Report on Scoping study of Quality Assurance Mechanisms in selected NATURA Universities:

- **BOKU University, Vienna, Austria**
- **The Center for Development Research, BOKU University**
- **University of Godollo, Godollo, Hungary**
- **SupAgro, Montpellier, France**

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2009

Summary of the main quality assurance aspects recommended for RUFORUM's Regional Programmes based on the scoping tour of selected NATURA member universities:

The summary below gives some of the key features that would define quality assurance mechanisms for regional graduate programmes being implemented by RUFORUM universities. It is appreciated that individual universities will have internal quality assurance mechanisms. However, regional programmes demand that quality assurance goes beyond the individual institution. The summary below highlights the key learning points from the tour of selected NATURA universities, with a strong focus on the regional aspect of RUFORUM's regional programmes.

i. A management system that integrates student learning, teaching and business in agricultural sector. The system has to cater for lecturers and people in the industry who want to offer their services to universities through teaching, attachments, supervision etc. The objectives of the integration must be clear from the start.
ii. Inter- institution and inter- country exchange of students and lectures to strengthen inter- cultural skills, self-reliance, and the culture of networking, open mindedness and collaboration both for the individual students and the cooperating institutions. All these mechanisms must clearly supported by regional, national and institutional agreements and policies
iii. A credit transfer system that facilitates the transfer of student credits across institutions
iv. A policy instrument that guides student and staff mobility among the participating institutions. The institutions must subscribe to, support, and recognize the policy. The policy must then be implemented through documented inter - institutional agreements.
v. **Access to information:** all information on opportunities, modalities, grants etc must be easily and freely accessible to all that such information is intended for Institutions must have an *international* office to coordinate information flow.
vi. A graduate admission office/committee with clear criteria for student admission and sponsorship into specific programmes.
vii. Supervision of student research: quality of supervision enhanced through supervision committees constituted based on the student topics subject area, specific research interest, any identified weaknesses the student may have. This gives the supervision a holistic approach.
viii. An institutionalized, multidimensional, comprehensive mechanism of periodic lecturer evaluation within inbuilt mechanisms to enhance quality. A participatory evaluation system promotes ownership of the results, and remedy plan.
ix. Clearly defined programme objectives, and how these contribute to national and regional strategies.

x. Clearly defined standards to be met at programme level, including transparent admission criteria.
xi. Clear definition of the expected job description for the graduates.
xii. Clear articulation of graduate profile – what kind of graduate is the programme expected to produce?
xiii. Periodic review of curricula to assess appropriateness of content, assessment and learning methods.
xiv. Participation of students and staff in quality assurance procedures.
xv. **Management and resources:**
a. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all parties involved
b. Ensuring adequate resources for the programme (financial, human, physical)
c. An efficient communication system
xvi. Flexible mechanism for addressing skill gap areas and emerging issues through short courses for students and staff
xvii. An M&E system with a strong learning component, involving all stakeholders.

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1.0 Introduction

The scoping study on quality assurance mechanisms in selected European universities of the NATURA network was conducted as one of the activities under RUFORUM's EDULINK project titled "*Strengthening the capacity of universities in eastern, central and southern Africa to offer quality graduate programmes*". The overall objective of the project is to enhance capacities of universities in eastern, central and southern Africa to offer quality graduate training, especially PhD level. The expected results are:

- Strengthened quality assurance mechanisms in the Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) universities

- Strengthened capacities and competencies of ECSA universities to implement graduate training programmes

- Enhanced regional and international partnerships for effective and efficient graduate training

RUFORUM secretariat is responsible for implementing the action. The partners in the project are:

i. Makerere University, Uganda
ii. Egerton University, Kenya
iii. 4.Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya
iv. University of Malawi, Malawi
v. University of Zambia, Zambia
vi. Sup Agro, Montpellier, France

The objectives of the scoping study were:

i. To meet and inform NATURA network members about RUFORUM, its mandate, and recent developments especially regarding the regional graduate programmes,
ii. To get informed from NATURA network members how they assure quality of graduates, research and staff
iii. To learn from NATURA network how their credit transfer system works, and draw some lessons to inform the development of a harmonized credit transfer system for RUFORUM's regional graduate programmes.

The scoping study took place in April 2009. The RUFORUM team consisting of Dr. Wellington Ekaya, Program Manager (Training and Quality Assurance) and Ms. Agnes Akwang Obua-Ogual (Program Officer (Monitoring and Evaluation) met quality assurance managers and other officers form the following institutions;

i. BOKU University, Vienna, Austria
ii. The Center for Development Research, BOKU University
iii. University of Godollo, Godollo, Hungary
iv. SupAgro, Montpellier, France.

The team from RUFORUM would like to thank all the colleagues in the European universities visited for the elaborate discussions, perfect meeting arrangements, and the very warm hospitality.

2.0 Boku University, Vienna Austria

2.1 Background

Boku was founded in 1872 as an Agricultural Institute. The University is an education and research center for natural resources and applied life sciences, with a student population of 6,300 and 700 scientific staff. Teaching, research and administration facilities are throughout Vienna at 20 different sites. Boku has functional international partnerships with Universities in Africa, Asia, North America, Eastern Europe, Oceania, South America and Western Europe.

Boku has three categories of study programmes:

i. Bachelor studies: This programme takes six semesters. The Degree awarded is Bachelor of Technical Sciences.
ii. Master Studies: This is a continuing programme after the Bachelor study programme. The time line is 4 semesters, ending with the award of Master of Engineering Degree.
iii. PhD Studies: The programme is offered for Masters Programme graduates

Further information on Boku study programmes is available at www.boku4you.at

2.2 Student Mobility, Quality Assurance and Credit Transfer

2.2.1 The Erasmus Programme

Erasmus is the European Union's flagship education and training programme, enabling students to study and work abroad each year, as well as supporting co-operation actions between higher education institutions across Europe. It caters not only for students, but also for professors and business staff who want to teach abroad and for university staff who want to be trained abroad.

The Programme is named after the humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1465-1536). The Erasmus programme places great importance on mobility and furthering career prospects through learning. The programme is a pioneer of staff and student mobility grants in Europe.

Studies show that a period spent abroad not only enriches students' lives in the academic field but also in the acquisition of intercultural skills and self-reliance. Staff exchanges have similar beneficial effects, both for the people participating and for the home and host institutions.

Apart from mobility actions, the programme supports higher education institutions to work together through intensive programmes, networks and multilateral projects.

Almost all European universities take part in Erasmus and 2 million students have participated since it started in 1987.

2.2.2 Objectives and actions

Erasmus has become instrumental in the transformation of higher education in Europe and inspired the establishment of the Bologna Process. The general aim of the Programme is to create a European Higher Education area and foster innovation throughout Europe.

The Programme has plans to expand its mobility actions with the target of 3 million Erasmus students by 2012.

