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Introduction

As part of Egypt's National reform strategy of higher education which was translated into ٢٥ projects to be executed on three stages between ٢٠٠٢ and ٢٠١٧, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP) constitutes one of the main cornerstones of this strategy. Such strategy is aiming at enhancing the quality of higher education in response to the challenges of globalization, and the demands of the new millennium, for a mark of excellence education that can cope with these challenges and demands. A Ministerial Decree (Decree # ٢١٦٩ dated ٢٣ October, ٢٠٠٤) was hencefore issued forming The National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (NQAAC) with the mission of:

“Ensuring the quality, continuous improvement, and efficient performance of Egyptian Higher Education institutions, and soliciting community confidence in their graduates caliber that fulfills international recognized standards.”

NQAAC philosophy depends on participation and involvement of all the stakeholders such as Higher Education Institutions, the professional syndicates and unions, the civil society, People's Assembly, and Shura (Senate) Council in the process of developing and achieving its chartered objectives. Therefore, its work plan includes discussion sessions among those stakeholders in order to identify their expectations and integrate them in the national quality plan that NQAAC is preparing.

NQAAC adopts a work approach that emphasizes partnership, full engagement and involvement of all stakeholders while focusing on the capacity building of the participating universities in maintaining sustainability of the completed projects

NQAAC Mandate

NQAAC mission is consequently translated into the following strategic objectives:

١. Developing a national quality assurance and accreditation system and standards in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
٢. Raising both HEIs and community awareness on the culture of quality in education.
٣. Ensuring a quality standard of the Egyptian universities graduates in order for them to be able to compete at the national, regional, and international levels.

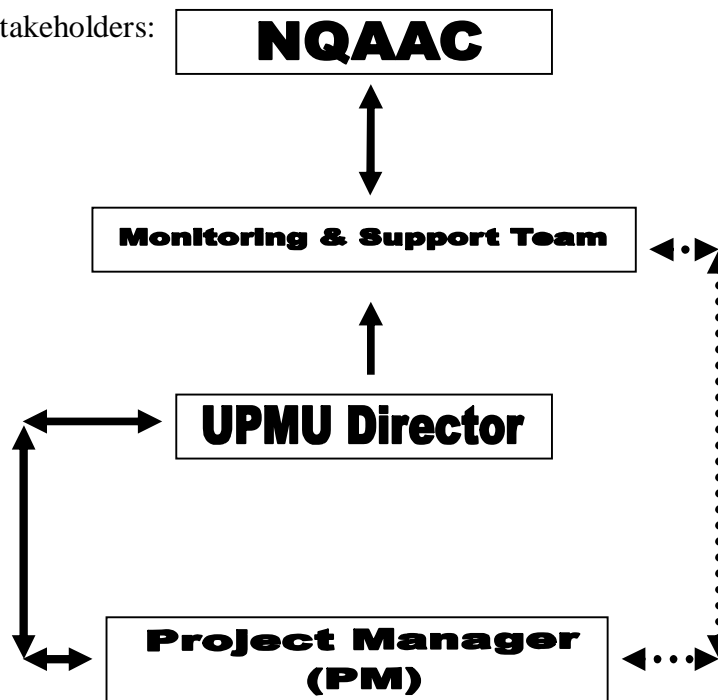
- ξ. Establishing national academic reference standard and benchmarks.
- ο. Building the self capacity of the Egyptian universities toward continuous improvement of education.
- ϛ. Establishing the National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (NQAAA).

NQAAC is supporting universities projects that focus on the following disciplines:

- Development of Strategic Plans for Quality Assurance.
- Establishment of Sustainable Quality Assurance Centers.
- Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance System.
- Development of Academic Reference Standards.
- Developmental Engagement Projects.

Teams: Structure and Relations

NQAAC, in the course of dispensing its national responsibility, works through an institutional structure that ensures efficiency and effectiveness. NQAAC adopts the view that success can only be accomplished through all the parties working together in harmony in their different capacities. The following chart briefly illustrates the relations among the team members at the different levels of the process to reflect the multi-layer *customer/supplier relationship* representing the core stakeholders:



- The aforementioned structure emphasizes the very close *partnership* relation between PMs and UPMU directors who will always be considered *customers*.
- It also focuses on the liaising role of the UPMU directors, representing the *first monitoring link* with the *monitoring and support team (MST)* to monitoring, facilitating and supporting on-going projects.
- *NQAAC* will always be available in providing guidance, support, and advise while *playing a mentoring role* to enhance performance at all levels.

