Cooperation in Cross-Border Higher Education: *A Toolkit for Quality Assurance Agencies*

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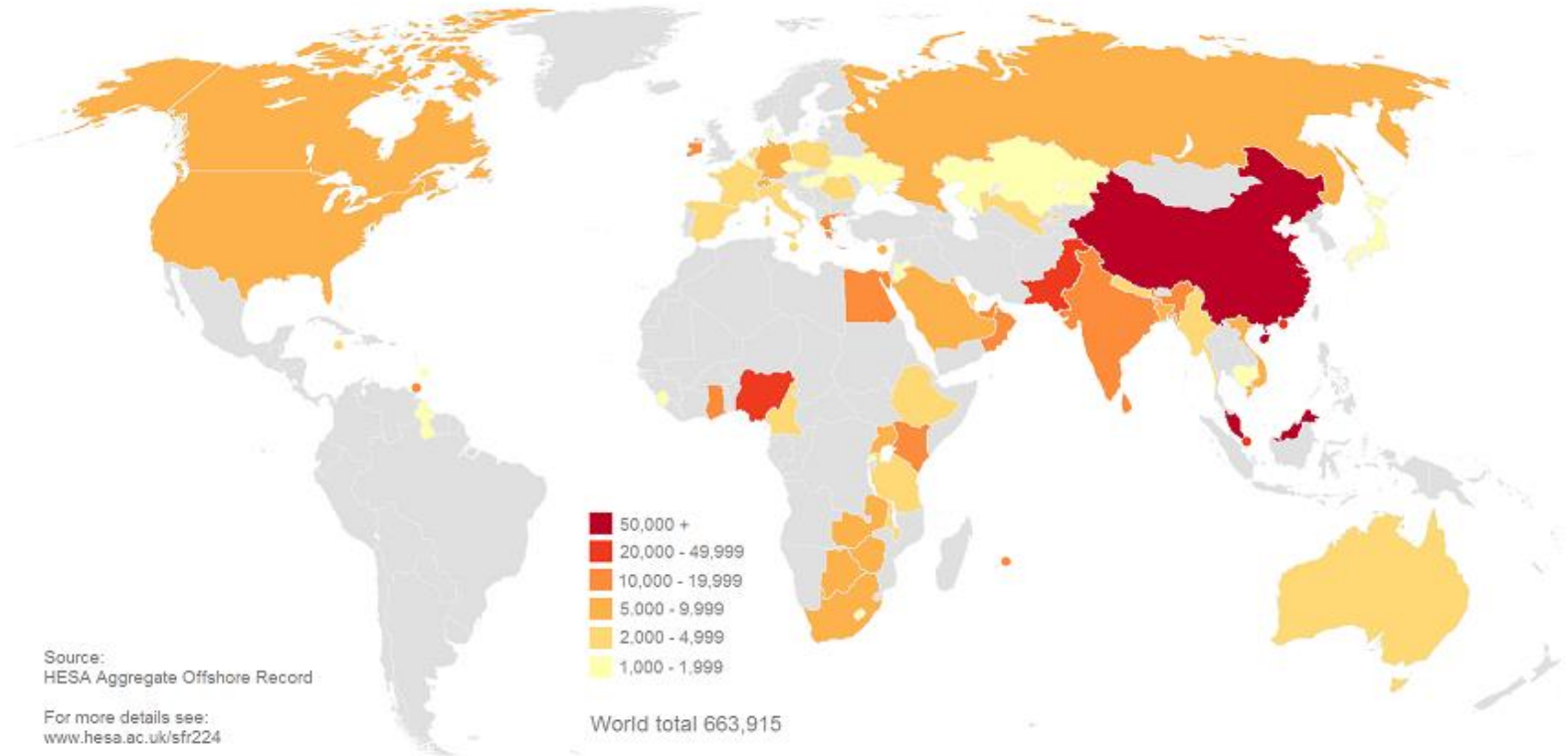ENQA Networking Event

Brussels, 14 June 2016

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Structure of the presentation

- The QACHE Project

- The QACHE Toolkit

- Follow-up activity

- Policy recommendations

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Over 80% of UK universities are involved in some form of CBHE, delivered all over the world

Transnational students studying wholly overseas for a UK HE qualification in 2014/15

50,000 +
20,000 - 49,999
10,000 - 19,999
5,000 - 9,999
2,000 - 4,999
1,000 - 1,999

