CROSS-BORDER QUALITY ASSURANCE THROUGH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – DIES PROJECT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

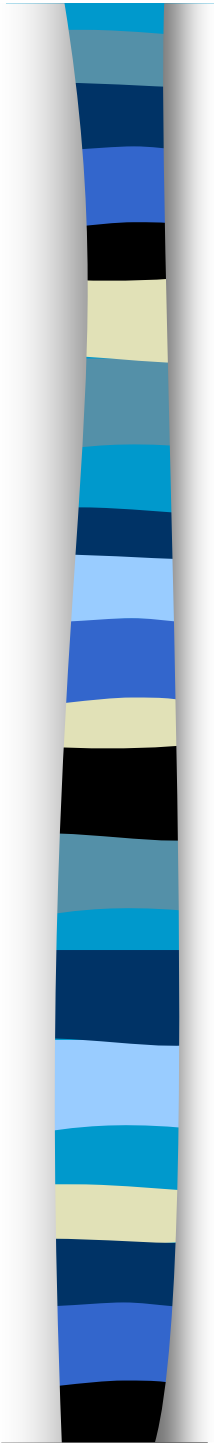**Francisco Alarcón, CSUCA**

DIES Conference: Strengthening universities, enhancing capacities – Higher Education Management for Development
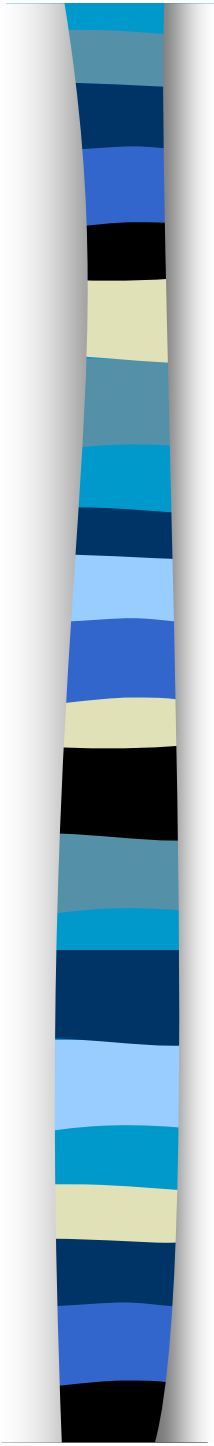
Germany, 28-29 November 2011

