

Development Studies, Accreditation and EADI

A Vision Paper

presented to the EADI Executive Committee

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Vision Paper presented at the EADI General Conference (Bonn 21-23 September 2005)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

On request by the EADI Directors and the EADI Executive Committee, a task force composed of Jacques Forster, Richard Jolly and Hans Opschoor, assisted by Joost Mönks, was set up to draft a vision paper with *recommendations to EADI on where it wishes to go with quality management and accreditation guidelines especially with a view to the need of criteria for evaluating interdisciplinary programmes in development studies.*

As a consequence of the Bologna process a certain sense of urgency exists among development institutes that are or will be going through an accreditation process, since they may have to face accreditation frameworks that are not (fully) adapted to the specific (interdisciplinary) nature of development studies (DS). In the emerging European Area for higher education, the EADI institutes wish, where possible, to influence proactively the options for accreditation and quality assurance as far as Development Studies is concerned. A vision on the demarcation of the field of Development Studies is, however, needed in order to be able to define specific accreditation criteria².

The objective of the vision paper is:

- 1) To propose a demarcation of the field of development studies and its distinctive and identifying characteristics as the “object” of accreditation, and
- 2) To analyse how DS can fit into (existing) accreditation frameworks and identify in what areas specific criteria and standards for accreditation should be developed, taking account of the specific nature of DS.

The development of such an “adapted” accreditation framework should enable EADI institutes to comply with the likely results of the Bologna process.

The vision paper was presented at the EADI General Conference (Bonn 21-23 September 2005). The paper was well received and a general consensus has emerged to move ahead along the lines proposed in the vision paper. In amended form, it is hereby presented to the EADI Executive Committee for further action.

Bologna and accreditation

The Bologna Declaration (signed in 1999), is about creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as an area of mobility of students and staff, and labour-market orientated education, through an array of interrelated mechanisms, including:

- Comparable degrees in a system based on three main cycles (BA/MA/Doctoral cycle)
- Transferable credits (ECTS) applying to different qualifications
- Mobility of staff and students across Europe
- European cooperation in quality assurance (QA), incl. in accreditation
- A European dimension in higher education.

EADI and its institutional members should be in the forefront of developing the Bologna system in the interest of their European students as well as their students from overseas, and in that of those who (will) employ these students after their graduation. In that sense the taskforce considers the Bologna process, and in particular quality assurance and accreditation, not only as a “must” but rather as an opportunity for development institutes wishing to ensure high quality education standards, mobility of students and international recognition.

² In the UK DSA is in the process of developing a QAA benchmark statement for development studies. The results of this need to be taken into account in the further development of EADI accreditation standards.

The taskforce expresses the strong desirability to involve representatives of (sister organisations from) the South in the second phase of the project, in order to ensure a global reach and validity of the project.

Key elements of the Bologna process:

(i) Quality assurance(QA)

- Quality Assurance is an ongoing process of assessing, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of a higher education institution or a programme allowing an organisation to reach the standards or objectives it - or an external agency -has set.
- Under Bologna, academic institutions are required to set up *internal* mechanisms of QA, while QA agencies (mainly national, but there are some international) exert the *external* part, through evaluation and accreditation.
- The European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) has been tasked to provide the general, consensual European quality standards.

(ii) Accreditation

- Accreditation is the process through which an accreditation body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole (*institutional* accreditation) or a specific higher education programme (*programme* accreditation) in order to formally recognise it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards.
- The effect of accreditation will typically be the recognition of the institution's entitlement to issue degrees, and often an entitlement also to funding from public sources.
- Accreditation is obtained after a formal procedure through an *Accrediting Organisation* (AO). As a matter of principle, these organisations need to be independent of the institutions or programmes whose qualities they assess and that they accredit. In many cases (and this tends to become the rule across Europe) these AOs need to be recognised themselves by competent (national) public bodies responsible, on behalf of governments, and to belong to a European network.
- Normally reviews of programmes in accreditation processes take place on the basis of a so-called "*self evaluation*" prepared by the institution responsible for delivering the programme. A visitation or peer review is then conducted by independent *experts committees* appointed by recognised accreditation organisations to assess the self-evaluation by applying the relevant criteria and procedure.

Defining Development studies as “object” of accreditation

Our main concern is that the (predominantly mono-disciplinary) accreditation frameworks and criteria used are not (fully) adapted to the specific (interdisciplinary) nature of DS. As a result EADI institutes may face difficulty and frustration in the accreditation process.

In order to see to what extent DS fits into the existing accreditation frameworks and in order to be able to identify what adaptations would be desirable, we first need to answer the question of what precisely defines DS, as “object of accreditation”. This vision paper proposes a possible minimum operational definition and demarcation of DS, in order to be able to identify specific criteria that should be considered in the accreditation framework for DS.

(i) Definition and goals of development studies:

- o Development Studies is a multi- and inter-disciplinary field of study (i.e. not a *discipline*) that seeks to understand social, economic, political, technological and cultural aspects of societal change, particularly in developing countries.
- o It is characterized also by normative and policy concerns. It aims at contributing to possible solutions to societal problems that development or its absence may produce.

- In pursuit of these objectives, Development Studies is context sensitive. It examines societal change within a historical, comparative and global perspective. It aims to take into account the specificity of different societies in terms of history, ecology, culture, technology etc. and how these differences both can and often should translate into varied 'local' responses to regional or global processes, and varied strategies of development and methods.
- Development studies is a changing and evolving field of study, at present covering topics and concerns such as poverty, environmental and socio-political sustainability; women's empowerment and gender equity, globalization, sustainable development and human development. The range of topics it covers is, however, by no means fixed as witnessed by the evolution of the focus of the field of study over the last decades, and the emergence of new topics such as development issues and poverty in the industrialized countries.

(ii) Teaching development studies:

- As a case-oriented, issue-oriented and policy-oriented field, development studies draws on various disciplines but the manner in which this is done varies. In most cases, programmes and courses are inter- and/or multi-disciplinary and relate a number of general disciplines to the particular (and diverse) context of the topics and concerns. In some other cases, deepening the grasp of a single discipline is prioritized but accompanied by steps to enhance the ability to use and integrate concepts from other disciplines.
- Which disciplines receive priority attention and in which proportions will depend on the particular societal and policy issues considered, and hence on the particular specialization followed within development studies. Anthropology, cultural studies, natural sciences and engineering, agriculture, ecology, economics, history, geography, management/planning/administration, politics, sociology are each important.
- Methodological enrichment, including from cultural studies, ethics, gender studies, history and the humanities, participatory and action research is emerging; with increasing attention to general skills and tools such as in problem analysis, objectives analysis, concept mapping, participatory methods and evaluation, and broad based assessment methodologies.
- A gradual shift from ad hoc case study work towards more comparative and integrative approaches is occurring;
- Education in development studies in the North is based on genuine partnership with sister organisations in the South. Enhanced complementarity, building on the respective comparative advantages, and increasing North-South multi-locational delivery of teaching programmes pave the way for a movement from northern supply-driven DS education to more demand driven cooperation in education between the North and the South.

(iii) Learning Objectives (outcomes):

- Education in development studies needs to (a) deepen, contextualize and broaden disciplinary understandings, and (b) investigate societal problems in a way that both provides students with relevant analytical tools and theories, and provides them with a wide range of examples, cases and histories. It needs to (c) give students a coherent specialization focus and yet (d) flexibly accommodate their particular needs and interests given their academic and work background and career path. And it needs (e) to build-in ways for students to reflect on their own experience and to learn from each other's diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- Graduates are to be able to deal with the complexities of development processes and issues, graduates in DS and to carry out analyses in a broad perspective, using conceptual frameworks sensitive to relevant socio-economic and politico-ethical aspects. They must recognize the need to bring in features, concepts and tools from relevant ranges of disciplines and to relate these elements with scientific rigour.
- Graduates must be able to select and apply relevant tools for collecting, interpreting and assessing (qualitative and quantitative) information on development processes and their impacts, including knowledge and know-how from a variety of relevant sources.

- They must be able to communicate the results of their analyses to a variety of audiences ranging from professional (research-oriented as well as policy-oriented) to non-professional (stakeholders, other users).

