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Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije  
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

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Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency  
for Higher Education



*Naložba v vašo prihodnost*

OPERACIJO DELNO FINANCIRA EVROPSKA UNIJA  
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## **WORKING AND FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2012 - SUMMARY**





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## Introduction

Due to events linked with the replacement of the Agency management in the first four months of 2012, the adoption of the work and financial plan for 2012 moved into June, and thus a more detailed plan with concrete tasks and deadlines for their implementation could only have been prepared for the second half of the year. Nevertheless, the plan is very ambitious, since the Agency will have to, in addition to accreditations or external evaluations of higher education institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges, reorganise its work, establish a comprehensive information system, restore the cooperation with the foreign quality assurance agencies and associations, perform self-evaluation and prepare itself for the external evaluation in order to meet the important objective, i.e. full membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and entry into the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) as soon as possible.

One of the foundations for achieving this objective is following the association role of the Agency defined in its strategy. Thus, the Agency has to more actively and openly than ever cooperate with the stakeholders from higher education and higher vocational education in improving both the internal and external quality system, criteria and other acts of the Agency. In performing its work, it shall follow the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) more consistently, meaning that it will, together with all stakeholders, strive for widely accepted and acknowledged system of external quality assurance. This is the only way for the Agency to accomplish its mission and vision, and to operate in accordance with the defined values.

We are aware that developing tertiary education and culture of quality is not merely (self-)responsibility of those who educate and research and of other external stakeholders, but is tightly linked precisely to the development of quality performance of the Agency. It involves mutual and transparent process based on cooperation, trust and respect for the agreed procedures and criteria that will be of assistance in establishment of efficient quality system in higher education and higher vocational education.

Tatjana Debevec,  
Acting Director

Ljubljana, June 2012



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## ABOUT THE SLOVENIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

### Internal organisation

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency) was founded on the basis of the Act Amending the Higher Education Act – ZViS-G (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 86/2009, while its bodies, competences and tasks are determined in the Act and Resolution on the Founding of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 114/2009).

The basis for establishment and operation of the Agency is Article 15 of ZViS-G (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 86/2009). Subject to statutory provisions, the Agency has the following purpose and objectives:

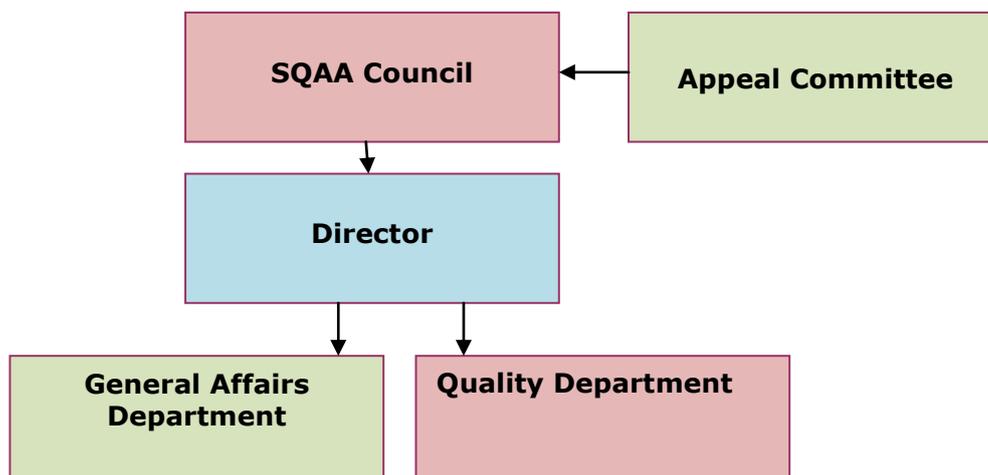
- quality assurance in higher education;
- professionalization of quality assessment;
- obtaining trust into the quality assessment system;
- operating in line with the European standards.

By implementing the planned changes, the Agency should encourage higher education institutions towards the following:

- responsibility for quality implementation of study programmes;
- constant development and establishment of the culture of quality;
- regular annual self-evaluation and periodic external evaluations on the grounds of clear and consistent criteria and professional assessment.

The Agency is composed of the following: the Council as the first-level decision-making body, the Appeal Committee as the second-level decision-making body and the Agency staff led by the Director.

