: If yes, what type of regulations on CBHE QA exists?

The answers provided by the participants were:

- The Standards for Licensure and Accreditation – 2011
- National Standards and Guidelines for QA/Accreditation

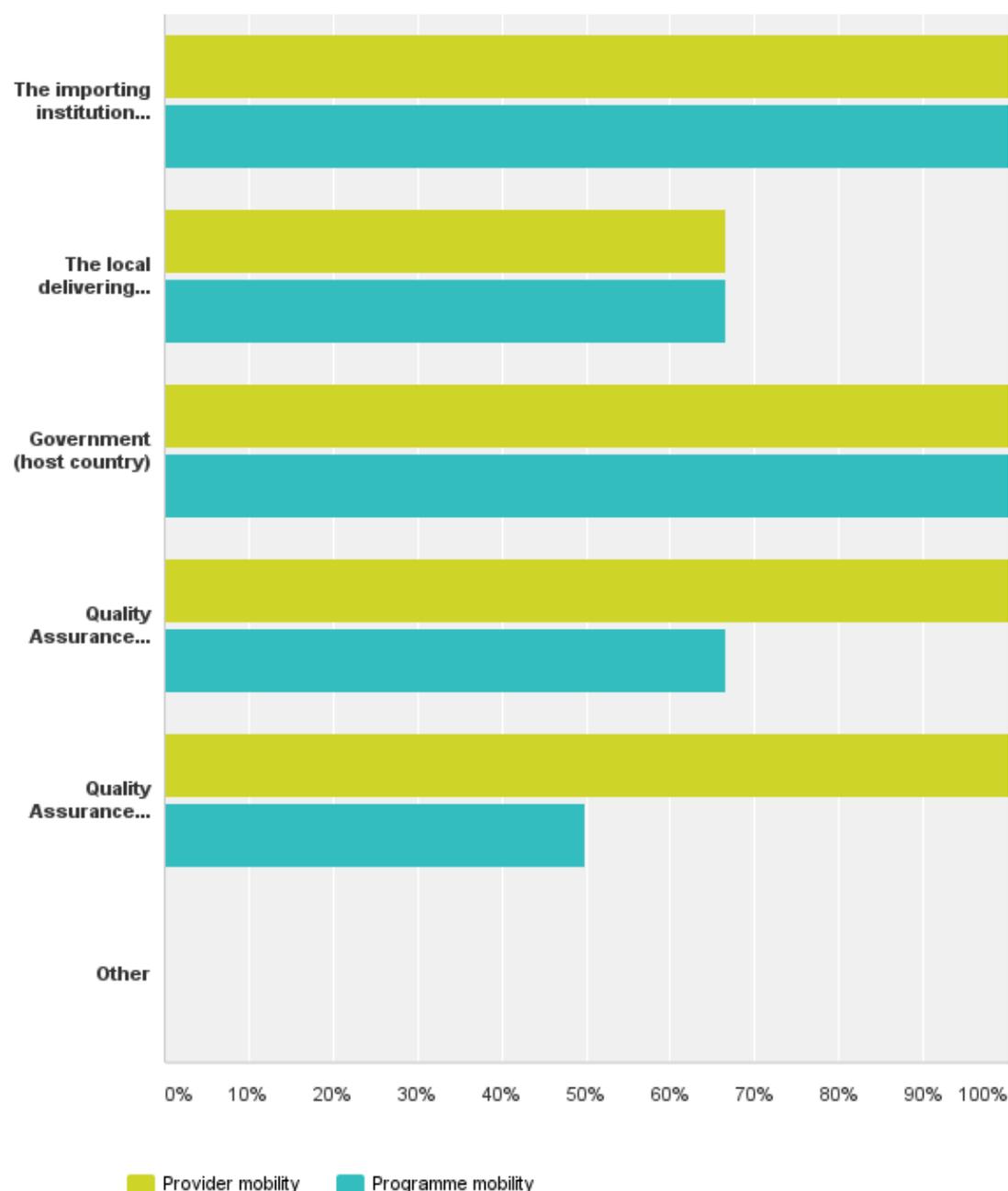
Q26: Is imported CBHE subject to compulsory QA procedures?



Only half of the respondents confirmed the existence of compulsory QA procedures for CBHE in their countries with only 17% confirming the presence of such procedures for *all of* imported CBHE. One third of respondents did not report any compulsory QA procedures regulating imported CBHE.

Many reasons are ascribed to that lack of compulsory QA procedures, chief amongst them is the variety of channels through CBHE is offered and not all channels come within the QAA remit. For instance, some forms of CBHE (especially MBA's) are not provided through HEIs altogether.

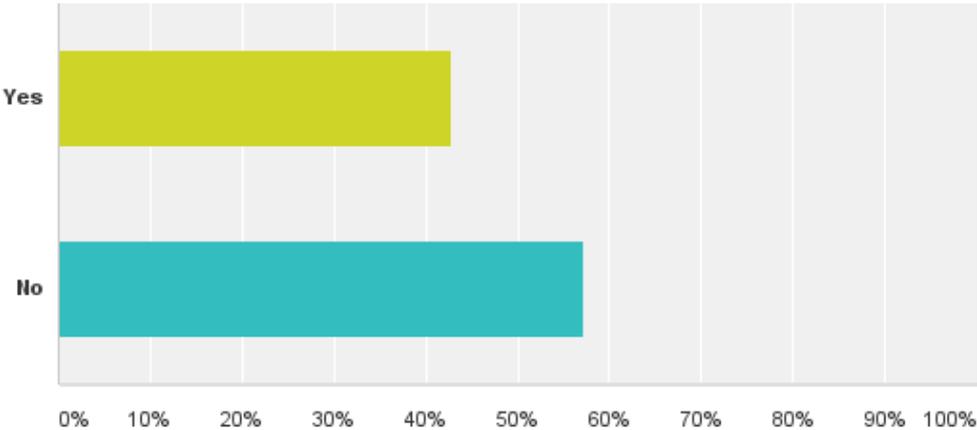
Q27: Who is responsible for QA of imported CBHE? Please indicate all that apply.



When it comes to the provider mobility, all of the following bodies are involved all the time (100%) in the QA of imported CBHE: *“the importing institution itself”*, *“the government at the host country”*, *“the QAA at the host country”* and *“the QAA at the provider country”*. To a lesser degree (67%), *“The local delivering institution”* can also be responsible for the QA of the imported CBHE.

