

United Nations Development Programme / Regional
Bureau for Arab States (UNDP / RBAS)

UNDP HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT

“Enhancement of Quality Assurance and Institutional Planning in Arab Universities”

Phase I

1/1/2002 (30 months) 30/6/2004

Independent Evaluation
(December 2004)

Phase II

Started June 2005 (42 months) December 31, 2008

UNDP / RBAS acknowledges with appreciation significant funding support for
phase II from BMZ (Germany) and GoF (Finland)

PROJECT'S AIMS AND COMPONENTS

To introduce:

- *on a regional level,*
- *through voluntary partnership with leading Arab universities,*
- *through the efforts of the academic representatives of participating universities*
- *backed by intensive training and advisory support from project*

Three independent instruments of quality assurance and enhancement:

A. EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Through internal and external (peer) evaluation

B. ADMINISTRATION OF INTERNATIONAL TESTS

*For assessing the performance of students of reviewed programs
(Major Field Test – ETS)*

C. DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICAL DATABASES

For participating universities in accordance with commonly agreed data definitions and specifications

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS - 1

A. Evaluation of Academic Programs

(Cycle duration = 15 months)

- **Cycle 1 (2002-2003):** review of Computer Science programs in 15 universities
- **Cycle 2 (2003–2004):** review of Business Administration programs in 16 universities
- **Cycle 3 (2005-2006):** review of Education programs in 23 universities
- **Cycle 4 (2007-2008):** review of Engineering programmes in 19 universities

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS - 2

B. TESTING PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS OF REVIEWED PROGRAMS

(using Major Field Test, ETS)

- ❑ **Cycle 1** (2002-2003) English-based CS + BA tests (788 senior students).
- ❑ **Cycle 2** (2003-2004) Arabic / French-based CS + BA tests (921 senior students). Translation: UNESCO Beirut Office
- ❑ **Cycle 3** (2006-2007) Administration of a **jointly developed ETS-Project** test in Education to 1500 senior students in Education in 24 universities (May-June 2007). Joint ownership
- ❑ **Cycle 4: Administration of Global Test in Major Studies (GTMS) to 1500 senior students in Engineering, in 20 Arab universities.**

C. STATISTICAL DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ **One cycle** (2002-2004) Statistical database development in 15 universities in accordance with common data definitions and specifications (about 500, 000 students). Regional report this year.

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES

OUTCOMES – 1

INTRODUCING METHODOLOGIES OF PROGRAMME REVIEW

- ❑ **An adaptation of QAA (UK) Academic Subject Review (ASR). Our own Handbook**
- ❑ **Three stages:**
 - **Self Evaluation:** by the program providers
 - **External evaluation:** By peer reviewers (on-site visits) with active participation of university representatives
 - **Final reporting:** by peer reviewers
- ❑ **Introduced to /implemented by 36 leading universities. With very few exceptions, as their first experience in professional programme review (self-evaluation followed by peer review and reporting)**
- ❑ **Generic: discipline-independent, system independent, supportive of other methods (e.g. accreditation)**
- ❑ **Underpinned by outcome-based approach to learning: an instrument of quality assurance and programme reform**
- ❑ **First step towards institutional evaluation**

OUTCOMES - 2

GENERATING AGENDAS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND REFORM

For each university: An individual review report (54) :

- Evidence-based analysis and assessment
- Identification of weaknesses and strengths
- Graded judgements (comparisons)
- Graded sub aspects (Special indicators)
- Recommended improvements
- Awareness / internal action in most. Follow up action taken by about 1/3 . Depends on resources. Need for development support (e.g. national / regional fund, Tempus).

For the region: An overview regional report for each subject (3) :

