

IMPAQT: a project proposal

1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2010, NVAO submitted a new Qrossroads project proposal. Working Group 3 developed the idea of a dissemination proposal. Since dissemination projects are not possible, the project focuses on disseminating Qrossroads among target audiences and let these audiences evaluate Qrossroads in order to better achieve Qrossroads' intended long term objectives, i.e. impact. NVAO is the coordinating partner. All the agencies part of the Qrossroads network are involved through Working Group 3.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY (THE OFFICIAL VERSION)

Qrossroads is a database-driven website that presents information regarding quality assured higher education in Europe. The information on Qrossroads is automatically provided by databases of quality assurance agencies and specifically concerns degrees from quality assured programmes and institutions.

The IMPAQT project is an impact-oriented dissemination and evaluation of Qrossroads. It uses the concept of the results chain to focus its activities. In the results chain inputs produce outputs that engender outcomes that contribute to impact. IMPAQT will determine the extent to which Qrossroads has achieved its (intermediate) outcomes. Accordingly, improvement measures will be implemented in order to ensure realisation of Qrossroads' intended impact.

Qrossroads partners and stakeholders have established a shared, sound understanding of the intended (long term) impact of Qrossroads. Qrossroads should contribute:

- to the cross-border recognition of degrees,
- to the mutual recognition of quality assurance & accreditation results and
- to the mobility of students and graduates.

This impact should be achieved by providing all the stakeholders with transparent information on quality assured higher education.

Qrossroads' intended (intermediate) outcome is therefore a user-friendly website that provides all the necessary, essential and required information to all the stakeholders and target audiences in order to achieve its intended (long-term) impact.

IMPAQT will engage stakeholders in Qrossroads in a structured way, identify and reach out to target audiences, evaluate Qrossroads against its intended impact among both stakeholders and identified target audiences, implement improvement measures based on the aforementioned evaluation and increase the scope of countries in the Qrossroads network by making it easier for new partners to join.

3. RATIONALE

The European Commission's report on progress in quality assurance in higher education (September 2009) identifies Qrossroads as a good practice. It also states that Qrossroads "*may provide a useful point of departure for a much larger scale database. Close cooperation with the NARIC-ENIC network is likely to enhance the database's potential to contribute to the recognition of qualifications and to foster mobility*". The consortium sees this project as a direct response to the Commission's report. Qrossroads has gone through a project-based planning (TEAM) and development (TEAM2) phase, both with a high degree of European-level stakeholder involvement. In the first phase the consortium tested the premises of a decentralised network of databases for quality assurance agencies. In the second phase the consortium fully developed this network of databases and made information on quality assured higher education available through Qrossroads.

Grossroads has thus gone through the first two steps of the PDCA-cycle. This the most basic quality model consisting of a logical sequence for continuous improvement: Plan, Do, Check and Act. The third step will now be taken. In order to achieve the European Commission's intended impact there is a need to check Grossroads' outcomes among the totality of the target audiences. It means getting feedback from individuals (e.g. credential evaluators), institutions, national actors (e.g. business organisations), etc. It also means reaching out outside Europe: to recognition bodies, national authorities, guidance centres (e.g. Soros Foundations), etc. Only by checking whether Grossroads really provides all the necessary, essential and required information to all these target audiences and adapting it accordingly, we will be able to ascertain achievement of its intended (long term) impact.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the project is to ensure that Grossroads will achieve the objectives mentioned above. The project will need to question the level of achievement of Grossroads and where needed implement improvement measures. The objectives of this project therefore directly result from this aim.

1. The first objective of the project is the strengthened involvement of the stakeholders. Stakeholders will be invited to participate in Grossroads in a more structured way in a move towards shared ownership over Grossroads. This particularly concerns the ENIC-NARIC Network.
2. The second objective is to identify and reach out to the target audiences. They can then be familiarised with Grossroads in order to facilitate the evaluation itself.
3. The third objective is the evaluation of Grossroads against its intended objectives and the European Commission's declared potential. This evaluation will of course build on the results achieved by the second objective.
4. The fourth objective is the improvement of Grossroads based on the results of the above mentioned evaluation and in line with the long-term objectives.
5. The fifth objective is making it easier for new partners to join the Grossroads network by showing good practices and by providing a manual outlining both policy and technical aspects.