Organisational chart of the Agency



## **From the Agency Development Strategy for the Period 2011-2016**

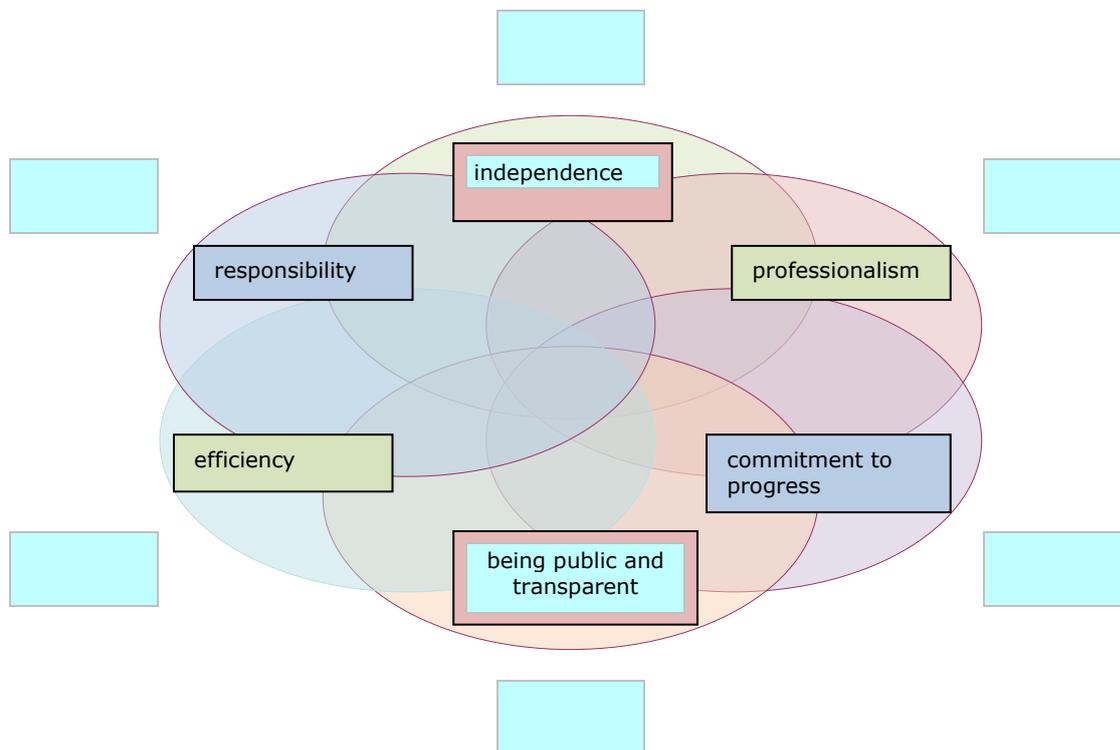
### **Mission**

The Agency provides for development and operation of the quality assurance system in the Slovenian higher education area. It operates responsibly, both formally and substantially, and counsels all stakeholders and participants in tertiary education in line with the European and global directions of development.

### **Vision**

The Agency shall, with its system of quality assurance development, contribute to the higher education in Slovenia being of high quality in terms of education and research, internationally recognisable, competitive and equally integrated in the global higher education area.

### **Values**



### **Strategic objectives**

1. development and operation of the quality assurance system
2. monitoring progress and strengthening the culture of quality in higher education
3. presenting the role, importance and quality of operation of the Agency in public for better recognition
4. co-creating and developing higher education policy in the field of quality
5. encouraging the quality of transnational education
6. admission of the Agency to the international associations (ENQA and EQAR)
7. providing high quality counselling services of the Agency by professionally trained personnel.

## **Activities of the Agency in 2011**

On its 30<sup>th</sup> session on 19 May 2011, the Agency Council granted consent to the Agency's work plan for 2011. The tasks of the Agency were defined according to the following four content orientations:

1. quality assurance in higher education;
2. preparation and adoption of criteria and other acts of the Agency;
3. organisation of the operation of the Agency;
4. quality assurance of the work performed by the Agency.

From the comparison with the annual work plan and report on work and operation in 2011 (report contains data for 2010, 2011 and the first few months of 2012), the following is evident:

1. mainly the tasks, related to accreditation of study programmes and higher education institutions and evaluation of higher vocational colleges, training of candidates for entry into register of experts, and adoption of certain criteria and other acts of the Agency (tasks defined in the first two content orientations) were performed, whereby the training and education of experts was not adequate;
2. regarding the organisation of the Agency's operation (third content focus) – with the exception of employing new employees due to the ESF project – the tasks as are international exchange of Agency staff, education at home and abroad, renewal of the visual image and website of the Agency were either not performed satisfactory or not performed at all; the latter include establishment of comprehensive information system for the applications for accreditation and their monitoring, being one of the fundamental conditions for efficient and quality work of the Agency;
3. neither the numerous important tasks related to quality of the Agency's work (fourth content focus) such as self-evaluation of the Agency, preparation for external evaluation and preparation of materials for the membership in ENQA relating thereto, were not performed. Also, the participation in international quality assurance associations and performance of public and transparent work by the Agency were inadequate.

