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UNIT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EXTERNALLY
FINANCED PROJECTS



THE ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN
HIGHER EDUCATION



ESQA

Effective involvement of Stakeholders in
External Quality Assurance Activities

Guide for effective stakeholders' involvement in QA

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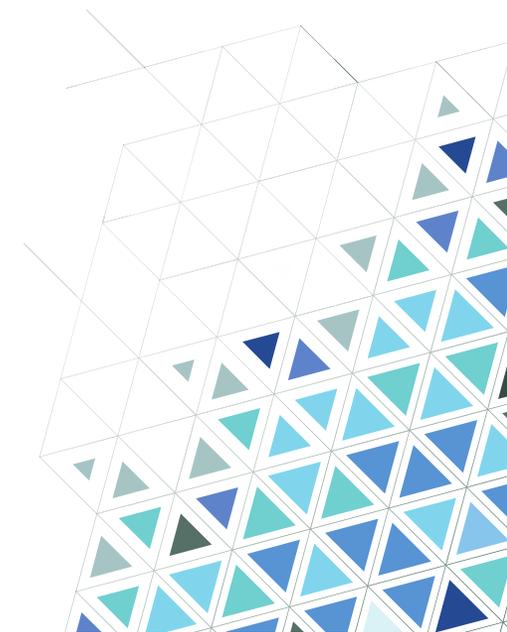
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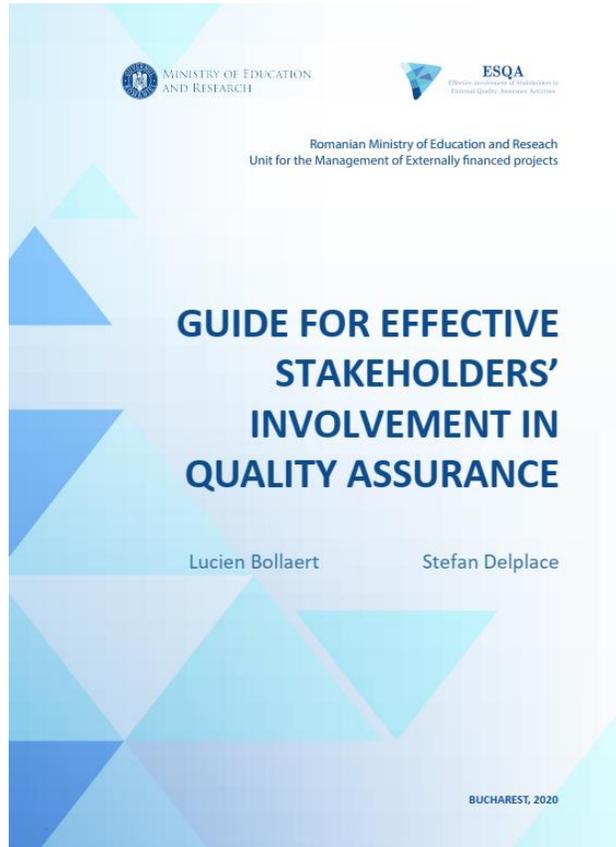
Co-author with Stefan Delplace of ESQA Guide



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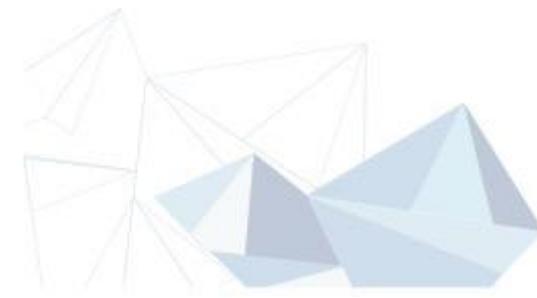
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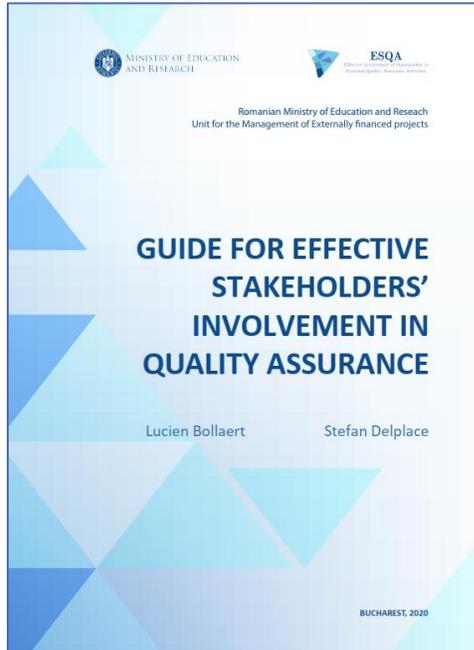