CONTENT

- 1. Establishing the Regional Accreditation System for Higher Education in Central America.
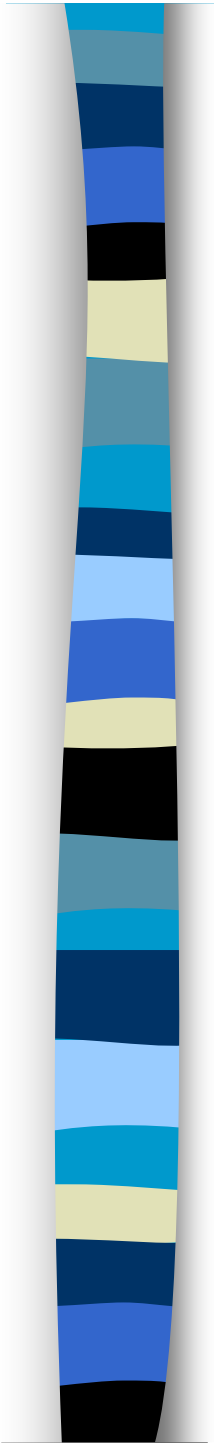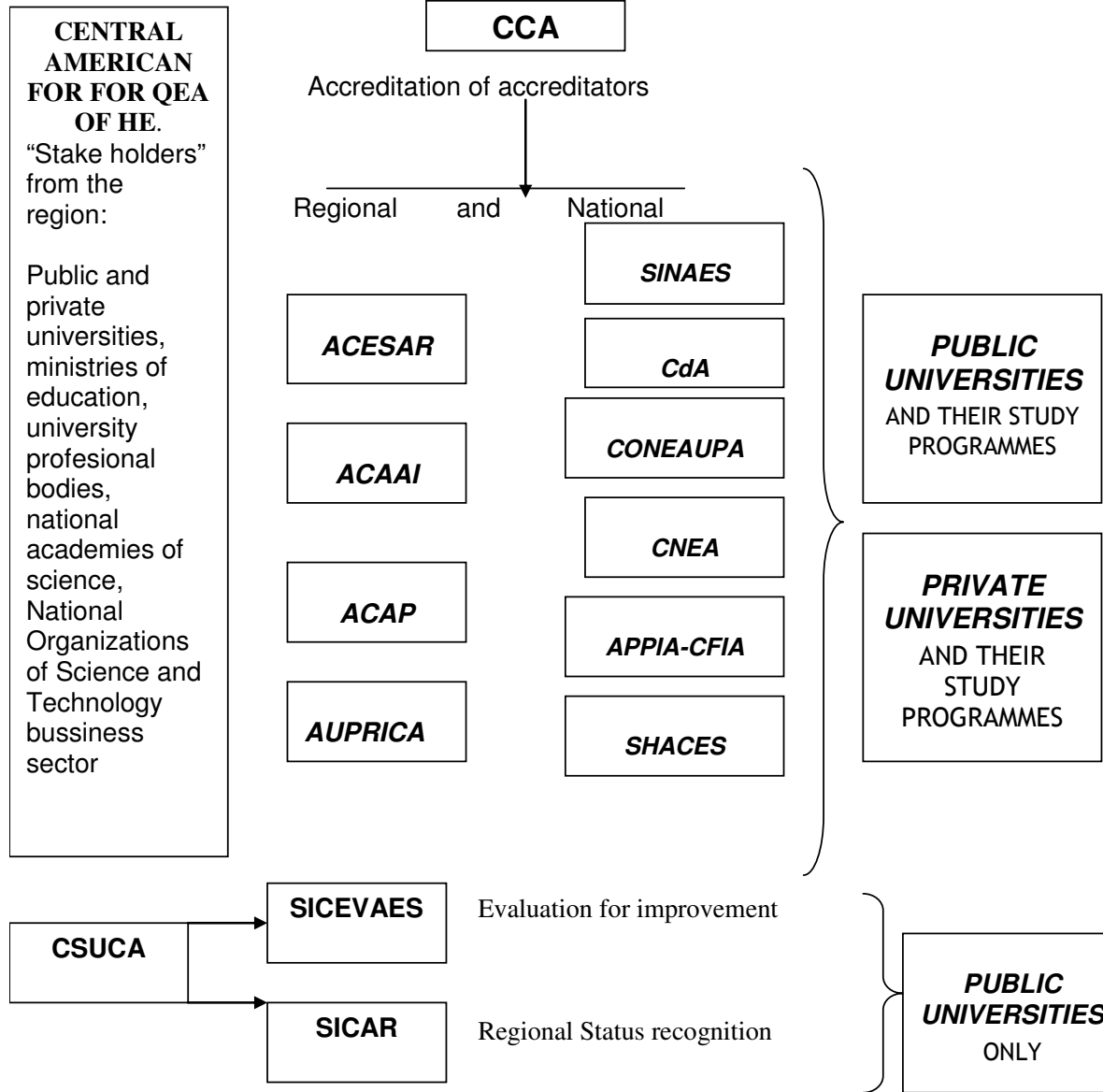
- 2. Some results

■ It has been a complex 15 years process
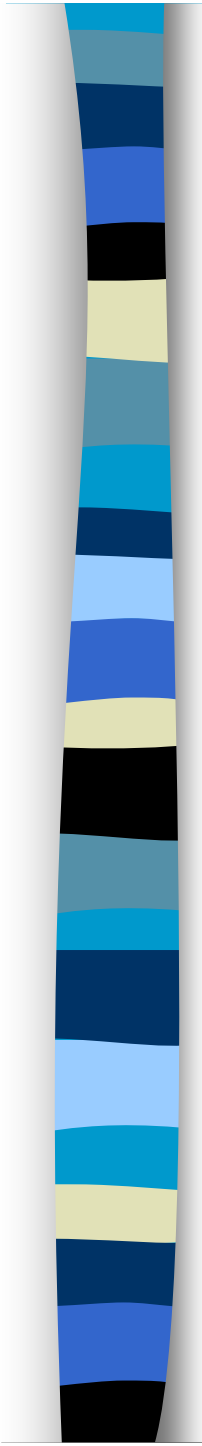
Aspects/steps:

- awareness building, 1996-2006
- concept clarification and **training**,
- design, consensus building and decision making,
- establishing a **regional evaluation system for quality improvement only**, SICEVAES 1996-1998
- **self evaluation and external peer evaluation for quality improvement**,1998-2011
- design, consensus building and decision making for a **wide regional accreditation system** that ended with the establishing of CCA, 2001-2003
- design, consensus building and decision making for establishing **regional and new national accreditation agencies**, ACAAI, ACAP, CONEAUPA, SHACES…. 2004-2011

- The Central American Quality Assurance System is a two layers multinational and multisectorial system. It includes the participation of stake holders and universities from 7 countries: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. It also include the direct participation of public universities, private universities, ministries of education and professional bodies (university graduates) from the whole region.

- In one layer it includes a Central American Accreditation Council (CCA) in charge of setting good practice principles for accreditation and standards for the accreditation organisms which operate in the region. A Council in charge of carrying out the metaevaluation of the accreditation agencies and its procedures, and awarding regional recognition or accreditation to the accreditation agencies. In the other layer the system are the accreditation bodies themselves, in charge of accrediting the universities and or their study programs.

