HCERES

FACT-FINDING ON THE 4 PARTNER COUNTRIES (PC) SYSTEMS

Purpose
The aim of the fact-finding on the 4 Partner countries (PC) systems is to better understand the peculiarities each context brings in specific trends.

Methodology
An in-depth investigation is needed and will be carried out through an initial country draft report to be prepared by the representative of partner organisation (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Ukraine). The reports will follow the basic table of contents thereunder.
The reports make reference to the national framework, laws, guidelines, as well as statistics, strategies and funding mechanisms related to Cycle 3 and Quality assurance (QA) of Cycle3, challenges, trends and peculiarities of each context. The reports also include an analysis of the impact and use of international best practices (European ECTS, Salzburg Principles...) at the national level. The authors of the reports will involve national authorities and other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the country reports.
The sources of information that authors are expected to use include policy statements, studies/research papers, legislation and any other national available data.

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews is also to be used in the analyses and integrated into the reports.

Sources of information should always be cited. It should also be mentioned when the information does concern only your institution or more generally your country.

The reports will be between 15 and 20 pages long.

Guide of contents

Introduction (1 p)
Description of the methodology used to produce the report.

Executive summary (1 p)

1 Chapter 1: Overall landscape – National Higher Education (HE), research and QA context (with focus on Doctorate level) (6-8p)

1.1 Brief presentation of the HE and research system

1.1.1 Country size, number of HE students, number of HEIs, type of HEIs (public/private, general or very specific), missions of the HEIs…
- The role of HEI in research and delivery of doctoral programs, award of qualifications, the role of other bodies in charge for the award of doctoral qualifications
-Description of the general architecture of training programs provision (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, ECTS?....) and of Degrees awarded
- Articulation between Master and Doctorate level, statistics per level of study and field of study, students /graduates statistics
- References to the national qualifications frameworks

1.1.2 National statistics on research and role of the HEIs within the research system (if some), research priorities (at national level or at HEI level)? Role of other actors (if some)
- Statistics on research funded projects and type of owner
- Relationships between Academia and Research centers

1.1.3 Relationships between HE and Enterprises: internships, practicum, etc.
- Are there placements included in the Curriculum?
- Are there incentives from the HEIs to promote results dissemination and research exploitation policy (transfer, start-up, incubator…)

1.2 Overview of the national legal framework and regulations governing quality assurance (QA) of Cycle 3

- Is there a national legal framework for QA of HE? And more specifically Cycle 3? If not, are there other mechanisms? (role of international, regional frameworks? / any other ?
- Is there any national regulation governing the possibility to open a PhD program? What are the national requirements to open such programs?

1.3 Strategies and incentives for Cycle 3 at national level

- Did your government recently decide new policies for Cycle 3? If yes, what are the main reasons for this? And what are the main changes?
- Is the development of Cycle 3 encouraged by other ways?
- Are there incentives for HEIs / professors/students engaged in Cycle 3?
- Is there any gender evaluation on the PhDs? Is there any regulation or mechanism to favor gender balance on PhDs?
- Are companies looking for PhD graduates? Do they consider PHD graduates as an added-value? Do PHD graduates have advantages in terms of salary, responsibility…?

1.4 Impact of European Principles, Standards and Guidelines at national level

- Do you know the ESG? If yes, do they have an impact on Cycle 3?

- Do you know the Bologna Principles? Impact?
- Do you know the Salzburg Principles? Impact?
- Do you know any other standards/ principles that have an impact of Cycle 3?

1.5 Financial conditions
Description of funding mechanisms which have an impact

- Are there any financial incentives to develop Cycle 3? For Professors, HEIs, students?
- Are there any fundings?

2 Chapter 2 – Cycle 3: state of the art (4-6 pp)

2.1 Main characteristics of Cycle 3 programs (type of provision, of study, statistics...)

(Or Main obstacles to the implementation of Cycle 3 Programs in general and alignment with the internationally best practices in particular.)

2.1.1 Are there Cycle 3 Programs in your university country?

- If not at all, please explain the reasons for that
- If yes, is it a professional doctorate or a PhD program? Please also provide some historical background

---

Definitions:

PhD programs: Students are expected to extend the body of knowledge in their field to apply the knowledge to solve for a real-world problem in their workplace or community. They demonstrate this through a dissertation.