The Erasmus Programme currently has the following opportunities for staff and students:

i. **For students:**
- studying abroad
- doing a traineeship abroad
- Language study/support

ii. **For universities/higher education institution staff:**
- teaching abroad
- receiving training abroad

At Institution level, Erasmus Programme supports the following:
- intensive programmes
- academic and structural networks
- multilateral projects

Erasmus Programme supports enterprises in terms of:

- hosting students placements
- teaching abroad
- participating in university cooperation projects

For higher education institutions to participate in Erasmus actions, they must have an Erasmus University Charter. The Charter aims to guarantee a high level of quality in mobility and cooperation by setting out fundamental principles for all Erasmus actions that participating institutions must follow.

The European Commission is responsible for the Erasmus programme's overall implementation and its Directorate-General for Education and Culture coordinates its different actions. The "decentralised actions" regarding individual mobility are run by national agencies in the 31 participating countries. Centralised actions such as networks, multilateral projects and the award of the Erasmus University Charter are managed by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture based in Brussels.

3.0 ERASMUS Student Mobility for Studies

The student mobility for studies action enables students at higher education institutions to spend an integrated period of study of between 3 months and 12 months in another participating European country. The objectives of this action are:

- To enable students to benefit educationally, linguistically and culturally from the experience of learning in other European countries;
- To promote co-operation between institutions and to enrich the educational environment of host institutions;
- To contribute to the development of a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals.

Under this scheme students can study 3 to 12 months abroad or at least a full academic semester.

Prior to departure, students are provided with:

1. A "Learning Agreement" setting out the programme of studies to be followed, as approved by the student, the home and the host institution;

   Example of a Learning Agreement from the University of Valladolid
2. An "ERASMUS Student Charter" setting out their rights and obligations with respect to their period of study abroad.

At the end of the period abroad

i) The host institution must provide the ERASMUS student and his/her home institution with a transcript of records confirming that the agreed programme has been completed and confirming the results.

ii) The home institution must give full academic recognition for satisfactorily completed activities during the ERASMUS mobility period as agreed in the Learning Agreement, preferably by using European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

3.1 Erasmus Eligibility Criteria

ERASMUS student mobility for studies takes place between the home and host institution, which are linked through "inter-institutional agreements".

- Both institutions must be holders of an ERASMUS University Charter.
- The student must be a citizen of one the participating countries or be recognised as having an official status of refugee or stateless person or permanent resident according to national legislation.
- The student must be registered at a higher education institution which holds an ERASMUS University Charter and be enrolled in higher education studies leading to a recognised degree or other recognised tertiary level qualification up to and including the level of doctorate.
- The student must be enrolled at least in the second year of higher education studies.
- At least the sending or the receiving country must be an EU Member State.

3.2 Application process

The participating Institutions have an International office and /or an Erasmus office which provide information on opportunities for studying abroad, modalities for application and grants availability.

In Boxes 1-8 below, the different Erasmus actions are described in detail. In order to avoid misrepresentation, the information is reported "as is" in official documents. (http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/action_en.html)

Box 1: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals - Erasmus University Charter

Objectives and description of the action
The **Erasmus University Charter (EUC)** provides the general framework for the European co-operation activities a higher education institution may carry out within the Erasmus programme. It is a prerequisite for sending and receiving students and teaching staff on mobility assignments, as well as for carrying out intensive programmes and

coordinating multilateral projects and networks. Awarded by the European Commission following a call for proposals, the Charter sets out the fundamental principles and the minimum requirements with which the higher education institution must comply when implementing its Erasmus activities. The institution's application for an EUC includes an Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) which will be published and given wide visibility setting out the institution's overall Erasmus co-operation plan in coherence with the strategy defined in the mission statement of the institution and specifying the measures and actions the institution intends to introduce in order to fulfill the requirements of the Charter. "Standard" Charter obligations apply to institutions wishing to participate in transnational mobility activities for students and for staff. Placement-related Charter obligations apply to institutions wishing to enabling their students to carry out placements in an enterprise during their studies. When awarding the EUC, the Commission informs the recipient institution as to whether its Charter refers to "standard" activities or placements or both. Institutions awarded a Charter covering both "standard" cooperation activities and "placements" are deemed to be holders of an "Extended Charter". The EUC is generally awarded for the entire duration of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). However, it may be awarded for a shorter period if this is warranted. EUC compliance is monitored on an ongoing basis, and the Charter may in the last resort be withdrawn by the Commission if an institution fails to meet its EUC commitments.

Box 2: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individual: Mobility of Students for the Purposes of Studying

Objectives and description of the action
This action enables students at higher education institutions to spend an integrated period of study of between 3 months and 12 months in another country participating in the programme. The objectives of such mobility are: ▪ To enable students to benefit educationally, linguistically and culturally from the experience of learning in other European countries; ▪ To promote co-operation between institutions and to enrich the educational environment of host institutions; ▪ To contribute to the development of a pool of well-qualified, open-minded and internationally experienced young people as future professionals; ▪ To facilitate credit transfer and recognition of periods abroad, utilising ECTS or a compatible credit system. Erasmus student mobility is carried out in the framework of prior "inter-institutional

agreements" between home and host universities, both of which must be holders of a valid Erasmus University Charter.
Prior to their departure, Erasmus students are provided with:

- An "Erasmus Student Charter" setting out their rights and obligations with respect to their period of study abroad;
- A "Learning Agreement" setting out the programme of studies to be followed, as approved by the student, the home and the host institution.

At the end of the period abroad, the host university must provide the Erasmus student and his/her home university with a transcript confirming that the agreed programme has been completed and confirming the results. The home institution must give full academic recognition for satisfactorily completed activities during the Erasmus mobility period, specified in the Learning Agreement.
Students may be awarded an Erasmus grant to help cover the travel and subsistence costs in incurred in connection with their study period abroad and for prior language training if necessary.
Erasmus students - whether or not they receive an Erasmus grant - are exempt from paying tuition fees at the host institution. The payment of any national grants or loan to outgoing students should be maintained during the Erasmus study period abroad.
Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned.

Box 3: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals: Student Placements in Enterprises, Training Centres, Research Centres and Other Organisations

Objectives and description of the action
A <u>placement</u> is a period of time in an enterprise or organisation in another participating country, with a view to helping individuals to adapt to the requirements of the Community-wide labour market, to acquiring a specific skill and to improving understanding of the economic and social culture of the country concerned in the context of acquiring work experience. The period may be supported as appropriate by preparatory or refresher courses in the host language or working language. Host organisations for student placements may be enterprises, training centres, research centres and other organisations. The characteristics of the individual placements are: ▪ The student must be provided with a Training Agreement regarding the programme of the placement period; this agreement must be endorsed by the home higher education institution and the host organisation ▪ At the end of the period abroad, full recognition must be given by the home higher education institution for the period spent abroad as agreed in the Training Agreement.

The period of placement must be covered by a placement agreement between the student beneficiary and his/her home higher education institution. The Placement Agreement is based on the Training Agreement, a key part of which is the Quality Commitment of all parties relating to the placement. Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned.

