

WORK AND FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2015



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

Introduction

This year, the story repeats itself once again and we are late with the preparation of the annual Work and Financial Plan. There are numerous reasons for it. At the beginning of the calendar year we must prepare several documents for the previous year: business report, annual accounts, report on the work and operation of the Agency - we must perform the self-evaluation of the Agency and prepare an action plan for the future. These are quite time-consuming tasks in addition to everyday work. I still believe that certain reports could be joined, and this annual plan joins the work plan for 2015 and the action plan for 2015.

Therefore, the adoption of the proposal of the annual work and financial plan for 2015 shall be shifted. According to Article 51.i. of HEA, the Director of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency) shall prepare a proposal of a financial plan and adopt the work plan of the Agency, but he must gain the consent of the Agency Council. This shall likely happen in September; there are no regular meetings of the Agency Council in July and August.

2015 marks a special year in the five-year operation of the Agency. In 2015, the ESF project "Establishment of a national quality assurance system in higher education 2010-2014", which has been extended to 31 October 2015. Not only did the project enable the employment of more than half of the employees of the Agency, the financial funds made easier, in the light of limited financial capabilities of the Agency, the work of the Agency on more demanding tasks, related with self-evaluation and external evaluation of the Agency, the establishment of the comprehensive information system, participation in international projects and organizations and the performance of activities for the obtaining of a full membership of the Agency in ENQA.

In the quality of the implementation of the set tasks or for the achievement of the objectives, the Agency was economical, and we anticipate that the entire amount from the ESF resources, EUR 4,606,499.48 (for the period 2010-2015), which is still available until the end of the, shall suffice. The value of the project upon the confirmation in 2010 was EUR 10,090,257.00. In 2015 (for the months of September, October, November, December), it shall be necessary to cover the loss of funds and to strive for a suitable allocation of the budgets for 2016 and 2017, respectively.

In 2015, we also expect a decision regarding the full membership of the Agency in the European network of agencies for quality assurance in higher education, ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). This is also one of the more important objectives from the National Higher Education programme for the period 2011-2020 and leads to international recognition of the Agency. In 2013, the Agency was successful and was entered into the European register of trustworthy quality assurance agencies, EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education). Another important objective at the end of 2015 is the final establishment of the information system.

Ivan Leban

Ljubljana, July 2015.



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Content	5
SLOVENIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION	6
Organization	6
From the Agency Development Strategy for the period 2011-2016	7
Activities of the Agency in 2014 - summary	9
WORK PLAN FOR 2015	10
A) ACCREDITATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES AND EVALUATIONS OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES	11
B) ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY	12
C) UPDATE OF THE AGENCY STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES from 2016-2020	13
D) SYSTEM OF NOTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY	14
E) TRAINING OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS AND EXPERTS	15
F) WORKSHOP AND CEENQA GENERAL ASSEMBLY in 2015	16
ADDITIONAL TASKS IN 2015	17
RESOURCES	18
Financial resources	18
Human resources	21
SQAA ACTION PLAN FOR 2015	24
CONCLUSION	32



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

SLOVENIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Organization

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency) was established based on the Act Amending the Higher Education Act – HEA-G (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 86/2009); Higher Education Act (official consolidated text) HEA-UPB7 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 32/2012; the act and the Decision on the Establishment of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 114/2009) determines its bodies, competences and tasks.

The basis for the establishment and operation of the Agency is Article 51.e of HEA-UPB7 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 32/2012). The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education is an entity of public law established to assure quality in higher education and to perform developmental and advisory work in the field for which it was established.

By taking into consideration the legal provisions the purpose and aim of the Agency is the following:

- quality assurance and improvement in higher education;
- professionalization of the quality evaluation;
- gaining the public's trust into the system of quality assessment;
- compliance of operation with the applicable European standards.

The Agency shall encourage higher education institutions towards:

- accountability for the quality of the creation and implementation of study programmes;
- constant development and establishment of the culture of quality;
- regular annual self-evaluation and periodical external evaluations based on clear and consistent criteria and applicable evaluation.