Professional doctorate programs: Students are expected to apply existing knowledge in their field to a real-world problem in their workplace or community. Professional doctorate students demonstrate this through an applied dissertation doctoral capstone, comprised of a paper, product, or portfolio.

2.1.2 Nature of the doctoral programs:

- Curriculum design (methodology ?)
- ECTS crédits (if any)
- Defense guidelines
- Etc

2.1.3 Characteristics of the Cycle 3 study:

- Describe the way Cycle 3 study is organized (selection of candidates and procedures for recruitment? research activities? Thesis to write and defend? National/local Commission to grant the diploma? National or universities regulation regarding minimum and maximum length of a thesis? Etc.)
- How many universities are granting cycles 3? Which ones?
- Which fields attract students?
- What are the main reasons to have more students in those fields? Is there an unbalanced situation among the different fields?

- Must thesis supervisors/directors have a particular status/degree? Is there a minimum number of theses each of them can supervise?
- Is there a minimum number of publications or other research indicators to get competences for supervising thesis?
- Is PhD international mention included as an option for PhD Candidates? In affirmative case, what are the requirements?
- How do thesis defenses take place? Has each university set regulations for that? If so, what are they?
- Are there specific criteria to defend a thesis and are they passed on to PhD students and thesis supervisor?
- What is the legal composition of a jury? How many people? Is the thesis director/supervisor member of the jury? Is the defense private? Public? For the defense is there a specific ceremonial presentation (gowns, proclamations, etc.)?
- Are there procedures to validate a "PhD at work"? And a PhD on "validation on skills"?
- Are there definitions of specific skills for a doctorate?

2.1.4 Statistics related to Cycle 3: *(in your HEI or in your country)*

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Nb of students starting a doctorate					
% of students coming directly after a Master of the same university					
% of Male starting doctorate					
% of Female starting doctorate					
Nb of graduates					
% of Male graduates					
% of Female graduates					
Nb of thesis in co-direction or bi-national direction					
Nb of students having fundings					
Nb of students becoming teacher at the end of Cycle 3					
Nb of sudents becoming professors at the end of Cycle 3					

-Please provide your own tables showing for the last five years:
- Repartition of graduated per field of study
- Duration of thesis, repartition per field of study for the last five years
- Drop out rates for the last five years and provide also information about the reasons and the fields of study
- Repartition of co-direction and of bi-national direction thesis by field of study,
- How many PhD are going back to university after a period of professional activites? How long after their master? Why? How many pHD graduates are recruited as the Academic staff at the end of their Phd ?

2.1.5 Positioning of Cycle 3

- Do doctoral (professional and PhD) students belong to a research laboratory while writing their thesis?

- What are the relations of PhD students with the research laboratory?
- Are PhD research subjects chosen in partnership with research units and in line with the scientific local, regional and national environment?
- Beyond research unities are there operational interactions with the industry sector and/or national, regional or local authorities?
- What is the ratio of PhD workers in the private sector?
- Is there any regulation that favors the employment of PhD workers?
- Are there any contribution from the private sector the PHD curriculum? or to its financing ? of regulation ?

2.1.6 Follow-up of Phd Students and graduates

- Besides the direction provided by each research supervisor, does the university follow up PhD students?
- Are there trainings provided to PhD? Are they compulsory to validate a doctorate? Do they give credits?
- Is there a document, a "thesis charter" specifying the mutual commitments between PhD students and thesis supervisors?
- Are there rules of conduct for doctorate within universities? Are they written? How are they applied? Has the university set up methods against plagiarism? Which tools (software against plagiarism) are used?
- In connection with local officials, are proceedings adapted to PhD profiles set up in order to follow up the progress of their research project (results obtained, publications/productions, integration opportunities, etc.)?
- Are plans set up by the institution to prevent and reduce situations that may lead to dropouts, for example follow-up committees for thesis, defense in the course of a thesis, tutor or referent, mediator in case of conflict, etc.?
- Does the institution provide its PhD students with theoretical and practical trainings in order to integrate into society at a level corresponding to his/her qualification, in the private or academic sector?
- How many PhD receive a scholarship/financing to write their thesis? Where do scholarships/financing come from?
- Are there theses financed by private or public firms, or by State bodies, on subjects specified by the financing bodies?
- What is the percentage of PhD finding a job immediately after their thesis? Six months after? A year after? Later? Are such jobs directly linked to their thesis subject or to the subject area of the doctorate?
- Are there Alumni associations? Are they highly active?
- Are there any consideration for the PhD tittle or defense if an international stay in a foreign research or HEI is done?
 -Are there any grants for travel to improve the internationalization of PhDs?
 -What are the accepted languages to defence and/or write the PhD dissertation? In case of more than one, could you provide any figures concerning the number of PhD dissertation in foreign languages?