Monitoring and Support Team

MST Mission and Objectives

Complying with the philosophy of acting as a support board to help projects succeed, the following mission constitutes the core value of the MST philosophy:

“ Monitoring is not purely a control function that focuses on the projects commitment to abide by the terms and conditions of the grants awarded to them, as much as providing both support and help to these projects to overcome any problems which hinder their progress and the successful accomplishment of their projects.”

Consequently, the following states the main MST objectives and accountabilities:

١. Facilitating the work of the different projects teams.
٢. Tracking projects progress and goals achievement.
٣. Following up on the timely submittal of the projects deliverables, as well as the required periodical progress reports*.
٤. Maintaining open communication with both UPMUs and PMs, providing clarifications of the projects issues, and helping them take corrective actions to keep their projects on track.

* Every ٢ months for the six months projects.

* Every ٣ months for the one year projects (quarter progress report).

* Every ٦ months for the ١٢ months projects (biannual progress report).

- o. Paying occasional field visits, holding meetings with the projects' teams to discuss common interests and/or problems.
- u. Submitting a quarterly report about the progress of the projects they are monitoring to the NQAAC including their recommendations.
- v. Promptly alerting NQAAC on any unforeseeable problems that they could not solve in order to take the right decision.

MST Selection Criteria

The main philosophy that governs the process of monitoring the on-going projects is to provide maximum support to both the PMs and UPMUs to accomplish the objectives of their projects while performing the essential job of ensuring the progress of these projects and their compliance to QAAP procedural guidelines.

Monitoring will be performed through a number of MSTs, who will monitor projects other than those of the universities they belong to, depending on both the geographical distribution and the required work-load.

In order to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring process as well full objectivity, the selection of the monitoring team members focused on the following criteria:

- Appropriate experience in project management and monitoring.
- Peers, within the context of belonging to the academic field.
- Capability of dedicating a minimum of two full-time days per week to perform their monitoring tasks.
- Preference will be given to those who had attended QAAP workshops *viz.*, 'Peer Review' and 'Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance System'.
- Preference will be given to candidates who had carried over "Institutional Self Assessment".

UPMUs and PMs

The field teams represented by the PMs and the UPMUs would, within their own constituencies, perform the following tasks:

1. UPMUs Accountabilities

- a.** Opening and managing the different bank accounts for the projects of his/her university.
- b.** Representing the university in monitoring the progress of its projects as per the standards set in the loan contracts.
- c.** Balancing the projects accounts check-books, and affect the required expenditures.
- d.** Providing site support for the PMs of his/her university to help them overcome any unforeseeable problems.
- e.** Liaising with the concerned MST on all issues related to his/her university projects.
- f.** Approving procurement requests (equipment and sub-contracting) of his/her universities projects as per the World Bank regulations and guidelines.
- g.** Reviewing and approving the projects periodical reports on a timely manner, before sending them to the concerned MST.

2. PMs Accountabilities

- a.** Coordinate their teams work in order to achieve their projects objectives.
- b.** Ensure a smooth progress of the projects and help the management team solve any related problems.
- c.** Liaise with the UPMUs on any matters that require his/her approval.
- d.** Submit periodical progress reports (*vide supra, page*) to the UPMUs on the status of their projects.

- e. Submit expenditure requests to the UPMUs for prior approval and execution as per the stipulations of the loan contract.
- f. Maintain direct contact with the concerned MST to consult on matters related to the implementation of the project activities.

Projects Progress Report Forms

For convenience and to ensure consistency of periodical progress reports (*vide supra*, page ~) among all QAAP projects, a set of forms are adopted that will facilitate and expedite work-flow. The annexed forms, available as hard and soft copies, are as follows:

- **Annex 1:** **Progress Report Forms for Project # 1:**
Development of Strategic Plans for Quality Assurance
- **Annex 2:** **Progress Report Forms for Project # 2:**
Establishment of Sustainable Quality Assurance Centers
- **Annex 3:** **Progress Report Forms for Project # 3:**
Establishment of Internal Quality Assurance System
- **Annex 4:** **Progress Report Forms for Project # 4:**
Development of Academic Reference Standards