The Agency consists of: the Council as a first-instance decision-making body and the Appeal Committee as the second-instance decision-making body, and the Technical Department of the Agency led by the Director.



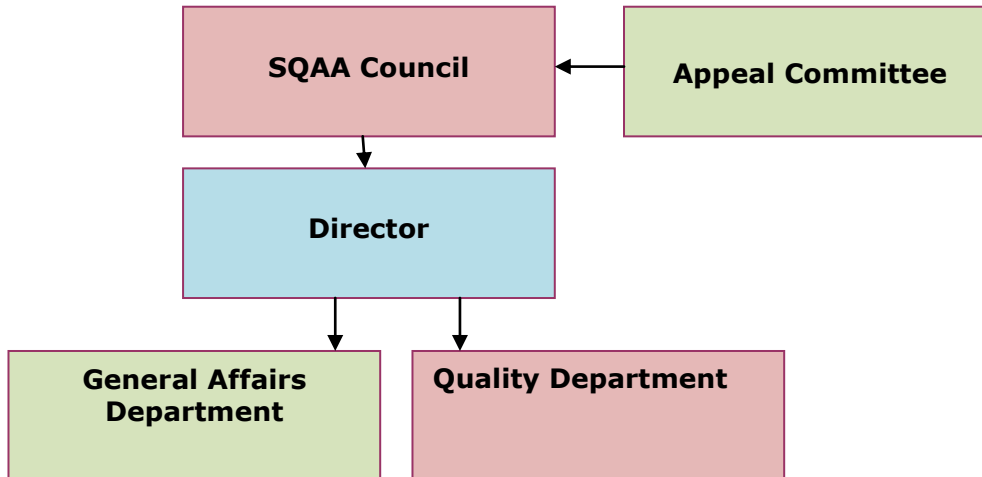
n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

Organizational scheme 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 contextually, and counsels all stakeholders and participants in tertiary education in line with European and global development trends.

Vision

The Agency shall, with its system of quality assurance development, contribute to 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.



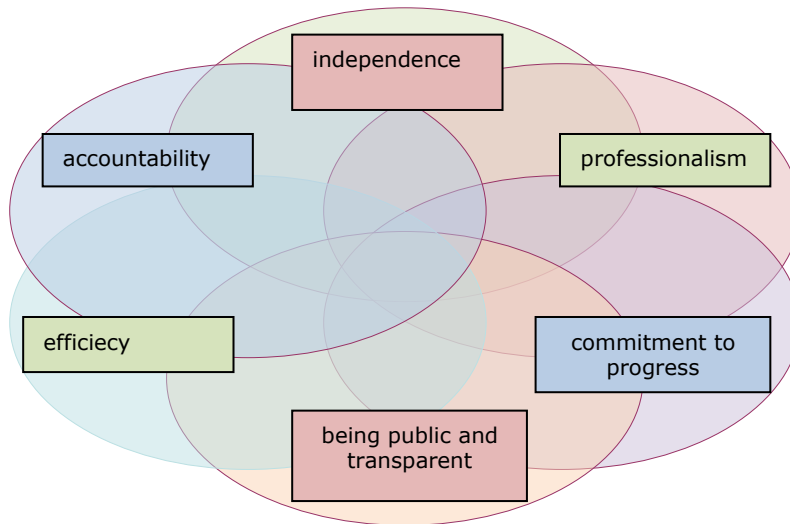
n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

Values



Strategic objectives

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



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

Activities of the Agency in 2014

(summarized from the final part of the Report on Work and Operation of the Agency in 2014)

In 2014, the Agency lived by its 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 contextually, and counsels all stakeholders and participants in tertiary education in line with European and global development trends."

In addition to the tasks which the Agency shall perform in accordance with the law and other acts, it strived towards establishing a better and more encouraging work environment to perform the numerous demanding tasks from the work plan. In January 2015, there were 102 higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges in Slovenia, and the register of the Ministry featured 937 study programmes which are being implemented at higher education institutions.