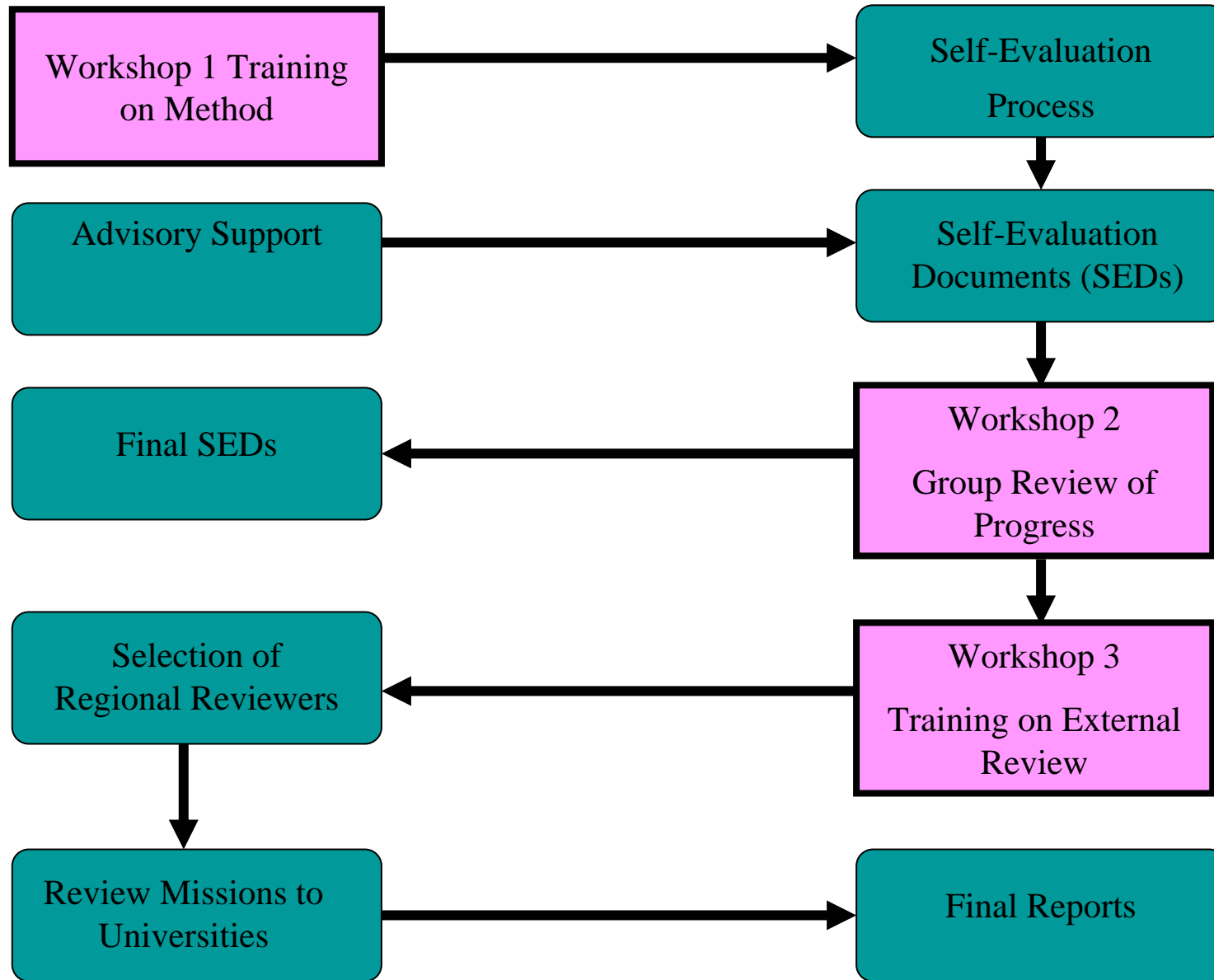
- Patterns of strength and weakness
- Comparative charts of graded judgements and special indicators
- Recommended areas for reform through regional collaboration and consultation
- Enables development by academics / associations in the field of subject – based benchmark statements, guidelines. Much needed.

OUTCOME 3

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Capacity Building is integrated into the structure of the Project's review cycle. A means and an outcome
 - Three training workshops on internal / external evaluation. Technical advisory support provided throughout cycle .
 - Trained representatives take lead in self evaluation, preparation of self evaluation documents , hosting of peer review missions.
 - Selected group from trained train ed representatives (about 2/3) take part in review missions in other Arab countries.(2 out of four reviewers)
- About 110 trained representatives. Cohort of 71 fully experienced (i.e. including peer reviewing) first three cycles to exceed 100 after engineering cycle. First regional cohort.
- Most playing a leading role in developing quality systems in faculties and universities / countries . Leadership network

Structure of Review Cycle (15-18 months)



EXAMPLE OF REGIONAL AGENDAS EDUCATION (1/7 of students)

Quality / Resources gaps:

- Quality gap: none of 12 teacher's training programmes graded good.
- Resources gap: > 50% of universities need improved resources.
- Regional message (as in previous cycles) : more investment in HE. At least doubling expenditure / student (using QA considerations as a guide)