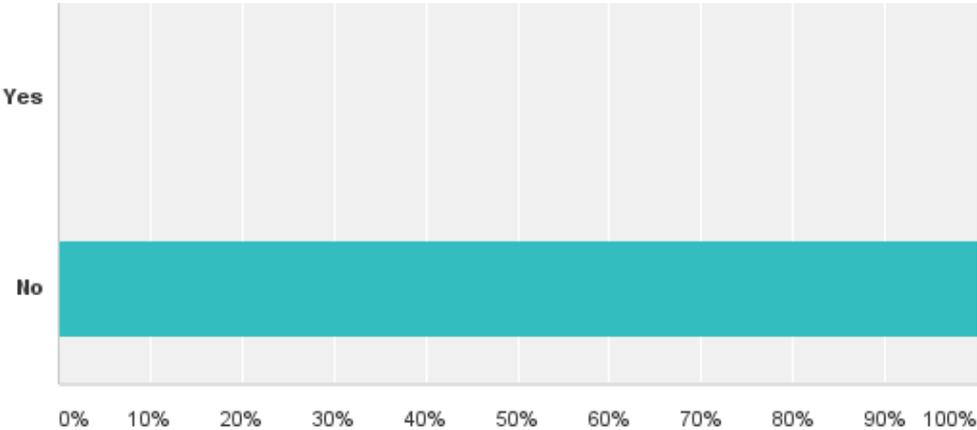
When it comes to programme mobility though, only *“the importing institution itself”* and *“the government at the host country”* are the sole responsible for the QA. The responsibility of the other bodies decreases as follows: *“the QAA at the host country”* (67%); *“the QAA at the provider country”* (50%); while *“The local delivering institution”* remains the same (67%).

Q28: Is your Agency involved in the QA of imported CBHE?



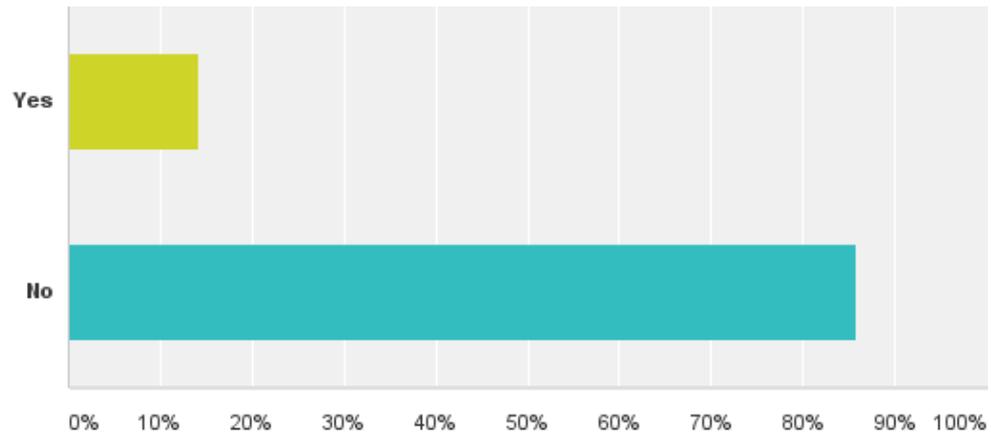
43% of respondents agencies are involved in the QA of imported CBHE, while 57% are not. This again confirms the recency of the CBHE phenomenon to the extent that QA regulations have yet to fully encompass it.

Q29: If no, is there another organization that is involved/in charge of QA of imported CBHE?



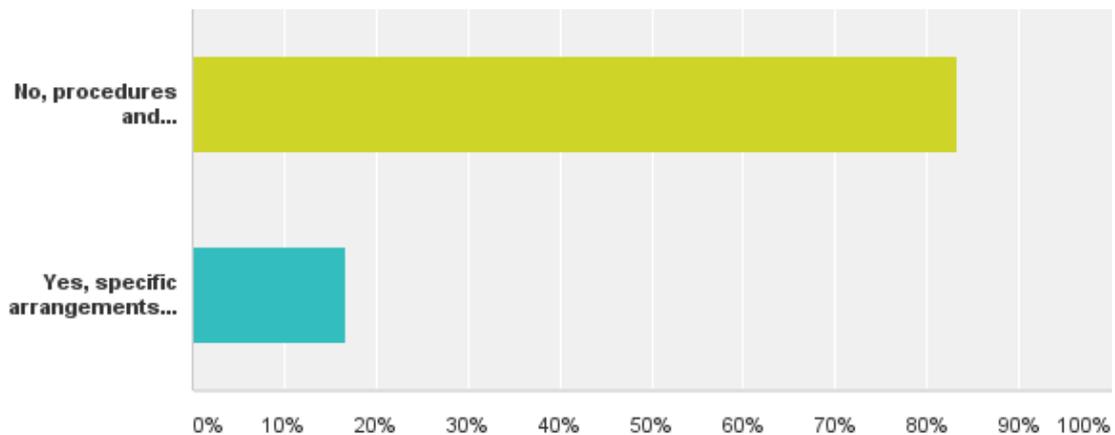
When the respondent’s agency is not involved in the QA of imported CBHE, there is usually no other agency to do the task. .

Q30: Is there a specific quality assurance system for CBHE in place in your country?



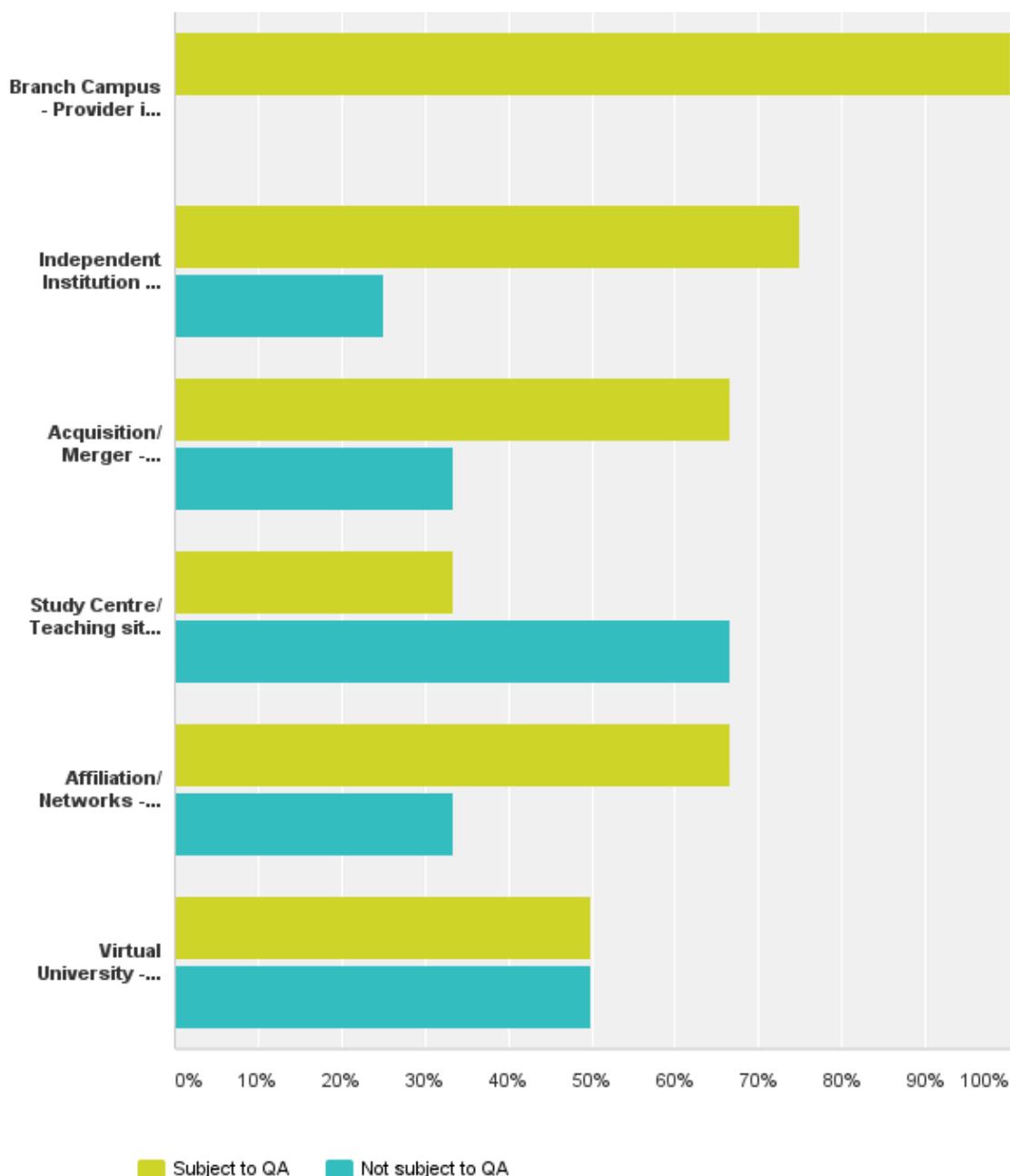
Confirming the absence of clear regulations and processes for CBHE in the region and reiterating the pressing need to establish some, nearly 86% of the respondents denied the existence of a specific quality assurance system for CBHE in their countries.