<https://esqa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GESIQA.pdf>

- Introduction to the Guide
- Related ESGs
- Overview of the themes & Guidelines
- Tool to identify degree of stakeholders involvement
- Follow-up: Questionnaire
- Short Q & A



- The 'Guide for effective stakeholders' involvement in QA' is last deliverable in **ESQA project** conceived before the Covid-19 outbreak.
- The Guide is the work of **2 experts in close collaboration with the ESQA partners.**



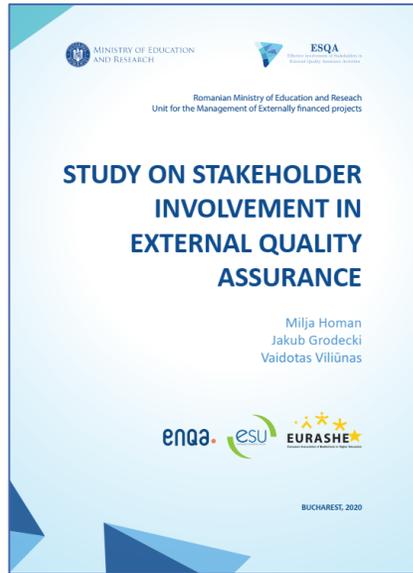
Coordinator: Ministry of Education - Romania

Partners: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), European Students' Union (ESU), Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher education (HCERES) - France, National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) - Bulgaria, The Danish Accreditation Institution (DAI), National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) - Republic of Moldova



The Danish Accreditation Institution





<https://www.enqa.eu/publications/study-on-stakeholder-involvement-in-external-quality-assurance/>,

- Underlying concepts and principles are that **QA embedded in diverse national and cultural political and HE contexts** as well as **quality itself and QA are contextually** influenced.
- The Guide does not prescribe anything as the ESG, but wants to give generic **inspiring guidelines and guiding elements** towards the realisation of effective stakeholder involvement.
- Effective stakeholder involvement is defined as **stakeholder involvement that has a positive impact on the quality of HE.**
- The Guide is informed by the **ESQA Study**, other surveys and research as well as practical experience.
- The Guide primarily addresses the **QA agencies and national authorities**, but it may also be inspiring to all stakeholders and outside the EHEA.
- The Guide mainly deals with **External QA.**



The European stakeholders model in the ESG QA Framework

- ESG 2.2: Designing Methodologies Fit For Purpose

(...) **Stakeholders** should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

- ESG 2.4: Peer-review experts

External QA should be carried out by a group of **external experts** that include (a) **student member(s)**.

- ESG 3.1: Activities, Policy and Processes for QA

(...) Agencies should ensure the **involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work**.

- ESG 3.3: Independence

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations **without third party influence**.

- ESG 1.1: Policy for QA

Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while **involving external stakeholders**.

- ESG 1.2: Design and Approval of Programmes: reference to NQF and QF-EHEA



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- Introduction: scope, objective, concepts, methodology and structure
- Theme 1: Sharing underlying concepts of quality in HE and QA systems
- Theme 2: Diversity of categories of stakeholders and their different roles, especially in consultations
- Theme 3: Objectives of stakeholders' involvement
- Theme 4: Recruitment/Selection of stakeholders
- Theme 5: Training of stakeholders
- Theme 6: Involvement of stakeholders in reviews
- Theme 7: Involvement of stakeholders in the governance and organisation of QA agencies
- Theme 8: Independence vis-à-vis stakeholders' involvement
- Theme 9: Communication and transparency towards stakeholders
- Theme 10: Strategic approach to stakeholders' engagement and supporting activities
- Phase identification tool

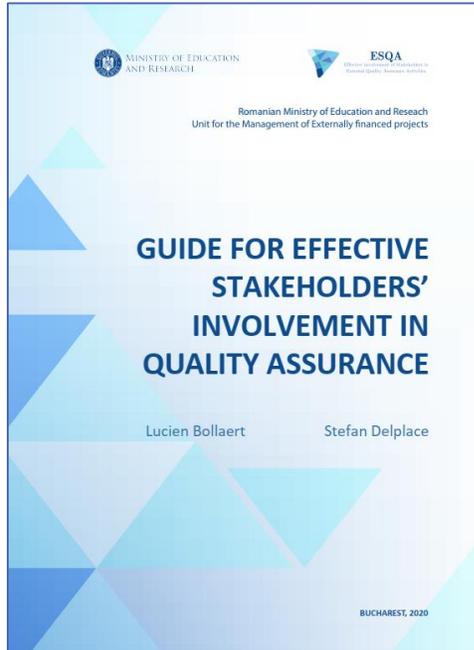


Structure of the 'Guide' under each theme:

- Introduction to the guideline describing shortly context and findings

The Guideline is an **inspiring** statement of the **ultimately best situation** and/or a (morally) required **action** to arrive at such an excellent situation in which **the stakeholders' involvement is most effective/impactful** in the **quality of HE, the QA system and/or the EQA activities of QA agencies.**

- Guiding elements towards realisation:
 - From generic or holistic to practical, topical and detailed
 - Making clear the **addressee(s)**

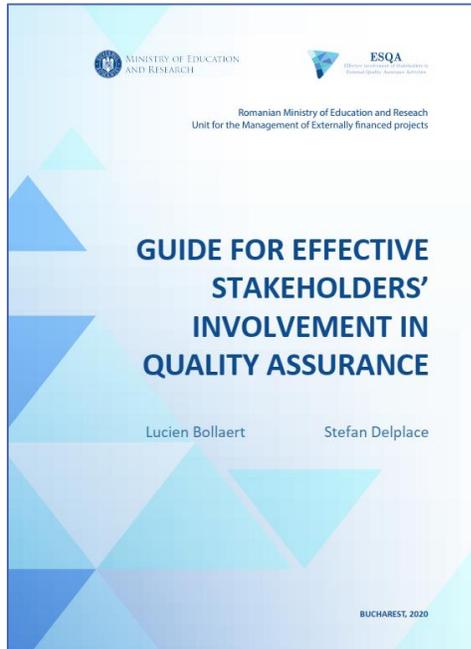


Theme 1: Sharing underlying concepts of quality in HE and QA systems

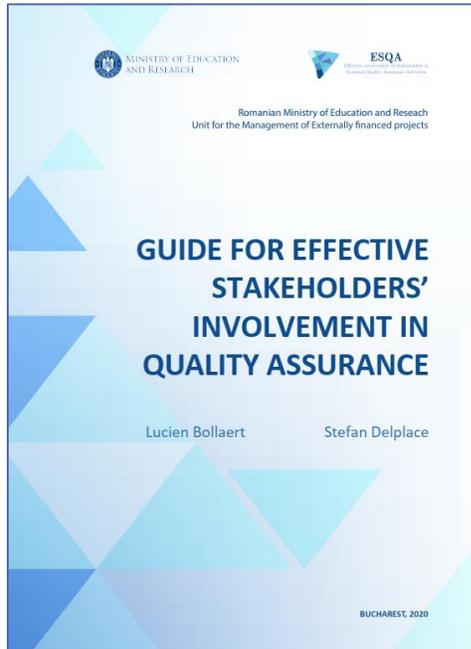
The underlying concepts of quality and QA systems, as embedded in the HE system, should be **shared** and **co-created** involving **relevant stakeholders**. This way a **commitment is built** which is embedded in a **quality culture** that is based on trust and mutual understanding.

Guiding elements towards realisation:

- **All stakeholders and QA agencies** should always keep in mind the underlying concepts. Sharing them is the ultimate basis for an effective commitment by all stakeholders.
- Make sure that **all stakeholders and QA agencies** have a good knowledge of the political and cultural context, and can work strategically as well as tactically within those contexts.
- **QA agencies:**
 - May organise open dialogues about the underlying concepts.
 - Should bear in mind and accept that stakeholders can have quite different views and should therefore be approached to commit themselves in different ways
 - Involve stakeholders in collaborative partnerships rather than merely consulting them.



Theme 2: Diversity of categories of stakeholders and their different roles, esp. consultations



All identified and relevant stakeholders that have an interest in the quality of HE should be **systematically** involved, especially when (re)designing a QA system. This may lead to more openness, transparency, and effective stakeholder involvement based on **co-ownership**.

Theme 3: Objectives of stakeholders' involvement

Be **explicit and transparent** in sharing in a collective way the **different objectives** of the stakeholder categories, in order to raise the effectiveness of their involvement.

As stakeholders are not a single, homogenous group, dealing with them requires a **diversified approach**; this may imply that their involvement is 'unequal' and happens at different stages.



Theme 4: Recruitment/Selection of stakeholders

The selection methods should be clear, publicly known and **used consistently** by the agency and all stakeholders, including the national authorities.