In addition, comparison of the financial plan and financial report for 2011, shows that the Agency spent only 23% (poor quarter) of the ESF planned funds. The explanation of such small use of funds in the report for 2011 makes it evident that the cause was, in addition to objective circumstances, the fact that plenty of the planned tasks were not implemented, among them establishment of the information system.

Additional obstacles in the operation of the Agency were in particular poor relationship between the management and employees, inefficient work organisation and inadequate or insufficient counselling to the stakeholders (applicants) and experts.



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## WORK PLAN IN 2012

The tasks in the work plan are defined (determined) with regard to the strategic objectives of the Agency and activities for reaching these objectives by the 2013 (Agency Development Strategy for the Period 2011-2016, adopted at the Council session in November 2011) according to which the operation of the Agency is directed towards the following:

1. establishment and development of the quality assurance system of the Agency;
2. transformation of the quality assurance system in higher education and higher vocational education; and
3. participating in development of higher education in Slovenia.

The stated strategic orientations refer to concern for quality work of the Agency by means of self-evaluation and external evaluation of the Agency, cooperation with external stakeholders and establishment of efficient and mutually agreed upon system of external quality assurance and cooperation with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) subject to European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The concrete tasks in 2012 shall be demonstrated by the following:

- activities related to two or all three of strategic focuses, and which, therefore, can not be limited to only one of them;
- strategic focuses in case the activities defined in the strategy can be for the most part related to an individual strategic focus.

Particular regard shall be paid to unfulfilled tasks from 2011 such as establishment of information system and self-evaluation of the Agency.

In 2012, the Agency will strive for establishment of better trust between the stakeholders and itself, better cooperation, and strengthening of its counselling role.

The reorganisation of work at the Agency and unburdening of the Agency staff and also of external stakeholders from unnecessary administrative tasks are necessary.

In the work plan, the tables are showing the following:

- A: dealing with the applications either submitted before 2012 or in 2012;
- B, C, D, E, F: executive objectives, activities and tasks that could have been implemented by the end of 2012 or in 2013 (*information system*). In the tables, the responsible holders, deadlines for implementation of the planned activities and expected results are given.

**COLLEGES (SITUATION ON 15 JUNE 2012)**

<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 1: DEALING WITH THE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BEFORE 2012</b>				
<b>Activity 1: Accreditations in higher education</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>No of applications submitted until 31 December 2011</b>	<b>No of accreditations granted until 28 May 2012</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Initial accreditation of study programmes	Quality Department/ Agency Council	162	145	
Re-accreditation of study programmes		68	21	For the programmes of UL Faculty of Social Sciences, UM Faculty of Organisational Sciences and UP Faculty of Management, the accreditation mostly expires in September 2012
Initial accreditation of higher education institutions		14	8 (3 of them for members of the universities)	
Re-accreditation of higher education institutions		2	1	
Transformation of higher education institutions		6	5	

<b>Activity 2: Evaluations of higher vocational colleges</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>No of applications</b>	<b>No of opinions</b>	<b>Notes</b>
External evaluation of higher vocational colleges	Quality Department/ Agency Council	5	4	
<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 2: DEALING WITH THE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED IN 2012 (FROM 1 JANUARY 2012 ON)</b>				
<b>Activity 1: Accreditations in higher education</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Anticipated No of applications</b>	<b>No of received applications</b>	<b>No of accreditations granted/notes</b>
Initial accreditation of study programmes	Quality Department/ Agency Council	31	44	15/mainly post-graduate study programmes
Re-accreditation of study programmes		90	15	/
Initial accreditation of higher education institutions		5	5	/
Re-accreditation of higher education institutions		10	4	/
Transformation of higher education institutions		3	2	/
<b>Activity 2: Evaluation of higher vocational colleges</b>				
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Planned no of applications</b>	<b>No of received applications</b>	<b>No of opinions/notes</b>
External evaluation of higher vocational colleges	Quality Department/ Agency Council	15	13	additional two calls for application submission in June

Note: *The applications to change study programmes are not considered in the table.*

Explanations:

1. Dealing with the applications submitted before 2012

- in the third column (No of

applications submitted until 31 December 2012), the applications passed to the Agency from the former Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education or Accreditation Senate were also considered;

- in the fourth column, the number of Agency Council's accreditation decisions for applications, indicated in the previous columns, are given (all decisions adopted until the May 2012 were considered);
- in the second row of the fifth column (notes), the Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Ljubljana (UL) and Faculty of Organisational Sciences at University of Maribor (UM) are listed that mainly apply for re-accreditation of the programmes for which the accreditation expires on 30 September 2012. These procedures are being concluded; namely, the visits on both institutions have already been carried out, and thus the decision on re-accreditation shall be adopted in time. Next to them, the Faculty of Management at University of Primorska (UP) is stated, since in this case, the decision is following appeal (the re-accreditation was granted, but for less than 7 years).