Source:
HESA Aggregate Offshore Record

For more details see:
www.hesa.ac.uk/sfr224

World total 663,915

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Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE):

'education in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based'

(UNESCO/Council of Europe 2001 *Code of Good Practice in the provision of transnational education*)

The QACHE project (2013-15)

- Funded by the European Commission
- Undertaken by a project consortium led by ENQA:
  - ❑ ANECA (Spain), GAC (Germany), HCERES (France), QAA (UK), TEQSA (Australia)
  - ❑ APQN and ANQAHE
- <u>Main aim</u>: Enhance international practice in the QA of TNE / CBHE
- <u>Main output</u>: A Toolkit for QAAs to enhance inter-agency cooperation in the QA of TNE / CBHE

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QACHE's three phases

Phase 1 – Information gathering

Regional networks surveys (ENQA, APQN, ANQAHE)

European providers survey (SP, DE, FR, UK)

Country reports (ANECA, GAC, HCERES, QAA, TEQSA)

Phase 2 – Regional expert forums
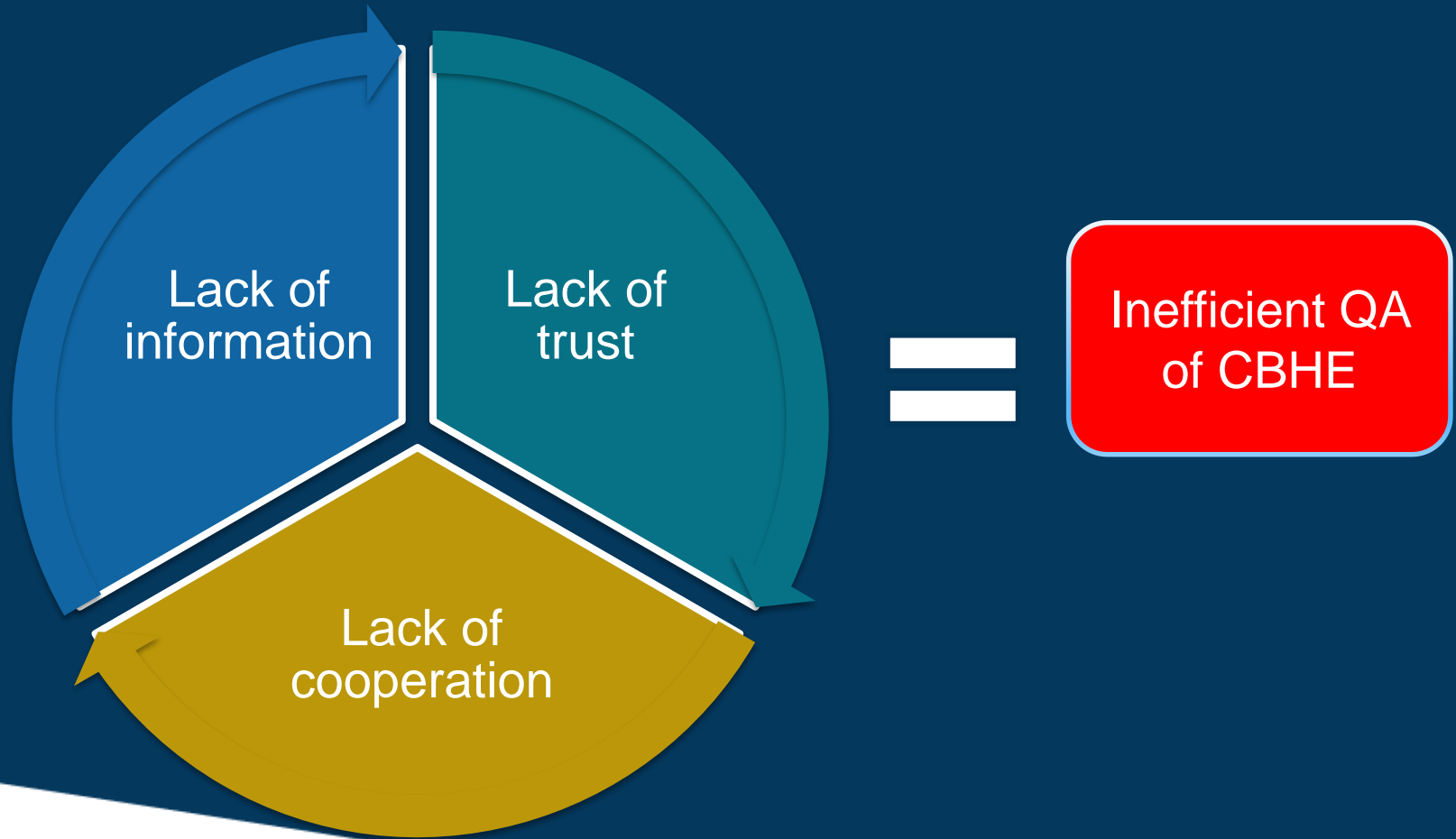
Europe (UK), Gulf (Bahrain), Asia (Macao)