Review and comparison of national practices in accreditation and the integration of the DS dimension

The vision paper reviews the programme accreditation processes in three countries, Switzerland, The Netherlands and UK with a focus on the following questions:

- What are the main criteria to be evaluated for an accreditation?
- What is the procedure for evaluating these criteria?
- Where and how could DS specific criteria be fitted in or specified, tailor-made and/or added in these existing framework as defined in the vision paper?

1) The comparison on the criteria shows that:

- The criteria applied in Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK are very similar. Broadly they all specify criteria and related sub-criteria for 1) the definition of aims and objectives, 2) internal quality assurance 3) curriculum and teaching methods, 4) results 5) teaching staff and 6) learning resources.
- The systems all appear as flexible enough to integrate specific sub-criteria as they relate to DS, including its inter/multidisciplinary dimension, the blend of empirical and theoretical approaches, the normative concerns, the need for policy-orientation as well as partnerships with sister organisations in the South.

2) The comparison on the procedures shows that:

- The three countries work similarly as well, with a phase of self-evaluation, an external evaluation and a final decision on accreditation.
- The differences relate in particular to the possibility which is provided in Switzerland to use a third party evaluation instead of the evaluation through the national accreditation body in the accreditation process. This element is of course interesting for EADI.
- Other differences relate to the organisation of peer-reviews which tend to be more institutionalised in the Netherlands and more ad hoc in Switzerland. The UK system shows slightly less convergence, but the overall philosophy remains similar, with a phase of self-evaluation and the use of external experts for peer-reviewing.

Thus, accreditation follows similar criteria as well as procedures in the selected countries, which should allow a harmonised integration and deployment of DS criteria in those systems.

Assessment of EADI's possible role and next steps discussed in Bonn

The Taskforce considers that, given the complex European context, the possible role of EADI in the accreditation process can be more or less ambitious. Two main options present themselves:

1. The first one is less ambitious but appears as realistic in a reasonably short term. An important phase of the accreditation process is the experts' phase or peer review. This opens a window of opportunity for EADI to develop criteria and benchmarks elements at a European level and bring a real added value compared to current, national frameworks for accreditation. A framework, or more concretely a "*Guide for the evaluation of DS*", with which all EADI members could agree to comply with during the experts' missions could guarantee that DS specificities are taken into account.
2. The second, more ambitious option would be to empower EADI to act as an accreditation agency for DS *programmes* or to have EADI set up one. The taskforce has identified another field (public administration) where accreditation is effectively, at programme level, carried out by a European association. EADI could potentially evolve in a similar direction.

In the Accreditation workshop and Directors Meeting in Bonn (September 22 and 23, 2005) the choice for the ambitious option was endorsed, in which EADI would be empowered (inter alia) as the accreditation agency for MA programmes of DS in Europe (similar to the EAPAA example) or decide to set a separate one up.

It was decided furthermore that a new taskforce open to all EADI member institutions committed to actively supporting the initiative should be set up. The taskforce will be headed by a chairman (who is preferably a member of the Executive Committee of EADI) and will be assisted by an executive secretary. The taskforce will report to the Executive Committee of EADI.

Par. 2.3 in the main text presents both a set of products to be expected from that new task force, and a set of next steps to realise these. The first elements in these are: the setting up by the EADI Executive Committee of the Task Force and calling a first meeting of it, on the basis of this final version of the vision paper.

Development studies, Accreditation and EADI

Vision Paper presented at the EADI General Conference (Bonn 21-23 September 2005)

Introduction

On request by the EADI Directors, the EADI Executive Committee has set up a task force composed of Jacques Forster, Richard Jolly and Hans Opschoor, assisted by Joost Mönks, to draft a vision paper. The taskforce was asked *to advise and formulate recommendations to EADI on where it wishes to go with quality management and accreditation guidelines. It was asked to provide EADI with recommendations on how best to cope with the present trend in Europe for accreditation and quality assurance, especially with a view to the need of criteria for evaluating interdisciplinary programmes in development studies.*

As a consequence of the Bologna process a certain sense of urgency exists among development institutes that are or will be going through an accreditation process, since they may have to face accreditation frameworks that are not (fully) adapted to specific (interdisciplinary) nature of DS. In the emerging European Area for higher education, the EADI institutes wish to where possible, proactively influence the options for accreditation and quality assurance as far as Development Studies is concerned.

Yet, no articulated consensus seems to exist presently on the nature of the field of Development Studies. Nor is there at present an articulated and recognized benchmark for Development Studies³. A vision on the demarcation of the field of Development Studies is, however, needed in order to be able to define specific accreditation criteria.

The objective of the vision paper is twofold: 1) to propose a demarcation of the field of development studies and its distinctive and identifying characteristics as “object” of accreditation, and 2) to analyse how DS can fit into existing accreditation frameworks and identify in what areas specific criteria and standards for accreditation should be developed, taking account of the specific nature of DS. The development of such an “adapted” accreditation framework should enable EADI institutes to comply with the likely results of the Bologna process.

A draft vision paper was presented at the workshop on accreditation, the Directors’ Meeting and the General Assembly at the EADi General Conference (Bonn 21-23 September 2005). The paper was well received and a general consensus has emerged to move ahead along the lines proposed in the vision paper. The vision paper is hereby presented to the Executive Committee for its further consideration and action. More specific next steps will be proposed in section 2.3 below.

The remainder of this vision paper is structured as follows. First we present some further thoughts on the rationale and objectives of the paper. Then we present its main body, in two parts: one on *Development Studies* as a field of study, and one on a system of accreditation in the domain of development studies that would do justice to its special features.

³ It should be noted that DSA in the UK is in the process of developing a QAA benchmark statement for development studies. The results of this initiative need to be taken into account in the further development of EADI accreditation standards.

Rationale, objectives and outline of the paper

A number of trends push our profession to move ahead with defining accreditation standards and criteria for the field of development studies. In the first place they relate to the Bologna process and include the following interrelated trends:

- Lack of convergence in the interpretation of the Bologna criteria in particular for the bachelor and the master degree, and possibly also on the doctoral level;
- The need to enhance our professional network and safeguard quality standards in training and research.
- The emergence of national accreditation organisms with a tendency towards a mono-disciplinary approach.

This leads to a certain sense of urgency among development institutes that are or will be going through an accreditation process, since they may have to face accreditation frameworks that are not (fully) adapted to specific (interdisciplinary) nature of DS.

Development Studies in the beginning of this 21st century, has entered a period of “soul-searching” to define the distinctive and identifying characteristics of its domain and future orientations. *No consensus* seems to exist presently on the nature of the field of Development Studies: different approaches are therefore likely to exist in Europe. Nor is there at present an articulated and recognized benchmark for Development Studies. A clear vision on the demarcation of the field and the object of the field of Development Studies is however needed before accreditation criteria are to be developed.

The paper is composed of two parts:

- Part 1: consists of a brief reflection on the historical foundations, the specific nature and the present trends in development studies. This part of the paper should significantly contribute to the definition of Development Studies as “object” of accreditation.
- Part 2: consists in particular of the structural (i.e. not yet the operational or detailed) aspects of accreditation of development studies, in view of development in the Bologna process and accreditation standards in a number of benchmark countries (NL, UK and CH). This should lead to the identification of a list of areas where criteria for accreditation should be developed, taking account of the specific nature of DS.

In the perspective of the taskforce, DS should be in the forefront of developing the Bologna system in the interest of their European students as well as their students from overseas, and in that of those who (will) employ these students after their graduation. In that sense the taskforce considers the Bologna process, and in particular quality assurance and accreditation, not only as a “must” but rather as an opportunity for development institutes that wish to ensure high quality education standards, mobility of students and international recognition.

However, there are also threats associated with accreditation of which the taskforce is aware and which need to be taken into full account in the further deployment of the project. Beyond the administrative burden and the risk of “bureaucratism” associated with the accreditation process, these include the risk of *over-standardisation*: One of the strengths of the DS is the large number of approaches and the room for innovation it offers. Exaggerating in the way of standardisation could endanger this strength. It is also possible that the developed specific criteria will in particular be targeted at the larger DS institutes, which may not apply to the same extent to or even exclude the smaller institutes.

On a different level the taskforce also expressed the strong desirability to involve representatives of (sister organisations of) the South in the second phase of the project, in order to ensure a global reach and validity of the project.

Part 1. What is “Development studies”, what defines us?