Q31: Are there specific arrangements in place in relation to CBHE from specific countries or regions?



Most of the respondents (83.33%) picked the answer “No, procedures and requirements are the same for all imported programmes and institutions”. This illustrates, once again, that imported CBHE is not –yet- addressed with the specificity it requires.

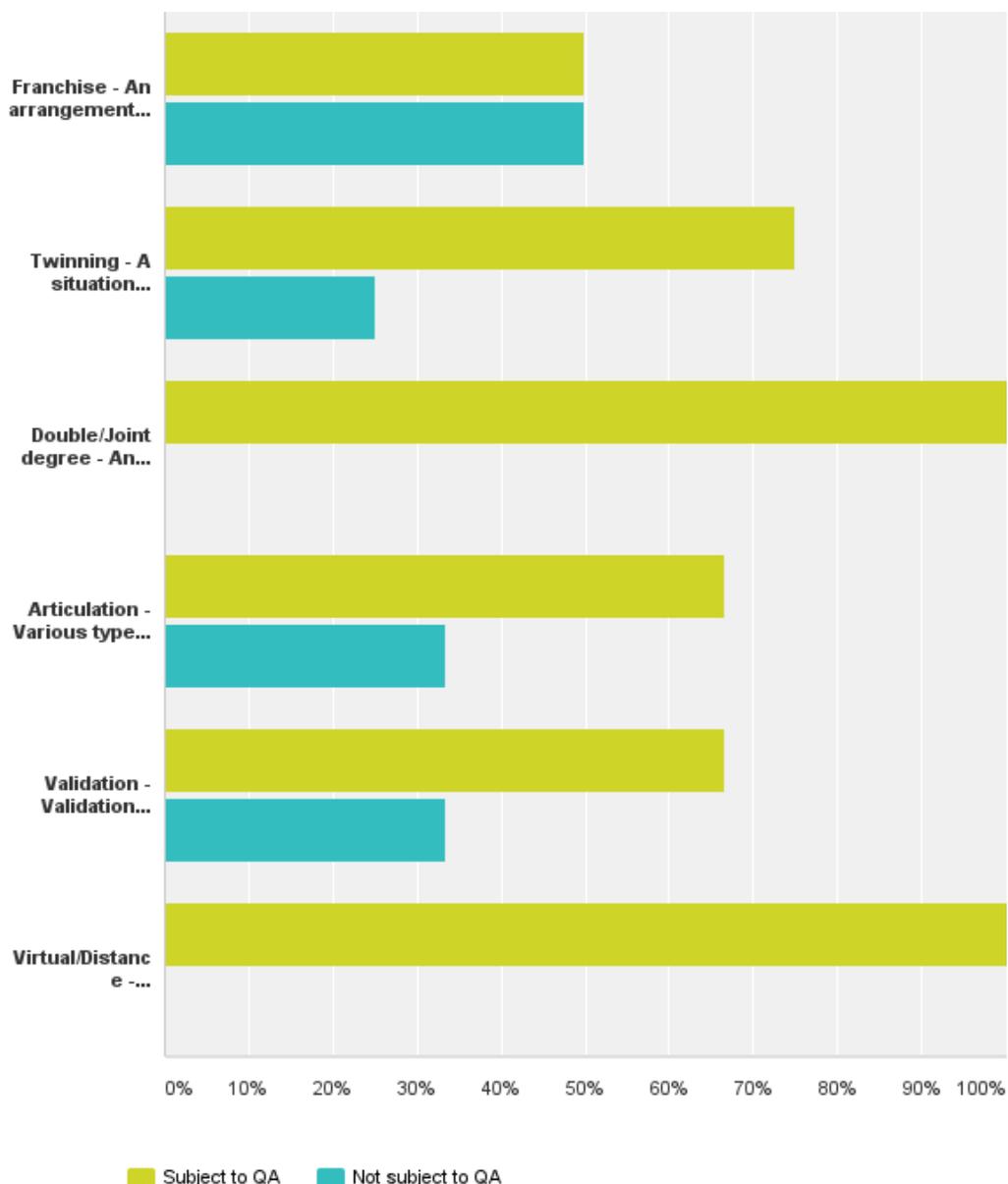
Q32: Please indicate which CBHE categories are subject to QA procedures by your Agency?



According to the provided answers, the CBHE category that is the most subjected to QA procedures by the respondents' agencies is the "Branch Campus - Provider in country establishes a satellite campus in country B to deliver courses and programmes to students in country B (may also include country A students taking a semester/courses abroad).The qualification awarded is from provider in country A" (100%). The second most mentioned category by the respondents is the "Independent Institution - Foreign provider A (a traditional university, a commercial company or alliance/network) establishes in country B a standalone HEI to offer courses/programmes and awards" (75%). Then, two thirds of the participants (66.67%) mentioned both of the "Acquisition/ Merger - Foreign provider A purchases a part

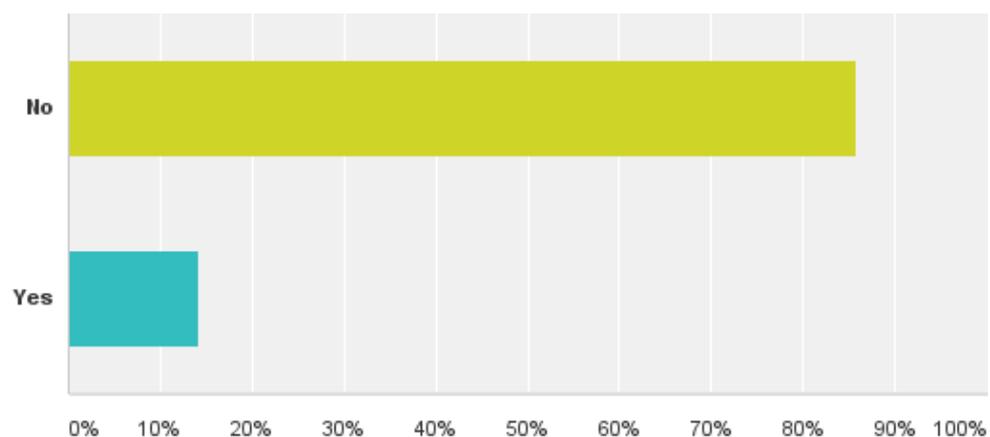
of or 100% of local HEI in country B” and the “Affiliation/ Networks - Different types of (public and private)/(traditional and new) providers from various countries collaborate through innovative types of partnerships to establish networks/institution to deliver courses and programmes in local and foreign countries through distance or face-to-face modes”. Finally, 50% of the participants mentioned that the “Virtual University - Provider that delivers credit courses and degree programme to students in different countries through distance education modes and that generally does not have face-to-face support services for students”.