2. Dealing with the applications submitted in 2012

- in the third column, the anticipated number of applications is given that should have been – next to those listed in the fourth column – sent to the Agency by the 31 December 2012. For higher vocational colleges, the precise number of applications is determined in each of yearly plans;
- in the fourth column, the number of actually received applications until 15 June 2012 is indicated;
- in the fifth column, the number of applications that were sent to the Agency and resolved in 2012, is given.

The more precise data on accreditations of higher educational institutions and study programmes or external evaluations of higher educational institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges are indicated in the appendices.

## **B) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY**

<b>Activity: Establishment of comprehensive information system</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Preparation of tender documentation	Agency staff/ Director	June 2012	Comprehensive information system for the Agency, the applicants for accreditation or evaluation and other stakeholders
Publication of the tender, and selection of the contractor	Agency staff/ Director	publication in July and selection in August 2012	
Participation in forming and application of support information system	Agency staff/ Director	until establishment of the system, expected in beginning of 2013	More efficient and rational work of higher quality, and simplification and improvement of accreditation and evaluation procedures and other work processes at the Agency.
Connecting with the e-VŠ System (Record and Analytical Information System for Higher Education in the Republic of Slovenia)	Agency staff/ Director	until establishment of the system, expected in beginning of 2013	Reduction of administrative burden of Agency staff, applicants and other stakeholders.

**C) ENTRY OF EXPERTS  
IN REGISTER OF THE  
AGENCY, AND RENEWAL  
OF THEIR EDUCATION  
AND REGISTER**

Activity 1: entry of experienced experts in register (in accordance with amendment of the Criteria for Entry in the Register of Experts); registry renewal)			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Sending out the invitations of the Agency Council to acknowledged or internationally recognised experts for quality in higher vocational and higher education	Agency staff/ Agency Council Director	first invitations were sent in May 2012, and then in June 2012 or when necessary	Improving the register, better selection of experts, and above all, the acquisition of experts in deficit study, scientific and artistic fields.
Preparation of the list of experts with their references to be approved at the session of the Agency Council.		Approval of the first group on 28 June 2012, while approval of the second is planned in September 2012	
Renewal or transformation of the register of experts and constant updating – call for all experts in the registry to complete a special form.	Quality Department/ Director	July 2012, and later on permanently	Refreshment of data; register of experts with all necessary data to comprise an appropriate group of experts; according to ZViS, more detailed data on professional experience, habilitation areas, employments, possible certificates on quality assessment, etc.  Standard form shall always be used, and the candidates for experts shall also complete it (registration form).
Activity 2: Education and training of experts			
Task	Implementation	Deadline for	Expected result

	<b>and accountability</b>	<b>implementation</b>	
Surveying experts, applicants, students and other stakeholders; the analysis of surveys.	Quality Department/ Agency Self-Evaluation Group/ Director	Sending out survey questionnaires in June 2012; the analysis in August 2012	Acquisition of information from different stakeholders on work done by the Agency and, on the basis of the results, adoption of measures to improve its work, and monitoring achievement of these measures and designation of responsible persons.
Surveying of Agency staff on the quality of the visit (external evaluation) and the analysis of surveys.	Quality Department/ Director		
Analysis of reports by the groups of experts		30 September 2012	Preparation of relevant instructions for experts on preparing reports and proposals to supplement the Candidate for Entry in the Register of Experts Training Manual  Constant monitoring and improvement of the system of external evaluation and accreditation; work standardisation, and assurance of comparability and objectiveness.
Renewal of the education/training programme of experts	Agency staff/Director	30 September 2012	Higher qualifications of experts, better and more unified work of groups of experts (professionalism, efficiency and success). Meeting the expectations of stakeholders.
Supplementation of the visit of group of experts protocol			Clearer instructions and guidelines for both the experts and other stakeholders, namely on preparation of a visit to an institution or college, the visit schedule, and the actual visit (clearly defined competences and responsibilities, and

			rights and duties of all stakeholders). Renewed Expert Training Manual.
Renewal of the Candidate for Entry into Register of Experts Training Manual			
Preparation of the code of ethics for experts.	Agency staff/Director	December 2012	Adoption of code of ethics for experts, entered in registry of the Agency