1.1. Setting the stage: Proposed definition and demarcation of development studies

To set the stage, the taskforce proposes the following definition and demarcation of DS. These provide a possible working basis for the identification of specific criteria for the accreditation of development studies to be undertaken in a next stage by a new Task Force.

Definition and goals of development studies:

- Development Studies (also known as ‘international development studies’) is a multi- and inter-disciplinary field of study (i.e. not a *discipline*) that seeks to understand social, economic, political, technological and cultural aspects of societal change, particularly in developing countries.
- Development Studies is characterized also by normative and policy concerns. It aims at contributing to possible solutions to societal problems that development or its absence may produce.
- In pursuit of these objectives, Development Studies is context sensitive. It examines societal change within a historical, comparative and global perspective. It aims to take into account the specificity of different societies in terms of history, ecology, culture, technology etc. and how these differences both can and often should translate into varied ‘local’ responses to regional or global processes, and varied strategies of development and methods
- Development studies is a changing and evolving field of study, at present covering topics and concerns such as poverty, environmental and socio-political sustainability; women’s empowerment and gender equity, globalization, sustainable development and human development.
- The range of topics it covers is, however, by no means fixed as witnessed by the evolution of the focus of the field of study over the last decades, and the emergence of new topics such as development issues and poverty in the industrialized countries.
- Though there have been dominant concerns in DS, there has never been a simple consensus on solutions, nor should there be, nor should teaching suggest this is desirable. There are too many uncertainties in the topics it covers and too much diversity in situations and objectives around the world to make this possible.

Teaching development studies:

- As a case-oriented, issue-oriented and policy-oriented field, development studies draws on various disciplines but the manner in which this is done varies. In most cases, programmes and courses are inter- and/or multi-disciplinary and relate a number of general disciplines to the particular (and diverse) context of the topics and concerns. In some other cases, deepening the grasp of a single discipline is prioritized but accompanied by steps to enhance the ability to use and integrate concepts from other disciplines.
- Which disciplines receive priority attention and in which proportions will depend on the particular societal and policy issues considered, and hence on the particular specialization followed within development studies. Anthropology, cultural studies, natural sciences and engineering, agriculture, ecology, economics, history, geography, management/planning/administration, politics, sociology are each important.
- Education in development studies therefore needs to (a) deepen, contextualize and broaden disciplinary understandings, by reference across disciplines and by giving historical, intellectual and comparative context; and (b) investigate societal problems in a way that both provides students with relevant analytical tools and theories, and provides them with a wide range of

- Methodological enrichment, including from cultural studies, ethics, gender studies, history and the humanities, participatory and action research is emerging; with increasing attention to general skills and tools such as in problem analysis, objectives analysis, concept mapping, participatory methods and evaluation, and broad based assessment methodologies. A gradual shift from ad hoc case study work towards more comparative and integrative approaches is occurring;
- Education in development studies in the North is based on genuine partnership with sister organisations in the South. Enhanced complementarity, building on the respective comparative advantages and increasing North-South multi-locational delivery of teaching programmes pave the way for a movement from northern supply-driven DS education to more demand driven cooperation in education between the North and the South.

Learning Objectives (outcomes):

- To deal with the complexities of development processes and issues, graduates in DS should be able to carry out analyses in a broad perspective, using conceptual frameworks sensitive to relevant socio-economic and politico-ethical aspects. They must recognize the need to bring in features, concepts and tools from relevant ranges of disciplines and to relate these elements with scientific rigour.
- Graduates must be able to select and apply relevant tools for collecting, interpreting and assessing (qualitative and quantitative) information on development processes and their impacts, including knowledge and know-how from a variety of relevant sources. They must be able to operate intelligently in situations of incomplete data and information.
- They must be able to communicate the results of their analyses (and their ways of arriving at these results) to a variety of audiences ranging from professional (research-oriented as well as policy-oriented) to non-professional (stakeholders, other users).

The sections below very briefly sketch the background of the origin, development and future perspective of DS as basis for the above definitions.

1.2 How did DS come about and what has changed?

1. Introduction : succinct trends in development studies and development cooperation

Development studies in the early 1950 emerged in a very specific historical context. This was pertinently defined by Myrdal⁴ as a combination of three elements: decolonisation, the emergence of new power elites in many developing countries with a development oriented agenda and the Cold War. Decolonisation and the Cold War called for a new approach towards both countries and territories- most of them colonies or former colonies- in which poverty, illiteracy and poor health standards were widespread. The scene has since then considerably changed.

The field of development studies has indeed seen quite fundamental policy debates over the past decades⁵. Thinking on development has changed, as well as the main paradigms that provide its

⁴ See Myrdal, G., 1996, *Asian Drama. An inquiry into the poverty of nations*, New York, Twentieth Century Fund and Pantheon

⁵ See for instance Spoor, M. (editor), 2004, *Globalisation, poverty and conflict*, Dordrecht, Kluwer

foundation⁶. Though there have been dominant concerns in DS, there has never been a simple consensus on solutions.

In the early days of post-colonialism, with the emergence of independent end nationalist regimes, there was a strong belief in the virtues of the “development state”, interventionist policies, import substitution, protectionist models of development and a strong emphasis on overcoming or mending “market failures”. Several stages of the development debate emerged, such as the introduction of the “basic needs approach” and the classic debate over whether growth and equity objectives can be reconciled. By the mid- and late 1970s the focus shifted towards “state” or “bureaucratic failure” and the realisation that there was substantial rent-seeking within the state, which had previously been seen as benign or good. The early 1980’s saw the emergence of a neo-liberal development agenda, which radically turned the clock towards a near sacrosanct belief in the virtues of the market. The foundations were laid for the era of structural adjustment and what has later become known as the “Washington consensus”. The pendulum shifted from regulation and state control to deregulation. Adjustment took place in the midst of a profound debt crises, and renewed lending, particularly by the international financial institutions, followed, making the debt crisis a sometimes forgotten but nonetheless structural issue for the developing world. The role of the World Bank and the IMF became more important than originally intended at Bretton Woods, and also different, for example, in their invoking conditionality related to structural adjustment before lending could follow. In the early stages of adjustment (know as the “structural adjustment programmes”) it was fashionable to consider poverty as a temporary phenomena which would be resolved after economic growth had resumed and economic recovery was realised. The “trickle down” theory, according to which any type of growth has a high elasticity of poverty reduction, regained popularity in the neo-liberal area. Actually the period of economic adjustment has shown growing income inequality to be a main factor underlying rising poverty.

In the 2000s the Millennium Development Goals, alongside with conceptual development and discussion around sustainable development and human development, have provided a new impulse to the international development and policy debate. The Development Goals by 2015 mark concrete targets for “Development”, and many governments have agreed to these objectives. Whether these goals can be achieved is another issue. They have to any extent brought focused attention and renewed intense debate about the relationship between the process of globalisation, widespread poverty and the emergence of many violent conflicts.

Though some scholars have tried to show that there is convergence, it appears now largely accepted that the gap between poor and rich (in the various manners that this can be measured) became more profound in the past decades. While globalisation may provide increased opportunities, it seems that quite some countries and segments of the population have been unable to benefit and a process of “exclusive” rather than “inclusive” growth has taken off. There are positive signs such as the rapid development of countries like China and India, which house most of the world’s poor and show reduced poverty incidence (at least in China). Africa, however, is lagging, alongside, quite a number

⁶ Of particular importance in the definition of the specificity of DS as an interdisciplinary and context sensitive field of study is the critique that emerged in the 1960s on the need for a specific approach towards problems of economic development. Dudley Seers’ “*Limitation of the Specific Case*” (1967) very aptly poses this critique. He argues that the study of these problems cannot be adequately undertaken out of “general theory” of economics derived from the experience of a few highly special cases based on western countries. “A book is not called “Principles of Astronomy” if it refers only to the earth or the solar system or even the local galaxy”. The major inadequacies of conventional economics with the typical case of unindustrialised economies are, according to Seers, that the analysis focuses on the wrong factors, and the models do not fit at all closely the way in which non-industrial economies operate, for instance because they take institutions as given (whereas the question precisely is what institutions to change and how), and because they omit the conditional nature of economic progress on raising the quality of labour. This renders conventional economics not only irrelevant but also makes the student of development gradually unfitted to understand, let alone, solve, the problems of non-industrialised societies.

of “transition” countries that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In both cases, nationalist and ethnically based conflict have caused much suffering and widespread poverty in politically unstable and fragile societies where sustainable development seems still a “bridge too far”.