Q33: Please indicate which CBHE categories are subject to QA procedures by your Agency?



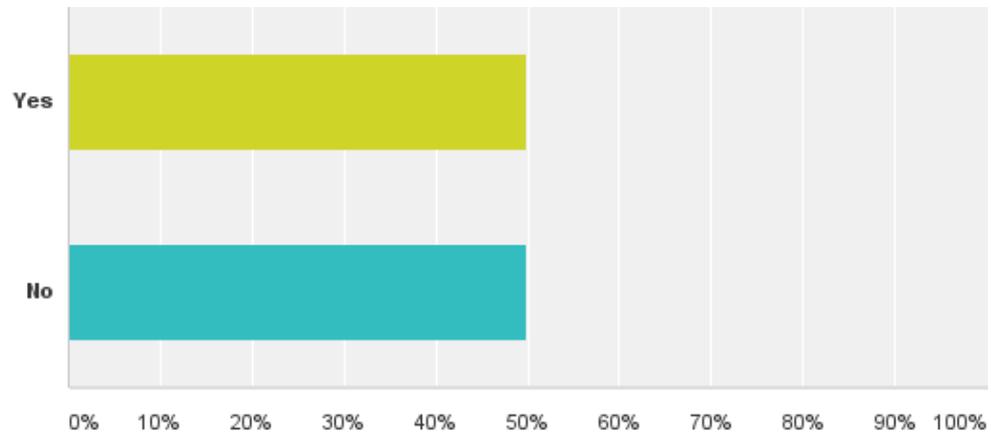
Following the same logic as in the previous question, the two most CBHE categories subjected to QA procedures are the “Double/Joint degree - An arrangement whereby providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which a student receives a qualification from each provider or a joint award from the collaborating providers” and the “Virtual/Distance - Arrangements where providers deliver courses/programmes to students in different countries through distance and online modes”. Then, 75% of the respondents mentioned the “Twinning - A situation whereby a provider in source country A collaborates with a provider located in country B to develop an articulation system allowing student to take course credits in country B and/or source country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the provider in the source country” while two thirds mentioned both the “Articulation - Various types of articulation arrangements between providers in different countries permit student to gain credit for courses/programme offered/delivered by collaborating providers” and “Validation - Validation arrangements between providers in different countries which allow provider B in receiving country to award qualification of provider A in source country”. Finally, half of the respondents confirmed that the “Franchise - An arrangement whereby a provider in the source country A authorizes a provider in another country B to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries” is also subject to QA procedures.

Q34: Has your Agency significantly changed its approach to QA-CBHE in the past three years or is it planning to do so?



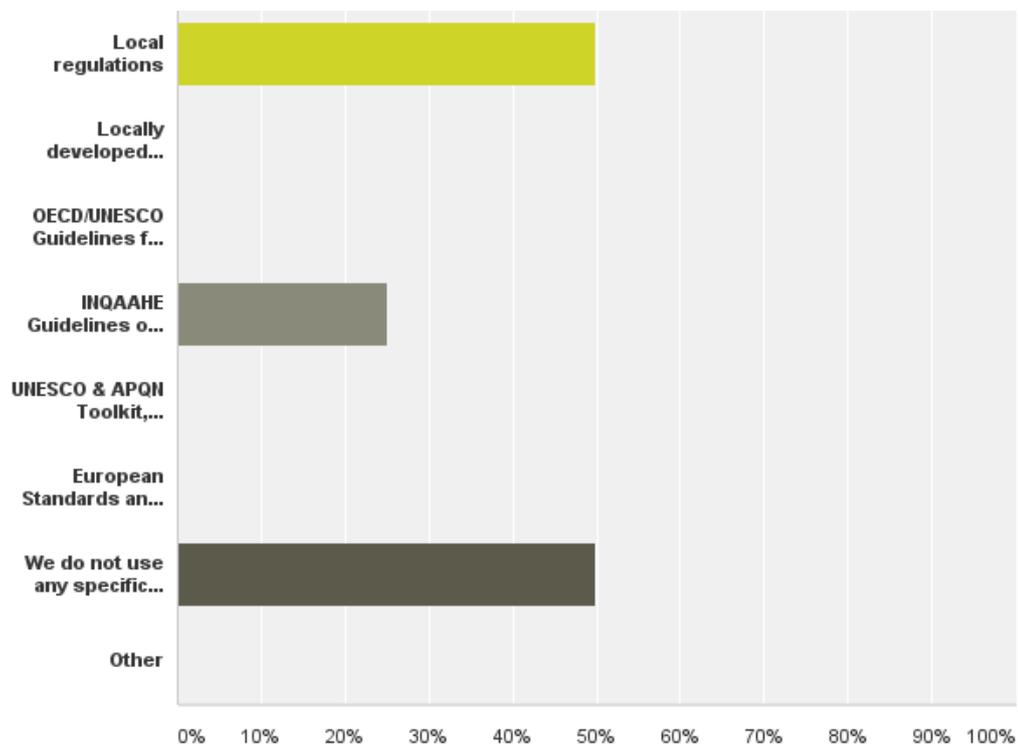
While 3 of the participants skipped this question altogether, nearly all the respondents did not indicate any significant change in their agencies’ approach to QA-CBHE, except for Egypt which has plans to do so in the next three years.

Q35: Do you systematically review your process and methodology for QA-CBHE procedures?