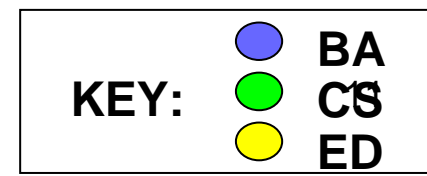
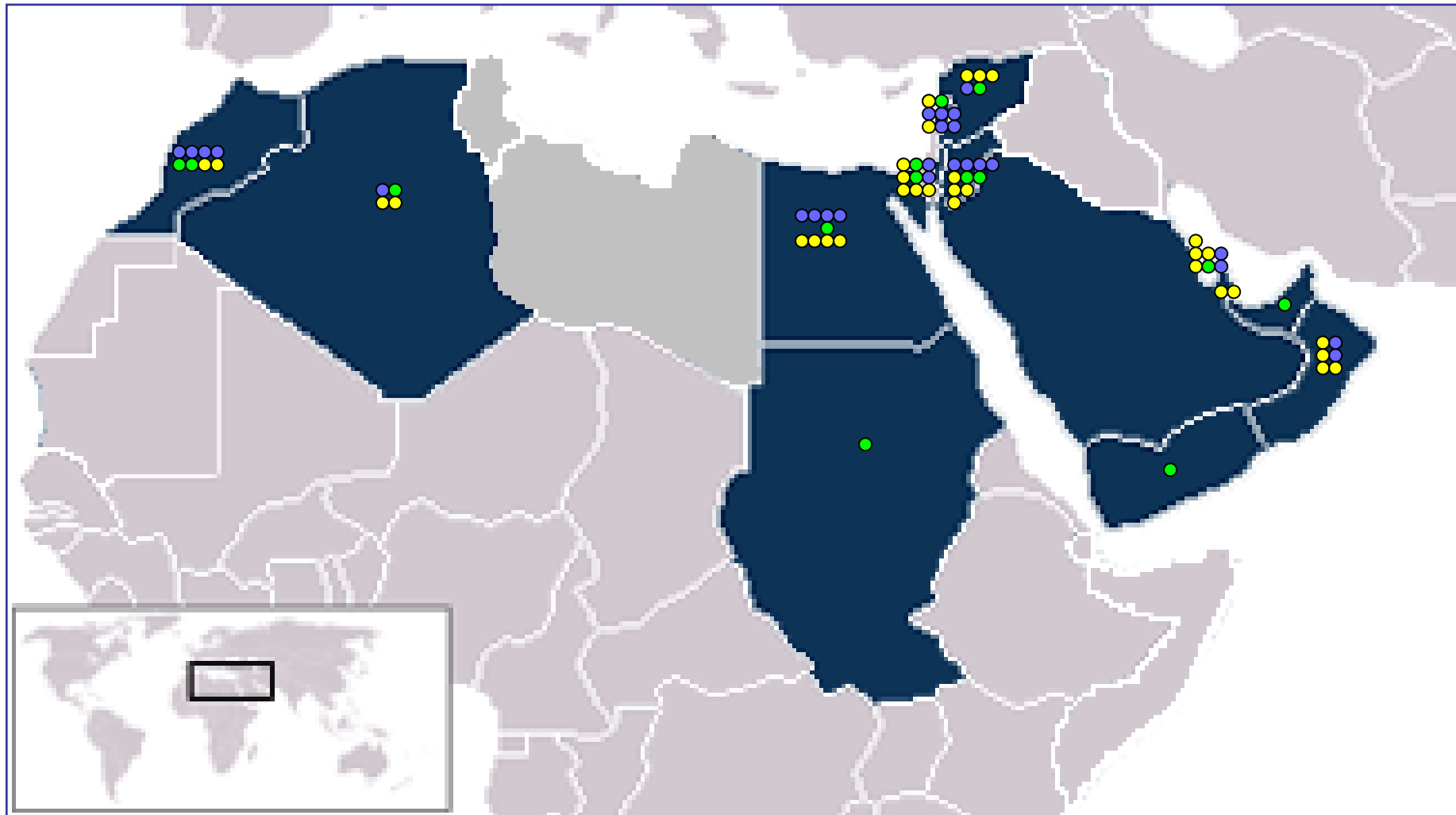
Regional consultation / collaboration, benchmark statements / guidelines needed on:

- Curricula:
 - weak theoretical foundations of teacher's training.
 - Weak application of theory to context of Education
- Assessment of students is weakest link: (need wider range of methods: cognitive skills vs memory recall,, moderation, item writing).
- State of Arabic text books and journals: minimum regional specifications needed