Phase 3 – Deliverable

Toolkit

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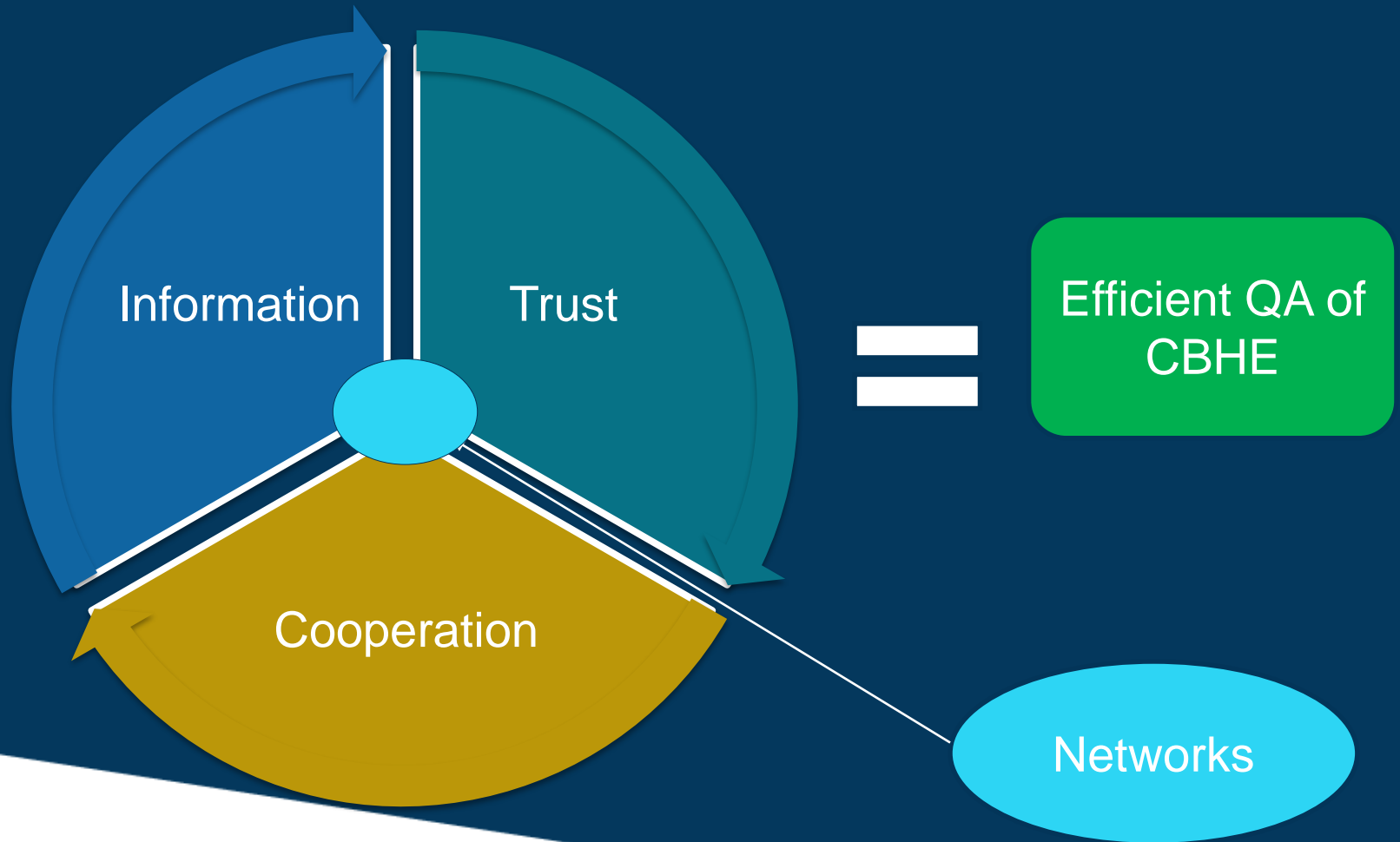
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Key findings

