

Annex 2: Drafting a national roadmap for programme accreditation: which approach?

1. Introduction to the presentation presented on Nov. 28, 2018 at ANO

The question of the roadmap to follow for the installation of a mechanism of accreditation was the object of many interrogations. That is completely comprehensible and marks the concern quite natural to go towards the action. I.e. here the installation of an essential mechanism of accreditation for the regulation of the study programmes offer, the warranty of its quality and its adequacy with the needs expressed by the **national policies** and without of course forgetting the good information of the beneficiaries of higher education of which primarily **students and graduates** as well as the **companies**.

The roadmap is seen first like the key of the implementation and the action. It is thus not astonishing that the request for a roadmap is expressed in a strong way. This request is even more comprehensible and justified that the design and the organization of a mechanism of accreditation **imply many stakeholders**.

The installation of a necessarily complex device because of the number of potentially implied or impacted actors and sensitive because as of decisions which it must deliver on the recognition of the quality of the higher education programmes, implies the adhesion of the greatest number. It is here that the greatest difficulty is posed. Without adhesion of those whose activity will be impacted and directed by the mechanism, this one will not deliver what is expected from it.

Without the adhesion of the stakeholders, which will be expressed in the form of a consensus of the greatest number, the accreditation mechanism is likely to **prove useless** and in so doing it will be detrimental to the very idea of guarantee of the quality of higher education programmes.

The idea of roadmap implies **an approach by stage and a projection step by step towards the establishment of a consensus**. It is in this, at the level of the concept, already a useful tool. It poses outset which it is not a recipe but a manner of acting which integrates time like acting factor. The production of consensus requires time indeed. Time necessary so that the opinions are formed and that the debate leads to objectives and accepted practices.

Therefore, it is necessary to design a roadmap **to specify, or clarify, the goals that are targeted** (the end of the road) and of course what are **the steps for each stakeholder**. In a pictorial way, each partner can also have its own roadmap related to its own constraints, but it must of course that they all end up in the same place. Each stakeholder is important to the good performance of the mechanisms of evaluation and accreditation: ministry, higher education institutions, labour market actors, etc.

The experience of the Member States shows in addition that there is **no roadmap independent of a context**. Each country according to its own difficulties has its manner of making. A fine analysis of the deployment of the mechanisms of evaluation and accreditation in the three Member States partners of the consortium highlights that there is **no either single roadmap with the European level**. Finally, in each of the three countries, and this is probably true for all countries, it is necessary to periodically review the approaches to better support the progress of higher education.

The **ESG in their part 2** give a framework for the development of mechanisms of accreditation or evaluation. The respect of the standards of part 2 of the ESG is the best guaranty that the carriers of the idea can be given to sit the legitimacy of the mechanisms to be set up. They are demanding for those who must lead the project of setting up the accreditation mechanism but also for all the stakeholders whose efforts must contribute to establish accepted mechanisms and whose results will be usable.

The presentation on November 28 aimed to **place the concept of a roadmap from an ESG perspective**, to show usable tools in the design phases and to recall that the fundamental challenge to overcome is that accreditation mechanisms are part of the governance of higher education and for this reason they impact current governance practices and they produce opinions on the quality of results and action of all stakeholders. The ESG part of Part 2 emphasizes that touching with its crucial dimensions for higher education institutions and higher education is a sensitive activity that must be conducted with tact and caution.

2. Some practical guidelines

From a technical point of view

It is necessary to distinguish clearly between ends and means. There is no ready-made recipe. As a precaution, consider that what works in one country will not work in another:

- The first question to ask is the goals to be achieved;
- The second issue is to bring together a consensus of stakeholders on the goals and ways to achieve them.

The road map is a consequence of the choices that will be made. It is a tool at the service of making choices. It is not a goal.

From a more fundamental point of view

In the context opened by the Bologna Process there are two major issues concerning quality assurance:

- The first is the objectives to be achieved in terms of governance and the role of quality assurance procedures in this area;
- The second is that of the status of the external evaluation and accreditation system and its situation with regards to the expectations of the three parts of the ESG.