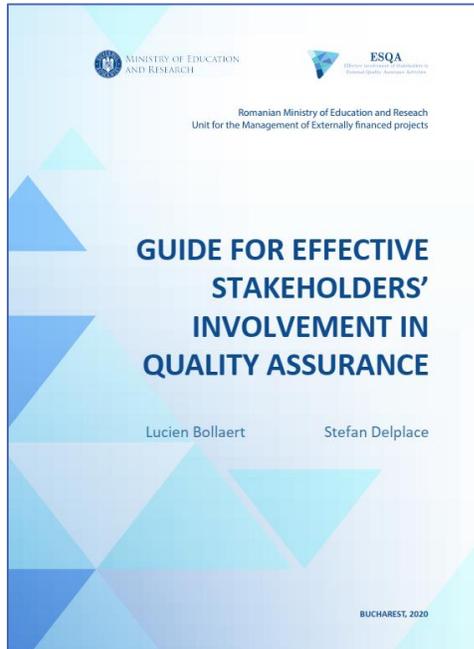
The recruitment methods may vary among the stakeholder groups. While **nomination** by the stakeholder's organisation is a sign of greater trust and independence, **selection** by the agency on the **basis of clear criteria** can help find a better candidate as far as vision, knowledge, experience and commitment are concerned. A combination of both has better chances of selecting more engaged stakeholders.

Preparatory meetings should best be held with the nominating stakeholders' organisations in order to **elucidate roles and expectations** of the future representatives.

Theme 5: Training of stakeholders

Well-prepared knowledge transfer about HE and QA should be organised in order to raise the commitment of stakeholders in the governance and work of the QA agency.

Trainings for review panel members should be **obligatory for admission to pools** of new experts as well as for **actual evaluations**. The trainings should be informative and develop the trainees' review skills in practice. Briefings must be held before any **review**.



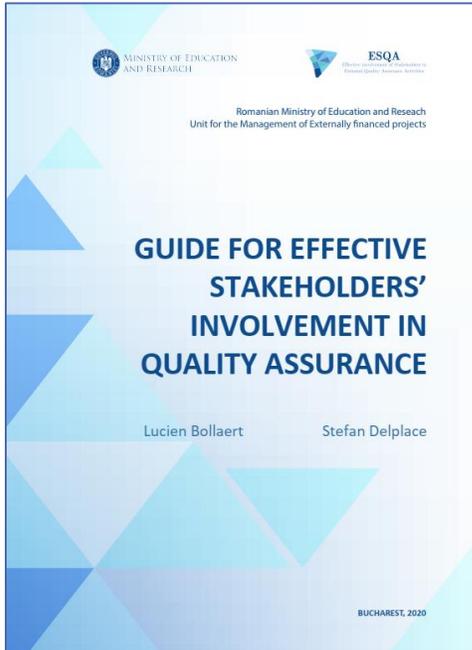
Theme 6: Involvement of stakeholders in reviews

Review panels should contain **all perspectives** of the institution, programme and/or topics under review. If the subjects are the QA processes and the output of a HEI or study programme, the perspectives are those of learners (student), teachers (academic peer/expert), of the institution (senior manager), the professional field and of the future lives of the graduates (employer and/or alumni). **The opinions of all review panel members** should receive equal attention during the review and decision processes, irrespective of their different roles and duties.

The international perspective is important in a review panel in the context of **global HE** and certainly when the HEI or study programme has a specific international strategy and/or dimension.

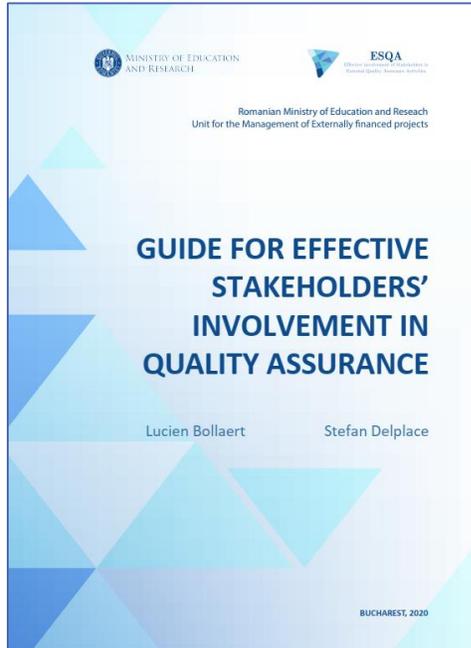
Theme 7: Involvement of stakeholders in the governance & organization of QAAs

The categories of the stakeholders and their degree of engagement are **related to the mission and strategy of a QA agency** as well as to the national QA system. Consequently, all **relevant and identified** stakeholders should be involved in internal and external QA activities of the agency. Relevant stakeholders' categories are those that reflect the opinions in the wider society linked to the quality of HE.