CENTRAL AMERICAN QUALITY EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

CENTRAL AMERICAN FOR FOR QEA OF HE. "Stake holders" from the region:

Public and private universities, ministries of education, university profesional bodies, national academies of science, National Organizations of Science and Technology bussiness sector

| CCA |

Accreditation of accreditators

Regional   and   National

SINAES

ACESAR

CdA

CONEAUPA

ACAAI

CNEA

ACAP

APPIA-CFIA

AUPRICA

SHACES

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR STUDY PROGRAMMES

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR STUDY PROGRAMMES

CSUCA

SICEVAES   Evaluation for improvement

SICAR   Regional Status recognition

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ONLY

- University degrees and titles awarded by study programs, accredited by accreditation agencies accredited by CCA are recognized by those that signed the CCA agreement.

- Therefore, accredited quality would be the basis for a much more flexible international recognition of university degrees between Central American countries. This would facilitate mobility within the region.

■ 2. QUALITY EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: SOME RESULTS

Cuadro No. 1
Resumen de los procesos de evaluación y acreditación realizados en la ultima década en la región.

PAIS	ORGANISMO	IES EVAL	IES ACRED	CARRERAS EVAL	CARRERAS ACRED	AGENCIA ACRED	VISITA EVAL PROGMDA.	TOTAL
Regional	CCA	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Regional	SICEVAES	3		112			10	125
Regional	SICAR	-	-	-	30	-		30
Regional	AUPRICA	-	14	-	-	-	11	25
Regional	ACESAR	-	-	-	3	-		3
Regional	ACAAI	-	-	-	16	-	5	21
Regional	ACAP	-	-	-	5	-	2	7
Costa Rica	SINAES	-	-	-	64	-		64
El Salvador	CdA	-	13	-		-		13
Costa Rica	AAPIA-CFIA	-	-	-	8	-	5	13
Costa Rica	SUPRICORI	-	-	-	2	-		2
República Dominicana	ADAAC	-	5	-	-	-	4	9
Panamá	CONEAUPA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nicaragua	CNAE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Honduras	SHAES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		3	32	112	128	1	38	314

Nota1: Además 13 carreras de URL-Guatemala y 1 de la UMG-Guatemala han sido acreditadas por agencias mexicanas (ACCECISO, COMAEA y CACECA, COMAPROD, CACEI, CONAET, CONAED).
Nota2: El Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas (INCAE) se encuentra acreditado por SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1994), AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 1999) y EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System, 2003).
Nota3: El SINAES fue acreditado a nivel regional por el CCA y a nivel internacional por la Red Internacional de Agencias de Acreditación de la Educación Superior INQAAHE.
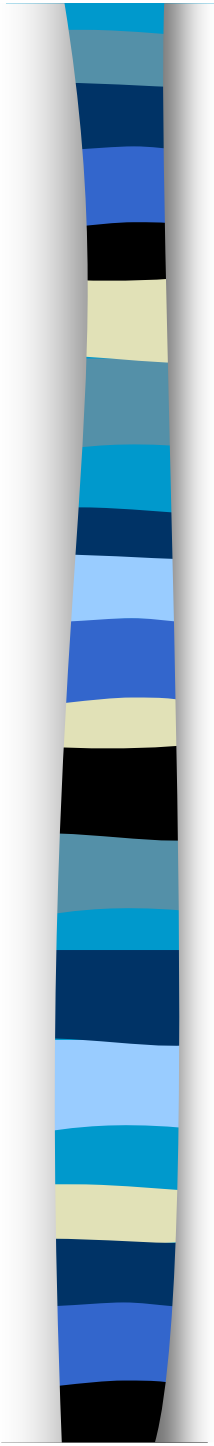
- 314 Quality Evaluation and accreditation processes has been completed during the last decade in the region. This include institutional and program evaluations. Only 240 study programs out of a total of more than 5,000 study programs has been evaluated in Central America.

- This means that it has been evaluated just about 5% of the total of programs existing in the region. We do not expect to evaluate and accredited all the study programs within the regional system, however, this number indicates that we are just at the begining of the process.

- Therefore, by now, the contribution that QA is making to the Quality improvement of higher education of the region and academic mobility within the region is still very limited. But the potential is already there and the process has already initiated.