Follow-ups:

- Association of Arab Universities + UNESCO + ALECSO.
- Jordan: Conference to be convened by M of HE

FULLY-TRAINED QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWERS

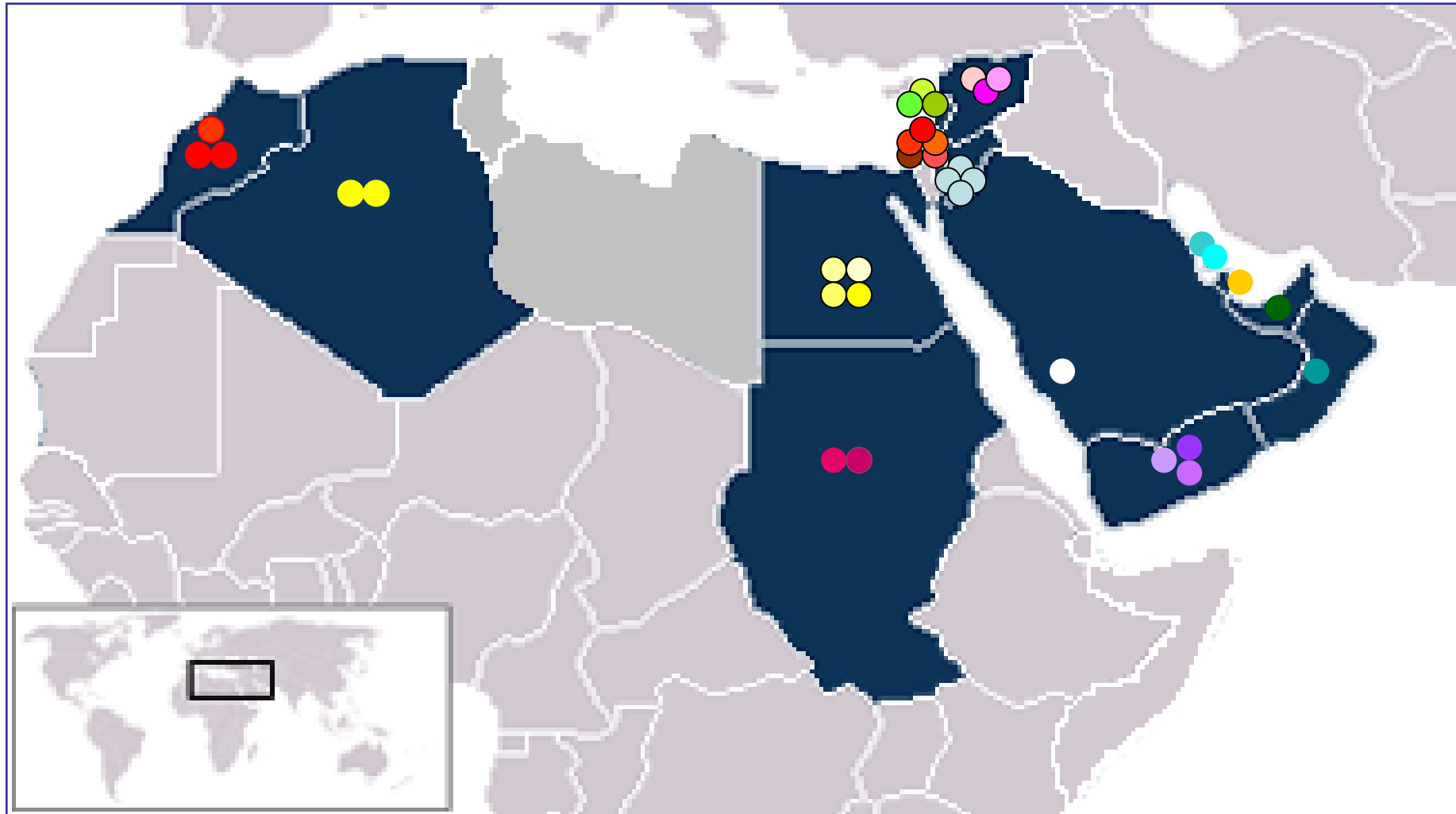


REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

- 36 leading universities in 14 Arab countries (36 university coordinators).
- 108 participating academics, of whom, 71 are fully trained QA reviewers.

[Table: Regional Participation](#)

NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES IN EACH COUNTRY



TESTING OF STUDENTS

CS + BA

THANK YOU