<b>Activity 1: Changes to systematisation</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Cessation of the Head of the Quality Department and Head of the General Affairs Department posts.	Director	July 2012	Rationalisation of work, and more efficient in-depth work of higher quality.  Higher motivation for work and better work atmosphere.
Reassignment of duties and responsibilities of the Quality Department			
Assignment of duties to individual employees in the substantially completed areas.			
<b>Activity 2: Employment of new employees financed with the ESF funds</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Publication of call for applicants to fill a new vacancy in the General Affairs Department	General Affairs Department	July 2012	Preparation of freelance contracts and applications for payments, supervision over deadlines and payments, organisation of the archive and other records, etc. Unburdening employees in Quality Department
Publication of call for applicants to fill a new vacancy in the Quality Department			Reinforcement of the department, assurance that all tasks are carried out in planned time, dealing with the applications in quality and timely manner and in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

Note: In the table, the publication of notice of two vacancies, for which the consent to the changes of the ESF project is not required, is planned.

<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 1: SELF-EVALUATION OF THE AGENCY</b>			
<b>Activity: Preparation of the self-evaluation report</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Action plan for preparation on the external evaluation of the Agency, and realisation of activities which are determined for 2012 according to the plan.	Agency staff/Self-Evaluation Group/Director	according to the enclosed plan for 2012 (the plan was updated in July 2012)	Self-evaluation of the Agency and simultaneous preparation for its external evaluation.
Preparation and sending out the questionnaires for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Agency staff</li> <li>— experts of the Agency</li> <li>— evaluated higher educational institutions and higher vocational colleges</li> <li>— Agency Council and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>		June 2012	Acquiring information on Agency's work
Analysis of survey questionnaires.	Agency staff	August 2012	On the basis of results, adoption of measures for improving work of the Agency, and setting deadlines for their realisation; analysis, measures and their realisation are important part of the self-evaluation report.
Preparation of the self-evaluation report structure, and determining appendices.	Agency staff/Director	April 2012	Self-evaluation report with relevant documentation.
Consideration of first draft of the self-evaluation report and appendices by the Agency Council at its session.		December 2012/January 2013	Self-evaluation report with relevant documentation.

## EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 2: EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE AGENCY

### Activity: Preparation for external evaluation of the Agency

Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Agency's notification to ENQA on its application for membership, i.e. contact with the ENQA Secretariat about the application for the external evaluation.	Agency staff/ Director	December 2012/January 2013	Visit of the group of experts of ENQA or of another agency that is the ENQA member.
Preparation for a visit of the group of experts of ENQA or of another acknowledged agency that is the ENQA and EQAR member for reasons of external evaluation.			

*Note: Action plan for preparation on the external evaluation of the Agency in enclosed, and thus only certain tasks are described in the table. The tasks related to renewal of the education for experts are not included, since they are addressed separately under point C.*

## **F) PRESENTATION OF REALISATION OF THE TASKS DEFINED BY INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIC FOCUSES UNTIL 2013 IN THE AGENCY**

### **STRATEGY 2011-2016**

#### **I. ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGENCY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

The internal quality assurance system of the Agency shall be developed in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Thus, a special attention has to be paid to efficient quality work, education of the technical associates of the Agency, participation in international associations and cooperation with foreign agencies and participation in the international projects from this field, respectively.

Above stated is tightly linked to achievement of one of the most important objective of the Agency, i.e. membership in ENQA and entry in EQAR – the two main associations for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Agency shall continue the work that was interrupted in 2010, namely restore the cooperation with the foreign associations, agencies and experts and the work in different project groups, etc. established in 2008 and 2009, and strive for establishment of new contacts.

<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE: THE AGENCY MUST BECOME TRUST-WORTHY AND PROFESSIONALLY CREDIBLE COUNSELLING BODY IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT IN THE SLOVENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION</b>			
<b>Activity 1: Providing quality professional support in conduct of accreditation and evaluation proceedings</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Continuous solving of problems related to the use of Accreditation Proposal form web application.	Quality Department/ Director	permanent task	Smooth use of the <i>Accreditation Proposal</i> form web application.
Exchange of experiences, information and coordination of work of Agency staff who conduct interconnected and comparable proceedings.	Agency staff/ Director		Uniformity of proceedings and higher quality of dealing with the applications for accreditation and external evaluation.