In 2014 and at the beginning of 2015, the Agency achieved the second of the important strategic objectives. It gained the full membership to ENQA. Of the 17 ENQA ESG standards (Parts 2 and 3), the Agency is, according to the opinion of international evaluators and the ENQA executive board, fully (10), mostly (6) and partially (1) in accordance with these standards. The most problematic is standard 3.4 – long-term stable financing of the Agency. The Agency has been entered into the register of trustworthy agencies EQAR (2013), <http://www.eqar.eu>, and is a full member of ENQA (March 2015), <http://www.enqa.eu>.

The Agency has also gained more trust from higher education and higher vocational education stakeholders and of the general public; it has also become more recognizable, both at home and internationally. It continually strives to improve its own quality which is the basis for an efficient system of external quality assurance in higher education, agreed upon with all stakeholders and generally recognized. Unfortunately, the general public gets to know about the activity of the Agency in light of negative events in Slovenian higher education (non-accredited programmes, plagiarism).

The Agency is also recognizable in the international area, as it is an active member of ECA, CEENQA and INQAAHE.

In 2015, the Agency marks the fifth year of its operation.



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

WORK PLAN FOR 2015

The tasks from the work plan have been defined by taking into consideration the strategic objectives from the Development Strategy of the Agency for the Period 2011–2016, adopted by the Agency Council in November 2011, and the operation of the Agency was directed towards:

1. establishment and further development of the quality assurance system (mainly the establishment of an information system);
2. transformation of the quality assurance system in higher and higher vocational education; and
3. participation in the development of higher education in Slovenia;
4. recognition of the Agency in the international area.

The specified strategic guidelines are related with the activity for a quality of work of the Agency through regular annual self-evaluations and external evaluations of the Agency, participation with external stakeholders or by establishing an efficient and mutually agreed upon system of external quality assurance and the participation with the European Higher Education Area, EHEA, by taking into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter: ESG).

Specific tasks in 2015 shall be presented in connection with the findings and recommendations of the Self-evaluation Report of the Agency in 2014 and shall also be taken from the action plan which was prepared based on these reports. The action plan for 2015 was presented at the end of the work plan. At the same time, it partially also includes the recommendations from the reports of international experts who performed the external evaluation of the Agency in accordance with the ESG criteria in November 2014. Only certain priority tasks are shown.

Individual assignments of the Agency in 2015 shall be divided and shown accordingly, which will simplify the subsequent preparation of the annual report about the work of the Agency in 2015. But since the Agency Council confirmed the Agency's Quality Manual at its 88th meeting on 19 February 2015, the instructions from this manual have also been taken into consideration.

We give attention to the previous tasks which have not been achieved. That is mainly the establishment of an information system which the Agency urgently needs for further work and an uninterrupted operation and preparation of various analysis and trends.

In 2015, the Agency will strive to establish more trust from all higher education stakeholders and to strengthen its independent advisory role in the Slovenian higher education area.

A) ACCREDITATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES AND EVALUATIONS OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

PROCESSING OF APPLICATION LIKELY TO BE SUBMITTED IN 2015			
Activity 1: accreditations in higher education			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Anticipated number of applications	Notes
Initial accreditation of study programmes	Quality Department / Agency Council	5	The data for the initial accreditations is only an estimate.
Re-accreditation of study programmes		250	
Initial accreditation of higher education institutions		2	
Re-accreditation of higher education institutions		12	
Transformation of higher education institutions		3	
Activity 2: evaluations of higher vocational colleges			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Planned number of applications	Notes
External evaluations of higher vocational colleges	Quality Department / Agency Council	6	A new plan shall be adopted at the end of 2015.

Note: The applications to change study programmes are not considered in the table. According to the Fiscal Balance Act (ZUJF, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 40/2012), a private higher education institution may change the compulsory components of study programmes according to the same procedure under which they have been adopted. A university changes the compulsory components of study programmes on its own. It then informs the Agency on the modified compulsory components of study programmes within 30 days of their adoption. The Agency considers the modification when re-accrediting study programmes.