FIGURA 1
EVALUACIONES Y/O ACREDITACIONES REALIZADAS EN LA REGION CENTROAMERICANA POR AGENCIA
(Años 2001-2010)

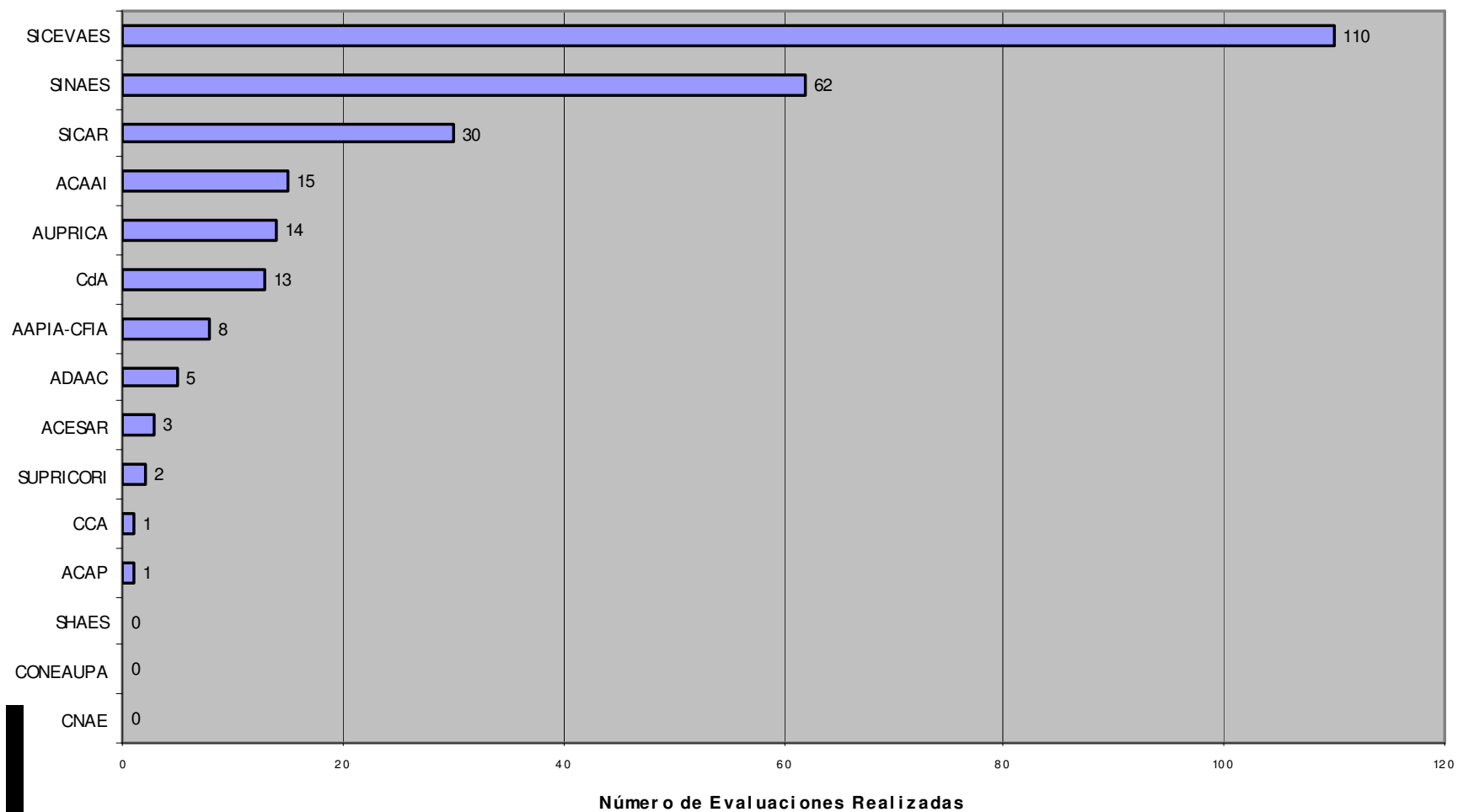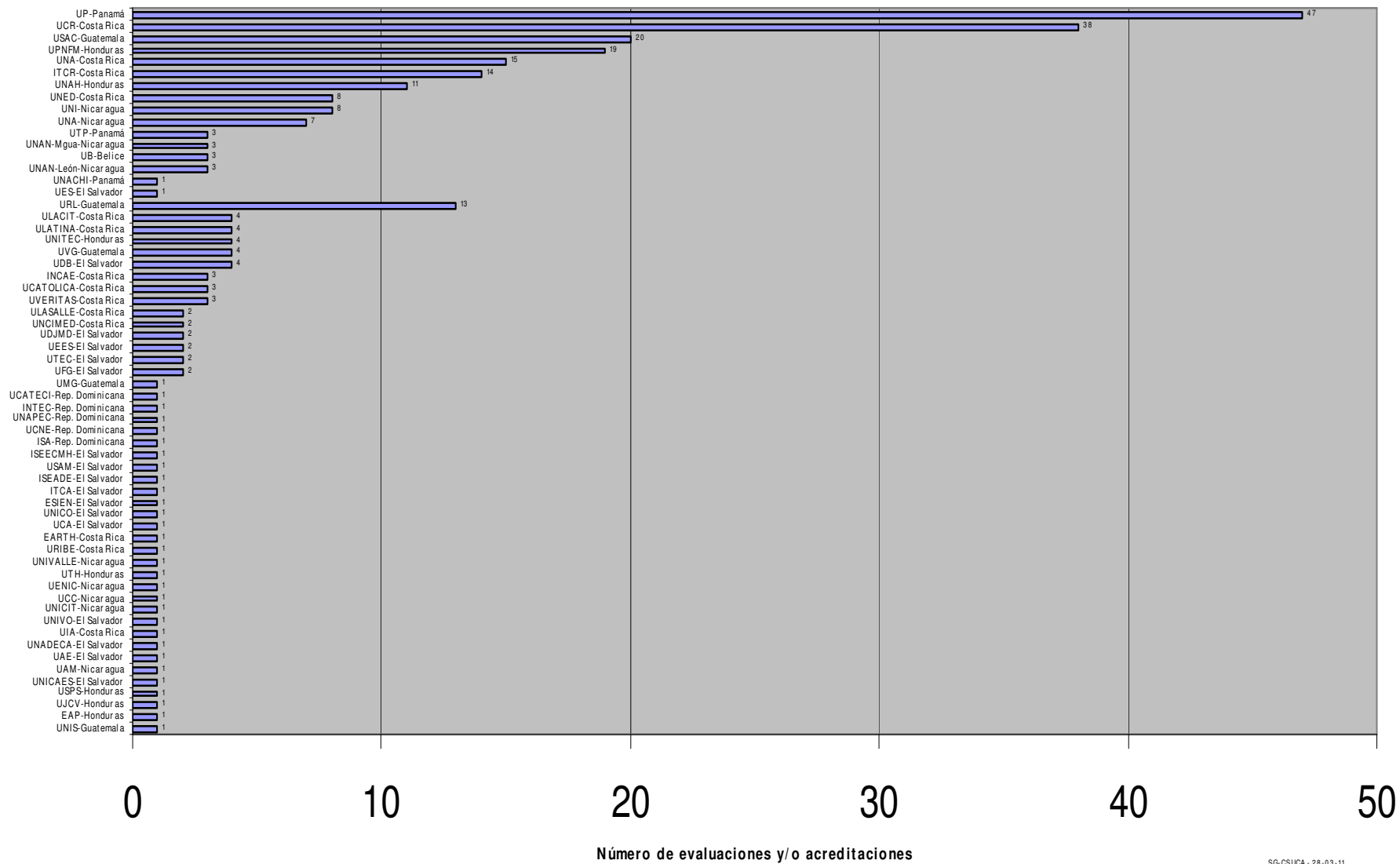| Agencia	Número de Evaluaciones Realizadas
SICEVAES	110
SINAES	62
SICAR	30
ACAAI	15
AUPRICA	14
CdA	13
AAPIA-CFIA	8
ADAAC	5
ACESAR	3
SUPRICORI	2
CCA	1
ACAP	1
SHAES	0
CONEAUPA	0
CNAE	0