Box 4 What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals: Teaching Assignments for Teaching Staff from Higher Education Institutions and invited Staff from Enterprises

Objectives and description of the action
The objectives of the Erasmus Teaching Assignments are: ▪ To allow students who are not able to participate in a mobility scheme, to benefit from the knowledge and expertise of academic staff from higher education institutions in other European countries ▪ To promote exchange of expertise and experience on pedagogical methods ▪ To encourage higher education institutions to broaden and enrich the range and content of courses they offer. The teaching assignments may be carried out by teaching staff from higher education institutions or by invited staff from enterprises. In all cases, teachers undertaking a teaching assignment must be integrated into the department or faculty of the host institution. The partner higher education institutions must have agreed in advance on the programme of lectures to be delivered by the visiting teachers. Where the person carrying out the assignment is from a higher education institution, the assignment must be based on an inter-institutional agreement between the home and host institution. Beneficiaries from higher education institutions are selected by the sending institution, beneficiaries from enterprises by the host institution. In the case of staff from an enterprise to a university, the mobility assignment is arranged by an invitation of the higher education institution to the staff member of the enterprise. The grant is always managed by the higher education institution. Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned.

Box 5: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals: Mobility of Individuals - Staff Training for Teaching and Other Staff in Higher Education Institution

Objectives and description of the action

Within the broad objective of training of staff this action encompasses the following types of mobility : ▪ Mobility of **teaching staff** from a higher education institution to another higher education institution or to an enterprise, for the purpose of receiving training. ▪ Mobility of **administrative and other non-teaching staff** from higher education institution going to a partner higher education institution or to an enterprise, for the purpose of receiving training. The purpose is to allow the beneficiaries to learn by transfer of knowledge or know-how from the experiences and good practices of a partner institution or host enterprise, and thereby to acquire practical skills relevant for their current job and their professional development. The activities can be very varied: seminars, workshops, courses and conferences, periods of practical training, short secondments, etc. The stay in the partner institution can be called a variety of names: short secondment period, job-shadowing scheme, study visit, etc. Beneficiaries are selected by the sending higher education institution. A prerequisite for the awarding of any grant is the submission of a work plan agreed by both the sending and the receiving institution or enterprise. The plan must consist of at least: overall aim and objectives, expected results in terms of training or learning activities to be carried out and a programme for the training period. Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned

Box 6: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals: Erasmus Intensive Language Courses

Objectives and description of the action
The Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) are specialised courses in the less widely used and less taught languages organised in the countries where these languages are spoken. The EILC give Erasmus students visiting these countries for studies and placements the opportunity to study the language concerned for up to six weeks (with a minimum of 60 teaching hours) with the aim of being prepared for the Erasmus mobility period. Supplementary mobility grants for Erasmus students participating in EILC are awarded and paid by the respective sending higher education institutions. Erasmus students may not be charged a study fee for participation in an EILC course. The selection of the EILC organising institution is carried out by the National Agency

(NA) in the country where the course is to be organised, on the basis of a call for proposals published by the NA in complement of the general LLP Call for proposals. Students apply for an EILC through their home institution. The selection of EILC students is joint responsibility of the EILC organising institutions and the NA in the host country. Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned, and the relevant complementary.

Box 7: What are Erasmus actions? - Mobility of Individuals: Organisation of Mobility

Objectives and description of the action
The organisation of mobility of students and university staff (OM) involves creating optimal conditions, through quality support measures, for students and university staff to undertake periods of learning or teaching at higher education institutions or, in some cases, enterprises in other participating countries. Organisation of mobility may include the following non-exhaustive list of activities: ▪ Provisions for selecting students and staff to take part in mobility activities ▪ Providing Linguistic preparation for mobile students and staff ▪ Providing information and assistance to students and staff (e.g. introduction to the host university/organisation, academic advice to students, assistance with practical matters such as accommodation, social security, residence permits, travel, provision of tutor/mentor for incoming students) ▪ Academic and organisational arrangements with partner institutions (e.g. for students, the recognition of study periods abroad; for teachers, the inclusion of courses taught in the regular programme of the host university; arrangements for student and course assessment, etc.; this may involve visits to partner universities) ▪ Development and use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS) ▪ Ensuring that students are provided with the necessary agreements on their programme of study and the related assessment arrangements (i.e. learning agreements) ▪ Arrangements for the monitoring of outgoing students, including visits to partner institutions or organisations ▪ Organisation of feedback from returning students and staff, and making feedback available to prospective outgoing students and staff (this may include helping local student organisations or selected students in various departments to provide information and counseling services to outgoing or incoming students) ▪ Specific arrangements to ensure the quality of student placements in enterprises.

- Each higher education institution sending out students and staff for Erasmus mobility periods receives funding for the organisation of mobility from the NA in its country. The level of funding is calculated mainly on the basis of the volume of outgoing mobility.

Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned.

Box 8: What are Erasmus actions? - Multilateral projects: Modernisation of Higher Education

Objectives and description of the action
European higher education needs reform in order to play its full role in the Europe of Knowledge and contribute to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. Modernisation of higher education is necessary in the areas of curricula (Bologna process), funding and governance so that higher education institutions can face the challenges posed by globalisation and contribute more effectively to the training and retraining of the European workforce. Erasmus promotes this process of reform and modernisation by providing support for two-year projects involving higher education institutions (and other types of organisation from the public or private sector, where appropriate to the topic) from at least three countries participating in the LLP. Key issues to be addressed by such projects include notably the following: ▪ Developing strategies for modernising curricula and making them more transparent (e.g. by describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes), improving governance and optimising funding, thereby making institutions more responsive to the needs of the labour market, citizens and society at large; ▪ Developing lifelong learning strategies (linking higher education with vocational education and training provision and certification) and helping higher education institutions become “continuing education centres" or "open learning centres” for their region; ▪ Devising measures to enhance the quality of higher education institutions' performance and contribute to their accountability; ▪ Improving access arrangements for people with non-formal or informal learning backgrounds or with alternative qualifications such as those derived from prior experiential learning; ▪ Developing strategies to enhance the attractiveness of higher education institutions, to reinforce the provision of guidance, and to inform the public at

large more effectively about their work.

Full details of the conditions for participation are contained in the general call for proposals relating to the academic year concerned.

4.0 Double Degree Programme at BOKU

4.1 Definition

The term "Double degree programme" designates a study programme executed on the basis of an agreement between an Austrian and a foreign university. The programme operates under observation of regulations valid for both partners as a joint programme. Parts of the programme are undertaken at the partner institutions. The programme leads to a diploma being recognized in the countries of origin of both partners. The programme does not aim at awarding two degrees but rather one degree/diploma from a joint study programme involving two institutions.