Theme 8: Independence stakeholders' involvement

The involvement of stakeholders should be organised in such a way that the **independence of the QA system, the governance and activities** of the agency are **enhanced**.



Theme 9: Communication and transparency towards stakeholders

Communication and transparency with all stakeholders should be considered as essential and **strategic building blocks** of a QA that functions as an effective stakeholders' model, in which there is a **culture of co-creating** and sharing of knowledge and practice.

Theme 10: Strategic approach to stakeholder engagement and supporting activities

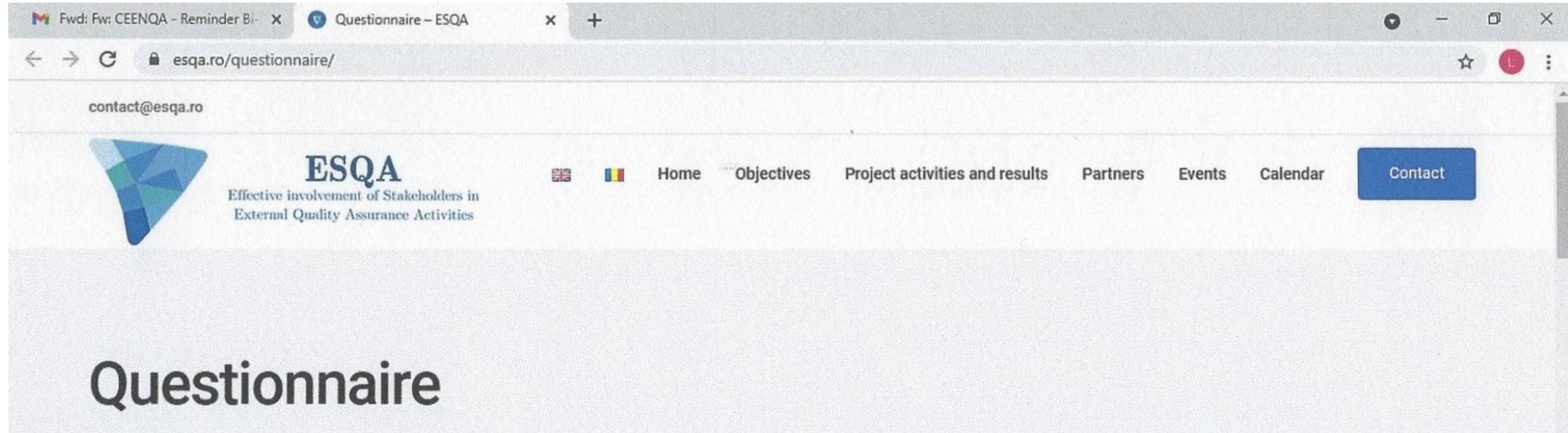
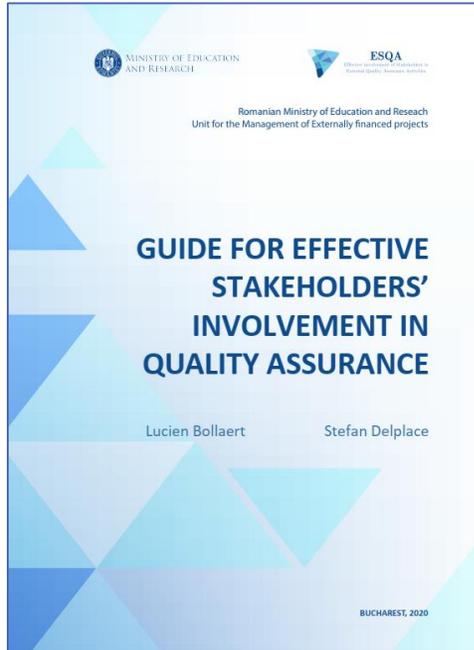
Stakeholder involvement which is aimed at having a qualitative impact should be **integrated in the agency's strategic policy**, and should also be linked to **other policies**, such as structural development, networking, communication and the agency's own internal QA.





Non-linear and non-automatic model or tool to identify the degree or development phase of stakeholders' involvement in 4 phases





Questionnaire: <https://esqa.ro/questionnaire/>

- ✓ Has your knowledge on stakeholder's involvement improved by reading the Study on Stakeholder Involvement in EQA?
- ✓ Do you think that the Guide on involvement of stakeholders' in QA activities is relevant for you/your organization?
- ✓ Have you identified at least one additional category of stakeholders that you intend to tackle in the future or at least on direction of improvement of your current practices?

THANK YOU!



Q & A