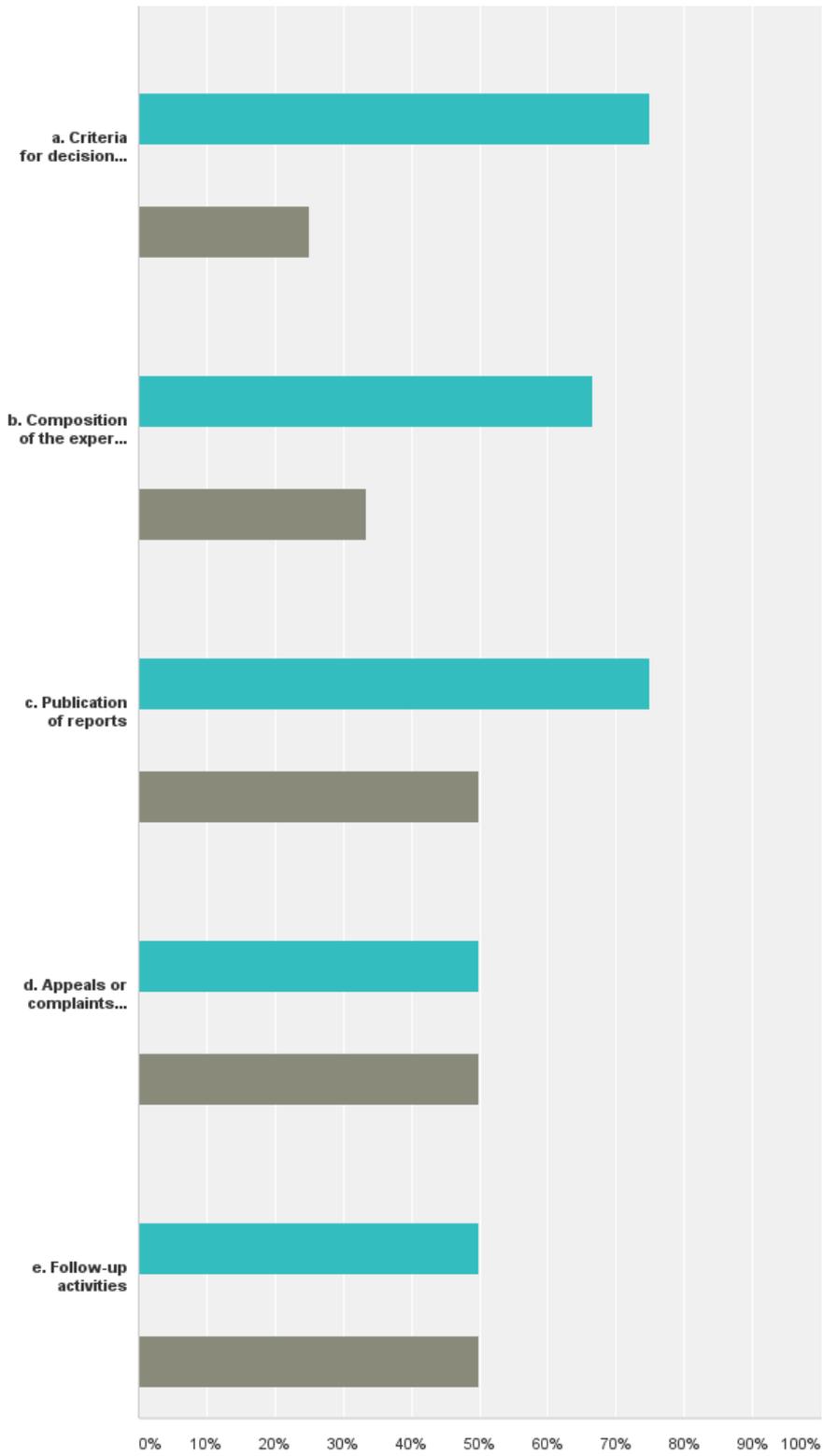
The respondents were evenly split between those who systematically review their process and methodology for QA-CBHE procedures and those who do not. This is in concordance with previous findings as many of the surveyed agencies still do not have clear policies and procedures for CBHE, let alone reviewing them systematically.

Q36: Which model/frame of reference do you use for your QA-CBHE procedures? Select all that apply.



Since many of the surveyed agencies still do not have clear policies and procedures related to CBHE, 6 of the participants skipped this question. This is confirmed through 50% of respondents picking the answer “We do not use any specific guidelines for CBHE”. As for those who actually turned to a model/frame of reference, they relied heavily on *local regulations* (mentioned by 50% of the respondents) and, to a lesser extent, on *INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance, 2007* (25%).

Q37: Criteria and processes used by your Agency in assessing imported CBHE provision for each of the following items; please indicate which criteria apply. You may check more than one box per row.

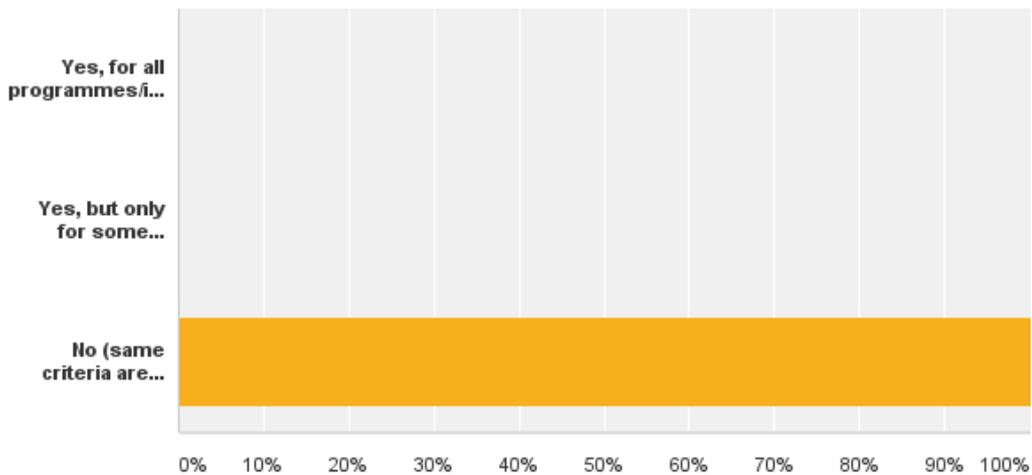


- The foreign country's criteria
- Both the agency's "home" and foreign country's EQA framework
- Specific rules for cross-border reviews
- Other

- a. **Criteria for decisions and formal outcomes:** Here, most of the surveyed agencies turned to “*Both the agency’s “home” and foreign country’s EQA framework*” (75%). One respondent who chose “*Other*” (Tunisia).
- b. **Composition of the expert group:** For this item, two thirds of the respondents’ agencies relied on “*Both the agency’s “home” and foreign country’s EQA framework*”. The rest opted for “*Other*” criteria.
- c. **Publication of reports:** For this item, most of the respondents’ agencies relied on “*Both the agency’s “home” and foreign country’s EQA framework*”. Two of the respondents opted for “*Other*” criteria.
- d. **Appeals or complaints procedure:** For this item, half of the participants who answered the question relied on “*Both the agency’s “home” and foreign country’s EQA framework*”. Two of the respondents opted for “*Other*” criteria.
- e. **Follow-up activities:** For this item, half of the participants who answered the question relied on “*Both the agency’s “home” and foreign country’s EQA framework*”. Two of the respondents opted for “*Other*” criteria.