Under the mode of operation at BOKU, a joint degree can be said to have all or some of the following characteristics:

- the programmes are developed and/or approved jointly by several institutions;
- students from each participating institution physically take part in the study programme at other institutions;
- Students stay at the participating institutions should constitute a substantial part of the

programme;

- Periods of study and examinations passed at the partner institutions are recognised fully and automatically
- The partner institutions work out the curriculum jointly and cooperate on admission and examinations. In addition, staff of participating institutions should be encouraged to teach at other institutions contributing to the joint degree;
- After completion the full programme, students either obtain the national degree of each participating institution or a degree (usually an official "certificate or diploma") awarded jointly by the partner institutions.

4.2 Legal Situation in Austria

At the moment, it is only possible to issue the national degree of each participating institution (more precisely, the degrees of the partner institutions where the graduate has completed a study period or has been supervised for thesis work). In the case of BOKU, this means that Master programmes will lead to the degree of Diplomingenieur/ Diplomingenieuring (Dipl.-Ing). In addition, the Diploma Supplement describes in detail the structure of the study programme and the study abroad periods.

4.3 BOKU-Internal regulations

It is essential that the contract between the particular institutions describes the curriculum in detail; listing all study abroad periods foreseen.

In the case of double degree programmes at Master level with two partner institutions, ideally the programme should prescribe an equal length of study at both institutions (60 ECTS: 60ECTS).

In case where more institutions are involved, a minimum of 40 ECTS points must be completed at BOKU for obtaining a BOKU degree. Part of those 40 ECTS can also be achieved by joint supervision of the Master thesis (BOKU Supervisor).

According to BOKU regulations, the joint supervision of the Master thesis has to be an integral part of the joint curriculum.

Assistance in establishing those contracts is provided by the Centre for International Regulations (CIR) of BOKU. The CIR, the Center for education, the Rectorate and the Senate are all involved and consulted at early stages of planning in order to benefit from their experience with similar projects and to comply with the BOKU-internal guidelines for curriculum development of the BOKU senate.

5.0 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation

As defined

A credit system is a systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credit to its components. The definition of credits in higher education systems may be based on different parameters, such as student workload, learning outcomes and contact hours.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a student-centered system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, objectives preferably specified in terms of learning outcomes and competences to be acquired.

Origin: ECTS was introduced in 1989, within the framework of Erasmus, now part of the Socrates programme. ECTS is the only credit system which has been successfully tested and used across Europe. ECTS was set up initially for credit transfer. The system facilitated the recognition of periods of study abroad and thus enhanced the quality and volume of student mobility in Europe. Recently ECTS is developing into an accumulation system to be implemented at institutional, regional, national and European level. This is one of the key objectives of the Bologna Declaration of June 1999.

5.1 Importance of ECTS in European Higher Education

- ECTS makes study programmes easy to read and compare for all students, local and foreign.
- ECTS facilitates mobility and academic recognition.
- ECTS helps universities to organise and revise their study programmes.
- ECTS can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery.
- ECTS makes European higher education more attractive for students from other continents.

5.2 The key features of ECTS

- ECTS is based on the principles that 60 credit units measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to around 1500-1800 hours per year and in those cases one credit stands for around 25 to 30 working hours.
- Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, long or short. Credits in ECTS can only be obtained after completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved.
- Student workload in ECTS consists of the time required to complete all planned learning activities such as attending lectures, seminars, independent study, preparation of projects, examinations and so forth.
- Credits are allocated to all educational components of a study programme (such as modules, courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study in the programme considered.
- The performance of the student is documented by a local/national grade. It is good practice to add an ECTS grade, in particular case of credit transfer. The ECTS grading scale ranks the students on a statistical basis. Statistical data on student performance is therefore prerequisite for applying the ECTS grading system.

5.3 Key documents of ECTS

i) The regular Information Package/Course Catalogue of the institution on the Web and/or in hard copy in one or more booklets. The Information Package/Course Catalogue must contain the items of the checklist attached to the document, including information for host students from abroad.

ii) The learning Agreement, containing the list of courses to be taken and agreed upon by the student and the responsible academic body of the institution concerned. In case of credit transfer, the Learning Agreement has to be agreed upon by the student and the two institutions concerned before the student's departure and to be updated immediately when the changes occur.

iii) The Transcript of Records documents the performance of a student by showing the list of courses taken, the credits gained as well as the local grades and possibly

ECTS grades awarded. In case of credit transfer, the Transcript of Records has to be issued by the home institution for outgoing students before departure and by the host institution for incoming students at the end of the period of study.

5.3.1 The Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma providing a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the graduate. The Diploma Supplement provides transparency and facilitates academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). A Diploma Supplement label is awarded to institutions which deliver a Diploma Supplement, to all graduates in all first and second cycle degree programmes, in accordance with the structure and recommendations to be found on the web-site: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html

6.0 Person-based Lecturer evaluation

At Boku, employment contracts stipulate a rigorous person-based evaluation prior to the termination or extension of the employment contract. The results of these evaluations are disclosed to the employee (Lecturer) at least 12 months prior to the termination of the contract. The university has put in place procedures for evaluation with relevant indicators. Boku is an institutional member of the German Society for Evaluation. The evaluation guidelines were developed based on the evaluation guidelines issued by the Humboldt University of Berlin.

6.1 Evaluation procedure

Evaluation of Lecturers prior to renewal or termination of contract is scheduled by the rectorate and consists of the stages highlighted below:

i) The evaluation process is scheduled at a specific time of the University calendar as one continuous procedure. The University's home page has all the relevant information and therefore Lecturers are able to obtain relevant information regarding the indicators used in the evaluation criteria, the process, and the structure of the self-evaluation. The Rector is responsible for initiating the evaluation process.

ii) An evaluation panel is constituted comprising of research representative and education representatives. The panel comprised five evaluators from within the university. The ratio of professors to mid-level faculty is 50:50. A student representative pertaining to the discipline related to the one to be evaluated is nominated by the national student's body.

iii) The evaluation panel appoints two external evaluators. These are distinguished scientific staff within the discipline that the candidates represent. All the evaluators are made to the candidate immediately they are appointed.

iv) The candidate submits a self evaluation report to the evaluators. Further, the research support office and the center for education each submit a performance profile of the candidate. The evaluators assess the performance profile and the self evaluation reports and submit a written statement to the evaluation panel.

v) Based on the self assessment report and the report from external evaluators, the evaluation panel generates an assessment report which includes a description and critical evaluation of the candidate with respect to;

- Research and education /teaching activities
- Services (management responsibilities e.g. Department Head, self administration within the University and scientific community service).
- Further development of the candidate in her/his discipline

The report will contain recommendations on the candidate areas of weakness, strengths, improvement, whether the contract should be renewed or not, and options for termination where applicable. The candidate is expected to issue a response statement within 14 days.

vi) The head of the Department to which the candidate belongs receives a copy of the evaluation report. The head is expected to generate a statement based on the presented documents, particularly on the recommendations within 14 days and submit to the head of evaluation panel. If the candidate belongs to more than one department, all respective heads of departments have to write a statement to the evaluation panel.

vii) A final meeting involving research and education representatives with the Vice Rector for Research, Vice Rector for Education and International affairs and teaching staff follows to make the final evaluation decision on the applicant. The head of evaluation panel presents the evaluation reports, external evaluations and individual statements. The results are further discussed then a written recommendation for a final decision submitted to the Rector of the university.

viii) The Rector makes the final decision and communicates to the candidate in writing. The human resource department is informed at the same time. The two options at the end of the evaluation are either to extend the candidate's contract or not. When an extension of contract is recommended, the recommendations issued by evaluators are included in the new contract.