Número de Evaluaciones Realizadas

FIGURA 2
EVALUACIONES Y/O ACREDITACIONES REALIZADAS EN LA REGION CENTROAMERICANA POR UNIVERSIDAD
(2001-2010)

Universidad	Número
UP-Panamá	47
UCR-Costa Rica	38
USAC-Guatemala	20
UPNFM-Honduras	19
UNA-Costa Rica	15
ITCR-Costa Rica	14
UNAH-Honduras	11
UNED-Costa Rica	8
UNI-Nicaragua	8
UNA-Nicaragua	7
UTP-Panamá	3
UNAN-Mgua-Nicaragua	3
UB-Belice	3
UNAN-León-Nicaragua	3
UNACHI-Panamá	1
UES-El Salvador	1
URL-Guatemala	13
ULACIT-Costa Rica	4
ULATINA-Costa Rica	4
UNITEC-Honduras	4
UVG-Guatemala	4
UDB-El Salvador	4
INCAE-Costa Rica	3
UCATOLICA-Costa Rica	3
UVERITAS-Costa Rica	3
ULASALLE-Costa Rica	2
UNCIMED-Costa Rica	2
UDJMD-El Salvador	2
UEES-El Salvador	2
UTEC-El Salvador	2
UFG-El Salvador	2
UMG-Guatemala	1
UCATECI-Rep. Dominicana	1
INTEC-Rep. Dominicana	1
UNAPEC-Rep. Dominicana	1
UCNE-Rep. Dominicana	1
ISA-Rep. Dominicana	1
ISEECMH-El Salvador	1
USAM-El Salvador	1
ISEADE-El Salvador	1
ITCA-El Salvador	1
ESIEN-El Salvador	1
UNICO-El Salvador	1
UCA-El Salvador	1
EARTH-Costa Rica	1
URIBE-Costa Rica	1
UNIVALLE-Nicaragua	1
UTH-Honduras	1
UENIC-Nicaragua	1
UCC-Nicaragua	1
UNICIT-Nicaragua	1
UNIVO-El Salvador	1
UIA-Costa Rica	1
UNADECA-El Salvador	1
UAE-El Salvador	1
UAM-Nicaragua	1
UNICAES-El Salvador	1
USPS-Honduras	1
UJCV-Honduras	1
EAP-Honduras	1
UNIS-Guatemala	1