As development decades have gone by, the boundaries of development cooperation have equally evolved and have been constantly expanded. New objectives have not been replaced but rather added to original ones. In a first phase, accelerated growth was often the key objective. It was to be brought about by higher rates of capital formation made possible by international transfer of resources. This objective is still very often in the forefront, particularly for low income countries. However, the means advocated to promote growth have changed and tended to shift to policy and institutional reform rather than the transfer of resources per se. At the turn of the millennium yet new dimensions were included in the North-South international development cooperation. Issues such as democracy, human rights and good governance, in brief political reforms, came to the forefront of aid relationships at the end of the Cold War. Today the scope of development cooperation has grown in complexity and diversity and comprises both bottom-up approaches (such as community development, women empowerment) and top-down strategies (such institutional development and state-building).

2. The continued relevance of development studies

For a long period of time development studies were, with important exceptions, an “asymmetric business”⁷. “Northern” social scientists were studying the “South”, i.e. those parts of the world which were facing “development problems”. As time went by the South’s capacity to study its own problems has however considerably increased. Does this mean that DS in the North have become obsolete? This paper argues it has not, both because there still are needs in the traditional areas of DS and because new development problems in different parts of the world call for the expertise developed over time by DS. The continued relevance of DS is, however, conditioned by its ability to renew itself and learn from the past and its ability to adopt a pro-active stance.

a) Relevance in traditional areas

In the North there is still a continued need for expertise on developing countries and their specific development needs. Yet the context of DS has changed in our globalising world. The ongoing integration of the world economy intensifies and diversifies the impact of many- and sometimes new-dimensions of international relations in developing countries. Although globalisation is said to be accelerating the integration of the world, it also marginalizes, leaving out many, and in particular the poor countries. Decisions in the North on aid and trade but also on environment and migration issues for instance, have to be made in full cognisance of their impact on developing countries and their part in the globalised economy, especially if these decisions have an adverse impact of developing countries.

DS have in this sense a continued role to play as a inter- and multidisciplinary and context sensitive way of looking at development issues in a globalising world. At the same time it has a role to play in the critical reflection on conventional development strategies and the search for new ones, in the continued pursuit of remedies and answers for development issues.

b) Relevance in new areas

The new areas in which development studies can provide valuable input derive from both the new agenda of international development cooperation, relating for instance to the MDG, sustainable and human development, and the developing problems confronting the North itself, the increasingly heterogeneous South and the specificity of so-called “transition economies”.

⁷ See for instance Forster, J., 1997, *The new boundaries of international development co-operation*, in “Changing international aid to education”, King, K., and Buchert L. (eds.) Paris, UNESCO publishing.

The dichotomy, in this respect, dividing the world into developed and developing areas has at all times been questionable as both groups always displayed a certain degree of heterogeneity. The “third world” still exists as many developing countries continue to face “traditional” unresolved development problems, yet its boundaries have definitely changed. Transition economies of the former communist countries are difficult to characterize since they tend to display both typical characteristics of developed (such as high education, scientific research levels) and developing countries (such as structure of foreign trade). At the same time “development crisis” in the industrialised world has led to increasing spread of poverty in the rich world itself.

The dichotomy dividing the world according to the degree of development therefore seems to have lost its validity, if it ever had one. All regions of the world face unresolved development problems. This implies that the potential scope for development studies equally increases. Specifically, the interesting turn is that the experience of DS can be of relevance in dealing with the development problems which the high income industrialised countries are themselves confronted with. This concerns issues in which developing countries have gained experience and which, *mutatis mutandis*, could be relevant for the North, for example in dealing with poverty and inequality related issues, coping with structural adjustment and its social and political feasibility. This applies even more to transition economies.

As far as the international development agenda is concerned DS may have a comparative advantage in areas relating to various “Global” issues -stretching from security to trade and the environment, the MDG and global governance. DS may have a distinctive and critical contribution in the global agenda setting in addressing, for instance, the question of what the root causes are of global problems (such as global environmental problems) , what their impact is in various parts of the world, who the main actors are and what the policy options are in the North and the South. It is well placed and actually ideally suited to contribute to the thinking of what dimensions and targets beyond those encapsulated in the MDGs are to be pursued. DS should not have the pretention to deal with all these issues which require expertise knowledge. DS has however a number of assets which should enable to meaningfully participate in the study, teaching and debate on such themes, notably because of the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of DS. This is not a monopoly of DS, but development oriented social scientist can contribute to the integration of social, economic, and political dimensions of teaching and research on global issues, which all, almost by definition, require a inter- and multidisciplinary, context sensitive approach. In addition DS has developed a strong experience – and even a positive reputation- in understanding divergence in perception and the need to conceptualise analysis of social and human phenomena.

In view of the changing context of DS in the North and the South, there is a need for DS to adopt a new agenda based on its strengths and comparative advantages. Development studies in the North have to further develop or define an enhanced partnership with organisations in the South based on genuine partnership and complementarity. In student training, new modalities involving more partnership based approaches with multi-locational delivery and distant learning are emerging⁸, and the centre of gravity of the point of delivery of training is shifting away from the North. This may pave the way for a movement from northern supply-driven international DS education to more demand driven cooperation in education and research between the North and the South.

1.3 The specific nature of DS

In view of defining a vision on the demarcation of the field of DS as object of accreditation, and based as well on the concise perspective proposed in of the previous section, the following distinctive and identifying characteristics of DS are proposed in this paper. They relate in particular to the interdisciplinary and problem-oriented character of DS. The partnership and network dimension, as another key characteristic, has already been developed in the previous section.

⁸ See for instance Opschoor, H., *Knowledge sharing in support of human development*, in op cit Spoor, M., 2004

One widely agreed issue relating to the characteristics of ‘Development Studies’ is that they involve the blending of analytical approaches and insights from several ‘disciplines’⁹. This, first, raises the question of the nature of a discipline, and whether ‘Development Studies’, as an area of study which synthesises several disciplines, can itself be regarded as a discipline. Most of those involved in ‘Development Studies’ would probably not regard it as a discipline, and most would also have their own ‘home’ discipline – such as economics, sociology, political science, civil engineering and so on. This implies that ‘Development Studies’ is an ‘umbrella’ field of study – covering a range of disciplines – rather than being a discipline in itself.

In so far as disciplines are associated with particular paradigms (at least in their ‘mainstreams’) the above already necessarily implies paradigmatic diversity of DS. But also in terms of e.g. normative stances and ideological perspectives as well as the diversity typical of the sociology of knowledge, such paradigmatic diversity and an aprioristic pluralism are typical of development studies.

Closely related to this issue is the observation that Development Studies is, in nature, more inclined to be ‘problem-oriented’ than to be ‘discipline-oriented’. It is concerned with bringing intellectual power to bear on major societal problems through the selection of appropriate theory, techniques and methods as a basis for studies which enhance our understanding¹⁰. Much of DS is normative: it is not merely concerned with knowledge creation for its own sake, but more characteristically with knowledge creation as an instrumental means of contributing to the improvement of natural and social conditions. And the latter is built on an enhanced understanding of these conditions as well as of the processes by which social agents address them.

It is necessary to be clearer about the notion of interdisciplinary. The notion of interdisciplinarity is a difficult one¹¹, as many related concepts exist with various interpretations: multidisciplinary, crossdisciplinarity, pluridisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity. These forms of *non-disciplinary* knowledge have in common that they are generally defined in contrast to what is seen as ‘normal’ – that is disciplinary – knowledge, and the prevailing classification of research in disciplines, sub-disciplines, and research fields is often taken for granted. Therefore disciplinarity is first defined, before nondisciplinarity is defined. A disciplinary research field can be defined (in line with Kuhn) as a group of researchers working on a specific set of research questions, using the same set of methods and a shared approach. Disciplinary research is ‘normal problem solving’ within a ‘paradigm’. Non-disciplinary research then can be seen as ways of combining elements from various disciplines, as an interaction among two or more different disciplinary specialties, in order to answer practical questions and to solve practical problems. The interaction may range from communication and comparison of ideas, and the exchange of data, methods and procedures, to the mutual integration of organizing concepts, theories, methodology, and epistemological principles. Without trying to define all the various concepts mentioned above, the basic difference between these various manifestations of non-disciplinary is the *level of integration* of the different disciplinary approaches they are based on.