In 2016, **92** re-accreditations of study programmes and **5** re-accreditations of higher education institutions are expected.

Explanations:

The list of publicly available records of the accredited higher education institutions and study programmes is published at the Agency's website <http://www.nakvis.si> under three links and additionally the register at MESS.

- [Public records on the accreditation of study programmes from 2004 to 2010](#)
- [Public records on study programmes accredited after 1 March 2010](#)
- [Plan for re-accreditation and public records on the accreditation of higher education institutions](#)
- [Register of higher education institutions](#) (and the list of publicly valid study programmes)



n.a.k.v.i.s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s.q.a.a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

B) ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

(also in the Action Plan for 2015)

Activity: Establishment of a comprehensive information system			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Acquainting higher education institutions with eNakvis	Technical Department	July, August 2015	More efficient, rationalized and quality work, simplification and improvement of accreditation and evaluation procedures and other work processes at the Agency. Connectedness with the e-VŠ system as well. One of the strategic objectives of the Agency.
Testing application forms and usability of eNakvis with internal and external stakeholders	Technical Department	October 2015	
Elimination of detected flaws and irregularities	Technical Department	November 2015	
Final version and implementation of eNakvis	Technical Department / Director	January 2016	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

C) UPDATE OF THE AGENCY STRATEGY AND DETERMINATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES from 2016-2020 (in the Action Plan 2015)

activity: Strategic objectives of the Agency 2016-2020			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Determination of the strategic objectives of the Agency 2016-2020 by taking into consideration NHEP 2011-2020	Quality Department / Director	October 2015	Appointment of a working group
		October 2015	Preparation of the draft of the Agency's strategy and determination of priority objectives up to 2020
		November 2015	Discussion at the Agency Council
		December 2015	Adoption and publication



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

D) SYSTEM FOR NOTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY (from the Action Plan for 2014)

activity: System for notifying stakeholders in higher education			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Establishment of an efficient system for notifying stakeholders about the important events, good practice and the changes of the acts of the Agency	Quality Department / Director	September 2015	Determination of the persons responsible at the Agency
		September 2015	Preparation of the plan for notifying
		October 2015	Prompt monitoring and notifying (newsletters, Twitter)



n.a.k.v.i.s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s.q.a.a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

E) TRAINING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE AGENCY COUNCIL AND THE EXPERTS (in the Action Plan 2014)

IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE 1: Training new members of the Agency Council			
Activity: training			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Execution of the training for new members of the Agency Council	Director, Agency Council, foreign guest	September 2015	Acquaintance with the acts and procedures of the Agency, execution of the training
IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE 2: Training candidates for experts			
Activity: training			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Training of candidates for entry into the Agency's register of experts	Quality Department Director foreign guest	October 2015	Appointment of the working group
		October 2015	Supplementation of the training programme
		November 2015	Discussion at the Council
		November 2015 January 2015	Execution of two trainings

F) WORKSHOP AND CEENQA GENERAL ASSEMBLY in 2015

Activity: Execution of workshop and CEENQA general assembly			
Task	Implementation and accountability	Implementation deadline	Expected result
Workshop and CEENQA annual assembly (together with the CEENQA secretariat)	Quality Department, General Affairs Department, Director	January 2015	Appointment of the working group
		March 2015	Workshop programme and invitations to lecturers
		April 2015	Invitations to attendees
		May 2015	Execution of the two-day meeting in the City Hotel, Ljubljana

ADDITIONAL TASKS in 2015

In 2015, the visits from auditors from the Court of Audits of the Republic of Slovenia shall continue at the Agency regarding the audit of the efficiency of the procedures of evaluations, accreditations and granting concessions for quality assurance and diversity of study programmes. The audit began in 2014, a clarification meeting is anticipated for September 2015.

Based on experience from previous years, we also expect several inspection visits in 2015.