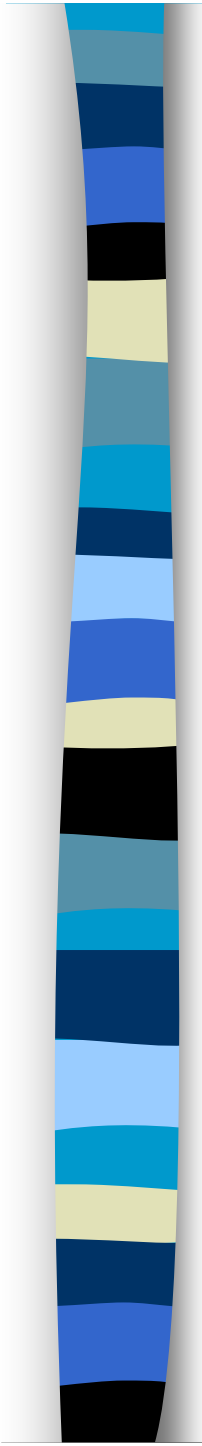**Número de evaluaciones y/o acreditaciones**

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- The university that has concluded more evaluation processes within the region is Universidad de Panamá, followed by Universidad de Costa Rica. They are followed by Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala and Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Honduras.

- Although the total number of evaluated programs is still low, it is encouraging to see that, 61 universities has been taking part in these processes (16 public and 45 private). It is 30% of the total number of existing institutions. This includes the main universities of the region.