6.2 Candidate's self evaluation

All teaching staff has to carry out a self evaluation.

The self evaluation consists of two parts:

(i) A personal evaluation statement

(ii) Documentation on research and education performance

The candidate is expected to report on relevant scientific and educational activities, scientific community service and self-administration of the university, medium and long term projects. The candidate is expected to be self-critical, pointing out weakness, challenges, etc and suggesting solutions.

At the start of self-evaluation, the candidate is supplied with all the necessary questionnaires and data derived from the University data bases. In addition, the candidate is given research and teaching performance benchmarks by comparable (but anonymous) Boku researchers, and by comparable international research institutions.

6.3 Evaluation Criteria

The nationally and internationally recognized indicators for evaluating teaching and research performance and other services are derived from Boku data base systems. The aim is to enable an overview of the academic performance using data provided by the research support office and the Center for Education.

6.3.1 Indicators relating to research

The following indicators are derived from Boku research database in consultation with the research support office;

i) Quantity and quality of publications

- These include accepted and published peer reviewed publications in journals, conference publications verified as reviewed, books, editorships and patents.
- The University also recognizes efforts by the candidate to inform society (e.g. through schools, media, articles in books and journals) or contribute to the transfer of knowledge into practice or educational facilities (unpublished presentations).
- The University expects Lecturers to succeed in acquiring projects. The candidate is expected to have collaborated on projects, and held a leading position. It is also expected that Lecturers will generate working groups that support young scientists. Among the indicators for evaluation are;
  - Fund raising connected to managing projects
  - Level of research cooperation; this includes national, international or outside the University
  - Interdisciplinary within Boku
  - Transdisciplinarity
- The University expects Lecturers to make contributions that benefit the progress of the pursued discipline. Among others, those considered include:
  - Managerial responsibilities e.g. at scientific research institutions and /or academics
  - Journal editorial and reviewer responsibilities

- Evaluator responsibilities for research programs, national institutions, international institutions
- Membership to scientific advisory boards
- Membership to in-house organization panels, etc.

ii) Indicators relating to Education

The University expects and encourages the participation of scientific staff in education and promoting education. The evaluation of staff is based on the following criteria/indicators:

- Courses taught under regular curricula:
  - Scope of credit hours
  - Language of instruction
  - Course evaluation results
  - Number of Supervised Bachelor's thesis
  - Number of supervised theses
- Postgraduate education and lifelong learning
  - Participation in PhD programs
  - Participation in summer schools, presentations, workshops, seminars, etc.
  - Number of supervised dissertations

6.3.2 Indicators relating to promotion of education within the University

- Use of new teaching and learning methods
- Active participation in International study programs
- Active participation in the generation of curricula
- Active participation in consulting services
- Participation in University public relations activities

The self evaluation report format used at BOKU is given below:

6.3.3 Evaluation of Professors at BOKU

Self Evaluation Report

Personal Data of the Candidate			
Degree			
Last Name			
First name			
Email			
Phone		Fax	
Department			
Institute/Division			

I. Evaluation of own performance during the last 5 years

0. Positioning of the Candidate: Please describe

- **Your position within your department/institute/division,**
- **Your activities with regard to the department development plan,**
- **Your contributions to the development of the university,**
- **Your contributions to the internationalisation of the university**

1. Please assess your research performance on basis of the provided data and the attached benchmarks.

- **List your 5 most important publications**
- **If your publication output was decreasing, explain why.**
- **If your publication output is not above the department benchmark, explain why.**
- **If your supervision rate of dissertations is not above the department benchmark, say why.**
- **List your major activities in scientific community service.**

2. Assess your performance in education on the provided data and the attached benchmarks.

- **Give two examples of your best courses or your best educational projects and give reason why: Cover innovation, improvement of quality of education, inter-disciplinarily and research into education**
- **List your contribution to the development of degree programmes**

- **List your activities in lifelong learning**
- **If your course evaluation rate is not above average, explain why.**
- **If your supervision rate of Master thesis is not above the department benchmark, say why.**

3. Assess your performance in management and administration:

- **Your activities as a head of department/institute/division/working group covering**

  Staff management ,
  Raising external funds,
  Management of resources.

If your rate for raising external fund is not above the department benchmark, say why.

- **Your major collaboration in committees at BOKU and outside BOKU.**

II. Outlook: Mid- to long term strategies and planned activities

4. Outline your strategies and planned activities in research, covering the following aspects:

- **Planned research areas and research projects,**
- **Third party funding,**
- **Establishment of working groups and co-operation within and outside of BOKU (nationality and internationality),**
- **Promoting young scientists.**

5. Describe your strategies and planned activities in education covering the following aspects:

- **Innovation and improvement of the quality of education,**
- **The development of courses and degree programmes at BOKU,**
- **International courses and programmes,**
- **Life-long learning and knowledge transfer.**

Please outline the major strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in respect to the planned activities you have outlined above.

Additional room for further relevant comments

Addendum

Profile of the candidate	
List of publications (source: FIS)	
Review of research projects (Source: FIS)	
Review of courses (Source: BLIS	

7.0. Guidelines for evaluating organizational units

7.1 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation of organizational units pertain to competency. These kinds of evaluations are commissioned by the Rectorate. They may also be carried out on behalf of the University Council or the Ministry for Education, Science and Culture. An organizational unit can also request for an evaluation. The objectives of evaluating an organizational unit include:

i) To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the unit
ii) To advance specific profile and organization development
iii) To provide an assessment of the overall performance profile of researchers and funders
iv) To highlight developmental perspectives, problem solution, and potential of the respective unit

The evaluation standard follows those published by the German evaluation society. The standards and guidelines are as a result of the Bologna procedure.

7.1.1 Evaluation Procedure

a) Preparatory phase/initiation

The procedure for evaluation of organizational units comprises four (4) major steps;

(i) Initiation of evaluation

At the start the rectorate communicates to all concerned departments and officials in writing. The communication spells out the reasons and objectives of the evaluation, and a schedule for the exercise. The organizational unit being evaluated is expected to submit a statement on the planned evaluation within a specified time, normally two weeks.