Interpreting criteria, solving open issues and dealing with topics linked to work of Agency staff on regular meetings.		permanent task; normally two times a month	Searching for common or unified solutions, increased efficiency and success of work. Improving quality of work of the Agency staff, and thereby strengthening the trust of external stakeholders in professionalism of the Agency's operation. Reducing the number of mistakes.
Updating e-Archive (common folder)	Agency staff	September 2012	Optimisation, rationalisation and reduction of administrative burdens of Agency staff.
Comparative analyses with foreign agencies (identifying good practices, comparing procedures, etc.).		permanent task	Introducing examples of good practice subject to national characteristics.
<b>Activity 2: Drawing up transparent process schemes of all procedures</b>			
<b>Naloga</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Transforming the plan for conducting proceedings at the Agency and preparing protocols for individual proceedings.	Agency staff/ Director	July and August 2012	More efficient and better conduct of all proceedings at the Agency and rationalisation of work. Overview of work performed
Simplifying the protocol and manner of preparing materials for the SQA Council sessions.		December 2012; first simplification in June 2012	Eliminating all unnecessary administrative tasks (burdens), and thus enabling in-depth dealing with the applications on one hand, and increasing the efficiency of work performed by the Agency staff on the other.

<b>Activity 3: Education and training of the Agency's Agency staff at home and abroad</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Preparation and adoption of Rules on educating Agency staff	General Affairs Department Director	July 2012	Systematic planning of education and training
Preparation and adoption of the plan for education and training of Agency staff in Slovenian and abroad	Director	first discussion was carried out in may 2012; adoption of the plan in September 2012	Education and training of Agency staff with their needs and wishes in mind.
Education and training of Agency staff at seminars, workshops, and consultations at home and abroad.		permanent task	Refreshment of the gained professional knowledge and acquisition of new one. Higher professional qualifications of staff.
<b>Activity 4: Participation in international associations and cooperation with the foreign quality assurance agencies for higher education</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Organisation of a symposium with the foreign experts.		February 2012	Symposium with the participation of 5 foreign experts and 50 other participants.
Active participation in consultations and conferences from the area of Agency's operation.		permanent task	Recognition (establishment) of the Agency and Slovenian experts abroad.
Organisation of visits to foreign quality assurance agencies in higher education.		permanent task; visit to the Agency	

Organisation of visits to the Agency by foreign agencies	Agency staff/ Director	for Science and Higher Education (ASHE, Croatia) on 8 and 9 March 2012	Strengthening of international cooperation; exchange of information, experiences, register of experts, and participation in projects.  Conclusion of agreement with at least one foreign agency.
Exchange of quality assessment experts; striving for cooperation of the Slovenian experts with foreign agencies.		permanent task	
Signing of bilateral agreements with related foreign agencies and institutions, and regularly maintaining contacts.		December 2012	
<b>Activity 5: Participation of the Agency in the international project JOQAR – Joint Programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of Degrees Awarded</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Coordinating the project. Cooperation with The Slovenian provider of EMMIR (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations study programme) at the University of Nova Gorica.	Quality Department/ Director	until the conclusion of the project: participation of 3 Agency staff in the Brussels (March 2012) and Madrid (13, 14 and 15 June 2012)	Forming of common (international) accreditation criteria and acknowledgement of the joint study (programmes) Implementing the procedure of the EMMIR joint study programme accreditation, and preparation of the report on the procedure implementation. Successful cooperation with foreign institutions, and higher recognition of the Agency. Increasing possibilities for participation in the upcoming projects.

Analysis of the conditions for provision of joint study programmes in the EU countries and analysis of good practice examples.			Identification of accreditation procedures for the joint study programmes abroad and of good practice examples (procedures, legislation, etc.), and updating and improving the procedures related to the joint programmes.
<b>Activity 6: Participation of the Agency in the MULTRA international project (which is tightly linked to JOQAR)</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Active work in the ECA project group.	Agency staff/ Director	permanent task (until conclusion of the project)	Full membership of the Agency in MULTRA, prerequisite being positive external evaluation of the Agency. Development and signing of the Multilateral agreement on mutual recognition of accreditation decisions linked to joint study programmes.
<b>Activity 7: Participation of the Agency in the QROSSROADS international project</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Active work in the ECA project group.	Agency staff/ Director	permanent task; participation at the Project Group meeting in Haag on 31 may 2012	Adjustment of the Agency's web site and provision of the following data: records on accredited higher educational institutions, study programmes, and evaluated higher vocational colleges. Participating in establishment of the European register of experts; forming of a unified "portfolio" for experts.