FIGURA 3
EVALUACIONES Y/O ACREDITACIONES REALIZADAS EN LA REGION CENTROAMERICANA POR PAIS
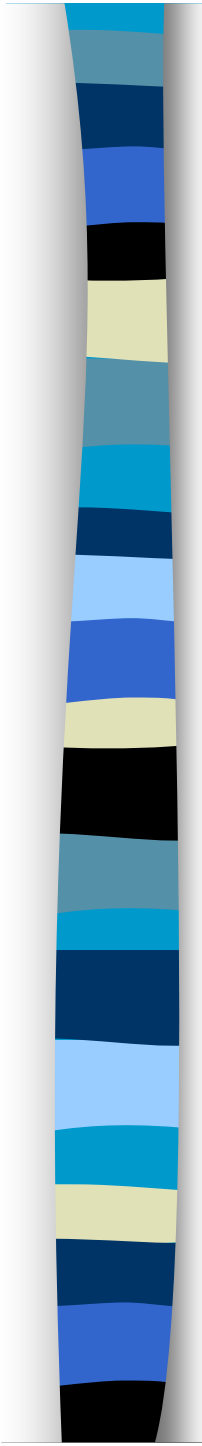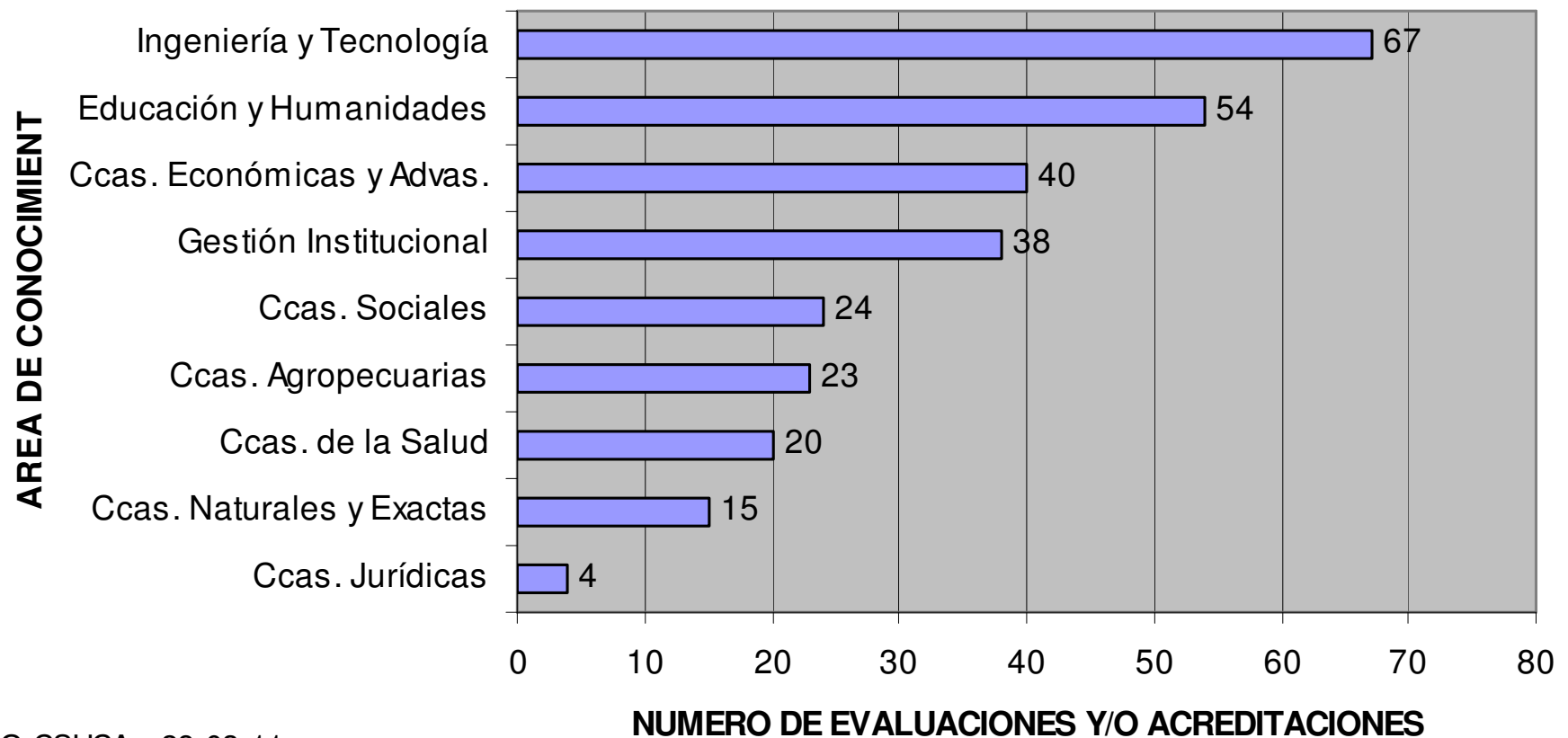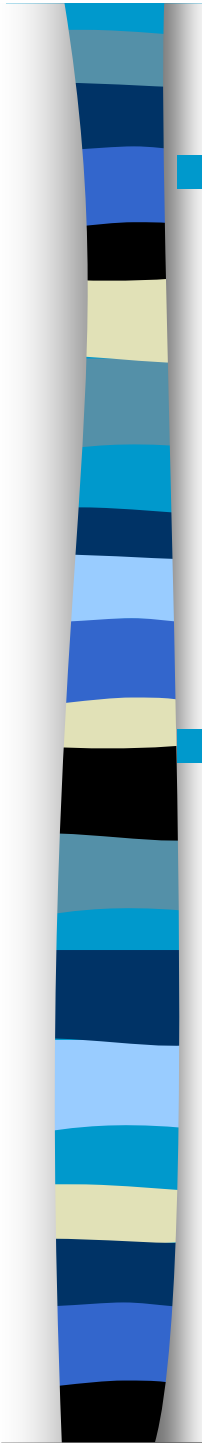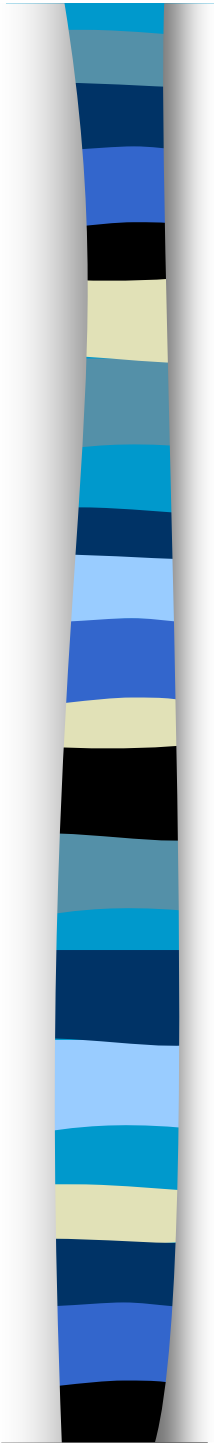**(2001-2010)**