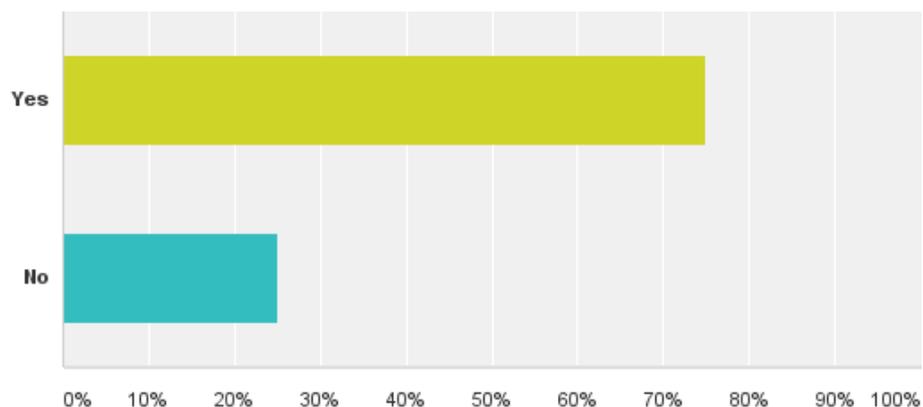
The two participants that chose “*Other*” criteria are from Tunisia and UAE. The former stated that: “*CBHE is not assessed as such; it must fulfill the local requirements for licensing with no further evaluation*”, while the latter explained by citing “*The CAA criteria are based on those followed internationally (INQAAHE), but not necessarily EQA ones.*” This implies that CBHE is not recognized as such in Tunisia and is considered on an equal ‘regulatory’ footing with local provision.

Q38: Do the criteria and procedures used in assessing imported CBHE differ from those used for QA of local HE provision?



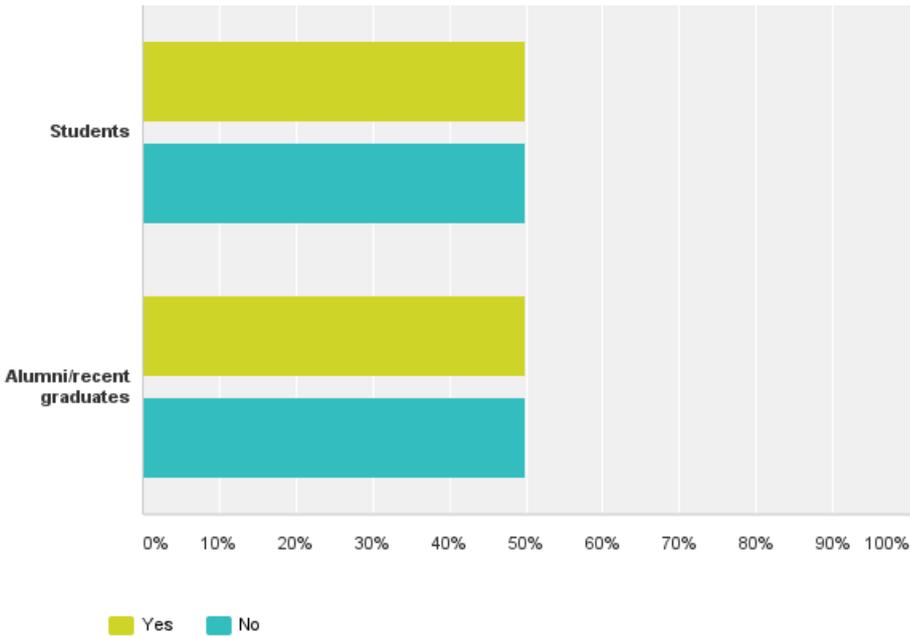
All the participants who actually answered this question unanimously agreed that the same criteria and procedures are used in assessing both imported CBHE and QA of local HE provision. This seems to contradict with the previous UAE answer that a specific QA framework is used for CBHE. However, the question was probably understood to mean whether there are any significant differences between QA methodologies for local provision vs. CBHE provision; which is expected not to be the case.

Q39: Do these criteria and procedures take into consideration your country needs (e.g. knowledge and technology transfer, infrastructure development, localization of research, capacity building, etc.)?



Three quarters of the respondents confirmed that CBHE criteria and procedures, whenever existent, took into consideration their countries' needs.. Here one cannot expect from those who developed and use QA criteria to turn around and say that they do not take into consideration the country needs. However, 2 respondents did indicate that the existing criteria did not fulfill the country needs; an issue worth investigating.

Q40: Are students and alumni/recent graduates involved in the QA of imported CBHE?

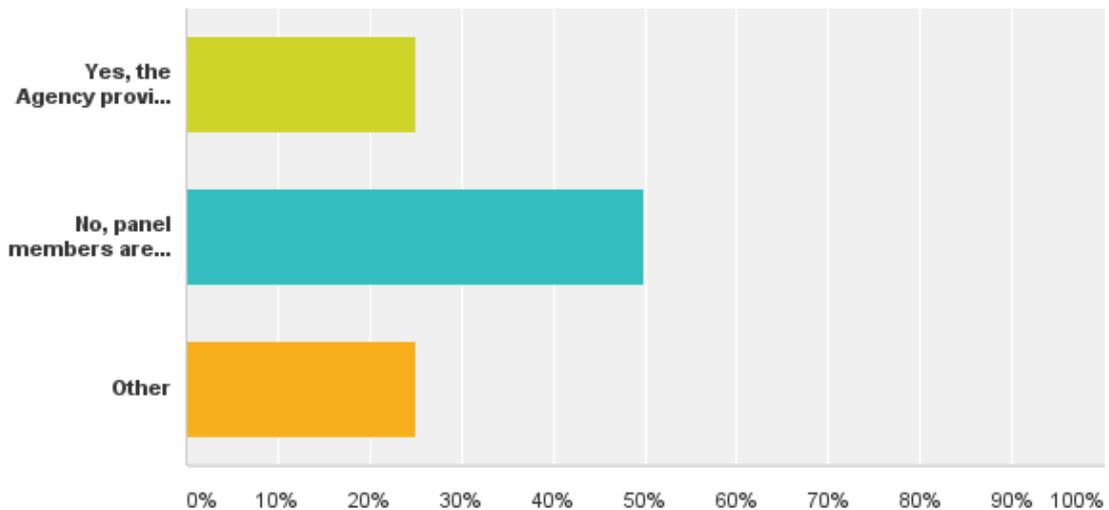


Rather than reflecting the actual state of affairs, this kind of questions seem to indicate the stand of QAA’s towards the involvement of students and alumni in the QA process in general; be it for CBHE or the local one. The stands are deadlocked with an equal number of respondents seeing an opportunity or obligation to involve students and alumni and the rest not thinking it opportune.