- Diversity of approaches and regulatory frameworks for CBHE (in/out-bound)

- Lack of information and knowledge of other agencies' frameworks/approaches

- A 'trust gap' between home and host countries about the quality of CBHE

- Lack of cooperation in the QA of CBHE

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The QACHE vicious circle

Lack of information

Lack of trust

Lack of cooperation

= Inefficient QA of CBHE

The QACHE virtuous circle

Information

Trust

Cooperation

= Efficient QA of CBHE

Networks

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The Toolkit

Offers practical guidance on:

(1) *Information sharing*: how QAAs can improve the sharing of information on CBHE

(2) *Cooperation in quality assurance*: how QAAs can enhance cooperation in its quality assurance

(3) *Networks of agencies*: how networks of QAAs can facilitate information sharing and cooperation

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Information sharing

QAAs should share information about their respective QA systems and about cross-border providers, *with a view to facilitating mutual understanding and building mutual trust*

1.1. have clear and accessible policies for the QA of CBHE

1.2. make easily accessible a list of those institutions they have quality assured, including any eventual list of quality assured CBHE provision, and associated reports

1.3. seek to establish regular channels of communication to facilitate information sharing, strengthen mutual understanding, and explore ways in which to cooperate in the QA of CBHE

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Cooperation in quality assurance

QAAs should seek to coordinate and cooperate in their review activity of cross-border higher education, *with a view to avoiding regulatory gaps and duplication of efforts, and to lessening the regulatory burdens on providers*.

2.1. contact the counterpart agency whenever undertaking review of inbound or outbound CBHE

2.2. seek ways to make use of or rely on each other's collected information or quality assurance decisions

2.3. seek ways in which review activity of CBHE could be undertaken jointly

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Networks of agencies

Networks of quality assurance agencies should facilitate inter-agency cooperation and the implementation of the QACHE Toolkit

3.1. facilitate information sharing about quality assurance and higher education systems in their member agencies' countries.

3.2. strengthen cooperation with other networks to promote policy dialogue, information sharing, and dissemination of good practice on the quality assurance of CBHE.

3.3. undertake projects and initiatives aimed at supporting agencies in implementing the recommendations included in this Toolkit.

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The scope of the Toolkit

- ✓ It is directed exclusively at QAAs (and networks)
- ✓ It does not issue guidelines for the QA of CBHE
- ✓ It is not prescriptive

- • It acknowledges that QAAs don't operate in isolation
- • It recognise and respects the diversity of QAAs

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INQAAHE / QAA project on the challenges to inter-agency cooperation

Trust building is critical, but takes times & resources

- Adopt a strategic approach and long term commitment to partnership building

Engage with all key stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the QACHE Toolkit

- with governments to enable policy/legislative change
- with institutions to identify areas of synergy and cooperation
- with students to understand their expectations for TNE

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Policy Recommendations

To national policymakers

- ✓ Support HEIs in developing the capacity to harness the benefits of CBHE, while safeguarding its quality
- ✓ Support QA agencies in developing the capacities for quality assuring of CBHE and engaging in inter-agency cooperation
- ✓ Facilitate the development of reliable data collection for inbound and outbound CBHE at the national level
- ✓ Develop, together with all relevant stakeholders, clear policy frameworks for the QA of CBHE.
- ✓ Engage with QA agencies to identify any needed reforms to facilitate the QA of CBHE / cross-border cooperation in QA

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Policy Recommendations

To European level policymakers

- Support national efforts to develop adequate data collection and QA frameworks for CBHE
- Facilitate the development of favourable policies for cross-border cooperation in the QA of CBHE
- Support regional policy dialogue initiatives to increase reciprocal understanding and build mutual trust, including the activities of QA networks

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QACHE - a catalyst for trust building

The Toolkit's main aim:
- ✓ to help QAAs, through practical advice, activate the virtuous circle of information sharing / trust building / and cooperation in the QA of CBHE

The project brought to the fore a common ground:
- ✓ CBHE creates great opportunities for societies – agencies should work together to facilitate quality and relevant CBHE

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Thank you

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