Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region: APQN Strategic Plan (2016-2019)

The Fifth Board Council of APQN

July 4, 2016

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) is a non-profit, non-government network/organization focusing on the quality of higher education, the provision of the education and training for quality assurance agencies (QAAs) in the Asia and the Pacific region that contains over half the world's population. APQN was founded in Hong Kong in January 2003, incorporated as an association in December 2004 in the State of Victoria, Australia; and registered as a non-profit organization in June 2011 in Shanghai, China.

APQN's mission is "to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies (QAAs) and extending the cooperation between them". For the past 13 years, under the leadership of APQN pioneers and four previous Presidents - Mr. Peter PT Cheung, Ms. Concepcion Pijano, Dr. Antony Stella, and Dr. Jagannath Patil, APQN has been committed to pursuit excellent quality of higher education and very supportive to QAAs in the region. APQN has been dedicated to the following tasks: 1) dissemination of information through newsletters, documents, journals and books; 2) train and development through seminars, workshops, conferences and staff movement; 3) reference to the databases and other resources of INQAAHE and other organizations; and 4)other appropriate tasks as determined by the General Council or the Board. As of March 1, 2016, APQN has 166 members representing 38 countries/territories. Today APQN is the largest and most influential international organization in the field of higher education quality assurance in Asia-Pacific Region. The pioneers have made extraordinary improvement and made APQN legacy.

The General Council is governed by a Board consisting of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary/Treasurer, an immediate Past President, 4 other elected members, and up to 4 co-opted members. The fifth board began its term after the formal announcement on May 27, 2016 in the Annual General Meeting(AGM) in Fiji. To realize the value of "committed to quality higher education, and supportive of quality agencies in the region" and to reach the vision of "to be a self-sustaining Network, a first point of reference for advice or support, efficient in its operations and open in its information sharing." this Strategic Plan is made as the guidance for the new general council in the next three years (2016-2019)[1].

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[1]   Based in APQN Strategic Plan (2012-2015), this new Strategic Plan (2016-2019) was made by the fifth President, Prof. Jianxin Zhang. The first version was discussed by both old and new APQN board members in May, 2016; the second version was discussed by the office bearers, and the immediate past president, Dr. Jagannath Patil

APQN Secretariat: Administrator Fang Le
  No. 202, South Shaanxi Road, Shanghai, 200031,CHINA; Tel: +86-21-5404 1620; Fax:+86-21-5467
  Web: www.apqn.org; E-mail: administrator@apqn.org; apqnsecretariat@163.com

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The fifth board council will take on the new mission with new attitude and new perspectives. We will repay the trust and expectation of all APQN members with the greatest effort, first-class service and best performance. 2016-2017 will be the year of procedure building, 2017-2018 is the year of personnel capability building and 2018-2019 is the year of action and achievements. The four principles of the fifth board council are: 1) target-orientated principle; 2) project-orientated principle; 3) SMART principle (Specific, Meaningful, Agreed-upon, Results-oriented and Tractable); and 4) Principle of sustainable development. Our five key words are "procedure-base, capability-building, self-reliance, information-sharing and sustainable development". In "APQN Strategic Plan (2016-2019)", APQN will complete the following seven goals and actions along with ten targets in the next three years.

APQN Strategic Plan (2016-2019)	
1. Vision and Mission	1.1 **Vision**: To be a **self-sustaining** organization of higher education related agencies and HEIs, and be the first point of reference for its members for the provision of expertise, advice, discussion and consultation on all matters relating to quality assurance within the higher education sector. 1.2 **Mission**: To enhance the knowledge and capability of agencies and individuals within the Asia-Pacific Region to provide quality education within their specific higher education sectors through a cooperative network platform. 1.3 **Value**: to be committed to quality higher education, and supportive of quality agencies in the region.
2. Strategic Objectives	2.1 To promote and share good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education and to facilitate research into the practice of quality management in higher education and its effectiveness in improving the quality of higher education **in the Asia-Pacific Region**. 2.2 To provide advice and expertise to assist the development of new **QAAs,** facilitate experience sharing and links among QAAs and acceptance of each other's decisions and judgments in the region. 2.3 To assist **its members** to determine standards of institutions operating across national borders and enable APQN to be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organizations. 2.4 To facilitate the process for cross-border recognition, permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region and assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes to enhance the mobility of students among **higher education institutions (HEIs)** both within and across national borders. 2.5 To establish effective working relationships with relevant **international**

who provided valuable suggestions. The third and fourth version has been discussed among the new board members. This final version has been endorsed by the fifth Board Council by July 4, 2016.