41. Which, if any, other stakeholders are involved in the QA of imported CBHE?

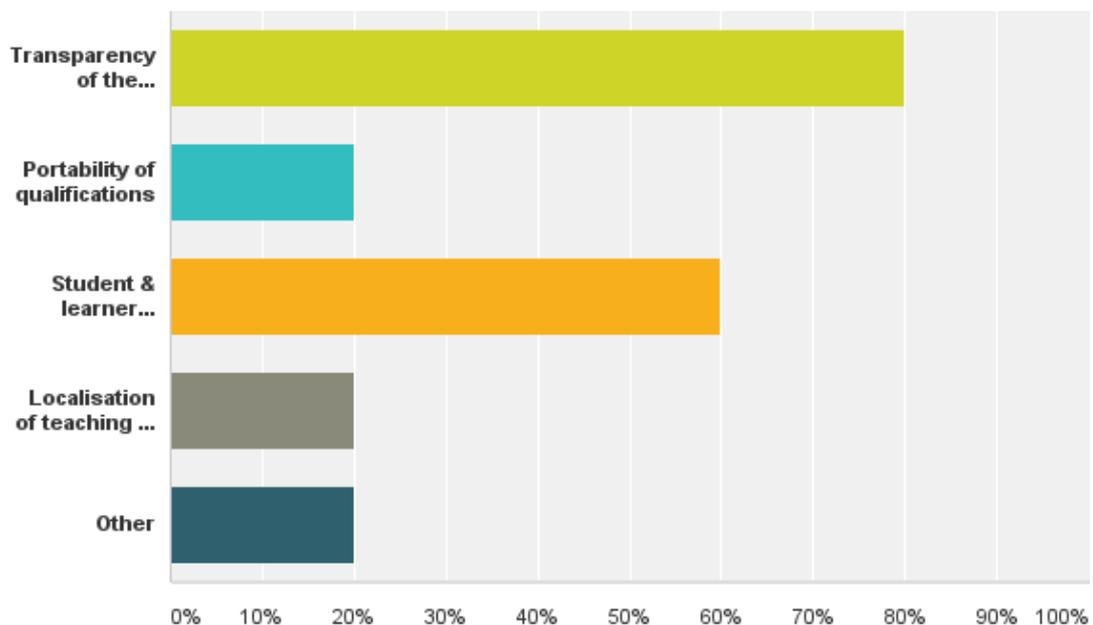
The other stakeholders involved in the QA of imported CBHE as mentioned by the respondents are the *Employers* and the *Advisory councils (at program level, for programs which are of "Professional" nature)*.

Q42: Are members of QA review panels trained to be familiarized with external QA-CBHE?



Half of the participants (50%) acknowledged the need for QA-CBHE expertise while 25% said they were fairly trained to undertake QA-CBHE assessment. The respondent who chose “*Other*” did not give a clear explanation.

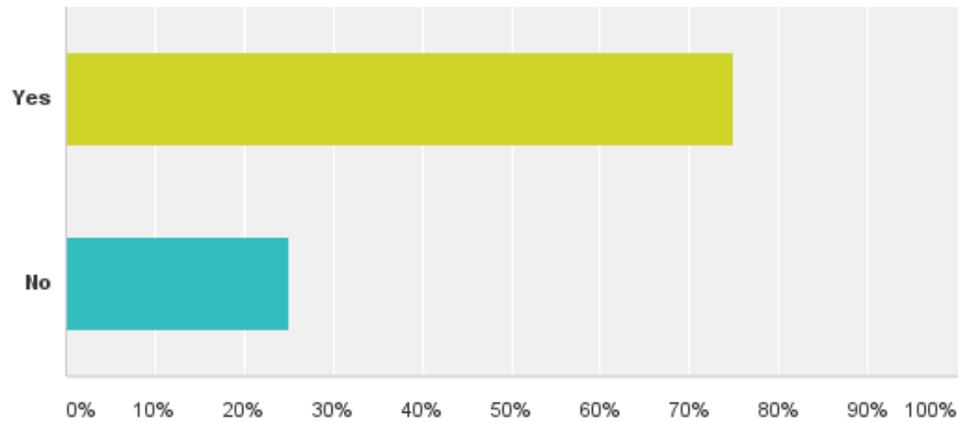
Q43: What are the scopes of QA-CBHE?



The scope of QA-CBHE was quite diverse as they included the “*Transparency of the relationship between partners*” (mentioned 80% of the time); the “*Student & learner protection*” (mentioned 60% of the time); the “*Portability of qualifications*” and the “*Localization of teaching & learning*” (both mentioned 20% of the time).

The “*Other*” category was chosen to mean than: “*All of the above should be in the scope*”.

Q44: Is your current regulatory and quality assurance framework of CBHE provision in line with national policy objectives?



Most of the respondents (75%) who answered this question confirmed that their current regulatory and quality assurance framework for CBHE provision is in line with their national policy objectives.

Q45: What would your Agency need to further develop its QA-CBHE processes and improve the quality of CBHE?

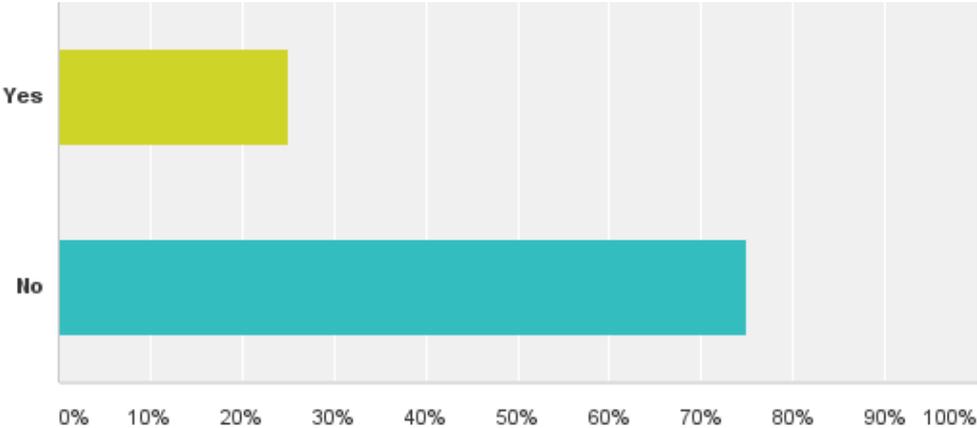
This is an open question that gives the respondents an opportunity to lay out the needs of their agencies in order to develop their QA-CBHE processes and improve the quality of CBHE.

The answers revolved around the need for training seminars and workshops, networking and collaborating with other countries with successful experiences in CBHE and the need for technical assistance. One respondent expressed the need to concurrently develop a national QA framework that integrates CBHE evaluation while another suggested the need to develop a separate policy dedicated solely to CBHE with realistic implementation procedures. Finally, one participant called for tightening up the criteria for online courses to ensure their quality and for finding ways to deal with MOOCs.

PART IV - Collaboration with QA agencies/HEIs and the role of international collaboration

This part is composed of 7 questions (Q46 to Q52).