- In the *multidisciplinary approach*, the subject under study is approached from different angles, using different disciplinary perspectives. However, neither the theoretical perspectives nor the findings of the various disciplines are integrated.

⁹ See for instance Tribe, M. and Summer, A., 2004, *The nature of development studies: An exploration from the standpoint of the British-Irish Development Studies Association*, paper prepared for the DASH Annual Conference 2004

¹⁰ A good example of such an approach is the work of Amartya Sen on poverty and famines

¹¹ See for instance van den Besselaar, P. & Heimeriks G., 2001, *Disciplinary, Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary concepts and indicators*, paper presented at the 8th international conference on scientometrics and infometrics, Sydney. See also the influential OECD study: *Interdisciplinarity: Problems of Teaching and Research in Universities*, 1972, Paris.

- An *interdisciplinary approach*, on the other hand, implies a direct interaction between the disciplines, with individuals being knowledgeable and experienced within more than one discipline. It creates its own theoretical, conceptual and methodological identity. Consequently, the results of an interdisciplinary study of a certain problem are more coherent, and integrated. The OECD study (1972) defines interdisciplinary as “the interaction between two or more disciplines. This interaction can go from the mere transmission to the mutual integration of the basic concepts, epistemology, terminology, processes, as well as of the organisation of training and research”.

DS as a multi- and inter-disciplinary academic field of study (i.e not a *discipline*), however, still requires rigorous disciplinary foundation. One of the key challenges of the DS accreditation framework will be to operationalise the inter- and multidisciplinary rigour in its teaching programmes. Without sufficient depth and scientific rigour there is a major risk that this dimension of DS is but a thin layer of inter- and multidisciplinary which may be adequate for journalistic purposes but not for academic studies.

Illustration Box

*Diplôme de formation continue en études du développement:
A concrete example of continuous training reflecting some of the
DS main characteristic*

This post-graduate diploma serves to illustrate some of the characteristics of a multidisciplinary, problem-oriented DS training programme in partnership. The guiding principle of the DFD is to make different actors interact: the iuéd, responsible and coordinating the whole diploma and pedagogical support, the student, collaborating with an institution (the “supporting institution”, an NGO in most of the cases), with which the student sets up a field research theme, and finally the academic partners in countries from the South.

Three phases	August-October	November-January	February-March
Three pedagogical phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intro to concepts, theories and methods ▪ Initiation to a multidisciplinary approach to DS ▪ Introduction to the analysis of a specific issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applied field study ▪ Analyse and diagnostic of a precise socio-economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge and experiences sharing Drafting of the report, experiences capitalisation ▪ Exchanges between continents ▪ Visits of institutions
Three places	Bamako (Mali) or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arequipa (Peru) or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hanoi (Vietnam) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In country of residence of the student, possibly at the office of the “supporting institution” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geneva
Three partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ L’Institut supérieur de technologies appliquées (ISTA), Bamako or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo (DESCO), Arequipa or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Asian Institute of Technology Center in Vietnam (AITCV), Hanoi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring of the students in the field through iuéd staff and/or local staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All courses and seminars take place at the iuéd ▪ Additional fields visits are also foreseen

Specifically, one student, for example, was found to engage into the DFD after having completed an internship with a Swiss NGO, to study the exportation of electronic waste to developing countries and its impact on public health. This student is supported by the NGO of her internship. One of the decisive elements in her choice of the DFD was the possibility to study a concrete multidisciplinary problem, with a strong link to practice, with the opportunity to study both in Geneva and Vietnam.

Part 2 : Foundations for a possible system of accreditation for Development Studies

Having set the stage of what defines DS, part 2 of this paper focuses on the Bologna process itself. It starts with a basic description of its main components and finishes with a series of options for the future in terms of accreditation of Development Studies and EADI's possible role.

Specifically, this part aims to:

- Describe the main elements of the Bologna process and how the process is unfolding, highlighting what that might mean for Development Studies at the MA-level.
- Review and summarise the accreditation practices and standards currently in use in some relevant countries (NL, UK, CH). In doing so, we present a first list of areas where criteria to be used in accreditation should be developed taking into account the specific character and nature of the field of DS.
- Indicate what roles there might be for EADI within this context, even potentially as an accreditation body, and what the possible implications of each of these would be for EADI.

2.1 Bologna: why and how

1. The Bologna Declaration

Bologna is not a binding agreement. It is a Declaration (signed in 1999), so at best it is an agreed policy or a declaration of intent in the form of a structured process. It is about creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as an area of mobility of students and staff, labour-market orientated education, summarised with the term of “employability”¹². It also constitutes for EU states an important element of the Lisbon Strategy aiming at making the EU the first knowledge based economy in the world¹³. It intends to do this through an array of interrelated mechanisms (as defined by the 1999 Declaration):

- Easily readable and comparable degrees
- System based on three main cycles (BA/MA/Doctoral cycle)
- System of transferable credits (ECTS) applying to different qualifications
- Mobility of staff and students across Europe
- European cooperation in quality assurance (QA), incl. in accreditation
- European dimension in higher education (the introduction of the “European” perspective; what is particular to Europe as a continent)

Bologna sees students and staffs move through this open area on the basis of internationally transferable (harmonised) European credits (ECTS), through programmes that are externally recognised or validated.

This seems to involve contradictory ambitions: on one hand, to standardise, to “Europeanise”, higher education but, on the other hand, to protect the diversity that is constitutive of the continent. The great challenge of Bologna is actually to strike a balance between the two.

¹² Workers mobility is seen as one of the main obstacles in the creation of a true common European market. Standardised education is a step in that direction.

¹³ It is however not limited to EU countries: 29 states have signed the Bologna declaration in 1999, amongst them Switzerland. Other countries from Eastern Europe have now signed the Declaration.

Obviously, this challenge is also relevant for DS. European institutions active in the field of (international) DS should be in the forefront of developing the Bologna system in the interest of their European students as well as their students from overseas, and in that of those who (will) employ these students after their graduation.

Due to these ambitions, the Bologna process is complex and sometimes ambiguous. To understand all its consequences, we need to take into account the high degree of *interactions* that it requires from different actors, at various levels:

- Institutional level (universities, both private and public, but also single cycle/ programs)
- National level (States/Min of Education, but also quality/accreditation agencies)
- European level (EU official bodies, but also European consortia, networks, lobbies, etc).

Furthermore, the reforms implied by Bologna often take place in national environments where other major reforms are already unfolding, producing a blend of European and endogenous activities¹⁴. This has led to a certain degree of confusion in some cases. In other cases, as in the UK, Bologna does not constitute a major issue, for the academic world considers itself as a forerunner of what Bologna pursues¹⁵.

2. Key elements of the Bologna Process

a) The Ministerial Conferences

Despite this complexity, the process is moving at a reasonably fast pace. In order to set up the EHEA for 2010, a wide range of concepts and mechanisms has been defined and launched. To begin with the basic concepts, an overview of the Ministerial Conferences outputs is necessary. The Ministerial Conferences are the “steering committees” of the Process, defining the general objectives and taking the stock of the progress every two years:

- In Prague (2001):
 - > The Conference noted with satisfaction the results that have been reached in the adoption of two-cycle system (BA/MA).
 - > The Conference encourages mutual recognition of accreditation and the dissemination of best practices in QA.
 - > A special attention is given to the involvement of universities as key actors in the Bologna process.
 - > The Conferences calls for the development of “European” contents in modules / courses.
- In Berlin (2003):
 - > The Conference notes the international appeal of the Bologna process (a delegation from Latin America is invited).
 - > It underlines and specifies the need for QA: on one hand, recalls that QA is primarily a responsibility of each institutions; on the other hand, asks the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) to develop an agreed set of standards for QA, which should include : a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved; a system of internal and external evaluation, the involvement of students

¹⁴ This is the case in Switzerland, for instance, where the Universities, up until now mainly managed by Cantons, are in the process of becoming more federalised.