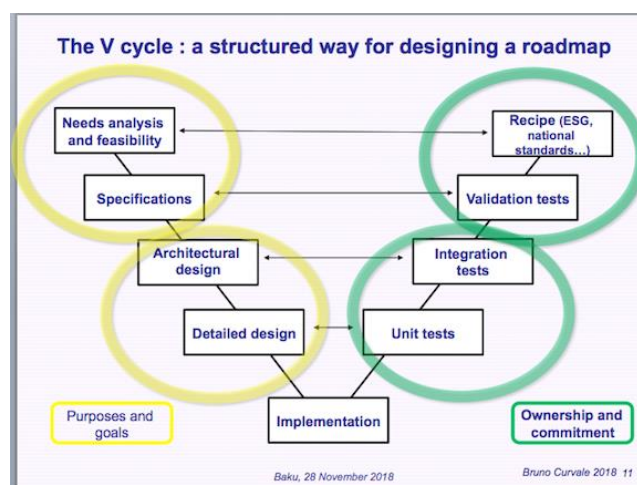
To go further:

- Analyse the existing:
 - Identify the actions already implemented
 - Ask for the agreement of stakeholders
- Prioritise projects or actions
 - Anticipate future projects
- Build the roadmap
- Involve all stakeholders: their participation is essential

Use ESG part 2 as a guide.

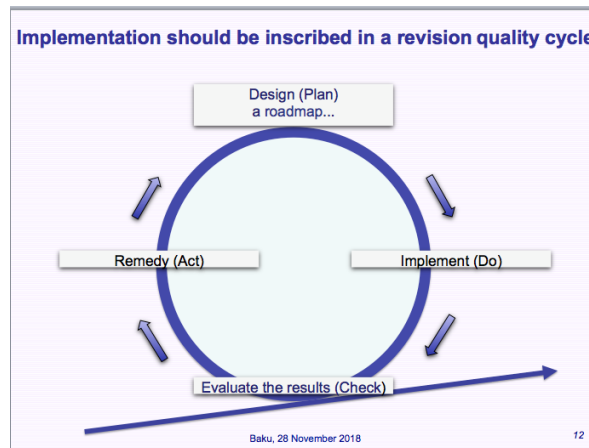
When implementing make sure that all stakeholders are listen to and participate

The V cycle: a structured way for designing a roadmap which facilitates verification that all stakeholders are well aligned during the design of all elements necessary for the proper functioning of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms



Adopt an experimental approach

Implementation should be inscribed in a revision quality cycle



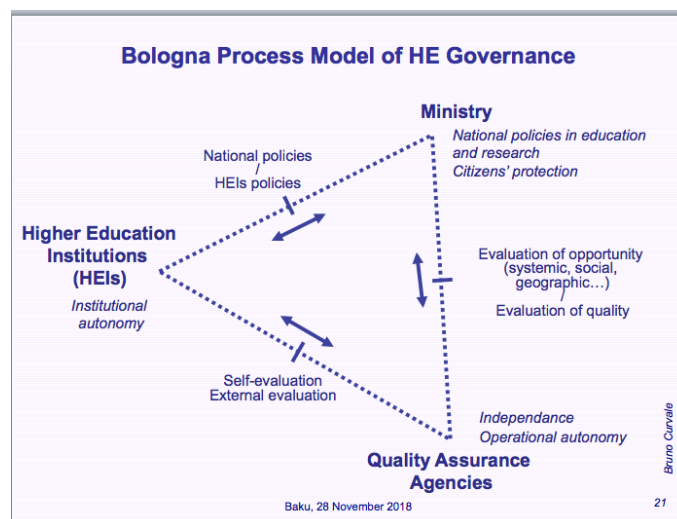
How to design a concrete roadmap?

The reflection should be based on a SWOT analysis referring on one hand to internal strengths and weaknesses, on the other to external opportunities and threat.

Some questions must be asked:

1. What are the purposes?
2. What will be the outcomes?
3. What are the steps?
4. What is the calendar? (time line, deadlines)

The Bologna Process Model of HE Governance clarifies the different roles and responsibilities



Final considerations

- A roadmap is not a recipe: a recipe is meant to reproduce but not to innovate;
- HE institutions need to innovate: some solutions adapted to today's world, could become outdated very soon;
- HE institutions must make choices: there are different roads to achieve their purpose;
- The accreditation mechanisms need to support experimentation and innovation while assuring accountancy and respect of quality standards.