In 2015, the EIQAS project (Enhancing Internal Quality Assurance Systems, financed by the European Commission, namely from the Erasmus+ programme for 2014, 2015, 2016 (field: strategic partnership in higher education; action: participation for innovation and exchange of good practice) shall continue. Our Agency also participates in this project (project identification number: 2014-1-PL01-KA203-003593). The EIQAS project consortium consists from partners from Poland, Slovenia, Portugal and Bulgaria, in its constitution it joins four quality assurance agencies (PKA, NAKVIS, A3ES and NEAA), rectors' conferences from Poland and Portugal and higher education institutions from Slovenia and Portugal.

The EIQAS project "Improvement of internal quality systems" is centered towards two objectives:

- increasing the capacities of higher education institutions in the participating countries to develop their internal quality assurance, with emphasis on increasing their awareness and understanding of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines ENQA (ESG) and by determining, developing and expanding good innovative practice to internal quality assurance; and towards
- increasing the capabilities of the participating agencies for quality assurance in external quality assurance systems by comparing the methodologies between agencies for an assessment of the internal quality assurance and the exchange and development of good practices in the assessment of internal systems of quality.

RESOURCES

Financial resources

In 2015, the activities of the Agency shall be financed from the integral and project resources of the budget:

- the first arise directly from the state budget;
- the second arise from the resources of European structural funds (hereinafter: ESF resources) of the project "Establishment of the national quality assurance system for higher education 2010–2014". These are also budget resources. These resources finance
 - salaries of employees according to the project,
 - costs, incurred in the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes or external evaluations of higher education institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges (visits of the groups of experts),
 - expenses of business trips,
 - expenses for notifying activities,
 - expenses for publications,
 - promotional materials,
 - expenses for conferences, seminars and workshops,
 - computer services,
 - representation,
 - partial purchase of computer and office equipment,
 - indirect expenses.

It is worth mentioning that the ESF resources mainly finance the **basic activity** of the Agency and that the employees employed for the project as well as the funds themselves are necessary for a normal operation of the Agency. The project shall expire in 2015.

In 2015, the Agency was supposed to receive, as a direct non-governmental budget user, the following resources in total, in the amount of **EUR 1,462,267.32**, divided into two parts as indicated below:

Integral resources (for 9 employees employed for an indefinite period + the Director)

Salaries	EUR 352,089.67
Mat. costs	EUR 134,584.25
Investments	EUR 5.,00
Quality of higher education (meeting fees of the Council)	EUR 42,932

Material costs mostly cover the costs for rent and operating costs. But they are also partially covered from the ESF resources.

ESF resources (project until 31 October 2015) (for the salaries of 13 employees employed for a definite period and cumulative costs for the activity of the Agency and all accreditations)

The ESF resources are shown in the table below "ESF resources" and in more detail, according to the type of cost in the table "Financial plan for 2015 according to cost type (ESF resources)".

A major problem for the financing of the Agency will occur in 2015 and later in 2016 and 2017, when the ESF project expires. Then, the operation of Agency would be highly reduced or even disabled.

The National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020 imposes on the Agency a very high number of duties, while stating in action no. 20: "the Agency shall develop and constantly update the external quality assurance system, including all higher education stakeholders with the following explanations

- Explanation: the Agency will create and update the external quality assurance system in full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- Financing of the action: From 2015, when the (co)funding of the Agency from the European Structural Funds expires, **approximately 6 million of budgetary funds annually** shall be earmarked for the Agency, increasing in line with the extent of work and complexity of operation." – end of quote.

Therefore, the Agency currently finances all the activities (salaries, accreditations, material costs, external experts, the Agency Council, Appeal Committee) with approximately EUR 1.3 million annually. If the Agency would acquire only a third of the announced EUR 6 million in 2015 (when the ESF resources expire), that is EUR 2 million, it would be able to operate with the same level of quality, otherwise the situation will take a dark turn.

In 2012, 2013 and 2014, the Agency was prudent with its money, and spent annually EUR 1,295,457.97; 1,301,117.05, and 1,209,022.68.

Below is a more detailed presentation of the financial situation, it is the projection of the situation on 9 June 2014. A revised budget is possible for the fall.