¹⁵ See for instance Prof Caie of the University of Glasgow who argues: “Other EU countries are taking the Declaration very seriously for years now and many have changed their entire HE system to conform. In the UK there is almost no discussion and, if Bologna is ever discussed, the general attitude is that we already have a 3/4+1/2+3-year system and that the Declaration is aimed at other countries to conform with the UK system” (<http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/bologna/index.php>)

- > Ministers call for the elaboration of comparable qualifications frameworks describing qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. All this keeping in mind the differences between the cycles (to which one is added – the doctoral cycle), with the aim to enhance readability of qualifications between countries.
- In Bergen (2005):
 - > The Conference adopts the over-reaching framework for qualifications, comprising the three cycles, generic descriptors based on learning outcomes and competencies. Commitment of the Ministers to adopt national frameworks compatible with it.
 - > Adopts the ENQA standards and guidelines and welcomes the principle of a European register of national QA agencies.
 - > By 2007, the conference expects the parties to implement the ENQA standards and guidelines and the national framework for qualifications.

b) Definition of some major concepts and mechanisms

A number of key concepts mentioned above need to be mentioned here in order to appreciate the possible implications of the Bologna process on DS.

Quality assurance

- Quality Assurance is an ongoing process of assessing, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of a higher education institution or a programme allowing an organisation to reach the standards or objectives it - or an external agency - has set.
- Under Bologna, all academic institutions are required to set up *internal* mechanisms of QA, while QA agencies (mainly national, but there are some international) exert the *external* part, through evaluation and accreditation. The European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) has been tasked to provide the general, consensual European quality standards.

QA should also become a main precept for DS institutes and programme. It is advisable that any measures taken within the framework of the Bologna process should be compatible with QA standards and initiatives at the European level (see ENQA).

Accreditation

- Accreditation is the process through which an accreditation body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole (institutional accreditation) or a specific higher education programme (programme accreditation) in order to formally recognise it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards.
- The effect of accreditation will typically be the recognition of the institution's entitlement to issuing degrees, and often an entitlement also to funding from public sources.
- Accreditation is obtained after a formal procedure through an *Accrediting Organisation* (AO). As a matter of principle, these organisations need to be independent of the institutions or programmes whose qualities they assess and that they accredit. In many cases (and this tends to become the rule across Europe) these AOs need to be recognised themselves by competent (national) public bodies responsible, on behalf of governments, and belong to a European network.
- Normally reviews of programmes in accreditation processes take place on the basis of so-called "*self evaluation*" prepared by the institution responsible for delivering the programme. A visitation or peer review is then conducted by independent *experts committees* appointed by recognised accreditation organisations to assess the self-evaluation by applying the relevant

Accreditation is not a “trade mark”, delivered by a single agency. An institution can be awarded several accreditations, be it at institutional level or at the programme level. We will in that perspective and as reference describe and benchmark the accreditation system as it exists in the area of public administration education, where a European accreditation for MA programme has been launched and already began operating (see box in section 2.3).

Accrediting Organisation (AO)

- This is the organisation actually responsible for the process of accreditation. Once again, the term has not been invented by Bologna, and many accreditation bodies already exist in higher education. As a matter of principle, they need to be independent of the institutions or programmes whose qualities they assess and that they accredit. In many cases (and this tends to become the rule across Europe) these AOs need to be recognised themselves by competent (national) public bodies responsible, on behalf of governments. The European dimension is ensured by the ENQA set of standards forming the framework of agencies' activities and governance.

Qualifications frameworks (QF):

- Put simply, a QF is a systematic description of an education system's qualifications where all learning achievements are measured and related to each others. Such frameworks employ clear external reference points on: workload and credits, level, learning outcomes, competences and profiles (Berlin 2003). They operate at the national level and they are supposed to harmonise with the 'overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area'¹⁶ mentioned above under the Bergen Conference. Ultimately, QFs are an attempt to systematise the aims and objectives of higher education or what this seeks to convey with a focus on outcomes rather than inputs. At this stage, the “Dublin descriptors” are the most consensual tools to describe the learning outcomes of the different degrees and the differences between them (See Annexe 1).

*The QFs are set at a macro-level of the educational system of a country. As such they do not concern specific disciplines but rather, the specific disciplines should comply with their national QF. Currently they are in the process of being developed.
The Dublin descriptors are, by contrast, already largely considered as standards and could be applied to DS when defining the differences between BA, and MA and the doctoral cycle.*

The Tuning project

- The Socrates-Erasmus project “*Tuning Structures in Europe*”, initiated in 2000 by a Dutch and a Spanish university, constitutes the operational response *by and for the universities* to the Bologna process in order to anticipate the process, and take an active part by being a proposition force. As such, its aim is to ensure, while addressing most of the Bologna declaration principles of harmonisation, to safeguard of diversity and institutional autonomy. It has concretely defined competencies (*learning outcomes*) in seven areas (Business administration, Education sciences, Geology, Mathematics, History, etc) so as to make them comparable, and hence enhance quality and mobility. The focus is put exclusively on outcomes, in opposition to inputs such as the teaching staff. Two types of competencies are targeted: *generic competencies* (which are subject independent) and *subject-related competencies* (skills and knowledge). Competencies are then described as “*point of references*”, not as straightjacket, for the construction of curricula. The project has involved a new area in 2003, the “European Studies”, to provide with a methodology of interdisciplinary Tuning. The result of this project are expected to be issued by the end of September this year.

¹⁶ See the report of the Bologna Conference on Qualifications Frameworks, Copenhagen, Jan 13-14, 2005

The Tuning project applied to the European studies area could surely represent a major benchmark for the DS, as it explicitly focuses on the multidisciplinary dimension. It could be envisaged to embark on such a Tuning project for DS.

To implement and further develop some of these concepts, there are two important agencies at European level, with delimited duties:

The European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA)

- ENQA works towards European standards for three levels: the internal QA, the external QA and the quality of external QA agencies.
 - > Internal QA within each institution, with a set of standards and guidelines to reach those standards. In its proposals for "internal quality assurance" by HE institutions it develops a framework including items such as: (a) policies for QA within programmes, (b) students assessment, (c) quality assurance of teaching staff, (d) learning resources and student support. These amount to a framework for quality assurance at the institutional or departmental level (i.e. beyond the programme level) but with clear relevance at the programme level.
 - > Standards and guidelines are also given for external QA. The form of this QA varies from system to system and can include: peer-review, quality evaluation, accreditation, etc. The most formalised is the accreditation.
 - > QA for external quality assurance agencies. QA agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities as agencies with responsibilities for external QA/accreditation and should preferably have a legal base. ENQA also works towards the establishment of a European Register of QA Agencies.

All those three QA levels have been validated by the Ministerial Conference (Bergen, 2005). They represent very broad topics, which is why they could lead to a consensus. States remain responsible for developing the operational QA apparatus. To further underline the level of competency at which it operates, the ENQA itself states: "The standards (...) do not attempt to provide detailed guidance about what should be examined or how quality assurances should be conducted. Those are matters of national autonomy, although the exchange of information amongst agencies and authorities is already leading to the emergence of convergent elements"¹⁷.

The broad framework provided by the ENQA standards is of relevance for DS as well. There are, however, some elements that should be added in order to reflect the specific nature of DS in QA.

The European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA)

- ECA has been launched by twelve accreditation agencies across Europe. Its aim is to ensure that the accreditations as delivered in each state are recognised by the members. We find in the ECA two of the accreditation agencies we will review later on (NVOA of the Netherlands and OAQ of Switzerland).

¹⁷ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, p. 14

2.2 Review and comparisons of the national practices in accreditation

At this stage the definition of what accreditation is (a punctual procedure) and where it is situated in the big picture of Bologna (a tool for external QA) should be clear. In the following pages we review and compare the accreditation processes in three countries, Switzerland, The Netherlands and UK¹⁸, with a focus on the following issues:

- What is the definition of “accreditation”?
- What are the main criteria to be evaluated for an accreditation?
- What is the procedure evaluating these criteria and who are the agents?
- Most importantly, where and how could DS specific criteria be specified, tailor-made and/or added?

To comply with the ToR of the Task force as recalled in part 1, the comparison on next pages focuses on the accreditation of programs/course, and not of entire institution.

Reading guide for the comparisons:

- > There are two tables: one for the criteria and one for the procedure to assess these criteria. In both, we have structured the comparison so as to highlight what is similar in a first part (hence the order of criteria as they appear in official papers may have been modified), and distinguish what is not in a second part of the table under the heading “specific criteria”.
- > The main criteria for accreditation are written in bold letters, while the sub-criteria, which further specify what is understood by the main criteria, are in normal letters¹⁹.
- > In the Dutch model, which is the most precise in our view and which is already largely applied, we highlight with a **reference number from 1 to 5** the place where sub-criteria relating to DS specificities could be added. These additions relate to the definition of DS proposed in section 1.1. and are summarised on page 27.