APQN Secretariat: Administrator Fang Le
No. 202, South Shaanxi Road, Shanghai, 200031,CHINA; Tel: +86-21-5404 1620; Fax:+86-21-5467
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	networks and sector groups who can contribute to the work of APQN, includes ANQAHE (Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), AQAN (ASEAN Quality Assurance Network), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), AUN (ASEAN University Network), ECA (Economic Commission for Africa), ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), World Bank and others.
3. Principles	3.1 **Target-orientated principle**: 2016-2017 will be the year of procedure building, 2017-2018 is the year of personnel capability building and 2018-2019 is the year of action and achievements. 3.2 **Project-orientated principle**: all the activities are acted by way of projects, where five developmental components of a project can be followed: 1) initiation; 2) planning and design; 3) execution and construction; 4) monitoring and controlling systems; and 5) completion and reaching the goal. 3.3 **SMART principle**: all APQN activities should meet the requirements of being "Specific, Meaningful, Agreed-upon, Results-oriented and Tractable". 3.4 Principle **of sustainable development**: APQN development must meet the present needs of its members without compromising the needs of the members in the future. It contains three key concepts: diversity, equality and harmony.

	Goal	Key Actions
4. Goals and Actions	**4.1 Establish ongoing financial viability and stability**	4.1.1 Explore the idea of an "**APQN fraternity"** whereby people with a special connection to APQN can be called forth to provide advisory, training or other consultancy services on a pro bono basis. 4.1.2 Explore **additional funding sources externally** which can include donation, commissioned work, and sponsorship of events or publications by governments, agencies/organizations, philanthropists and other relative stakeholders[2], such as establishing "Guidelines for APQN Project by Self-fundraising". 4.1.3 Explore **additional funding sources internally** which can include APQR, training workshops on a user pay principle, sponsorship of events or publications by all the members. 4.1.4 **Increase income and reduce expenditure**, e.g. to establish **the reporting and reviewing system** on the current cycle of conferences, workshops and projects before giving all the financial support.
	4.2 Develop the website to provide a	4.2.1 Identify **options for QA services**, and encourage the **exchange program** by providing support to accepting hosts. 4.2.2 Design, develop and facilitate a **web-based discussion**

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[2] "Guidelines for APQN Project by Self-fundraising" was approved by the fifth Board Council on June 22, 2016.

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	platform for the communication for all members	**forum** for the members. 4.2.3 Ensure as much as possible wide **regional participation and membership category on the Board** through co-option.
	4.3 Populate and maintain the consultant database and make information accessible to all	4.3.1 Upgrade **existing database** to maintain relevance and up-dated, especially Virtual Library, Database of Consultants and Quality Information Portal. 4.3.2 Canvass its members to **identify relevant requirements** for quality assurance, e.g. APQN Label. 4.3.3 Establish the **transparency and responsibility** for ensuring currency of information, such as APQNews, APQN Awards, APQN publications.
	4.4 Ensure APQN annual conference efficiently and effectively	4.4.1 Actively **promote APQN Annual Conference**, such as the conference theme, the venue and the finance. 4.4.2 Actively **assist** the Conference organization with the local organizer. 4.4.3 Review the submitted papers, arrange the Conference Program, and **publish the series Proceeding** of APQN Conferences.
	4.5 Complete the research projects facilitate the requests, support and advice for training or others	4.5.1 **Develop the project procedure** to encourage all new researches and action plans, e.g. "Welcome Your Idea for APQN Collaborative Research". 4.5.2 **Establish the process** to obtain and build new physical and online opportunities for delivering training provision, editing and storing existing training material available across the network. 4.5.3 Identify and develop **more opportunities for institution members** which cover 56% of the total members, e.g. co-organizing QA conferences with Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI). 4.5.4 Identify and develop **opportunities for non-member** use that provides a monetary return to APQN.
	4.6 Strengthen relations with other international, regional and national networks/organizations within and outside the Region	4.6.1 **Promote the communication** with more international, regional and national quality assurance and networks/organizations, such as INQAAHE, ENQA ANQAHE, AQAN, CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation) and others. 4.6.2 **Expand the exchange** of Newsletter, Database of Consultants, Journals, Proceedings and other information with more international, regional and national quality assurance and networks/organizations.
	4.7 Broaden the base of services	4.7.1 Strengthen **ongoing initiatives** such as Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) , Quality Information Portal , Quality

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	to its members to ensure visibility and sustainability of network activities	Journal and so on. 4.7.2 Contribute to **capacity building** in terms of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and promote interoperability of NQFs within region. 4.7.3 Explore other **value-added services** to its members and stakeholders which can generate revenue for network as well as serve the needs of its members.
5. Targets	5.1 Raise more funds by seeking sponsorship, support and in-kind contributions from governments, agencies, networks/organizations, philanthropists and other relative stakeholders. 5.2 Ensure all countries/territories in the region have access to an accreditation agency – national or regional, establish Qualification Framework. 5.3 Conduct capability building workshops on evaluators on a user pay principle. 5.4 Asia-Pacific Quality Register(APQR) to be implemented in 2016 -2019. 5.5 APQN Quality Label to be implemented in 2018 -2019. 5.6 Continue to publish the series of APQN Conference Papers and Journals. 5.7 Continue to establish QA Consultant Database. 5.8 Continue to support the countries/territories with the founding of QAAs. 5.9 Continue to establish mutual relationship with other international, regional and national QA networks/organizations. 5.10 Strengthen APQN Virtual Library's Functionality.	

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