INTEGRAL RESOURCES (in EUR) – employees employed for an indefinite period

Budget heading	2015 established budget
Salaries	352,089.67
Material costs	134,584.25
Investments	5,000.00
Quality of higher education	42,932

TOTAL	534,605.92
--------------	-------------------

ESF RESOURCES (in EUR)

Budget heading	2015 established budget
ESF – EU (85%)	785,169.09
ESF – Slovenian participation (15%)	138,531.66
Total ESF	923,700.75

TOTAL OF ALL RESOURCES of the Agency

Budget heading	2015 established budget
Total integ. funds + ESF	1,462,267.32

a) Salaries

b) Material costs

Financial plan for 2015 according to the cost type (ESF resources)

Cost type	the Agency's plan 2015
Salaries and other expenses for employees	300,000.00
Work through the student work service	5,000.00
External experts (execution of external evaluations and accreditations)	450,000.00
Daily allowances, expenses for accommodation and travelling (for employees)	20,000.00
Informing and notifying	5,000.00
Publications	20,000.00
Promotional materials	8,000.00
Expenses related with conferences/symposiums/seminars/trainings	30,000.00
Representation	5,000.00
VAT	20,000.00
Other external services	30,000.00
Computer services	100,000.00
Purchase of furniture and office equipment	5,000.00
Computer equipment – inform. system	10,000.00
Indirect expenses in a lump sum (up to 15%)	117,000.00

Planned expenditure – total	1,150,747.00
ESF resources (85%)	978,135.00
Slovenian participation (15%)	172,612.00

In July 2015, we shall request an extension of the ESF project “Establishment of a national quality assurance system 2010–2014”, until 31 December 2015. The project was supposed to be extended to achieve the two remaining indicators, namely, the establishment and implementation of the Agency's information system, and the exchange of technical members of the staff with foreign agencies upon the existing financial obligations.

Human resources

The employments of staff of the Agency are planned:

- in the staffing plan of the Agency for those who are financed from integral resources;
- in the ESF project documentation for those who are financed from ESF resources.

At the beginning of September 2013, there was a change in the ESF project “Establishment of a national quality assurance system in higher education 2010 – 2014”, extending the project through 31 October 2015. To an extent, this simplified the work of the Agency, as there were a lot of demanding tasks to be done, related with self-evaluation and external evaluation of the Agency, the final implementation of the comprehensive information system is due, we are supposed to be a more active participant in international projects and perform all activities to obtain the membership of the Agency in ENQA.

Years of experience have shown us that for a quality execution of the set tasks we do not need or will not be able to spend all the anticipated resources from the ESF resources which are still available until the end of the project, through 2015. Now, the entire amount which is available to the Agency after the project, totals EUR 4,606,499.48, which will suffice for the fulfillment of all the objectives from the project. In 2015 we will request an extension until the end of 2015.

In the staffing plan of the Agency for 2014 and 2015, respectively, (sent to the Ministry of Finance) 9 job positions and the position of the Director are systemized in the integral resources.

The situation is different for employments, which are financed from the ESF resources. There were 13 members of the staff, employed for a definite period.

A new Director was employed in April 2013.

The staffing situation at the Agency shall become **very worrisome** in 2015, when the employment agreements expire in 2015 for the 13 members of the staff (out of 20 total) who are employed for a definite period. The Agency will have to exercise the rights it has in accordance with HEA and the provisions in the National

Higher Education Programme of the Republic of Slovenia 2011-2020, but with the financial capabilities.

For all tasks, which the Agency must perform, there are not enough staff employed for an indefinite period (the problem mainly lies in the numerous evaluations of programmes). The profile of the employee is specific, since they have all passed the general administrative procedure exam. If we were to lose these members of staff, significant damage would have been done to quality assurance in higher education in Slovenia.

At the same time, upon the admittance to ENQA, we must comply with the ESG Standard 3.4 Resources, stating "Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes, procedures and staff."