<b>Activity 8: (Training for) counselling to stakeholders from higher and higher vocation education</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Internal education of Agency staff on current affairs in European Higher Education Area	Quality Department, external experts/Director	permanent task	Higher professional qualifications of staff, and counselling services of higher quality.
Monitoring compliance of the Agency's operation with the European standards and guidelines and international principles in the area of quality assurance.	Agency staff/Director	permanent task	Understanding the importance of ESG for work and role of the Agency, and better cooperation with stakeholders and recognition of their role in establishment of quality system.

## **II. TRANSFORMATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

In performing its work, the Agency must follow the European standards and guidelines more than ever. Thus, it has to transform its fundamental activity – system of external quality assurance for higher education and higher vocational education. This involves transition from existing bureaucratic, sometimes almost inspection procedures for accreditation and evaluation to jointly agreed upon system of external quality, for which close and constant cooperation with higher education institution, higher vocational colleges and other stakeholders is of crucial importance. The Agency shall strengthen its counselling role, renew education of experts, and form new accreditation and evaluation criteria together with all stakeholders.

**EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE: FOLLOWING THE EUROPEAN CRITERIA AND STANDARDS IN DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

**Activity 1: Updating the system of external quality assurance in accordance with the European standards**

Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Developing culture of quality in cooperation with higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges through counselling and exchange of good practice examples.	Agency staff/ Agency Council	November 2012	Consultation and workshops with stakeholders in higher education and higher vocational education.

**Activity 2: Harmonising the acts and rules of the Agency's operation with the European standards and other regulations**

Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Amending the Criteria for the Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes.	Agency Council	June 2012	Harmonisation of Criteria with the Fiscal Balance Act – amendment of ZViS (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenian, No 40/12).
Drawing up and sending out the questionnaires (surveys) on criteria and procedures of the Agency's operation.	Agency staff		Acquisition of information on (in)adequacy of the existing criteria and procedures.
Analysis of the existing Criteria for the Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes, Criteria for the External Evaluation of Higher Vocational Colleges and other acts of the Agency or responses by the stakeholders.		September 2012	Amendment of the Criteria and application form as their integral part.

Proposals for new Criteria for the Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes, and coordination with all stakeholders.	Agency staff, Agency Council Working Group/Agency Council	By November 2012	Coordination with all stakeholders – adoption of agreed upon criteria in accordance with the European standards.
The new Criteria to be considered and adopted at the Agency Council.	Agency Council Working Group/Agency Council	November and December 2012	The new Criteria to be adopted and published in the beginning of 2013.  Higher comparability with international criteria and procedures; simplification of procedures and facilitation of the work of the Agency and stakeholders.
<b>Activity 3: Monitoring quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, and counselling</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Analysis of reports by experts on accreditation of higher educational institutions and study programmes and external evaluations of higher vocational colleges, and drawing up a report thereof.	Quality Department/ Director	analysis: September 2012  report: December 2012	Improvement of the structure of reports – different analyses (by different indicators). Overall view into “the situation” of accredited higher education institutions and study programmes in an individual year, and monitoring the higher education and higher vocational education quality development.
Determining higher education and higher vocational education quality indicators, and starting their selection.		December 2012	Monitoring the development progress and quality of higher education and higher vocational education both on the national and international level.

Collecting self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, and analysing internal quality assurance systems.		September 2012	Monitoring the progress of internal quality system of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, and counselling on how to improve it.
Meetings (organisation of workshops) of the Agency with committees or others responsible for quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges and other stakeholders.	Agency staff/Director	when necessary	Strengthening trust between the Agency and stakeholders, interpreting criteria, solving open issues, counselling and exchange of good practices.
<b>Activity 4: Transparent and public work of the Agency</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Continuing renewal of the website, designing website in English and promptly updating the website.	Agency staff/Director	promptly; the English website by September 2012; preparation of test translations and selection of translation service providers in July 2012	Public and transparent operation of the Agency  Recognition of Agency's role in public, and of the importance of quality in higher education and higher vocational education.  Prompt notifications to all stakeholders and wider public on the work of Agency.
Publication of the Agency Council's decisions, report on the work and work plan of the Agency, and other reports or presentation materials.		permanent task; report on work 2011, and work and financial plan for 2012 in June and beginning of July 2012	

Correcting the tables on accredited higher education institutions and study programmes and their prompt updating.		June 2012	
Drawing up the table of evaluated higher vocational colleges and its prompt updating.		the latest in July 2012	
Publication of annual reports, i.e. analyses of accreditations and external evaluations.		December 2012 or January 2013	
Preparation of the Agency's presentation brochure, its translation into English and publication on website.		October 2012	
Renewal of the Expert Training Manual, its translation into English and publication on website.		October 2012	
Establishment of permanent cooperation with journalists. Designation of the public relations representative.	authorised person/Director	permanent task, designation of the representative in May 2012	