(ii) Selection of peers

Once the rectorate receives the statement from the organizational unit, he/she appoints the Head of Peers. The appointment has to be approved by both the rectorate and the organizational unit. Once approved the head of peers selects the remaining peers/reviewers. Depending on the size of the organizational unit, the group of peers could consist of 3-5 peers. The peer group will generally comprise:

- Head of peers
- At least three experts covering the scope of subjects to be evaluated. Two of the experts are appointed from a foreign institution
- One representative of the professional practice
- An external member (in the respective discipline) with experience in academic setting
- An expert in organizational development

(iii) Comments on design of evaluation and peer selection

The organizational unit has a right to comment on the evaluation design and the recommendation of the peers. Any objections, especially against peers must be supported by facts.

(iv) Evaluation design and contractual agreement

The statement /reaction of the organizational unit being evaluated is duly considered and may lead to a revision of the evaluation design. Once all parties are agreed, a final version of the evaluation design is produced and a written agreement produced. The agreement/contract stipulates the rights and obligations of the organizational unit, and mutually binding consequences of the evaluation. The agreement further specifies the results to be accomplished, the type of information to be published, in what format, and the costs of the procedure.

(b) Internal Evaluation

(i) ***Self assessment by the organizational unit***

The organizational unit forms a working group comprising the head and his/her deputy, representatives of professors and other cadres of academic staff, non-academic staff and students. External consultation may be called upon to facilitate this critical reflection process. The organizational unit submits a report.

(ii) ***Statement on self assessment report***

The head of peers is expected to send the internal evaluation report to other units that closely cooperate within research and teaching or with whom facilities are shared, to submit a statement on outcome of the self evaluation. The University Senate is also expected to issue a statement. This includes students in Bachelors, Masters and PhD degree programs.

(iii) ***Submission of documents to the peers***

The organizational unit is expected to submit the following documents to the group of peers, prior to site visit by the group;

- Self assessment report
- Statements on the self assessment report
- Documents assessing the organizational unit's development
- Relevant aspects of the University development plan
- Results of previous evaluations
- Data from research data bases
- Results of benchmarking process

(c) External evaluation

(i) ***Visit to the unit and inspection of faculties***

The group of peers visits the organizational unit, and meets the following:

- The self assessment group
- University management
- The head of the unit
- Academic staff of all cadres
- Non academic staff
- Student representatives

- The premises and facilities of the unit are then visited following the meeting. The evaluators assess the performance of the units, and also provide further assistance in its future development. On the last day of the evaluation, the group of peers holds a workshop with representatives of the unit, where they share their findings and give first recommendations. It is also an opportunity for both partners to clarify issues and answer questions to avoid possible misunderstandings. Proposals by peers are discussed in order to co-jointly elaborate on possible solutions and development perspectives.

- ***Final reporting***
- The group of peers submit a final report that has blessings of both parties. The report will contain goals of the evaluation, procedure and a SWOT analysis of the organizational unit, recommendations and measures for implementation. The organizational unit is expected to submit a statement on the final evaluation report, which will form part of an updated report by the group of peers. The final report is submitted to the rectorate, senate and organizational unit. The rectorate calls for a meeting of the head of peers to present findings to University administration.
- **(d) Implementation and Follow up**
- The discussion of the final report determines the appropriate follow up and implementation measures. Any resulting respective and mutually binding obligations for various parties are stated in writing.
- To note:
- The quality assurance process at BOKU University is part and parcel of the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions, the European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance of higher education and the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- Any QA process must be supported by relevant data/information readily available within the university system.
-

8.0 Quality assurance of the Euroleague joint Master programmes

The Euroleague for life sciences is a network of Universities cooperating in the fields of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Food Sciences and Environmental Science. The Euroleague for life sciences offers international Master programmes and joint teaching and lecture mobility, among other opportunities. The Euroleague uses a number of quality elements that help to assess essential elements of the joint Master degree programme.

8.1 Definitions of quality

The European University Association defines quality in four aspects, that form the basis for quality assessment/assurance;

i. *Quality as compliance with standards*: Defined quality criteria/benchmarks have to be met

ii. *Quality as fitness of purpose*: Determines whether the aims of the programme are appropriate or not

iii. *Quality as fitness for purpose*: In education, fitness for purpose is usually based on the ability of a study programme to fulfill its aims.

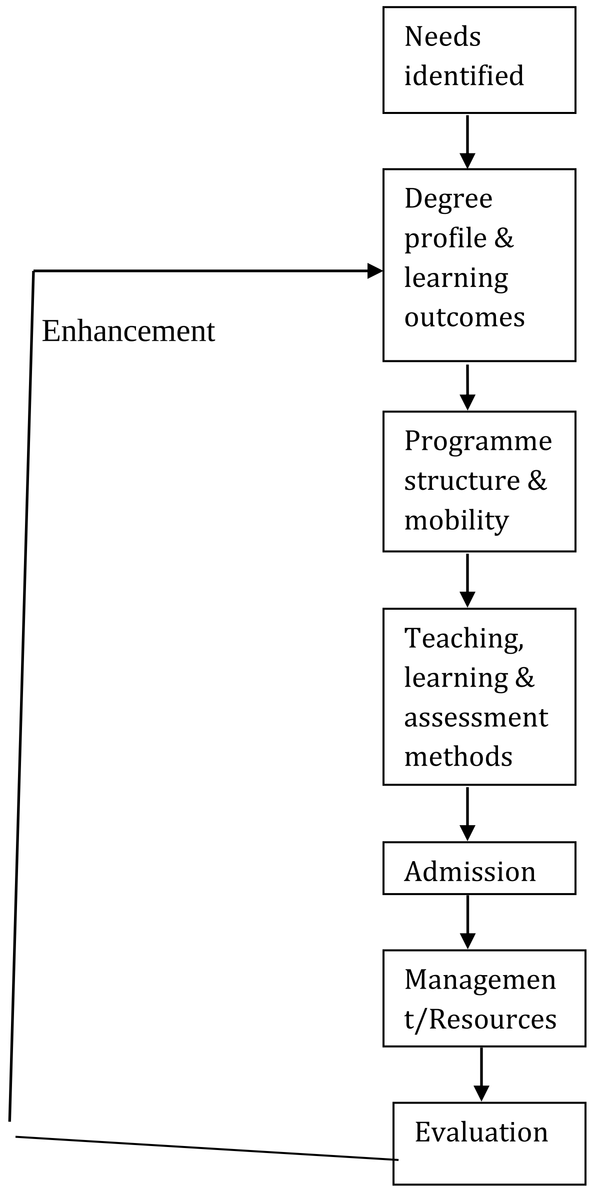
iv. *Quality as customer satisfaction*: Customer satisfaction contributes to quality improvement, e.g. through continuous student feedback loops.
v. *Quality as continuous enhancement*: Quality cycles have to be set up which require follow up measures and which feedback into planning

8.1.1 Principles of quality assurance

The following are guiding principles for quality assurance;

i. That transparency and openness within the system and among all concerned parties are absolutely necessary.
ii. That evaluation is a learning and development opportunity, as well as a reflection process for all concerned.
iii. Participation of students in quality assurance procedures is crucial