5. TIMELINES AND TASKS

Id	Workpackage	Start	End	2010			2011												2012											
				okt	nov	dec	jan	feb	mrt	apr	mei	jun	jul	aug	sep	okt	nov	dec	jan	feb	mrt	apr	mei	jun	jul	aug	sep			
1	Steering Group	1-10-2010	28-9-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Oct 2010 to Sep 2012]																										
2	Grossroads Administrators	1-11-2010	29-6-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Nov 2010 to Jun 2012]																										
3	Stakeholders Group	1-11-2010	27-6-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Nov 2010 to Jun 2012]																										
4	Promotion and awareness raising	1-12-2010	28-9-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Dec 2010 to Sep 2012]																										
5	Evaluation Design & Implementation	1-12-2010	27-1-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Dec 2010 to Jan 2012]																										
6	Grossroads	30-1-2012	30-10-2012	[Blue bar spanning from Jan 2012 to Oct 2012]																										

5.1. Steering Group

The Workpackage 'Steering Group' is the management instrument of the project. This workpackage includes all the responsibilities for all the other workpackages and deals with the general management of the project, the attainment of the schedule and the production of deliverables. This of course includes the financial management. The success of the project depends on the effective steering capacity shown by the Steering Group and the Project Coordinator.

5.2. Qrossroads Administrators

The aim of this workpackage is to involve, inform, discuss and get feedback from the quality assurance agencies part of the Qrossroads network (i.e. Working Group 3). The project intends to invite other quality assurance agencies to join the network.

In order to achieve this aim the Qrossroads Administrators group will be an integral part of the whole project enabling them to monitor the project activities at the different stages in the project.

Each participating quality assurance agency will also be responsible for including Qrossroads in a meeting with their national stakeholders. In the framework of this meeting, these target audiences will be made familiar with Qrossroads. The quality assurance agency can then get direct feedback from the target audiences present during the meeting. This workpackage will collect all the national stakeholders' feedback and combine this feedback into a national stakeholders' evaluation report.

5.3. Stakeholders Group

The aim of this workpackage is to involve, inform, discuss and get feedback from the European-level stakeholders of Qrossroads. After this project is finished, the Stakeholders Group is intended to remain as the standing advisory body of Qrossroads.

The Stakeholders Group consists of representatives from the established European stakeholder organisations: European Students Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), Association of Higher Education Institutions (EURASHE), Education International (EI), European employers (BusinessEurope) and the recognition authorities (ENIC-NARICs). Additionally, and with particular relevance for the impact of this project, we will invite the network of institutional academic credential evaluators of the European Association for International Education (ACE/EAIE).

5.4. Promotion & Awareness-raising

The aim of this workpackage is the development of material intended to familiarise the target audiences with the IMPAQT project and Qrossroads. This workpackage will additionally raise awareness among the European quality assurance agencies in order to share good practices in the publication of results of quality assurance procedures and in order to support the transfer of innovation in making these results public (here: the field of database design).

This workpackage will produce several deliverables: a project website with interactive features, an open newsletter, a database of direct project contacts, a promotion package and a dissemination event.

5.5. Evaluation Design & Implementation

The aim of this workpackage is the development and implementation of the evaluation of Qrossroads. This workpackage will combine all the information on identified potential target audiences of Qrossroads and the means to reach them. This information will be provided by the workpackages Qrossroads Administrators and Stakeholders Group. This part of the workpackage will then produce a database of target audiences that the evaluation should reach.

We will clarify the questions these target audiences need to answer through the evaluation and design the methods to collect information. This will produce the Qrossroads survey.

By using this survey, this workpackage will collect and analyse all the evaluation results. From this, the workpackage should finally produce a public, impact-oriented evaluation report.

5.6. Qrossroads

The aim of this workpackage is the exploitation of the results of the project. This workpackage will use the achievements of the project in order to implement improvements on Qrossroads to achieve its

intended (long-term) impact. This workpackage depends on the final outcome of the evaluation as produced by the workpackage Evaluation Design & Implementation. This part of the workpackage will then produce an improved version of Qrossroads.

This workpackage will additionally clarify how other quality assurance agencies (and countries) can join the Qrossroads network. To this end the workpackage will produce a Joining Qrossroads Manual. To enhance the sustainability of Qrossroads, this workpackage will also produce the Qrossroads Maintenance Handbook. This handbook can be used for the (very limited) management of the website but also explains the database. This will be useful when other database developers need to work on the central database.

6. BUDGET

		LLP Countries	Third Countries	Consolidated figures
Expenditure	Staff costs	77.507	-	77.507
	Travel & subsistence costs	36.341	-	36.341
	Equipment costs	2.500		2.500
	Subcontracting costs	50.000		50.000
	Other costs	41.774	-	41.774
	Indirect costs	13.500	-	13.500
	Total costs	221.622	-	221.622

Revenue	Community grant	161.558	-	161.558
	Percentage of funding	72,90%		72,90%
	Partners' own contribution	60.064	-	60.064
	Other sources	-	-	-
	Total financing	221.622	-	221.622