### III. PARTICIPATING IN DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

The mission of the Agency is constant cooperation with the ministries and other organisation in forming and determining national legislation and regulations from the area of higher education and higher vocational education, namely by means of active participation in working groups and at different meetings, and by drafting proposals for laws and other acts. Deadlines for these tasks depend on external stakeholders – typically, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

#### EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2011–2020 IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION, AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT RENEWAL

##### Activity: Participation in drafting the new Higher Education Act

Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Drafting proposals for amendment of the Higher Education Act.	Agency staff/Director, Agency Council	June 2012 or in line with the plan of responsible ministry	Adopted proposals of the Agency for amendment of the Higher Education Act, in particular regarding accreditation and evaluation procedures.

#### EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 2: FORMING AND IMPLEMENTING UNIFORM CRITERIA AND STANDARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALISATION

##### Activity: Preparation of the Criteria for Transnational Higher Education

Task	Implementation and accountability	Deadline for implementation	Expected result
Preparation of the Criteria for Transnational Higher Education in cooperation with stakeholders from higher education. Organisation and implementation of a workshop with the stakeholders.	Agency staff; Agency Council Working Group/ Agency Council	March 2012	Adoption and publication of the Criteria for Transnational Higher Education in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 18/2012.
Analysis of conditions for the implementation of transnational higher	Agency staff/Director	permanent task	Identification of accreditation procedures for TNHE abroad and of good practice

education in other countries, monitoring the development of this education, i.e. education according to joint study programmes.			examples (procedures, legislation, etc.) Updating the THEN related procedures.
<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 3: PARTICIPATION IN FORMING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK</b>			
<b>Activity: Participation in forming the national qualifications framework</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Participation at work meetings, consultations and conferences of the working group for forming the national qualifications framework.	Quality Department/ Director	participation at the consultation held in Hotel Mons on 19 June 2012; final deadline according to plan of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) in 2013	Recognition of the role and importance of the Agency in forming the national qualification framework; successful cooperation and adoption of the Agency's proposals.  National qualifications framework.

<b>EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOPMENT AND CONCERN FOR INTRODUCING THE UNIFORM CRITERIA AND STANDARDS IN STUDY PROGRAMMES</b>			
<b>Activity: Constant cooperation with the stakeholders in higher education and higher vocational education and experts of the Agency in exchanging experiences, examples of good practice and needs</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Implementation and accountability</b>	<b>Deadline for implementation</b>	<b>Expected result</b>
Organisation of consultation with the stakeholders and experts on quality standards development.	Agency Council/ Director	November or December 2012	Consultation for the stakeholders in higher education and higher vocational education and experts of the Agency.

## CONCLUSION

The year of 2012 will be, in addition to activities we have to perform by the law and other acts of the Agency, devoted in particular to establishment of better and more encouraging working environment and reorganisation of work, in order to complete all these numerous and demanding tasks according to the deadlines set in the work plan. Next to accreditations and external evaluations of higher education institutions and study programmes, and higher vocational colleges respectively, the tasks are in particular the following:

- self-evaluation of the Agency and preparation for external evaluation which is a prerequisite to become a member of ENQA and EQAR;
- renewal of the candidate for entry into register of experts training programme and training manual, and analyses of accreditation and evaluation reports by the experts and other required materials;
- active participation with the stakeholders in higher education and higher vocational education at workshops and professional consultations;
- participation in international projects related to the Agency's work;
- cooperation with foreign agencies;
- renewal of the Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes and of application form as their integral part;
- evaluation of all acts of the Agency;
- collection of data from higher education institutions, higher vocational colleges, experts and other stakeholders on Agency's work, analysis of survey questionnaires and, on the basis of survey results, adoption of measures for improvements;
- selection of and cooperation with the contractor for establishment of comprehensive information system of the Agency;
- planning of participation at various conferences, consultations and workshops at home and abroad;
- translation of important materials into English, and designing website of the Agency in English.

Gaining trust of all stakeholders and wider public into work of the Agency, and strengthening its recognition in Slovenia, will be of significant importance. The Agency must strive for assurance and improvement of its own quality, being the foundation for efficient, with all stakeholders agreed upon and generally acknowledged external quality assurance system in higher education and higher vocational education.



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Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije  
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

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Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency  
for Higher Education



*Naložba v vašo prihodnost*

OPERACIJO DELNO FINANCIRA EVROPSKA UNIJA  
Evropski socialni sklad