The underlying concept on quality assurance is based on a number of steps summarized below;



(i) Linkage with institutional mission

There has to be clear articulation of how the degree programme is aligned to the institutions mission. Further, the links with other degree programmes and research areas must be explored and elaborated. The other crucial process aspects include:

- demonstrated need for the degree programme by stakeholders wide consultation with stakeholders (academic community, professionals, employers)

- clear justification on the hosting/participating universities

(ii) Profile of the degree

In describing the degree profile, the following aspects are crucial:

Identification of overall aim, objectives, prerequisite knowledge

- Clear and adequate learning outcomes identified at the programme levels
- Ensuring that learning outcomes result in the identified profile
- Clearly identified competencies, abilities, skills and knowledge to be gained by students
- Learning outcomes that can be verified
- Ensuring the curriculum meets the learning outcomes
- Ensuring the learning outcomes are well related to specific professional or social context, labour market and student aspirations

(iii) Degree programme structure and mobility

Quality assurance mechanisms include:

- Clear correlation between workload and credit allocation
- Involvement of student in the correlation between workload and credit allocation
- Structuring the degree programme to allow student mobility
- Ensuring all participants of the programme have equivalent learning opportunities whether they are in a mobility phase or not.

(iv) Learning, teaching and assessment methods.

Key elements of quality assurance include:

- Clear identification of the learning, teaching and assessment methods to ensure students obtain the learning outcomes
- Assessing the suitability of learning methods to achieve the learning outcomes
- Clear justification and guarantee of an appropriate and well balanced student workload during each learning period
- Ensuring that assessments are explicit, valid and reliable
- Ensuring that examination rules are in place and well known, assessments are carried out in a consistent manner, consistency of grading across partner institutions.

(v) Student admission

Key aspects to ensure quality include:

- Clear description of the pre-requisite skills for the programme
- Members of the admission commission identified based on justified criteria
- Ensuring an objective assessment of admission criteria
- A reporting on the *admission yield* i.e. ratio between applications and admissions
- Ensuring information on application process is easily and publicly available
- Ensuring admission criteria are transparent and the same at all participating institutions

(vi) Thesis and degree

- Ensuring the fulfillment of formal criteria for the Master thesis
    - Required number of ECTS
    - Relevant clearly formulated and testable problem definition
    - Theoretical framework and research methodology
    - Analysis and interpretation of results
    - Appropriate use of references
- Ensuring the student timely feedback from the supervisor
- Ensuring comparability and transparency of thesis evaluation and defense at partner universities
- Ensuring effective involvement of internal and external examiner
- Ensuring participating partners deal with any legal constraints

(vii) Management and resources

- Ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly defined
- Ensuring that structures are appropriate for achieving the objectives of the programme
- Ensuring sufficient financial resources for the programme
- Ensuring sufficient administrative technical and other staff are available
- Ensuring sufficient facilities to meet programme objectives e.g. classrooms, library, equipment etc.
- Ensuring efficient communication in the system

(viii) Quality assurance and evaluation

This has to do with following the laid down procedure for curriculum development and quality assurance of the programme, whether the quality criteria were met. The quality management cycle is a continuing feedback process representing internal quality assurance.

Key aspects of Quality Assurance include ensuring that;

- There is annual internal evaluation of the programme
- The input and participatory feedback of students, lecturers and staff is included
- The programme(s) use the results of the evaluation to improve
- There are clear means through which results and evaluations are made known.

8.2 Key Learning points for RUFORUM:

8.3 SupAgro, Montpellier, France

SupAgro is a leading institution in teaching and research, under the trusteeship of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, widely open to the Mediterranean and Tropical Environments. It was created in January 2007 as a single unit combining four institutions;

- *Montpellier National Superior School of Agronomy*
- *The National Center for tropic and sub-tropic environments*
- *The National Superior School of Agro Food Industry's Division for tropical and subtropical regions*
- *Florac Pedagogical Teaching Experimental Center*

8.4 Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Quality assurance mechanisms under the Agris Mundus programme. Agris Mundus-masters course is a two year training program me in agricultural development and management of natural resources. The objective of the course is to produce graduates who are able to cope with current global and international concerns in agriculture and rural development. Under this programme, students spend the first year of training one institution, and the second year in a different institution.

8.4.1 Quality assurance

The management of Agris Mundus programme considers four components of quality.

a) **Quality, commitment and leadership.**

The institution or network must have high quality staff/highly qualified for their responsibilities. Verification and documentation is the institutions and/or networks responsibility in collaboration with the relevant national and international agencies. The institution and/or network has to ensure stability and competence of management and administration staff, in terms of strategic thinking and visioning. The system must be committed to the assurance of quality.

The starting point to producing high quality graduates is the recruitment of high quality students in order for this to happen, the following are pre-requisites;

- Clear articulation of what the programme is responding to i.e. why the programme is needed

- Clear articulation on the expected job description for the graduates from the programme

- Clear articulation of the graduate profile i.e. the type of graduate the programme aspires to produce

- A well established and known process for student recruitment. Information about the programme must be widely known/ distributed to all possible applicants.

The system must have a committed person/office to take responsibility for managing the programme.

b) Facilities, logistics, finance.

The responsible person/office has to ensure the following;

- All facilities necessary for the programme are in place and functional. Such facilities include teaching, research, accommodation, recreation, medical, etc.
- The potential students must receive frequent updates on the process of admission. They need full information well in advance on any proposed dates, changes and any expected responsibilities on their part.
- The admitted students must be informed of all logistical arrangements for their travel, etc and support information supplied in good time.
- The successful applicants must receive documentation in good time for them to respond, seek clarification etc before they can sign agreements, take leave from work, prepare to travel etc. The documents must be specific on what the students entitlements are, what the institutions responsibilities are etc.
- Adequate finance to implement the quality aspects afore mentioned.

c) Quality of teaching and learning.

i) Design of curriculum.

In designing the curriculum, it is imperative to;

- Avoid duplication and overlap with other related curricula.

- Ensure there is pedagogical completeness, consistent reaching lists and access to teaching material

- Ensure students will have time for placement, to inculcate professional skills.

ii) The learning environment.

- The institution has to create and maintain an enabling academic environment, one which motivates self directed learning. Such environment must uphold academic as well as cultural ethics, and promote inter-cultural working relations for both staff and students.

- The institution’s academic practice must be clearly defined, documented and clearly communicated to staff and students

- The staff and students must be provided with the most effective teaching and learning tools

- The system has to aim for continuous review, both internally and externally, and continuous improvement .This includes an assessment of the quality of the system and the products

- Institutions involved in joint programmes must ensure consistent and harmonized:

    - Student recruitment management process, Information and communication systems.

    - Workload management, course progression, assessment and feedback mechanisms and student consultation practice.