In 2015, the Agency wishes to obtain from the Ministry of Finance an assurance for increased integral resources in the budget, upon completion in 2015 as well as in the budgets for 2016 and 2017, which are the condition for the employment of new employees for an indefinite period upon the loss of ESF resources. This would prevent an impact on the operation of the Agency.

In 2015, similar is planned as in 2014:

1. the implementation of the information system will no longer require from the staff in the Quality Department to perform administrative tasks which stop a quick, efficient work regarding content with quality, in the processing of applications, drafting finding and reports, decisions etc.
2. some of the staff in the Quality Department will, in addition to conducting accreditation and evaluation procedures, self-evaluation and preparation for external evaluations of the Agency, update of acts and external evaluation of higher vocational colleges, have the responsibility for the tasks regarding coherent content fields; the distribution of work obligations shall take into consideration the complexity of the workplace, their professional qualifications, enthusiasm and interests or the wish to perform a certain line of work:
 - for participation at regular monthly meetings with the Directorate for higher education MESS;
 - for the register of experts and all correspondence with the experts until the appointment of a group at the Agency Council;
 - for a prompt update of the data at the website of the Agency, public relations and organization of events at the Agency;
 - for the implementation of the comprehensive information system;
 - for international participation and development or monitoring of the events and examples of good practice in other comparable agencies;
 - for presentation brochures, reports and other publications – connected with translating;
 - for prompt refreshing of data regarding the applications or accredited higher education institutions and study programmes and external evaluations of higher vocational colleges, correct archiving of applications etc.

- for the development of internal quality assurance systems at institutions / schools in the transition to institutional evaluation
- PR service of the Agency

In 2015, intensive talks about the critical financial and staffing issues should be continued with the relevant stakeholders – the Ministry of Finance, the National Assembly, and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports.

At the Agency the employees' union Sloka, KSS Pergam, is active and is included as much as possible in the resolution of the financial and staffing situation of the Agency, mainly in the direct discussions at MF and MESS.

Self-evaluation of the Agency for 2014 and the action plan

In the last month of 2014 and at the beginning of 2015, the self-evaluation of the Agency for 2014 was performed; the related activities are described in the Self-evaluation Report which is the basis for the preparation of the Action Plan for 2015, the summary of which can be found below.



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

SQAA ACTION PLAN FOR 2015

Field of assessment in accordance with the Agency's Quality Manual	Objectives and tasks	Activities	Participants in the activities	Activity coordinator	Deadline for the achievement of the objective and tasks	Note
I. Accreditations and external evaluations	I.1 Improvement of the quality of accreditation procedures and decisions	More accountability in the conducting of the procedures, elimination of potential procedural errors or inconsistencies	Technical members of the staff	Director T. Debevec	Permanent activity	
		More active participation of the members of the Council in the preparation of the	Members of the Agency Council		Permanent activity	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

		justifications of the decisions				
	I.2 Calibration of the work	Promptly solving potential issues or inconsistencies at meeting of the technical members of the staff and members of the Council	Technical members of the staff		Permanent activity	
II. Internal quality system of the Agency	II.1 Reorganization of the work at the Agency	More equal and effective distribution of tasks, calibration and monitoring of employees	Director General Affairs Department	Director	September 2015 (after staffing changes because of the 2016-2017 budgets)	
	II.2 Strengthening of the efforts for a peaceful resolution of disputes and the	Recognition and analysis of issues and an efficient effort for a successful participation among employees	Director, technical members of the staff		Permanent activity	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

	improvement of communication among the internal stakeholders of the Agency	(Monday meetings, individual work interviews)				
III. External quality system of the Agency	III.1 Organization of regular consultations, conferences and workshops for stakeholders (for the improvement of quality systems)	Preparation of the programme and participation at the consultation for the fifth anniversary of the operation of the Agency	L. Čok I. Leban N. Kramar M. Mravlja J. Širok (technique)	K. Šubic	November 2015	
		Workshops regarding the updated ESG standards for all stakeholders	T. Debevec and staff		December 2015	
	III.2 Guidelines for drafting self-	Appointment of an interdepartmental		Director	January 2016	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