¹⁸ The choice of these countries is consciously limited and reflects the countries of the members of the task force.

¹⁹ The vocabulary used to define the areas of evaluation differs from a country to another (in CH it is “area”, in NL “facets”, etc). We use here “criteria” as the main area, composed of “sub-criteria”.

1. Comparison of the criteria

<i>Switzerland</i> ²⁰	<i>The Netherlands</i> ²¹	<i>United Kingdom</i> ²²
DEFINITION		
<p>Accreditation is a formal and transparent process that uses defined standards to examine whether institutions and/or programs offered at university level comply with minimum quality requirements. Accreditation increases the national and international visibility of university performance and can provide guidance and an aid in making decisions. The purpose of accreditation is moreover to achieve international recognition and to improve the comparability of degrees.</p>	<p>Accreditation means ‘awarding a hallmark that indicates that certain quality standards have been satisfied’. Accreditation is a precondition for government funding of a bachelor’s or master’s degree programme, for the right of awarding recognised diplomas and, in the Netherlands, for granting financial assistance for students. In the light of the internationalisation of education and the labour market, accreditation provides for comparable quality assurance of higher education.</p>	<p>The main purposes of academic review are to secure value from public investment (and help decide whether further funding is appropriate), to encourage speedy rectifications of major shortcomings, to encourage improvements in the quality of education and to provide accessible public information.</p> <p><i>(It is essential to note that the UK QAA does not deliver “accreditation” as it is understood by the two other national agencies, but deliver “judgment” after a process named “academic review”. We will still compare this latter with those in CH and NL since they largely converge).</i></p>
COMMON CRITERIA		
<p>Program implementation and teaching objectives: programs are carried out regularly and objectives match the institution’s ones.</p>	<p>Aims and objectives of the course: <i>Domain-specific requirements:</i> the final qualifications of the degree course correspond to the requirements made to a degree course in the relevant domain by colleagues in the Netherlands and abroad and the professional practice. (1) <i>Level: BA and MA:</i> The final qualifications of the degree course correspond to general, internationally accepted descriptions of the qualifications of a BA or a MA. <i>University orientation (as opposed to Professional education):</i> A University master possesses the qualifications to conduct independent academic research or to solve multidisciplinary and</p>	<p>Aims and outcomes Evaluation of the learning outcomes in relation to external references points (incl. benchmark statements and the qualification framework), “operationalisation” in curricula and communication to staff and students.</p>

²⁰ For details, please refer to http://www.oaq.ch/pub/downloads/d_richtlinien_akkredit.pdf

²¹ For details, please refer to <http://nvaio.net/download.php?73>

²² For details, please refer to <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/academicReview/acrevhbook2004/HandbookAcademicReview.pdf>

	interdisciplinary questions in a professional practice for which a University degree is required or useful. (2)	
Internal organisation and quality assurance: transparency (who does what), participation of all stakeholders, existence of a QA system for the programme.	Internal quality assurance: periodic internal review, participation off all stakeholders.	-
Curriculum and teaching methods: match the Bologna ²³ cycles; covers the field in question and provide students with scientific methods; teaching methods in line with the objectives; conditions for acquiring degrees are regulated and made public.	Programme: - <i>Requirements:</i> The students acquire knowledge on the interface between teaching and academic research within the relevant disciplines; The programme follows the developments in the relevant academic disciplines, as it is demonstrated that it incorporates current academic theories; The programme ensures the development of skills in the field of academic research; For those for which this is applicable, the course programme has clear links with the current professional practice in the relevant professions (3). - <i>Relationship between aims and objectives and the content of the programme</i> - <i>Coherence of the programme</i> - <i>Study load</i> - <i>Duration</i> - <i>Intake</i> - <i>Coordination of structure and contents of the degree</i> - <i>Assessment and examinations</i>	Curricula: conditions for achieving the learning outcomes, curriculum design, integration of new developments in the relevant field and in the relevant professional requirements
Teaching staff: quality of staff; balance between teaching and research; mobility of the staff is facilitated.	Deployment of staff: quality of staff; teaching is largely provided by researchers; quantity of staff. (4)	Teaching and learning: Teaching quality, staff development, students participation, workload.
Facilities and premises: adequate resources for program implementation.	Facilities and provision: material facilities and support to students	Learning resources: IT availability, staff relevance, administrative support
Students: conditions for admission are public; gender equality; mobility; learning support and counselling		Students progression: admission arrangements, academic support, supervision arrangements,

²³ This is the unique reference to Bologna in the CH procedure. We note that NL only makes explicit mention of the Dublin descriptors (at the end of the presentation of the accreditation framework).

SPECIFIC CRITERIA		
-	Results Final qualifications correspond to targets; results of teaching reach targets set in comparison with other degree courses. (5)	Enhancement Review and improvement of standards
	Special quality feature Show the distinct profile of the course.	Assessment Assessment process can measure achievements of the indented programme outcomes

The general conclusion on this comparison is that Switzerland and the Netherlands apply very similar criteria for accreditation. The main difference lies in the reference to the professional fields, which appears more often in NL, and the reference to the “results” and “special features”. In pure formal terms, the NL procedure is also more precise.

These criteria also broadly correspond to the ENQA standards as proposed for the internal quality assurance in the paper “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA” (this list applies to institutions and largely to single programs as well). This shows that the criteria for accreditation have indeed been, or are on the way of being standardised in Europe, under the influence inter alii of ENQA.

The national systems are similar and all are flexible enough to integrate specificities of different fields. For a system that would take into account the DS specificities, some propositions can already be made (explicit reference is made here to the DS definition stated in section 1.1.) The places where the sub-criteria listed below relating to DS specificities could be added are highlighted with a reference number from 1 to 5 in the table above.

(1) Aims and objectives: Consider here the mention to the correspondence to requirements as set at the European level for DS studies (once created).

(2) Aims and Objectives: Consider here the elements such as the inter and multi-disciplinary dimension, the blend of empirical and theoretical approaches, the normative concerns and the need for policy-orientation and finally partnerships.

(3) Programme: Consider here the introduction of the following dimensions: variety of approaches, development relevance of the subjects (incl. with regard to MDG), variety of specialisations proposed, context sensitivity, integration of new trends such as analysis of globalisation, human development, environment and socio-political sustainability; the need for general skills and tools (problem analysis, concept mapping, quantitative and qualitative data handling and analysis; communication to various audiences).

(4) Staff: composition reflecting the programmes’ objectives (experiences, disciplines, nationalities)

(5) Results: graduates return to developing countries; employment by IOs, NGOs, government etc.

2. Comparison of the procedures

Regarding the administrative procedure to be accredited, the three countries work similarly as well:

<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
COMMON CRITERIA		
Self evaluation Request made by the unit (or alternatively by the Swiss government or the CUS - Conference Universitaire Suisse); Procedure of self evaluation agreed with the accreditation agency (similar to the above listed criteria).	Self evaluation Request made by the unit to a VAI; self evaluation according to the above listed criteria.	Preparing for review: compulsory review each 6 years, beginning with self evaluation based on a predefined procedure (similar to the above mentioned criteria); two main points of references are the “qualification frameworks” and the “benchmark statements”.
External evaluation OAQ sets up of a group of experts (3-5) based on teaching experience, working outside CH preferably, good understanding of the Swiss system; possibility for the unit to suggest experts; on site assessment (2 days); report to the OAQ based on the self evaluation.	Visitation by VAI VAI sets up a group of experts if needed (min. 3); visits the unit; the unit (!) makes a request to the NAO, attaching the VAI report to its application.	Conduction of the review: Based on peer –review of experts briefed by the QAA; test the self-evaluation; gather data; visit programmes; make their judgement (confident vs. non confident or limited confidence).
Decision on accreditation OAQ evaluates the self evaluation and the experts report; transmit its decision to the CUS, who takes the final decision (4 options: preliminary accreditation; unconditional; under certain conditions; refused).	Decision NAO takes the final decision based upon the self evaluation and the VAI visit.	Judgments Two inter-related areas: judgments on academic standards (in the form of: confident/non-confident/limited confidence), and judgment on quality of learning opportunities (in the form of failing/approved/exemplary).
SPECIFIC CRITERIA		
7 yrs validity	6 yrs validity	6 yrs validity
Use of third-party evaluations The results of self-evaluation not carried out as part of the Swiss accreditation procedure can be taken into consideration provided that they were carried out no more than three years previously and comply with the methods and standards set out in these guidelines for academic accreditation in Switzerland. The same applies to accreditation procedures carried out by foreign/international accreditation agencies		

We observe here again a very similar procedure. The differences lie in:

- The article governing the accreditation by an agency different from the official national one (OAQ) is specific to Switzerland. This element is of course interesting for EADI and should be clarified in NL.
- OAQ is not authoritative in last resort, since CUS (a federal body with representatives on the Cantons and the State) takes the final decision. This is due more to the Swiss federal system than to a difference in accreditation philosophy.