8.4.2 Quality assurance mechanism at SupAgro.

SupAgro is implementing a well established and documented quality assurance system. The quality assurance system does not focus on teaching improvement. In the French system all the lecturers have civil servant status, therefore their competence is assured. Under the quality assurance system, student evaluation is integrated into the management of studies, and the emphasis is on lifelong learning. SupAgro took a decision to seek international certification of its quality assurance system (ISO9001:2000) on pilot basis with a control office (Veritus international).

Key preconditions for the effectiveness of quality assurance system

(i) Political will in the system to support and implement a quality assurance system.
(ii) There must be a person responsible for managing and directing the quality assurance system. The person must be motivated to catalyse changes and improvements. In SupAgro, there is someone specifically responsible for quality assurance on 50% staff time basis.
(iii) The quality assurance system must choose the level of intervention and document a clear strategy with clear milestones

(iv) Detailed documentation of all quality procedures is absolutely necessary.
(v) The quality assurance system must have the support and input from alumni, particularly during tracer studies.

The quality assurance system at SupAgro is based on the PDCA approach i.e. Plan, Do, Check and Act approach. The PDCA approach has eight (8) key principles, which is described below. The quality assurance system at SupAgro has ISO certification (ISO9001:2000), which is an international norm that is improved on an annual basis.

The eight principles of quality management (of the learning environment) are described below:

Principle 1: Direct involvement of the institution's highest level of management

The institution's highest office must demonstrate personal commitment for the quality assurance system to be effective. The person in the highest office normally has influence on all issues relating to quality assurance management and implementation such as political goodwill, finances, institutional support and participation, external partnerships brokerage, inter-institutional negotiations, intra-institutional harmonisation and negotiation, etc.

Principle 2: Quality assurance must be seen/implemented in a systematic manner

The institution(s) must be considered as a system. Quality in itself is a system. A characteristic of a system is that there are many interrelated, interacting and inter-dependent components that form a unified whole. Therefore from a systems point of view, no system will be stronger that the weakest link in its chain of components. The implication therefore is that in a "network" situation (such as NATURA and RUFORUM's) any quality assurance system will be as good as that in the institution with the weakest quality assurance implementation and management system.

Principle 3: The outcome from the quality assurance system should be that the client (stakeholder) is satisfied.

The implication here is that right at the design stage of any quality assurance system, stakeholders have to be clearly identified. These stakeholders could be students, the graduates, employers etc.

Principle 4: There has to be a clear process orientation.

Whereas in principle both the institution(s) and quality assurance are systems, quality assurance is also a process. As a process, it must be elaborated with clear directions. For example:

- When an institution is engaging external lecturers and/or examiners, there must be clear direction on the expectations of both parties.
- There has to be a well established and understood process of managing information. For example, when a student makes a complaint, it has to be obvious where such information should be directed/deposited.
- When an institution carries out staff or student evaluation, where should such information go, and who should use it, feed it back into the system?

Principle 5: Quality assurance must involve all staff of the institution.

Quality assurance has implication on staff. Staff needs to be committed to quality improvement. Their understanding of their personal involvement is key to the improvement of the system. This principle derives from principle 2.

Principle 6: Quality assurance system must adopt a factual approach.

All aspects of the quality assurance system must be based on/supported by facts. The process has to be described based on facts. The implication here is that the system must have data, and people in the system must have confidence in that data.

Principle7: Quality assurance will involve partnership with external service providers; their quality is crucial to the quality of the quality assurance system.

The external service providers include external lecturers, external examiners, institutions offering attachments and internships to students and staff etc. For example, when a department is seeking services of an external lecturer/resource person, it is crucial to assess the expected quality of service prior to engaging the person. Such assessment will be done against the course description, the skills required to deliver the course, learning outcomes. The external lecturer/resource person should also do self assessment with respect to competence to deliver the course, and submit to the quality assurance manager.

Principle 8: Quality must be continuously improved

There must be demonstrated improvement in quality each time quality audit is carried out. If the quality assurance system is seeking ISO certification, demonstrated continuous improvement is imperative.

8.4.3 Concrete/ Practical examples of the PDAC approach

The approach is commonly referred to as the **Demming Wheel.** Below are examples of each part of the "wheel"

(i) PLAN:

The Institution’s Rector submits a one page commitment made up of five decisions/objectives, for example;

- Develop training supplies
- Improve stakeholder satisfaction level
- Increase profitability
- Adopt an international quality assurance system
- Mobilise training staff on sustainable manner

Each must have verifiable indicators. These are what quality assurance will be interested in during evaluations.

(ii) DO:

This part of the “wheel” comprises three processes i.e. management, training and quality. Under each process there will be a set of activities that the institution commits to undertake. The guiding principle here is that everything starts with stakeholders and ends with stakeholders. In the case of SupAgro training and management of human resources existed long before the quality assurance system came into place. However, what was new with the quality assurance system included the process of collecting information and data needed for management of quality, description of existing processes in the system and putting in place data bases. Another practical example under the DO part of the “wheel” is crucial to the quality assurance system and very involving/heavy. For example, SupAgro has several campuses. There is one quality assurance manager globally in-charge of the organization of the quality assurance system. Each campus has an officer in charge of quality assurance on a percentage staff time basis. Under each programme in campus there is a coordinator with an assistant. The quality assurance manager is not an ACTOR in the system but a FACILITATOR.

(iii) CHECK

This will basically involve finding out how close or far an institution is from achieving/satisfying the objectives/decisions they committed to.

(iv) ACT

This is the response stage. The system has to decide on how to react to the identified weakness and build on the strengths and positives. SupAgro’s approach is that after every audit, a report identifying the deficiencies and deviations is submitted. The QA management office makes a simple table of deviations /deficiencies, descriptions and suggestions on how to deal with the deviations /deficiencies or monitoring of the improvements. SupAgro takes deviations /deficiencies seriously-each action is clearly described, who is in charge and who does I, whether additional resources and people are needed, deadline etc.

8.4.4 Information Management Systems (IMS) at SupAgro

A coherent system of managing information is crucial to any QA system. All relevant documents such as quality handbook, hand book of procedures, templates for collecting information etc must be available at all times e.g. on the intranet.

Points to note on QA system at SupAgro

1. SupAgro's QA system became efficiently functional after four years. The main challenge however is how to make it lighter on users and how to reduce transaction costs

2. Awareness raising among stakeholders was crucial for SupAgro's QA system in terms of acceptance and understanding.

3. The QA manager was previously a lecturer. Upon taking up the QA portfolio, he underwent specific training in QA

4. The QA manager has direct access to the head of institution at SupAgro. He maintains constant information flow to the highest office, frequently consults and the decisions he takes have the blessings of the institutional head.

Meeting between natura1 and RUFORUM, Gödöllő , Hungary; and the natura General Assembly (GA), Gödöllő , Hungary

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[1] Network of European Agricultural (Tropically and Sub-tropically Oriented) Universities and Scientific Complexes Related with Agricultural Development, International Association – natura

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