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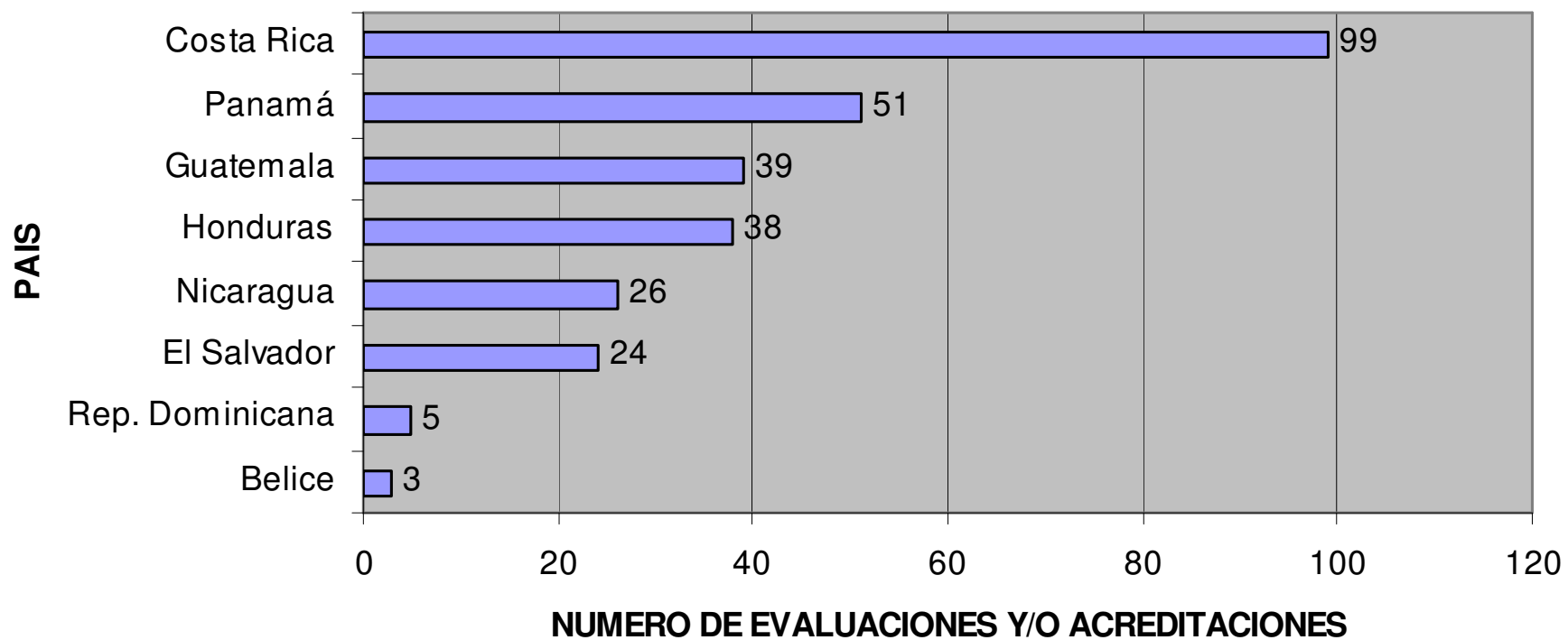
- Costa Rica is the country where more evaluation and accreditation processes has been succesfully completed followed by Panama. Both followed by Guatemala and Honduras.

- Proceses done in Costa Rica are mainly the work of SINAES and AAPIA-CFIA, while those done in Panama, Guatemala and Honduras are mainly the work of SICEVAES, SICAR and ACAAI.

- The majority of these processes has been done by the public universities 71%.

- The majority of the evaluated programs are in the area of engineering and technology.

FIGURA 5
EVALUACIONES Y/O ACREDITACIONES EN LA REGION CENTROAMERICANA POR AREA DE CONOCIMIENTO (2001 - 2010)

Area de conocimiento	Número de evaluaciones y/o acreditaciones
Ingeniería y Tecnología	67
Educación y Humanidades	54
Ccas. Económicas y Advas.	40
Gestión Institucional	38
Ccas. Sociales	24
Ccas. Agropecuarias	23
Ccas. de la Salud	20
Ccas. Naturales y Exactas	15
Ccas. Jurídicas	4

AREA DE CONOCIMIENT

NUMERO DE EVALUACIONES Y/O ACREDITACIONES

SG-CSUCA - 28-03-11

- Studying hundreds of quality evaluation reports we can now see with empirical data, what are the main and more frequent quality problems in Higher Education Institutions in the region

- Curriculum design and development, Curriculum innovation, Academic level of the academic staff, teaching and research competences of academic staff, are among the main quality problems in the region. This has opened important opportunities for improvement.

- Now we are entering the stage of a more massive participation of universities in evaluation and accreditation processes. What we can called an expansion stage.

- Our main challenge now is to keep the regional system together, it means to strenghtenen the leadership of the CCA on the accreditation agencies, and to reach agreements between regional and national agencies to trust each other and to work together in a complementary way.