	evaluation reports (SER) of institutions / schools	working group				
		Preparation and coordination of the proposed guidelines with stakeholders	J. Širok K. Šubic M. Štuhec T. Horvat Z. Sečnik A. Kajtazović	T. Debevec	March 2016	
	III.3 Regulation of the Agency's operation with a special act	Preparation of starting points for a new act which shall comprehensively regulate its operation	T. Debevec B. Zupančič Kočar I. Leban Z. Sečnik M. Bajuk Malešič		March 2016	
	III.4 Execution of the training of candidates for experts	Presentation of the legislation, ESG guidelines, role and tasks of experts, practical training	K. Šubic I. Leban B. Zupančič	K. Šubic	November December 2015	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

			Kočar T. Debevec J. Širok G. Rebernik J. Kramar			
	III.5 Strengthening of the advisory role of the Agency	Consultation and workshops for institutions / schools	K. Šubic J. Širok M. Mravlja I. Leban		January 2016	
IV. Criteria and other regulation	IV.1 Draft of the Agency's strategy through 2020	Appointment of a working group	Director	Director	January 2016	
		Preparation of a new strategy proposal	T. Debevec Member of the Council		February 2016	



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

			Member of the Council			
	IV.2 Guidelines for the improvement of accessibility and flexibility of content for persons with special needs	Appointment of an interdepartmental working group	Director	Director	November 2015	
		Drafting the proposal of criteria	J. Širok T. Horvat A. Kajtezovič K. Šubic	K. Šubic	January 2016	
	IV.3 Interpretation of the criteria for accreditation	Appointment of a working group	Director	Director		Depending on the act amending HEA 2015
		Preparation of the proposal for the interpretation of the criteria	T. Debevec B. Zupančič Kočar			



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

			M. Bajuk Malešič			
V. Information system and notifying	V.1 A user- friendly information system is established (eNakvis)	Testing application forms and usability of eNakvis with internal and external stakeholders	A. Krček K. Šubic M. Štuhec T. Debevec	A. Krček	October 2015	
		Elimination of detected flaws and irregularities	B. Zupančič Kočar		November 2015	
		Final version and implementation of eNakvis			January, February 2015	

Note: the list of participants in the activities is not final may change if necessary.



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

CONCLUSION

2015 will be, because of the still extensive activities of the Agency, performed according to the law and other acts of the Agency (evaluations and accreditations), devoted to the international affirmation of the Agency. In addition to accreditations and external evaluations of higher education institutions and numerous study programmes and external evaluations of higher vocational colleges, these are mostly:

- assuring an uninterrupted operation of the Agency, mainly the resolution of the acute financial and staffing situation in 2015 – and the adoption of the budgets for 2016 and 2017, respectively;
- upon the loss of the ESF resources in 2015, to assure suitable integral resources;
- to finally implement the comprehensive information system of the Agency;
- adoption of obligations upon joining the ENQA;
- assuring the implementation of the revised ESG standards and guidelines;
- permanent training of candidates for entry into the register of experts;
- fruitful cooperation with stakeholders in higher education and higher vocational education at workshops and professional consultations;
- permanent advisory service upon current issues;
- participation in international projects, related with the Agency's work;
- cooperation with foreign agencies;
- collecting data from higher education institutions, higher vocational colleges, experts and other stakeholders regarding the work of the Agency, analysis of survey questionnaires and adoption of actions for improvements based on the findings of the survey;
- planned participation at various conferences, consultations and workshops at home and abroad;
- translation of all the relevant materials into English and maintenance of the Agency's website – transparent publication of the experts' reports;
- active participation in the changes of higher education legislation.

Of great importance will be the gaining of trust of all stakeholders and the general public for the work of the Agency and the strengthening of its recognition.

The Agency shall continue to strive to assure and improve its own quality which is the basis for an efficient, generally recognized system of external quality assurance in higher education, agreed upon with all stakeholders.

Done in Ljubljana, in July 2015.

Ivan Leban