2.2 IQA and EQA mechanisms of Cycle 3 (actors involved, statistics...)

2.2.1 Internal QA (mechanisms inside the HEI)

ESG PART 1			
	YES	NO	EXPLAIN
Do HEI have a policy to guarantee internally quality of the Degrees delivered?			
If yes, is it made public and part of its strategic management?			
If yes, do they have appropriate structure and processes?			
Are the pedagogical methods and methods of delivery assessed?			
Does the university assess the supervision of the director of thesis			
Does the PhD student assess the supervision of his/her director during his/her thesis?			
Does the university assess the success rates at the doctorate?			
Are the criteria for the assessment made public?			
Is assessment carried out by an external examiner?			
Is there a procedure for students appeals?			
Are there regulations for student admission?			
Are there regulations for student progression?			
How is the competence of teachers assessed?			
Are there fair and transparent procedures for the recruitment of staff?			
Do the HEI collect analyses and use relevant information for the management of Cycle 3?			
Do the HEI publish clear, accurate and objective information on Cycle 3?			
Are the Cycle 3 programs well monitored?			
Are the Cycle 3 programs reviewed and modified?			
Can the PhD students make their own evaluation of skills acquired throughout their thesis?			

2.2.2 External QA (mechanisms outside the HEI)

- EQA: who is in charge of the external assessment of the cycle 3 of each university? How? What is the procedure? What methodology? What criteria? When? For what purpose? What is the periodicity? Are there peer-reviews? Are the reports published?
- EQA: if it is relevant, give examples of an external evaluation used to improve the cycle 3 of a university?
- Is each particular PhD program evaluated does the evaluation take into account the University/Faculty as a whole?
- Is it available a procedure to establish a category (level) of the Cycle 3 in a National/Local level (ranking of PhD studies according to different indicators)?

3   Chapter 3 – Main challenges of Cycle 3 Programs and its QA (4-6 pp)

3.1   At national /policy level
Describe the needs and incentives to develop Cycle Program at national level/ the problems that need to be solved.

3.2   For institutions
Support needs: what are institutions' expectations?
Data to be taken from the interviews.

Example of an interview :

1. Does your university provide Cycle 3 Programs?
If Not, explain why.
If yes, continue the questionnaire

2. What are the objectives of your Cycles 3 programs? What are their positioning in the university's strategies?

3.How is Cycle 3 Program articulated with … :
- with Master Programs of your university?
- with research strategiestrategies and activities

4.Describe how Cycle 3 is organized (from recruitment to Degree awarding)
In your Cycle 3 programs :
- do you meet any difficulty to recruit students ?students?
- do you meet any difficulty to recruit and motivate professors with accurate competencies?
- explain any other difficulties or challenges you do meet

5. Is there any follow up system of the PHD graduates?

6. Can you explain if there are any mechanisms (internal or external) to guarantee quality assurance of Cycle 3 programs?

3.3   For PhD Students
Data to be taken from the interviews.

1. What were the rationales for you to start a Phd in your country?
2. Is the information related to PhD programs :
- clear
- easily accessible
- transparent
3. Do you feel you have enough support from your professors? from the academic staff ?
4. What are your expectations after your PhD?

5. What would you suggest to improve Doctorate studies in your university/country?

3.4 For the socio-economic world

1. Is there a need for PhD graduates in your socio economic sector? (precise which sector)
2. Are the PhD graduated well adapted to your needs?
3. Are you associated to Cycle 3 programs? Would you like to be more involved in the training/research activities?
4. Precise the positive and negative aspects of Cycle 3, from your perspective

4 Chapter 4 – Good practice examples (2-4 pp)

The examples may concern, among others:
- IQA or EQA best practices
- collaboration between HEIs
- collaboration between HEIs and the QA authority
- use of specific international or European Guidelines

5 Any other comment or useful information?

Please complete this section if you want to mention any peculiarity regarding your system or if you have the feeling that some information is missing in the questionnaire.