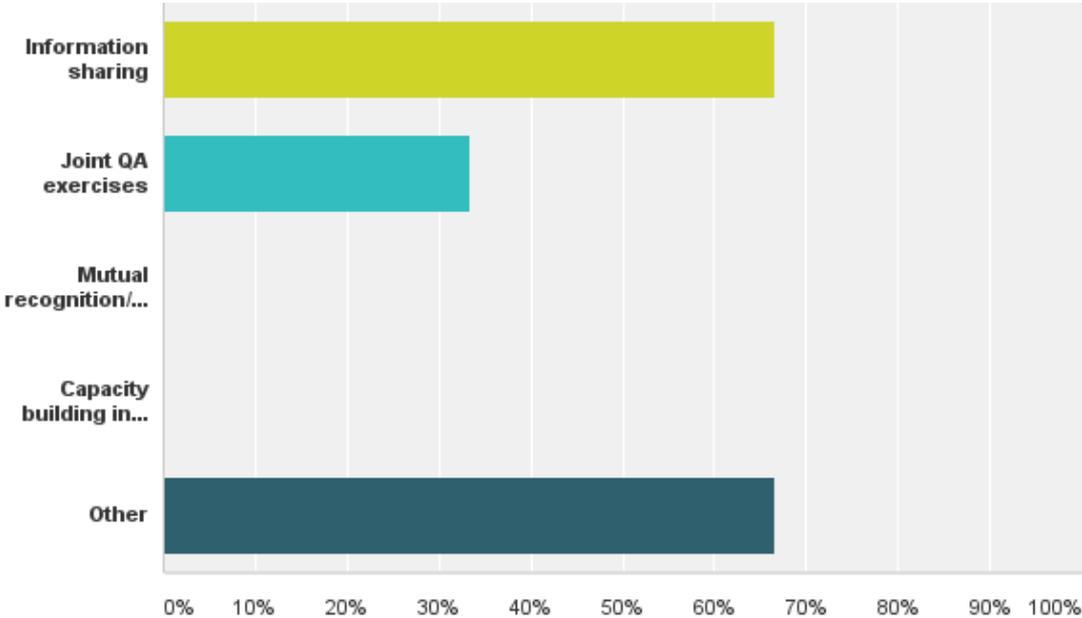
Q46: Does your Agency have any collaboration with provider country QA agencies and/or HEIs for the purpose of QA of imported CBHE?



Showcasing the lack of collaboration between the QA entities in the region in matters related to CBHE provision, nearly all the respondents did not indicate having collaborated with provider country QA agencies and/or HEIs for the purpose of QA of imported CBHE.

The only country that confirmed having such a connection was the UAE with previous collaborations with NEASC in the USA.

Q47: If there is collaboration, what does it cover?



Oddly enough, three different participants carried on to answer this question although only one respondent from the previous question confirmed that there were collaboration between his

agency and other QA-CBHE entities in other countries. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that respondents did not think that this collaboration amounted to QA collaboration as the previous question seemed to signify. Indeed, the only real QA collaboration was again reported by the UAE as a joint QA exercise whereas the rest of the respondents who indicated some sort of collaboration limited it to “*information sharing*”.

The “*Other*” area mentioned by the respondents was the “*Help in providing external reviewers*”.

Q48: If the collaboration takes significantly different forms with different countries, please specify:

None was mentioned.

49. What are some of the challenges in collaborating with QA agencies in the host country for the QA of CBHE?

Most answers emphasized the differences in the standards and regulations between the two countries and the challenge of harmonization of panels which should involve experts from both countries.

Other responses evoked the language of the report and the governance of the review. Doing joint review visits also seemed to be challenging as a lot of preparations are needed to facilitate such visits.

Another challenge mentioned by one respondent was the lack of clear regulations to monitor the relationships.

50. What are some of the challenges in dealing with QA agencies in the provider country for the QA of CBHE? Are there differences between provider countries/regions in this respect?

Those who addressed this question agreed that there are usually differences between provider countries/regions.

One respondent evoked the challenge of site visits and the difficulty of organizing them although they are very much needed.

51. Could you enumerate some examples of good practice in QA for CBHE in your relationship with QA agencies in provider countries, in particular (where relevant) with European provider countries?

Some quite interesting examples of good practice in QA for CBHE were laid out in the answers of the respondents such as the developing of MoUs with some International Accreditation Agencies in USA and Australia. Another example was the organization of a joint review visit (UAE).

Another respondent mentioned the development of a "Charter of collective requirements" for some qualifications to ensure alignment with QA requirements in both countries.

52. Have you benefited from any sharing of experiences and good practices on QA-CBHE through regional or international networks like APQN, ANQAHE, INQAAHE, etc.? How?

The respondents from Egypt, Tunisia and UAE indicated the most benefit from good practices in QA-CBHE through participating in international networks.

The respondent from Egypt mentioned in particular the benefit of participating in networks like ANQAHE and INQAAHE and attending their conferences and seminars on this subject.

The respondent from Tunisia who had collaborated with ANQAHE, UNESCO, and DAAD among others had already attended events in the topic of CBHE but was skeptical on how well these experiences were reflected back into the QA for CBHE of his country.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

This survey investigated many aspects of the CBHE provision in the surveyed countries, and mainly the following ones:

- the state of affairs of Cross-Border Higher Education across the Arab region, though the survey was restricted to 10 countries who were still representative of the different sub-regions of the Arab world.

- the state of affairs of Quality Assurance (QA) in CBHE (legal framework, criteria and procedures used, how they differ from those used for traditional HE delivery forms)
- the role of the national QA agencies in the QA of CBHE
- good practice in existing collaborations between agencies in the provider and host countries and/or with the provider institutions
- the main obstacles and challenges in QA of imported CBHE

Based on the answers of the participants and the analysis above, we can draw the following conclusions:

- CBHE programs are steadily gaining popularity in the region (60% indicated significant presence in terms of students and 100% believed it was growing).
- The main reason for this development is to increase access to higher education and to work around the insufficiency of local HE provision.
- While the growing presence of CBHE in the region is undeniable, the perception of its quality and added value –surprisingly- remains mixed.
- Private for-profit universities are by far more involved in CBHE than any other type of HEIs.
- The USA is the leading provider of CBHE in the region;
- A lot of uncertainty is displayed whenever the questions are about distant learning (online, virtual).
- The major concern for QA of CBHE is the comparability of qualifications.
- There is an obvious need for a public source of information about CBHE programs and institutions in many of the region's countries.
- There is very little awareness and involvement with the UNESCO-OECD guidelines on CBHE.
- One of the critical shortcomings identified is the lack of a legal framework for CBHE in many of the surveyed countries;
- CBHE is heavily under-regulated in the countries surveyed;
- The main concerns for CBHE in the region are the difficult recognition of qualifications, establishing a balance of responsibility between provider and receiver countries and/or between the different actors within the same country (institution, government, QA agency, etc.) and the QA processes in place (conflict of standards between local/provider QA systems, absence/lack of coordination between the 2 systems, etc.).

- There is an obvious need for QA-CBHE expertise and capacity building. The open question at the very end of section III enabled a better understanding of the exact needs of QA agencies in the region to develop QA-CBHE processes and improve the quality of CBHE: the need for training seminars and workshops, networking and collaborating with other countries with successful experiences in CBHE, plus the need for (on-demand) technical assistance.
- Unfortunately, the degree of collaboration between QA entities in matters related to CBHE in the region is still very weak.
- The main challenges in collaborating with QA agencies in the host country for the QA of CBHE are the differences in the standards and regulations between the two countries and the challenge of harmonization of panels which should involve experts from both countries. Moreover there is the challenge of the reporting language and the governance of the reviews and doing joint review visits also seems to be challenging as a lot of preparations have to be made to facilitate such visits. Finally, the lack of clear regulations to monitor the relationships hinders in many cases a proper collaboration between the different parties.
- Although there are many good practices in QA for CBHE to be developed and adopted in the region, some quite interesting examples already exist such as the developing of MoUs with some international accreditation agencies, the organization of joint review visits, and the development of a "Charter of collective requirements" for some qualifications to ensure alignment with QA requirements in both countries.
- Finally, the above could be complemented with live recorded interviews, which would shed more light on the issues raised.