Another difference that does not appear here is the fact that accreditation in NL is adding to an already developed quality assurance system. In CH, it is being developed together with a new trend of federalising universities.

Once again, the UK system shows slightly less convergence, but the overall philosophy remains similar, with a phase of self-evaluation and the use of external experts for peer-reviewing.

What we have here, based on our limited sample, is evidence that accreditation follows similar criteria and as well as procedures in the selected countries, allowing for the potential harmonised integration and deployment of DS criteria in all those systems

2.3 Assessment of EADI's possible role and next steps discussed in Bonn

Where does this lead us to, what are potential next steps and what is the possible role of EADI in the quality assurance and accreditation process of DS?

The Taskforce considers that, given the complex European context, the possible role of EADI in the accreditation process can be more or less ambitious. Two main options may present itself as regards accreditation:

1. The first one is less ambitious but appears as realistic in a reasonably short term. It can be characterised as seeing EADI provide some specific services to accreditation of programmes in development studies as done by others. These services might include the setting up and offering to AOs of a register of individual scholars ready to play a role in review processes and judged by EADI (or its members) to be qualified to assess development studies on its specific features as outlined in Part I. An important phase of the accreditation process is the experts' phase or peer review, when external experts come to visit an institution, test the self-evaluation and draft the report to the accreditation agency. They play a pivotal role regarding some important criteria. A lot is left to their appreciation, because they (should) know what is needed in their specific field of competencies²⁴. A second element in this first option therefore is, to develop these features and elements of the domain of development studies at a European level and articulate a framework, or more concretely a "Guide for the evaluation of DS", with which all EADI members could agree to comply with during the experts' missions could guarantee the DS specificities are taken into account.
2. The second, more ambitious option would be to empower the EADI as an accreditation agency for DS programmes (as opposed to institutions) or to have EADI set up such an agency. Accreditation is by no means reserved to national accreditation bodies. Indeed the taskforce has identified another field (public administration) where accreditation is effectively, at programme level, carried out by a European association as described in the box below. EADI could potentially evolve in a similar direction:

²⁴ In fact, an important lesson to draw is that most criteria as they exist concern more the form than the content: e.g. the criteria require that a definition of objectives exists, it does not control if the said definition is appropriate or not. This opens the door to relatively free adaptations by experts during their visits: an experts group for, say, engineering will not interpret the criteria in the same way as an expert in DS.

Accreditation by the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation

The Public Administration Institute from Switzerland (IDHEAP) has been accredited at both the national and the European level. The first accreditation by the Swiss Accreditation body has been awarded at the organisational level according to the national rules, whilst the second accreditation of the Master programme has been awarded by the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation EAPAA, an organisation of providers of tertiary education in the multidisciplinary field of Public Administration. It operates on the basis of a membership fee and has a secretariat. EAPAA organises accreditation processes for providers of HE in the domain of Public Administration in countries that are members of the Council of Europe. For that purpose it establishes Review Committees consisting of at least three members who are not employed in the country of the programme to be reviewed. It uses members of the association to form these Review Committees. It uses national evaluation systems and frameworks as basis, but has developed its own set of criteria including a specific criteria relating to multidisciplinaryity.

In the Accreditation workshop and Directors Meeting in Bonn (September 22 and 23, 2005) the choice for the ambitious option was endorsed, in which EADI would be empowered (inter alia) as the accreditation agency for MA programmes of DS in Europe (similar to the EAPAA example) or decide to set a separate one up.

It was decided that a new taskforce open to all EADI member institutions committed to actively supporting the initiative should be set up. The taskforce will be headed by a chairman (who preferably is a member of the Executive Committee of EADI) and will be assisted by an executive secretary. The taskforce will report to the Executive Committee of EADI.

The following expected results and next steps were discussed and endorsed in the Directors Meeting in Bonn in order to move ahead with the project:

A. Expected results to be achieved by September 2006	
Product	Sub-product
i. Guidelines for the evaluation of DS (Approved by EADI Directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vision paper defining demarcation of DS as object of accreditation (<i>this document</i>) b. criteria and sub-criteria for DS accreditation c. criteria and sub-criteria for “Development relevance” d. Standards and benchmarks for criteria and sub-criteria for DS accreditation, laid down in a “Guide for the Evaluation of Development Studies” offered to AOs by EADI
ii. EADI register of DS peer reviewers (Approved by EADI directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tentative list elaborated by participating institutes b. Consolidated list available at EADI
iii. Vision on EADI as actor in accreditation on the European level (approved by EADI Directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Elaboration of possible options b. Report to EADI EC c. Choice made and plan of implementation drawn up for phase 2 of the project (2006/7)

B. Next steps		
Step	By whom	When
1. Find 5-6 institutes and to carry the project and participate in taskforce, find representative(s) of the South ²⁵	EADI EXCO and Directors	Sept./Oct./Nov./Dec. 2005
2. Find chair and secretary of taskforce	EADI EXCO on the advice of Directors	Oct./Nov./Dec. 2005
3. Organise first meeting of taskforce to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adopt vision paper b. Define ToR and Plan of action c. Approve budget d. Discuss and attribute criteria areas (interdisciplinarity, development relevance, policy orientation,...) 	EADI EXCO and TF-Secretary	Nov/Dec. 2005
4. Start implementation of plan of action	Taskforce members and secretary	as of Dec. 2005/ January 2006
5. Second meeting taskforce to discuss and endorse progress	Taskforce members and secretary	Febr/March 2006
6. Third meeting of taskforce to discuss and endorse draft final products (i-iii)	Taskforce members and secretary	May/June 2006
7. Presentation to EADI EXCO	Taskforce members and secretary	Sept. 2006

Bonn/Brighton/Geneva/The Hague October 2005

²⁵ In addition to the IUED (Geneva) and the ISS (The Hague) several other EADI member institutes expressed their strong interest in Bonn to actively support the project. The Executive Committee and the (di-)recors of IUED and ISS have been made aware of these.

Annexe 1: Dublin Descriptors

The Dublin descriptors are widely accepted as means to differentiate between the three Bologna cycles.

Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who²⁶:

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences² typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;
- have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;
- can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;
- can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;

²⁶ Alternative title as proposed by the Joint Quality Initiative Meeting, in Dublin, on 23 March 2004

- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society;

Differentiating between cycles

Cycle	Knowledge and understanding:
1 (Bachelor)	[Is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study .
2 (Master)	provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas often in a research* context .
3 (Doctorate)	[includes] a systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of the methods of research* associated with that field.

	Applying knowledge and understanding:
1 (Bachelor)	[through] devising and sustaining arguments.
2 (Master)	[through] problem solving abilities [applied] in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts .
3 (Doctorate)	[is demonstrated by the] ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research* with scholarly integrity . [is in the context of] a contribution that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work some of which merits national or international refereed publication .

	Making judgements:
1 (Bachelor)	[involves] gathering and interpreting relevant data .
2 (Master)	[demonstrates] the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete data .
3 (Doctorate)	[requires being] capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.

	Communication
1 (Bachelor)	[of] information, ideas, problems and solutions .
2 (Master)	[of] their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale (restricted scope) to specialist and non-specialist audiences (monologue) .
3 (Doctorate)	with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general (dialogue) about their areas of expertise (broad scope).

	Learning skills
1 (Bachelor)	have developed those skills needed to study further with a high level of autonomy .
2 (Master)	study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.
3 (Doctorate)	expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement .