

# Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

## Mission Report

Short-Term Mission on Activity 3.2 Undertake capacity building activities for the Ministry of Education staff (including Accreditation and Nostrification Office and other stakeholders) to enhance the staff's role in supporting accreditation procedures

(June 3, 16, 18, 22, 25, 2020)

### 1. Name and Function of the Expert:

Dr., prof. Tatjana Volkova, Latvia,  
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Dr.,  
Chair

Dr. T.  
Policy

## 2. Objective and Tasks of the Mission:

The mission is carried out within the framework of:

### COMPONENT 3: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IS FURTHER DEVELOPED TO REFLECT THE STUDENT-CENTEREDNESS OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

Activity 4.1. Undertake capacity building activities for the Ministry of Education staff (including Accreditation and Nostrification Office and other stakeholders) to enhance the staff's role in supporting accreditation procedures

Benchmarks for this activity are:

- Best practices from EU countries on the system of monitoring the quality of higher education institutions are shared, including examples of KPI indicators;
- Best practices from EU countries on collection of data, its analysis and visualization (presentation through figures and graphics, in a reader-friendly format) are shared;
- A model of monitoring quality of higher education institutions relying on a list of Key Performance Indicators for Azerbaijan is elaborated, considering best EU practices and the local context specificities.

## 3. Time schedule of mission:

Date and Time	Activity
Wednesday – 3 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b></p> <p>Online briefing meeting with staff of Analytical Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants:</p> <p>Mr. Nariman Gahramanli, head of Analytical Department, EQAA Ms. Samira Guliyeva, Leading Advisor at Analytical Department Mr. Amirkhan Gasimzade, Senior Advisor at Analytical Department Ms. Nisa Idrisova, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Asiman Ilyasov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Javid Ibadov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Ms. Konul Fatiyeva, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA</p> <p><b>14:00-16:00</b></p> <p>Deskwork</p>
Thursday – 16 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b></p> <p>Online briefing meeting with staff of Analytical Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants:</p> <p>Mr. Nariman Gahramanli, head of Analytical Department, EQAA Ms. Samira Guliyeva, Leading Advisor at Analytical Department Mr. Amirkhan Gasimzade, Senior Advisor at Analytical Department</p>

	<p><b>14:00-16:00</b> Deskwork</p>
Tuesday – 18 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b> Online briefing meeting with staff of Analytical Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants: Mr. Nariman Gahramanli, head of Analytical Department, EQAA Ms. Samira Guliyeva, Leading Advisor at Analytical Department Mr. Amirkhan Gasimzade, Senior Advisor at Analytical Department Ms. Nisa Idrisova, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Asiman Ilyasov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Javid Ibadov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Ms. Konul Fatiyeva, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA</p> <p><b>14:00-16:00</b> Deskwork</p>
Monday – 22 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b> Online briefing meeting of experts</p> <p>Participants: Dr., prof. Tatjana Volkova, Chair of Studies Quality Commission, Latvia (BA School of Business and Finance) Dr. Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, Policy analyst, Lithuania (The Government Strategic Analysis Center (STRATA))</p> <p><b>14:00-16:00</b> Deskwork</p>
Thursday – 25 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b> Online briefing meeting with staff of Analytical Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants: Mr. Nariman Gahramanli, head of Analytical Department, EQAA Ms. Samira Guliyeva, Leading Advisor at Analytical Department Mr. Amirkhan Gasimzade, Senior Advisor at Analytical Department Ms. Nisa Idrisova, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Asiman Ilyasov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Mr. Javid Ibadov, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA Ms. Konul Fatiyeva, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA</p>

	<b>14:00-16:00</b> Deskwork
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#### **4. Relevant Background Information/State of Affairs regarding the mission**

The recently created and restructured Education Quality Assurance Agency asked for providing additional EU expertise to learn best EU practices regarding the system of monitoring the quality of higher education institutions, including elaboration of KPIs. The mission was conducted by experts from Lithuania and Latvia and the outcomes' main beneficiary was the Analytical Department of EQAA.

#### **5. Achievement of the Expected Results**

Planned action was achieved.

The following activities were performed:

- Best practices from countries on the system of monitoring the quality of higher education institutions were shared, examples of KPI indicators were provided during online briefings' presentations on the Latvian and Lithuanian cases, as well as in the Report "Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan";
- Best practices from EU countries on collection of data, its analysis and visualization (presentation through figures and graphics, in a reader-friendly format) were shared during online briefings' presentations on the Latvian and Lithuanian cases, as well as in the Report "Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan";
- A model of monitoring quality of higher education institutions relying on a list of Key Performance Indicators for Azerbaijan was elaborated, considering best EU practices and the local context specificities using online briefings' presentations on the Latvian and Lithuanian cases, as well as in the Report "Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan".

#### **6. Unexpected Results**

Not applicable.

#### **7. Issues Left Open After the Mission**

In case higher education system development is considered to be implemented, involvement and training of key actors of higher education system must be provided. The whole process must be contextualized, driven by the agenda of higher education system development of Azerbaijan.

#### **8. Recommendations (including recommendation for future missions)**

The monitoring of higher education system development is an overarching task as it has to be delivered on different levels and for different objects and for different time periods.

The main aim of monitoring higher education system development is to ensure that aims and targets set at national level and requirements set for the Bologna process are achieved and the higher education system itself is efficient and effective.

The reference point for higher education system monitoring is the high level national and international policies and strategies related to the higher education and science and research development plans associated with it.

The Higher education system's strategic priorities in Azerbaijan are closely related to The National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved on October, 24, 2013. The recognition of HEIs as main drivers of Research development and setting aims and KPIs for research development in HEIs are essential elements for ensuring higher education development. These are underlying strategic priorities of Higher education sector development which set the stage for other elements of Higher education sector and also have to be monitored to ensure that progress is made in achievement of the aims set for Higher education sector development, including research development delivered by HEIs.

The Higher education development framework (further – Framework) in Azerbaijan has been proposed as a basis for considering different elements of the system impacting higher education development (see the Report “Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan - further Report”). The Framework itself is an open system and other elements could be added to it.

The Framework consists of the following main elements: Strategic priorities set by National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, National Science and Research policy and aims set, Bologna process implementation requirements, The action plan on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, State program on increasing international competitiveness of the HE system, HE institutions accreditation requirements and criteria, HE study programs licensing and accreditation requirements and criteria.

The monitoring of achievements in all of those areas is an integral part of the Framework: monitoring the progress of Higher education system development includes monitoring of achievement of aims set in National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the achievement of Research performance aims, performance of HEIs, HE Quality monitoring, monitoring the performance of Graduates.

The Action Plan on the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved by the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated 19 January 2015 and contains strategic targets and measures to be implemented. The Action plan sets strategic targets and measures also for Lifelong learning (LLL) which are part of activities delivered by HEIs, therefore, the LLL activities delivered by HEIs are a part of higher education system development and the progress in this field has to be also monitored.

There is a State Program on Increasing the International Competitiveness of the Higher Education System in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023 approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018. The key target of the program is to train a new generation of specialists and modernize the content and quality indicators of Azerbaijani higher education system with an international double diploma program taking advantage of the cutting-edge scientific achievements and innovative teaching technologies. The program highlights measures in 27 Key areas of the State Program. For some of those areas KPIs are set. For example, establishment of initial 5 (five) international double diploma programs. For some areas the KPIs are not set, e.g., 3.2.4. Engagement of foreign teaching staff for renewal of curricula in higher education institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, where international dual diploma programs will be implemented. Therefore, in order to monitor the progress of HE system development, the relevant KPIs are necessary to be elaborated. Monitoring the HE system development has also to include the monitoring of progress in these key areas.

The Framework is an open system and based on the system development new elements can be added.

When developing a methodological means for external evaluation of HEIs in Azerbaijan, it is important, that confirmed evaluation areas and indicators of HEIs are supplemented with evaluation criteria, where active organization of activity made by HEI itself is emphasized, as well as HEI's own self-monitoring and self-evaluation of results is being proceeded.

The samples mentioned in the Report are illustrative and could serve as a base for setting goals and requirements and associated KPIs based on the priorities of higher education development of Azerbaijan for the next period and to monitor the progress of higher education system development.

Benchmarking could be applied as a tool to advance higher education system development, as well as on the level of the higher education institutions as a way to improve quality of performance. It would be beneficial to provide financing for training of higher education institutions top-management administrators on how to apply this tool for the benefits of institutions and for the broader society (more information may be found on Annexes).

### **9. Acknowledgments (if any)**

The experts would like to acknowledge the support for Mrs. Lisa Bydanova, Mr. Nariman Gahramanli, technical staff and all colleagues who participated for the beneficial exchange of information and provided support which enabled the experts to deliver the task under the mission "Supporting the newly created Analytical Department of EQAA for elaborating performance indicators of HEIs".

### **Annexes**

Additional information may be found in annexes.

List of annexes:

1. The Report "Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan"
2. Online briefing presentation 2020 06 25 "Monitoring the Higher Education System Development in Azerbaijan"
3. Article "An African perspective on Ranking HE"
4. Online briefing presentation 2020 06 16 "A methodical means for monitoring the progress of activities of Higher Education institutions. The Case of Lithuania"
5. Online briefing presentation 2020 06 16 "Higher education quality monitoring system. The Case of Latvia"
6. List of KPIs\_Lithuania
7. List of KPIs\_Latvia