Inception Report
(Final)

**Republic of Croatia**

**Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System**

December 2006

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## Abbreviations

| | |
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| ASHE | Agency for Science and Higher Education |
| CA | Contracting Authority |
| CARDS | Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation |
| CFCU | Central Finance and Contract Unit |
| EC | European Commission |
| ECD | Delegation of the European Commission |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer System |
| EHEA | European Higher Education Area |
| ENIC | European Network of Information Centres |
| ENQAA | European Association of Quality Assurance Agencies |
| ESG | European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance |
| EUA | Association of European Universities |
| EURASHE | European Association of Institutions in Higher Education |
| ETL | Extract(ion), Transform(ing) and Load(ing) |
| EU | European Union |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| ISVU | Information System of Higher Education Institutions (Informacijski sustav visokih učilišta) |
| IT | Information Technology |
| LAN | Local Area Network |
| LTE | Long-term Expert |
| MoSES | Ministry of Science, Education and Sports |
| NARIC | National Academic Recognition Information Centre |
| NCHE | National Council for Higher Education |
| NCS | National Council for Science |
| NZZ | National Foundation for Science and Higher Education |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PM | Project Month |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency (United Kingdom) |
| QM | Quality Management |
| QMS | Quality Management System |
| RDBMS | Relational Database Management System |
| SC | Steering Committee |

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SNMP | Simple Network Management Protocol |
| SPO | Senior Programme Officer |
| SRCE | University Computer Centre (Sveučilišni računarski centar) |
| STE | Short-term Expert |
| SWOT | Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TQM | Total Quality Management |
| WAN | Wide Area Network |
| WG | Working Group |
| WS | Work Shop |

# 1     Introduction

The central concern of this project is to assist the Croatian Government in its policy development effort for implementing nation-wide quality assurance standards at HEIs. Changes are required inter alia by the Bologna Declaration, which represents a far-reaching initiative in view of harmonising and homologising different national patterns in the management of HE systems. In many of the relevant countries this document is expected to bring about the most important reforms that have ever taken place in the respective national HEI management practices.

The Croatian Government has already been very active in the establishment of guidelines and rules required for this adjustment. Yet, a great effort still needs to be developed on the implementation level. An important part of this task has been assigned to the National Agency for Science and Higher Education, created in 2004.

This project is mainly designed to assist the institutional development of the Agency and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) as well as of its target groups who are expected to adapt to the new standards. A budget of about 374 man days has been earmarked for technical assistance to be implemented by a project team consisting of key and non-key experts.

Based on the technical proposal by the consortium, inception phase allowed to mobilise team of experts to do a thorough analysis of the present situation in GE in Croatia and, based on discussions and suggestions, to prepare a revised proposal, main issue being shift from design and implementation of HEMIS to actual support in designing and implementing of QA system in HEIs in Croatia and give needed support to the Agency for Science and Higher Education. First part of the IR present findings from the inception period, followed by revised TORs and, accordingly, activities.

We would like to thank all stakeholders that participated in meetings and discussions showing their interest and support for the project. We would also like to stress that we appreciate genuine interest and support of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for the implementation of the project, allowing us also to participate in policy support and decision meeting on highest levels. This would help the project to address real needs of the Croatian HE system and QA as an important part of the modernisation of this area.

## 1.1     HEI reform in Croatia

In the first years of the new Republic declared in 1991 the reform of the higher education System was not being considered a major priority in the policy-making process. The situation started to change during the mid-1990s. With help of the EU PHARE programme a fundamental review of the Croatian science & technology system was performed. Many of the recommendations emanating from this project were related to education, and formed a pressure on the Government to reform HE. It strengthened the role of the NCHE (created in 1993 already) and enacted the **Higher Education Institutions Act** in 1996 which provided a new scheme for the organisation of the teaching cycles. In 2000, this Act was amended, stipulating some changes in terms of:

- establishing scientific institutions, especially regarding their basic structure and the registration process;

- reducing the autonomy of faculties and calling for a stronger integration of universities (until 2007);

- introducing the Bologna model;

- facilitating greater vertical and horizontal mobility for students and academic staff; and

- streamlining the enrolment procedures at undergraduate level.

The issue of quality assurance had been delegated to the NCHE for a long time already. In fact, NCHE fostered self-evaluations by Croatian HEIs and organised numerous peer reviews on its own. According to the ToR, "*By the end of 2003, the NCHE had completed about 45% of its schedule of evaluations*" (p. 4). Yet, for various reasons the involvement of this body in the implementation of policy measures can only be of a minor magnitude. It is composed of 13 members only, and almost all of them have full-time jobs in HEIs. Thus, there is an undeniable risk for conflicts of interest. Moreover, the NCHE is supposed to be first of all an advisory body to the Government. Finally, NCHE representatives deplore that the Government does not always involve them in the decision making process to a sufficient extent.

Based on a recommendation of NCHE, the Croatian Government created the **National Agency for Science and Higher Education, formally** in 2004. This body is **expected** to ensure the execution of the following **tasks**:

- **organising evaluations**[1] of scientific organisations, HEIs, scientific programmes and projects, the national scientific network and higher education programmes;

- **developing a system** for the improvement and control **of quality management** at HEIs;

- **compiling and assessing data** about the performance of HE, by establishing an Information Centre with data about academic mobility;

- contributing to the establishment of the **national network of higher education quality;** and

- developing a **National Information Centre** and the national network for quality assurance in higher education, integrated into the "European Network of Quality Assurance".

Croatia introduced its new act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications in July 2004. Thus a legal framework was created for recognition of academic achievements and competence which was intended to be in line with European norms.

In spite of all these initiatives, there is still much to do. As the ToR indicate, the HE system is still characterised by serious deficiencies, such as

- Lack of student orientation;

- Out-dated teaching methods;

- Inappropriate curriculum design and resource planning;

- Lack of interdisciplinary studies;

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[1] The terms evaluation and quality assurance are used in an all encompassing sense including every type of quality management activities.

- Insufficient conditions for part-time studies;

- Scope for improvement in student assessment;

- Low level of strategic planning; and

- Improvable management information systems.

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## 2 Overview over the current situation

During the inception phase a detailed analysis was carried out, both on the basis of documentation available as well as based on interviews, discussions and different meetings comprising a number of stakeholders. In this paragraph a detailed analysis of the situation is given, which also served as the basis for changes in the focus of the project, reflected also in revised Terms of Reference.

### 2.1 National and international activities in the area of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

As it was stated in the terms of reference, there was a number of projects that had been addressing quality assurance in higher education. Among them the biggest were:

- A Tempus JIP project "Development of Quality Assurance in HE" began in February 2001, and was coordinated by the University of Zagreb. Other partners in Croatia were the University of Rijeka, the University of Osijek, the University of Split and the NCHE. There were also seven foreign partners. The objectives included designing types of quality standards and criteria, drafting model standards based on European Quality Criteria and Quality Assurance systems, developing a Quality Culture and promoting Quality Management. Work was also done on a sustainable enrolment policy. The project was scheduled to end in May 2004 with the production of a "Handbook for an intended Quality Assurance System and Quality Management in Croatia".

- In March 2001 UNESCO - CEPES launched a programme "Regional University Network on Governance and Management of Higher Education" in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM and FRY. The University of Split was selected to be a pilot institution for the implementation phase.

- The CARDS 2001 Regional programme contained a project: "Regional university network" for a total value of €0.5 million. The specific objectives of this project have been to: (a) integrate the universities and HE authorities of SEE into existing European networks and (b) develop HE policies that are based on European standards and international best practice in the areas of strategy management, financial management, relations with civil society and Quality Assurance.

- The CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation", lasted for eighteen months from September 2004, and included components which support (a) the design and implementation of management information systems, (b) the development and implementation of systems of Quality Assurance in HEIs and (c) the institutional development of a Croatian ENIC/NARIC office.

All of these projects have already ended but had a certain impact on the issues regarding assessment and development of quality assurance in some of the Croatian higher education institutions. This led to development of some procedures, among other self-evaluation of individual institutions, students' and teachers' surveys, and also added to some differences between institutions that are aware of the importance of their quality and others, that are for different reasons still left behind. The first Tempus project, started in 2001, had as a partner also National Council for Higher Education, that during the

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second half of the Tempus  project life provided evaluation/accreditation of nearly half of Croatian higher education institutions[2].

A new Tempus project Quality Assurance in University teaching is starting in October 2006, duration of one year and with University of Rijeka as project coordinator (Faculty of Maritime Studies) and with participation of all universities which offer these studies (Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik), as well as MoSES and ASHE. Area of intervention is important and the one that our project is also addressing. The following products are foreseen:

- *Code of Good Practice in Teaching and Assessment*  - key principles and/or common quality criteria on standards are set provided they respect the characteristics and needs of the specific subject area.

- *National Strategy for the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness* - developing monitoring processes, mechanisms for the evaluation of teaching performance (self-evaluation, peer evaluation and student evaluation), and suggesting how to utilise student evaluation.

- *Action Research Programme for Enhancing the Quality of Teaching in HE (A Staff Development Scheme)* - to complement to and become a fully recognised part of the national strategy for Quality Assurance in Croatian HE.

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[2] carried out during the year 2003

## 2.2 National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development - Projects within the programme „Development of Institutional Quality Assurance Units"

Projects, that succeeded to mobilize an important number of higher education institutions in Croatia and that will probably have the strongest impact, are projects on quality assurance in higher education, financed by the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development. Following the call for proposals and rigorous selection eight projects were selected, covering different areas of QA. With the duration of one year, projects are being finished by November 2006. Following a very good meeting with the President of the Board of Foundation, and participating in a closing seminar for two projects in Zagreb we think that there is development and expertise in some of the areas that could be used for the benefit of other institutions that are still in the phase of planning their QA procedures and structure. List of the projects shows, that there were different models developed for different institutions, but selection of project was made on the basis of broader coverage of issues in quality assurance in higher education and, according to the President of National Foundation, addressing different issues.

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**List of projects:**

1. **Development of organizational system and procedures for quality improvement on University of Rijeka**
   University of Rijeka
   Project leader: Professor Petar Bezinović, PhD
2. **Reference Center for Quality Assurance in High Education Institution**
   Institution: Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varaždin
   Project leader: Professor Neven Vrček, PhD.
3. **Development of the quality assurance model at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb**
   Institution: Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb
   Project leader: professor Branko Smerdel, PhD
4. **Establishment of quality management system at the University of Zagreb**
   Institution: University of Zagreb
   Project leader: Professor Mladen Andrassy, PhD.
5. **Development of the quality assurance system at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the University of Rijeka**
   Institution: Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Rijeka
   Project leader: Professor Sanja Smojver-Ažić, PhD
6. **Monitoring and improvement of quality of studying at the Faculty of civil engineering of the University of Rijeka**
   Institution: Faculty of civil engineering, University of Rijeka
   Project leader: Professor Aleksandra Deluka-Tibljaš, PhD
7. **Establishment of quality assurance system on University J.J. Strossmayer in Osijek**
   Institution: University J.J. Strossmayer in Osijek
   Project leader: Professor Sanja Lončar-Vicković
8. **Establishing Institutional Quality Assurance System at the Faculty of Engineering**
   Institution: Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka
   Project leader: Professor Duško Pavletić, PhD

## 2.3 Recommendations of the previous EU Project – CARDS 2002: Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation

Project that ended in Spring 2006 has touched upon, through its different components many of the quality assurance issues that are addressed by the present project. According to planning and Terms of reference, there should be some overlapping of the two projects in order to achieve synergy, namely: "The Consultant will ensure collaboration with related concurrent projects, especially the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation"." Unfortunately due to late start of the project this was not possible, but during the inception period some continuity (or better insight into the situation and results of the previous project) was provided by the short term expert, Mr Glanville, who was also Key expert in the CARDS 2002 Project.

Results and recommendations provide a good picture of the situation as well as possible directions for successful development and implementation of the QA activities and procedures and are in line with information collected during interviews and discussions with different stakeholders.

Croatia's recognition of foreign qualifications is only one aspect of the recognition necessary for mobility; the other aspect is a transparent and secure basis for the recognition of Croatian qualifications in other countries. An important element in the latter, also important to secure the quality of HE necessary for Croatia itself, is a national Quality Assurance (QA) system which conforms to the "Standards and Guidelines" endorsed by the Bergen Conference of European Ministers.

The success of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) in demonstrating the value of Croatian qualifications will depend upon an appropriate balance of responsibilities is stated in the project final report. To this end, there should be a clear recognition of where the boundary lies between the State and its responsibilities and the HE system itself and its responsibilities. The latter responsibilities need to be exercised in the context of the HEIs being autonomous, as is emphasized by the Bologna Declaration and in all subsequent stages of the Bologna process. There should be more self-regulation by the HEIs conjointly, which might be encouraged by the State but not controlled by it. ASHE, and the Councils which it supports, should be seen as part of the HE system's own self-regulation, while being demonstrably impartial as between individual HEIs.

The integration of HEIs should emphasize their corporate responsibility for the quality of what they provide, encouraged and confirmed by the national QA system. Corporate responsibility is an imperative for 'lump sum' funding, but it should also realize the following important principles:

- an understanding of the concept of 'learning outcomes', with an appreciation that these can be achieved in different ways, and that the best means of doing so will depend on the circumstances within which an HEI is working;

- an understanding that the 'Bologna cycles' represent the achievement of educational levels (expressed as appropriate learning outcomes) each of which is of recognizable value, and is based upon a general agreement within the relevant academic community, both nationally and ultimately internationally;

- through this, the development of, in terms of HE but related to the rest of Croatian Education, a National Qualification Framework (NQF);

- a correct use of ECTS credits in the specification of the curriculum;

- a means of assessing students which is appropriate for the learning outcomes concerned, and which has, as a process and in the certification of students, a transparent integrity.

The re-structuring and accreditation of programmes of study in 2005 was undertaken before an appropriate QA system had been developed and on a timescale that no country might have attempted successfully. It is important that this procedure is not considered to have completed the process of developing the quality of Croatian higher education in terms of the Bologna expectations for reform in the EHEA.

The reform of HE in Croatia, as elsewhere, requires a coherent national strategy which has obtained the consensus agreement of the HE system, and which represents not only goals but the stages and actions through which the goals are to be achieved. Such a strategic plan needs to recognize that HEIs are autonomous and can properly have different missions, and that there is a line to be drawn between this self-regulating system and those things which should be regulated by the State through its legal

framework. The latter should be seen as not only a consistent framework within which HEIs can plan and operate but also one which empowers the HEIs to exercise their responsibilities.

The Croatian State has demonstrated a commitment to the Bologna reforms, but, in addition to the above considerations, a need for additional financial support from the State is expressed by the HEIs as a prerequisite for their implementation. Restructured programmes based on learning outcomes need an approach to teaching and assessment which in its turn will require more student involvement. Seemingly MOSES has not yet attempted to meet the additional costs that will be incurred, relating especially to staff training and development. If the changes have to be financed by the institutions from their own budgets the outcome in relation to the quality of provision will be doubtful, while other elements of the system or institutions may be neglected.

One aspect is the need for HEIs progressively to develop a more effective internal support structure for their educational and research activities, including the development of professional academic administration significantly beyond the level of clerical work. The burden of the latter can be reduced through a HEMIS system. It is, however, not clear how far the HEIs see a distinction between the use of an MIS as simply the management of information for purely administrative purposes (finance, personnel, student data, educational and research facilities, income and expenditure etc.) or for the provision of information for the purpose of institutional management (tactical and strategic as well as operational). These issues need to be resolved in defining a clear overall strategy for a general HEMIS in Croatia.

**Recommendations:**

- The legal and organisational obstacles to the establishment of a transparent and secure basis for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Croatia should be further developed.

- There should be a clear recognition of where the boundary lies between the State and its responsibilities and the HE system itself and its responsibilities.

- The latter responsibilities need to be exercised in the context of the HEIs being autonomous, as is emphasised by the Bologna Declaration and in all subsequent stages of the Bologna process.

- There should be more self-regulation by the HEIs conjointly, which might be encouraged by the State but not controlled by it. ASHE, and the Councils which it supports, should be seen as part of the HE system's own self-regulation, while being demonstrably impartial as between individual HEIs.

- The integration of HEIs should emphasise their corporate responsibility for the quality of what they provide, encouraged and confirmed by the national QA system.

- This involves among other things the development of a more effective internal support structure for their educational and research activities, including the development of professional academic administration significantly beyond the level of clerical work.

- To secure the quality of HE necessary for Croatia itself, there is an urgent need for an effective and efficient national Quality Assurance (QA) system which conforms to the "Standards and Guidelines" endorsed by the Bergen Conference of European Ministers. Such a system would be broadly based on the following principles:

- o The 'learning outcomes', with an appreciation that these can be achieved in different ways, and that the best means of doing so will depend on the circumstances within which an HEI is working
- o understanding that 'Bologna cycles' represent the achievement of educational levels (expressed as appropriate learning outcomes) each of which is of recognisable value, and is based upon a general agreement within the relevant academic community, both nationally and ultimately internationally
- o Translation of the curriculum into ECTS credits with a proper attention to student learning needs and capabilities
- o The development of a national qualifications' framework that incorporates the basic concepts and achievements of the European Qualifications' Framework (EQF).

## 2.4   Challenges of quality assurance in tertiary education in Croatia – OECD Report

A good overview of the challenges that higher education quality assurance system in Croatia is facing was presented by Prof Lučin, Vice-Rector of the University if Rijeka in a chapter of the Croatian Report for the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education (final draft May 2006). These challenges and opportunities, which could be seen as risks for the successful implementation of the project, will partially be issues addressed by our project. Below they are presented in their entirety as they represent all aspects of the quality assurance situation in Croatia, which should be taken into account when implementing the project.

The adopted quality assurance system had been in many aspects inadequate and inefficient. It did not reflect the actual needs of tertiary education. The main problems in quality assurance in tertiary education in Croatia can be identified as follows[3]:

- **Lack of appropriate legislation** at the national level and the **lack of regulations and rules** at tertiary education institutions, particularly given that universities were not recognized as integrated institutions. Legislative deficiency at the national level, thus, did not require an institutional approach to quality assessment at the faculty level.

- **The National Council for HE** was in charge of the quality assessment of study programs and tertiary education institutions, but it developed complex and time consuming procedures which was not supported by adequate financial and human resources. In many cases, the feedback could be provided according to a time-plan and its reports were not discussed at the university level (due to the disintegrated structure of the university). Therefore, no integrated central university policy could be created.

- **Quality indicators** have neither been systematically collected, nor adequately used. In some cases in which quality indicators had been collected and interpreted correctly, recommendations for improvement actions were not implemented.

- **The concepts of accountability and self-evaluation were not familiar to members of the Croatian academic community**. Croatian universities and other tertiary institutions did not

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[3] Prof. Pero Lučin, Assuring and improving the quality of tertiary education, Higher Education in Croatia, OECD Country Report, 2006

develop a system of internal quality assurance, and mostly depended on an external body (NCHE) for its quality assurance.

- The **awareness of universities** that maintaining and improving quality as their own responsibility is still not developed to the point that it could be organized into a robust system of quality management with adequate resources. In addition, it is not clear to most of members of the university staff that the maintenance and improvement of quality should cover all aspects of the university's work (teaching and learning, research, institutional management, relations with the community, etc.) and there is lack of collective responsibility for the totality of the institution's functions.

- Quality culture in Croatian universities is underdeveloped, and there is a lack of and **resistance to the academic self-evaluation**. Even if it is present, it is not sufficiently critical, and it is not based on a methodology of **strategic planning**. When most of the academic staff discusses quality, they pretend to discuss teaching, a teacher's workload and a teacher's performance rather than learning, a student's workload and the competencies acquired by students. There are a small number of examples that can be documented institutionally, for staff development policy, performance, planning, and transparency to students and to the local community.

- To most of the members of a university, it is not clear that **a university has a mission** to perform high quality research and to serve the community in addition to teaching and learning. The main approach to evaluate teaching (learning) is based on the use of student questionnaires, and there was no widespread use of other methods of collecting evidence for self-evaluation. Organized communication with stakeholders is not developed and service at a tertiary education institution is very often considered as public service in the state administration.

- Self-evaluation and **reporting** at all levels is not developed, and if exists, it is usually not considered as a serious basis for further development and decision-making. There is a lack of reporting at the faculty level, at the university level and at the national level.

- **Internal quality measures** were never successfully implemented. There were several attempts at the introduction of internal evaluation made by students, partly to fulfill an obligation based on the Senate decision (University of Zagreb[4], University of Rijeka). Faculties accepted the initiatives and even some elements of internal evaluation were introduced, however no feedback had been available to the teaching staff, to students, and to the public. A number of factors complicated the successful and functional application of internal quality assurance instruments at universities.

- Lack of experience and tradition in evaluations, and underdeveloped quality culture is transformed in **doubt of faculty members and students** that questionnaires and surveys could have any effect. Strong skepticism regarding their effects is a major obstacle for serious discussion at the institutional level.

- **The goals of evaluation are often misunderstood, misinterpreted and misused**. Quality assurance is still not understood as only one of the indicators of a teacher's success and as a tool for improvement and corrections, but rather as control instrument (this results in mixing terms "quality control" and "quality assurance"). Very often academic members of the universities believe that manipulation of the results is possible, and they feared that the results would be misused. Negative attitudes towards evaluation by students were prevalent. Finally, great

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[4] University of Zagreb Self-evaluation Report (Association of European Universities) "Institutional Evaluation".

differences exist among faculties: some carefully evaluate their work and have been applying their own internal quality assurance instrument for some time, while others find it superfluous or consider it an attack on their autonomy.

- **Information and promotion policy**, as well as communication, was inefficient at all levels: at the faculty level, university level, and at the national level. The implementation of new rules for the improved operation of the university faces barriers and resistance from the academic community, mostly due to the lack of information or the fear of change. Public relation and communication with the students was underdeveloped.

- **Resistance of the higher education staff to change** was a result of undeveloped system for staff appraisal. Teaching staff are not institutionally motivated to improve teaching methods. Teaching processes were not evaluated, and if they were, they mostly went without any significant consequences.

- **Incentive policies at the institutional levels and staff promotion**. No standardized effective mechanism exists for recognizing and rewarding excellence and quality at universities. This is a serious constraint for the efficient quality management.

- **Staff appointment and management of human resources** was not based on the long term strategic planning, particularly not at the university level, and was constricted by the restricted employment in public sector. In general, the engagement of staff was based on the teaching needs of tertiary institutions but not on research and development needs. In addition to inadequate human resources policy, in the 90' problems was also low income and low social status, poor conditions for research, the lack of scientific equipment and unstable financial support, and the social rating of the scientific profession. Human resource policy was not created at the university level, but rather in direct negotiations between faculties and the Ministry, and the real decision-maker on human resources policy was the Ministry, as it has to approve or disapprove any vacancy. Therefore, universities did not have programs for staff development and were not able to support new and more active approaches to teaching and learning.

- Insufficient discussion and definition of **the enrolment policies** significantly influenced the performance and quality of tertiary education. Student enrolment was based on high school grades, entrance exams, and the numerus clausus fixed by the Ministry. However, the numerus clausus has never been adequately estimated based on the real capacity of the faculty, study costs, quality of education outcomes, and needs of employers, public sector and the local community. Competencies of the graduates and their relevance for the labour market were never systematically evaluated and in public perception, they are considered insufficient.

## 2.5 Overview of issues emerged during meetings, discussions and interviews

During the inception period a number of meetings had been held, with discussions and interviews, and with participation in some events regarding quality assurance procedures. On the basis of them, as well on the basis of documents' review, the following issues emerged as important for the project to address:

- Roles and responsibilities of the various bodies and organisations in relation to QA in HE should be very clear and unanimous.

- The primary responsibility for the quality of higher education programmes lies with the higher education institutions themselves.

- HEIs should get all the necessary help and expert advice they need in order to establish and operate robust internal QA systems and mechanisms.

- HEIs should have the necessary resources, both financial and human, and enjoy an appropriate degree of autonomy in order to be able to develop and operate their internal QA systems. They should nevertheless, not forget that autonomy means responsibility and accountability at the same time.

- As to external QA, the exact roles and the boundaries of responsibilities of NCHE and ASHE should be clarified. This could also be done, of course, in the framework of an overall exercise reconsidering the existing national scheme for QA.

- The external QA system should, in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)[5], be transparent and clear to all. If it involves accreditation in the future too, then when revising the predefined criteria, the involvement of a broad spectrum of experts from HEIs (including private institutions and students as well) could be considered in the drafting process.

- An impact analysis of the performed programme accreditation of the new, Bologna type degree programmes could be carried out. Results of this could be fed into the possible refinement procedures of the national QA system.

- A clear conceptual separation should be made between accreditation and the decision on licensing HEIs and degree programmes to operate. Although there are some countries, where the accreditation decision is made by state authorities, there are other national systems in Europe, where accreditation (the attestation of quality involving the accreditation decision) is done by an independent external organisation, whereas the licensing of HEIs and programmes remain the responsibility of the respective state authority.

- Any possible refinement of the current QA arrangements or the establishment of a future national scheme of external QA in Croatia should be accomplished based on a holistic approach, on the system level. Issues to be possibly reconsidered could include the objects or "targets" of external QA (HEIs / faculties / degree programmes / themes / internal QA systems); the type(s) of external QA activities (evaluation / accreditation / audit) and the like. Especially issues related to the apparently intended parallelism of accreditation and audit should be clarified.

- Quality assurance is perceived differently from different stakeholders. It is often seen as a control mechanism for higher education institutions. It should be made clear, that in line with the European Standards and Guidelines it should be (primarily) based on the internal mechanisms in HEIs, and then linked to other, higher levels which provide external mechanisms.

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[5] *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* Helsinki: ENQA, 2005. Accessible at: http://www.enqa.eu/files/ENQA%20Bergen%20Report.pdf

- An important part of the quality assurance is quality of teaching and learning and, including learning outcomes, assessment (examinations) of students and quality of teaching. These are issues that haven't been addressed yet in proportion to their importance and should be one of the foci of the project.

- Original ToRs for the project planned additional two lots, one for hardware and the other for software for HE management information system. Project itself was building upon providing support for development and implementation of the MIS. Before the start of the project, both have been procured, leaving no need for development of the original system as designed. That led to re-formulation of the terms of reference, after discussions with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, focusing more on the quality assurance procedures and activities in HEIs, and reconsidering the activities regarding development of HEMIS that was originally planned, to be shifted towards designing quality assurance information system with necessary QA indicators, to be developed upgrading and redesigning existing MOZVAG system that served for accreditation of study programmes, and that could serve as information system on quality assurance on all levels providing data needed both for HEIs, universities, ASHE and NCHE, as well as the Ministry. System itself should also provide for link with the existing MIS that exist in different HEIs, especially ISVU, which is used by more that half of HEIs.

- Ministry of Science, Education and Sports will give support for the development and implementation of the new MOZVAG system, based on specifications prepared by statistics and analytics department of ASHE, and which will be produced by SRCE.

- Quality assurance in HE should be built both on experience from the European Higher Education Area as well as on the experience and expertise which has been developing in the country in last decade. Local experts, especially those who have been actively involved in development of QA procedures on the higher education institutions, will be included as short term experts in the project.

- There are a number of projects that are starting in the area of QA in HE. Project will establish contacts and develop cooperation in those areas in order to achieve synergies with them. Such project is the TEMPUS Quality Assurance in University teaching which represents also one of the important themes project will offer as part of the training/seminars for HEIs.

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## 3    Project objectives and expected results

The project is subordinated to the **overall objective** to promote the reform of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia in line with best practice in the EU Member States.

Its **specific objectives** according to the ToR are:
1. Support to the development of Quality Assurance processes, procedures, systems and structures in Croatian Higher Education which will stimulate and establish the quality of the Higher Education being provided for students.
2. Support to the development and implementation of an Information System, so that it can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes.

In line with this, the Consultant is expected to achieve the following **results**:

1.1.    The staff of the Agency for Science and Higher Education who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, will have been enabled to perform their duties in a way comparable to best practice in the rest of Europe, and a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established.

1.2.    The NCHE will have refined its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation so that they are fully in line with best practice elsewhere in Europe, and have the capacity to keep these under review. Those who will have been appointed as evaluators by the Agency/NCHE will have been led to set sustainable precedents of good practice in the evaluation of HE programmes and institutions.

1.3.    Quality Promotion Units in the HEIs will have become well established and recognised as authorities on Quality Assurance in their own institutions, including in the provision of support for monitoring and internal evaluation. They will be the main actors in the Quality Assurance Network and an efficient working model of partnership between them and the Agency/NCHE will be established. The HEIs will have made significant progress in Quality Management (including academic and strategic planning).

2.1.    Inter-related and analysable Information Systems will have been developed and implemented so that they can be used for reliable and appropriate inputs of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level.

## 3.1 Assumptions and risks

Assumptions and risks are explicitly outlined in the Terms of Reference. They are stated in the following table, which also contains some conclusions, which we would develop for the planning of the operations, and also some remarks based on some new developments and the previous section of the IR.

Table 1: Assumptions and risks as well as their implications for the task system

| Assumptions | Implications for the task system of the Consultant | Status as of 20 December 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| The Government remains committed to the reform of HE. | There is no reason to believe that the Government will not remain committed to HE reform, but the project will ensure that the implications for the Government's own role in the process are understood. | The assumption is still valid. |
| MOSES will actively support the development of HE in Croatia without seeking to control it. | The project will support the Ministry's recognition of the autonomy of the HE sector in Croatia, while emphasising the importance of its accountability to all stakeholders. | The assumption is still valid. |
| The NCHE is dynamic in its promotion of HE reform | The project will support the NCHE in taking the initiative in HE reform as an integral part of Croatia's HE sector.. | The assumption is still valid. |
| In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA. | The project assumes that a decision will be made on the exact organisational setup, and in the course of the project implementation we shall proceed accordingly, providing assistance to the national agency irrespective of the organisational setup within which it operates. | According to the best of our knowledge the underlying problem is well understood by the representatives of the organisations involved. Discussions on the possible options are underway. |
| The Tempus Quality Assurance project will have provided a useful foundation on which the CARDS project can build. | The project will utilise the conclusions of all relevant Tempus projects where appropriate. | In spite of all our efforts we have been unable to get a copy of the final Handbook produced by the Tempus QA project. However, we succeeded in establishing good contacts with other ongoing Tempus projects related to QA in HE in Croatia. |

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| Assumptions | Implications for the task system of the Consultant | Status as of 20 December 2006 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The funding of HEIs follows the August 2003 Law on Scientific Activity and Higher Education | The project will treat all Faculties as integral parts of their universities, with the latter having a corporate responsibility for the optimal allocation of resources | The assumption is actually, not a core one. The project can work both with integrated HEIs and separate faculties. Experience shows that even in the case when there are large integrated HEIs in a given country, it is best to contact and work with faculties individually as well. |
| There is a relaxation of state control over staffing establishments in HEIs. | The project will advocate that the maximum flexibility be allowed to HEIs in the deployment and use of their staffing resources | The assumption is still valid. |
| The HEIs can establish and resource Quality Promotion Units | The project will support the development of QA units in all universities and other HEIs | The assumption is still valid. |
| There is the necessary synergy between the implementation of the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" and the implementation CARDS 2003 project. | The project will utilize the outcomes of the CARDS 2002 project wherever relevant and appropriate. | The assumption is still valid. Moreover, by having personal contacts with Peter Debreczeni, the TL of the CARDS 2002 project, and by inviting in September this year Hugh Glanville, (KE for the CARDS 2002 project) as a Short Term Expert for our project we are progressing well in the utilisation of the results of the previous project. |
| The chosen Information System enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation | The project will seek to ensure that any MIS system for which it has some responsibility will be compatible with other MIS systems introduced in Croatia, without imposing unnecessary burdens on HEIs through requirements for duplication of effort | The assumption is still valid. |

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| Assumptions | Implications for the task system of the Consultant | Status as of 20 December 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| There is sufficient funding, beyond that resulting from the project, for the chosen Information System to be developed and implemented. | The project will seek to ensure maximum cost-effectiveness in the case of any MIS system it recommends. | The assumption is still valid. |
| The members of the projects target groups are encouraged to be available for project activities. | The project will make direct contact with those staff in HEIs who have an immediate responsibility for QA in HEIs and work with and through them, | The assumption is still valid. |
| HEIs are committed to teaching and the quality of student learning. | The project counts on the establishment of QA units and on the active participation of HEIs and faculties on the training workshops organised by the CARDS 2003 project for them. | The assumption is still valid. |
| HEIs committed to good practice in the assessment and certification of students. | This is to be an important element of the internal quality assurance systems at HEIs. | The assumption is still valid. |
| Appropriate evaluators appointed by the Agency / NCHE. | The Croatian national QA system aims to meet the European Standards and Guidelines in this respect thereby promoting the international acknowledgement of it. The assumption is also relevant from the point of view of a possible application of the Agency for ENQA membership. | The assumption is still valid. |

| Additional assumptions | Implications for the task system of the Consultant | Status as of 20 December 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| Agency will in all respects be independent from the Ministry, Government, Parliament or any other political influence | Exploring and supporting the conditions for and consequences of such position of the Agency | The assumption is still valid. |

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| QA units located in HEIs are integral to these institutions and do not have, even collectively, the potential to be considered a national QA body, or part of one. | Support the integration of QA units in their HEIs. | The assumption is still valid. |
|---|---|---|

| Risks | Measures of a risk management system of the Consultant | Status as of 20 December 2006 |
|---|---|---|
| The universities fail to move to become integrated institutions | The project will as far as possible treat the universities as integrated institutions | The risk is actually, not crucial from the point of view of the implementation of the project. The project can work both with integrated HEIs and separate faculties. Experience shows that even in the case when there are large integrated HEIs in a given country, it is best to contact and work with faculties individually as well. |
| Redundant staff from the merged Ministries might be placed on the Agency staff, without proper consideration being given to their suitability | The context for this statement of risk has now passed, but the project will support the appointment of any new staff as a matter for the Councils. | The risk is over anyway, the attitude and measures of the Consultant have not been changed. |
| There are pressures which could result in the Agency becoming a bureaucratic body simply affirming the acceptability of the status quo. | The project will emphasise the fact that Quality Assurance should never be a purely bureaucratic process. | The attitude and measures of the Consultant have not been changed. |

## 3.1.1 Project components and their linkages

The project is structured into three components:

- Component 1: support to the Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Council for Higher Education;

- Component 2: support to the establishment of the National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the development of quality assurance in the HEIs; and

- Component 3: support to the development of a Management Information System for HE.

The institutional context of these components and their linkages can be explained as follows:

A national quality assurance scheme in HE consists of three levels:

- the policy level defining the general rules and guidelines for the quality system (quality policy);

- the organisational level developing indicators and other standards and establishing the procedures for quality control process (quality control); and

- the executive level transferring these prescriptions into the operational system of their institution (quality management).

In the frame of the project, these functions are performed by

- the NCHE as an advisory body to the MSES;

- the ASHE being entrusted from NCHE; and

- the HEIs being evaluated by the ASHE.

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In this context, the Consultant will intervene as follows:

**Figure 1:** **Interventions of the consultant**
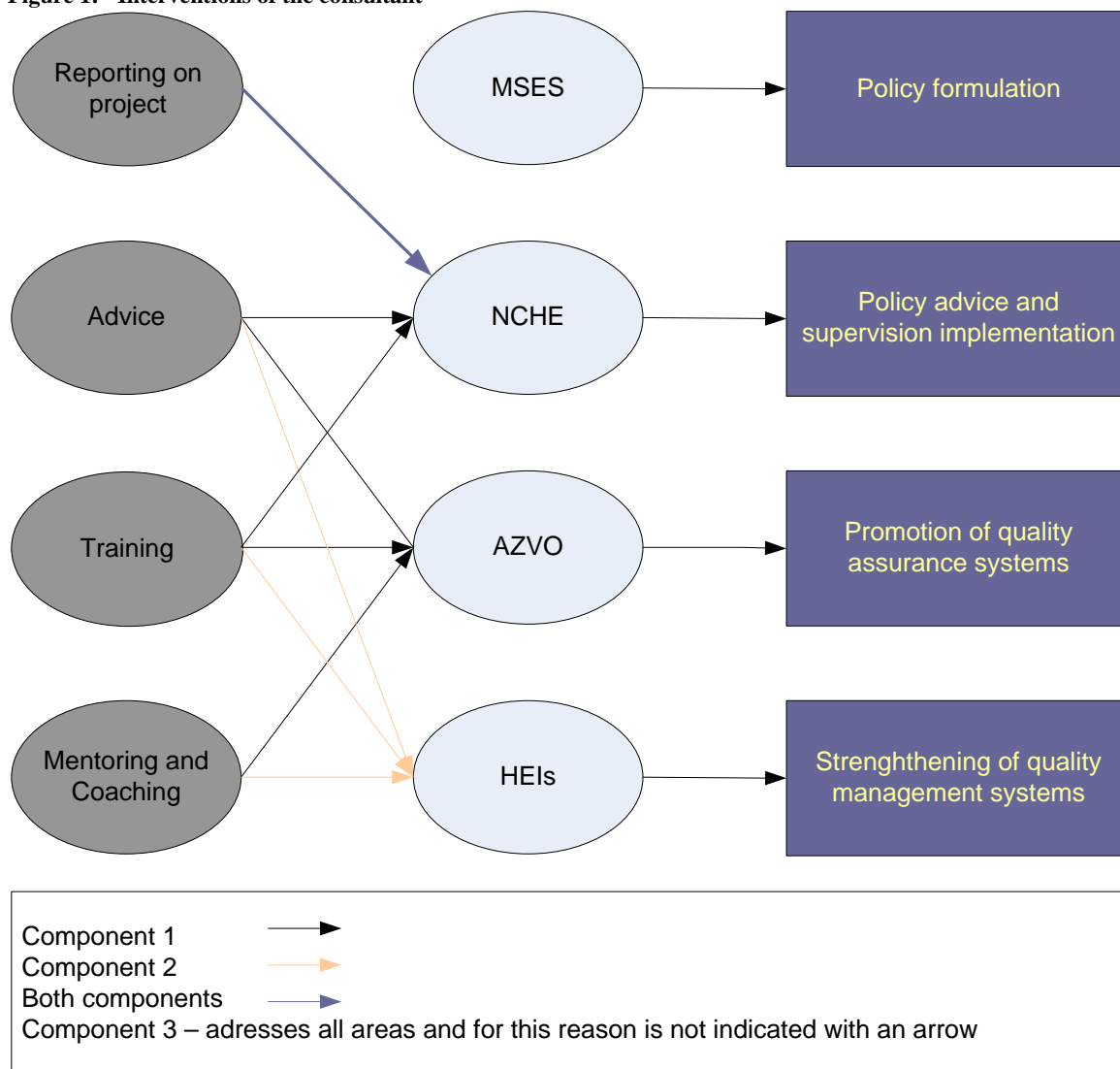


The interventions towards NCHE and ASHE are summarised in component 1, while the direct contributions on behalf of the HEIs are considered as the constituent parts of component 2. There is a complementary relation between component 1 and component 2: in component 1, the Consultant will prepare the political system and its executing agency for the implementation of the national policy in terms quality assurance to HEIs. On the basis of component 2, he will be expected to ensure that the latter institutions can respond to the political rules and guidelines.

In this context, the information system (component 3) is expected to play a supportive role:

It centralises information on

- policy content;

- evaluation standards and procedures;

- quality indicators.

This enables

- the NCHE to supervise the quality of policy implementation;

- the ASHE to control the quality assurance progress on a HE-wide basis.

- the HEI to conduct their self-evaluation and thereby practise a continuous system for quality control.


Thus, component 3 will be instrumental to the successful implementation of components 1 and 2. It can be concluded that a complementary relation between the three components becomes apparent.


## 3.2 Mobilisation and organisation of experts' assignments

The major part of the project's technical assistance relies upon the key experts spending about 347 working days in the country. Project success fundamentally depends on a timely provision of these experts, with appropriate skills and experience. The complementary relation identified in the linkage between the three components is reflected in the qualification profile of these experts. Thus, both capacities for sharp analysis and strategic thinking as well as sound operational experience is covered.

The responsibilities within the TA core team (key expert 1 to key expert 3) have been clearly defined in the ToR. The TA core team is composed of 3 key experts complementing each other.

**Key expert 1 - Quality Assurance Expert**. **Mr Tibor Szanto** is responsible for the Component 1, support and institutional strengthening of the new Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Council for Higher Education, by mentoring the Agency staff in the course of their work and conducting regular in-house seminars. He will enhance the work of the National Council for Higher Education by training Agency staff in the professional skills of committee servicing necessary for its administrative support, and by providing direct advice to it on its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation.

**Key expert 2: Team Leader. Mr Sergij Gabršček** is responsible for the overall project implementation and the institutional strengthening of the ASHE and NCHE. Besides taking on the project management and related administrative tasks, he will ensure that the Steering Committee will be informed regularly and a clear communication model is designed and implemented to keep all stakeholders informed. He will also be responsible for providing information on components 2 and 3 in case the respective key experts should not be available. His prime task will be to mentor the HEI staff with a designated role in QA and supporting the establishment of a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, meet with the QA Units staff and to attend and participate in any relevant workshops or seminars organised by the HEIs themselves.

**Key expert 3: Information System Expert**. **Mr Edgar Frackmann** is responsible for the development and implementation of Information System for quality assurance based on agreed indicators, particularly to be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level, effected through the provision of expert guidance to the team/s developing such system/s, and the provision of advice on their implementation and use to HEIs, and, on their use, to the Agency/NCHE.

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In addition to this core part of the consulting staff, the Consultant would make short-term experts available to the operation.

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## 3.3   Number of working days

**Table 2:   Number of working days**

| Expert Role | Year 1 / 2006–2007 | | | | | | | | | | | | Year 2 / 2007–2008 | | | | | | TOTAL staff days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M1 Sept | M2 Oct | M3 Nov | M4 Dec | M5 Jan | M6 Feb | M7 Mar | M8 Apr | M9 May | M10 June | M11 July | M12 Aug | M13 Sept | M14 Oct | M15 Nov | M16 Dec | M17 Jan | M18 Feb | |
| Key expert 1: Quality assurance in HEI | 5 | 9 | 9 | 5 | | | | 9 | 7 | 9 | | | 7 | 5 | 8 | | 5 | 5 | 83 |
| Key expert 2: Team leader | 22 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 22 | 198 |
| Key expert 3: Management information system | 15 | | | | 5 | | 15 | | | 5 | | | 15 | | 6 | | | 5 | 66 |
| Additional international TA experts (Senior) | | 5 | | | | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | | | 5 | | | | | | 50 |
| Additional international TA experts (Junior) | | | | | 3 | | | | | | | 4 | | | | | | | 7 |
| Additional national TA experts (Senior) | | | 2 | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 29 |
| Additional national TA experts (Junior) | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | 6 |

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## 3.4 Project visibility

### 3.4.1 Visibility deliverable: the project webpage

The GOPA Consortium will set up a project website in to present the context, goals, and main activities of the project to a broader public. This public website should be seen as one element of making public relations for the project. Websites are cheaper and more accessible compared to printed means. The draft website will be available in November 2006.

### 3.4.2 Visibility deliverable: the project brochure & leaflets

A brochure and a leaflet according to the EU Visibility guidelines will be produced. One brochure and one leaflet are normally planned. Further brochures could be produced if considered necessary by the Client. The draft version of the project brochure will be presented by the end of December 2006. After the application of changes based on the comments of the Client the brochure will be published.

The brochure will be produced in English and Croatian with print runs of 1,000 copies, and may comprise 5 - 10 pages.

Leaflets are a suitable and relatively inexpensive way to promote the Programme and to communicate its achievements. They can convey information in a concise and attractive form and can be disseminated in a variety of ways, e.g. through appropriate institutions (EU Delegations, infopoints, etc.) or on the occasion of conferences organised by third parties for relevant audiences. We would like to point out that technically the most suitable formats would be 4, 6 or 8 pages, and that consideration should also be given to 2-page leaflets (A4 printed recto/verso).

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## 3.5  Approach and methodology

Original project design as outlined in the Terms of reference gave two main focuses for the project: support to the Agency for Science and Higher Education in quality assurance and development of the supporting information system. Findings during the inception period, as well as discussions with the key stakeholders and project partners showed that support for the Higher Education Management Information System is not the main focus of the project (although its original acronym was HEMIS and was as such referred to). Part of the original ToR was also procurement of hardware and software for the MIS Hardware was delivered to the University of Split before the start of the project, but software hasn't been delivered yet. The main focus is now on supporting the development of the Quality Assurance system, both at the Agency as well as in higher education institutions.

Transparency of all procedures is of the utmost importance, so "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (now known as the "ESG") have been selected as the basis for our project. They give a clear structure to what has to be achieved on different levels.

At the meeting in Berlin in 2003 the Ministers invited the Association of European Quality Agencies (ENQA), together with the Association of European Universities (EUA) "through its members", and in cooperation with the European Association of Institutions of HE (EURASHE) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB),

- to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance,

- to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation Agencies or bodies, and

- to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005.

In reporting this request the Communiqué made two fundamental points. The first was:

> "The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Ministers …. stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance."

The second point was:

> "[Ministers] also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution [i.e. HEI] itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system ….."

ENQA presented its conclusions to the Ministers' Bologna meeting in Bergen, Norway, in May 2005, through a document entitled "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (now known as the "ESG"). It did not, quite deliberately, include "procedures" as such, since it was argued that administrative detail was a matter for each national QA Agency. The ESG focus more on what should be done than on the detailed means by which the standards and guidelines can be achieved.

The ESG were adopted by the Ministers' Conference last May, with the instruction that each signatory country should report on their implementation for the Ministers' Conference in London next May.

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The principal decisions implicit in the adoption of the ESG are:

1. There are now European standards for internal and external quality assurance (ESG Parts I and II).
2. There are now European standards for external QA agencies (ESG Part III).
3. QA Agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review every five years.
4. A European Register of recognised QA agencies will be produced.
5. A European Register Committee will act as a "gatekeeper" for the inclusion of QA agencies in the Register.
6. A European Consultative Forum for QA in HE will be established.

The **ESG are underpinned by twelve stated principles**. These are:

- The central importance of **institutional autonomy**, while recognising that "this brings with it **heavy responsibilities**".

- There need to be **efficient and effective organisational structures** [in HEIs] within which academic programmes can be provided and supported.

- There should be encouragement of a **"culture of quality"** within HEIs.

- It is important to **take account of the interest of students**, as well as that of **employers** and **society** more generally, in good quality higher education.

- The **quality of academic programmes** needs to be developed and improved for students, and other beneficiaries of HE, across the EHEA.

- **HEIs have the primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance.

- HEIs should be able to **demonstrate** their **quality** both at home and internationally.

- **Transparency** and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important.

- Processes should be developed through which HEIs can demonstrate their **accountability**, including accountability for the investment of public and private money.

- Processes used should **not stifle diversity and innovation**.

- **External quality assurance should not place a burden on HEIs** that is any more than is appropriate and necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

- Quality assurance for accountability purposes is *fully compatible* with quality assurance for enhancement purposes.

The ESG begin with standards and guidelines for quality assurance within HEIs and *build up from there* to the national level and then international level.
Similar structure has been adopted for the project and its three components.

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**Component 1: support to the new Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Council for Higher Education.**

Component 1 focuses on the quality assurance external to higher education institutions and criteria for international recognition of QA Agency. According to ToRs, outputs are:

1.1.1. Extensive training for the staff of the Agency who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, including conducting regular in-house seminars on the planning, organisation and reporting of evaluations and follow-up action

1.1.2. Training in committee servicing for Agency staff who work in support of the NCHE .

1.1.3. Mentoring of the Agency staff in the course of their work (including evaluations).

1.1.4. Arranging for Agency staff to observe evaluations conducted by Quality Agencies in EU Member States (at least one programme evaluation and two institutional evaluations, involving a total of at least three members of the Agency staff for a minimum of 5 days each).

1.1.5. Arranging for the members of the Agency staff involved in 1.1.4. to disseminate reports of their observations, critical as well as positive, for discussion with their colleagues.

1.2.1. Training evaluators appointed by the NCHE/Agency in their evaluation role.

1.2.2. In agreement with the Agency/NCHE, attending evaluations to provide advice and guidance on good practice.

1.2.3. Advising the National Council for Higher Education on its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation.

1.2.4. Reporting to the NCHE on the feedback from those participating in evaluations (both evaluators and HEIs) and from the workshops and seminars organised by the Consultant.

1.2.5. Designing and producing evaluation and feedback instruments for the purposes of 1.2.4..

In consultation with the NCHE/Agency, and as the occasion requires, the Contractor will employ short term international experts with appropriate expertise and experience who will participate in evaluations.

These are in line with the **ESG standards** for **quality assurance external to HEIs,** which are annexed in Annex 4.

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## Component 2: support to the establishment of the National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the development of Quality Assurance in the Institutions of Higher Education

1.3.1. The provision of advice and assistance in support of the establishment of a National Network for QA in HE and the Quality Promotion Units being established in Croatian HEIs.

1.3.2. Mentoring of HEI staff with a designated role in Quality Assurance, including staff associated with Quality Promotion Units.

1.3.3. Guidance to HEIs on curriculum development, including ECTS.

1.3.4. Guidance to HEIs on monitoring the progress of degree programmes.

1.3.5. Guidance to HEIs on the periodic evaluation of degree programmes.

1.3.6. Guidance to HEIs on institutional self-evaluation.

1.3.7. Guidance to HEIs on strategic planning.

1.3.8. Guidance to HEIs on preparing for external evaluations.

1.3.9. Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students

1.3.10. Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff

Similarly, we follow guidelines from ESG regarding **standards for Quality Assurance within HEIs**, presented in Annex 5.

## Component 3: support to the development of a Management Information System for Higher Education

ToRs for the third component are:

2.1.1. Expert guidance on development of Information System for Quality Assurance.

2.1.2. Expert guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System. for Quality Assurance.

2.1.3. Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance.

2.1.4. Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system for Quality Assurance.

This component doesn't have a direct "mirror" in ESG but gives support for policy decision making. One part of it is mentioned in the previous component, information system, which is built in institutions, but there is to be a QAIS that provides data and information on the state level too.

# 4 Implementation strategy

This section is based on the proposal submitted by GOPA Consultants. The first three steps have remained identical whereas changes have been introduced to the steps 4 to 6. You will find only the updated information in the following pages.
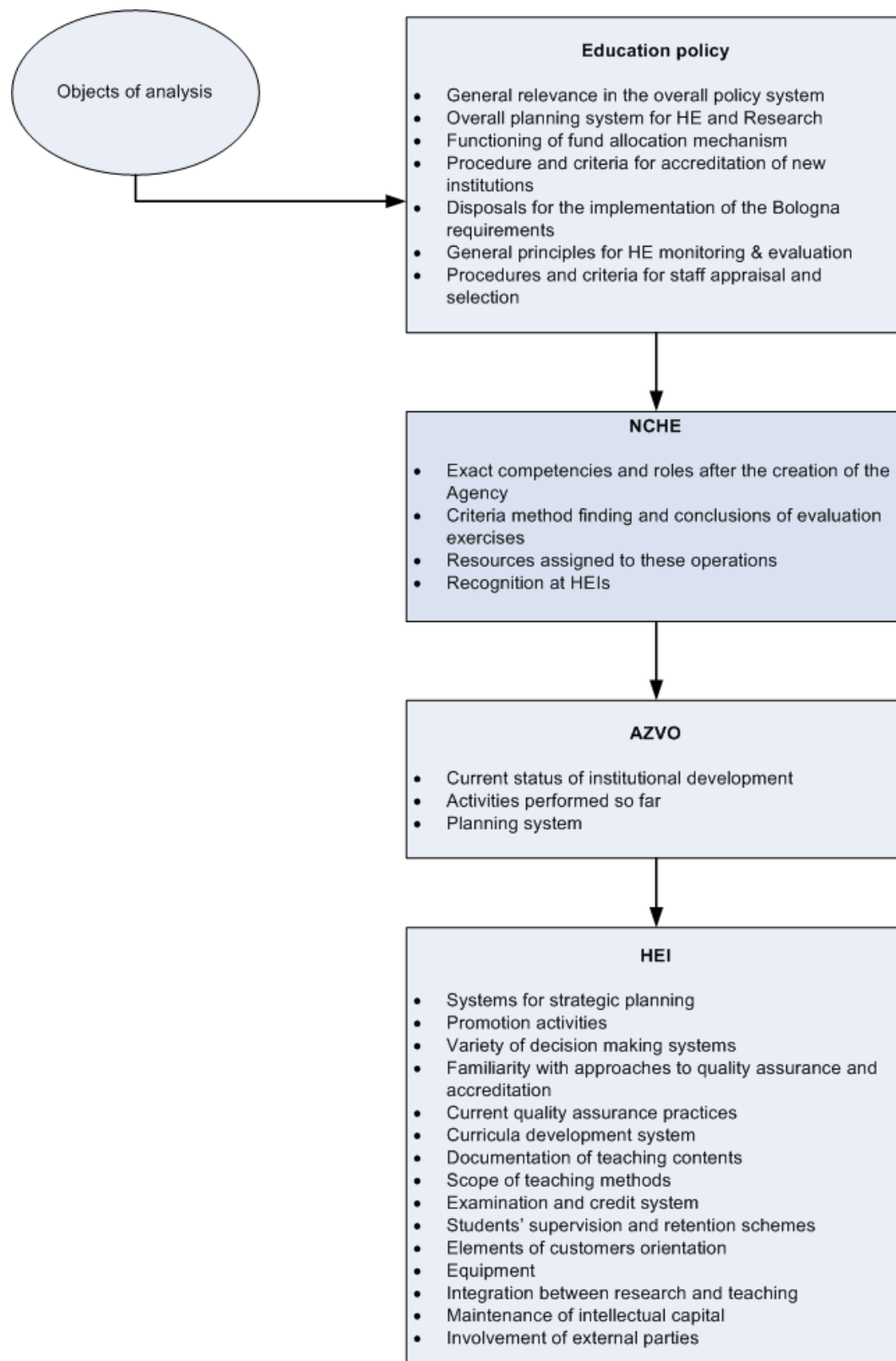
## 4.1 Proposed services

The services offered by the Consultant are structured according to the sequence described above. They cover the requirements of the ToR without exception and to a certain extent create scope for additional dimensions and orientations.

More information on the products which aim to enhance the visibility of the project, such as a project web page and a project brochure have been discussed in chapter 3.5 "Project Visibility".

### 4.1.1 Step 1: Review current situation

The following figure summarises the main tasks, deliverables, time foreseen as well as the expected benefits and consequences of this step.

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**Figure 2: Objects of analysis**

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The activity for the quick scan had commenced right at project start in parallel with the activities for project mobilisation. A number of meetings with NCHE and ASHE representatives had be organised during first two weeks after the arrival of the experts. The Consultant then gave a brief summary about his first findings and impressions. The survey was prepared in parallel to the quick scan and questionnaires were sent out at during the first project month. The deadline for return was restricted to about two weeks with a prolongation of another two weeks but unfortunately only at the end of the third month the questionnaires returned for the analysis to start.

The evaluation started at the end of project month 2 but has not been completed by December. Thus, most of the investigative work will be completed four months after project commencement, although some of the activities have already started regardless of this delay.

### 4.1.2 Step 2: Define the national quality scheme

This is mainly conceptual work which is to be performed in various iterative cycles. A first draft of suggestions will be presented about one month after the evaluation of the survey. This then needs to be approved by the Steering Committee, which in turn will consult some political authorities beforehand. For the time being it is difficult to give a precise estimate on the required time, as the process will not depend on the project team solely and as we cannot forecast the need for amendment. It is our objective to finalise the process by the end of project month 6. Revisions of these concepts will be conducted in project months 12 and 18.

### 4.1.3 Step 3: Draft a policy implementation mechanism

Some first suggestions will be made right after the quick scan. They will concern certain immediate measures that should be implemented by the Government in view of catching up with some delays in the system. In principle, the Consultant should then interrupt his conceptual work until the approval of the quality system, because this will be a prerequisite for the definition of the implementation mechanism. Yet, in order to avoid major time delays related to the uncertainties of the approval procedure, the Consultant will start his preparation partly in parallel to the conceptual work for step 2. The first draft will be finalised about one week after the initial version for the Quality Scheme (step 2), a rhythm that is planned to be maintained for the approval and amendment procedures, too. Revisions will be performed in project months 12 and 18, as in the case of step 2.

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### 4.1.4 Step 4: Develop an institutional framework

There are mainly two types of activities to be performed within this step: 1) concept development, 2) human resource development. Training started at the end of the project month two. The conceptual work for step 4 will be commenced in parallel to step 3 and completed, as regards the first drafts for approval, in project month 5. This first version will contain suggestions for the future functioning of NCHE, ASHE and a first set of HEIs. As in the case of steps 2 and 3 it might be subjected to various iterative cycles and revisions. There will be two types of training, in-house seminars for ASHE and NCHE staff, and training for QA units in HEIs, which will give "template" for the future work and training of these units and HEIs themselves. Thus, we expect the Consultant to remain involved with step 4 until the end of the project, and this presumably without any substantial interruption.

According to the ToR, institutional development is the key issue of this operation. Three types of services will be rendered by the Consultant in this field:

- conceptual work;

- training;

- coaching/mentoring.

**Conceptual work**

The project will define the overall responsibilities of the different institutions. In this field, the Consultant will provide advice for the:

- central mission;

- activity scheme;

- operational functioning; and

- resource plan.

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**Training**

Training will be based on a thorough analysis of needs. This will be done in two stages:

- During the quick scan and the survey;

- Consequent to the finalisation of the new models developed during steps 2 and 3 as well from the conceptual work of step 4.

The actual content for each seminar should not be defined beforehand. Thus, this proposal can only make some indicative suggestions, given in tables 3a and 3b.

In-house seminars for ASHE staff will be organised covering the main themes defined during the training needs analysis. Duration of seminars could vary, from 1-2 hours seminars to one, maximum two days seminars. In-house seminars will be, when possible and appropriate, combined with seminars for QA Units in HEIs, delivered before or after the seminar/workshop in order to use resources available, especially short term expert that will participate in training, in an optimal way. ASHE staff members will also be invited to HEIs seminars, to learn topics that will be delivered to HEIs and to establish working relationship with their partners in those organisations.

The number of in-house seminars corresponds to the minimum number of seminars that have been requested in the ToRs and cover extensively all topics that are relevant for the work of the Agency. Members of the National Council for Higher Education and National Council for Science have actually been invited to these seminars.

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**Table 3a: Proposal for a series of in-house seminars for ASHE staff**

| Topic | Contents |
|---|---|
| Internal QA at higher education institutions<br><br>The seminar was held on 26 October 2006 | Context, framework in Croatia<br>The international context with special regard to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)<br>Possible systems and solutions with some historical outlook (can include theme 1 as well)<br>Actual cases of internal QA measures in Croatia |
| Types of external QA in higher education<br><br>The seminar was held on 27 November 2006 | Evaluation[6]. Characteristics: general review and recommendations, no decision, focus on quality enhancement.<br>Accreditation. Characteristics: predefined criteria, yes-no decision, focus on accountability.<br>Audit. Characteristics: review and evaluation of internal institutional QA system, no decision, focus on quality management |
| Focus of external QA<br>Institutional evaluation<br><br>The seminar was held on 18 December 2006 | Faculty evaluation<br>Programme evaluation – operating programmes<br>Programme evaluation – new programmes to be launched<br>Evaluation of themes, such as e.g. implementation of the credit system, examinations, curriculum design and development, gender issues, student services etc. |
| Special modes of programme delivery and their evaluation | E-learning and distance education, general characteristics<br>Evaluation of distance education programmes<br>Evaluation of e-learning |
| Methodology – Evaluation design<br>The seminar was held on 21 December 2006. | Elements of evaluation<br>Evaluation design step by step |
| Methodology – Evaluation of scientific institutions an personnel | From "little science" to "big science"<br>Performance indicators and evaluation in science<br>Dos and donts in relation to scientometrics |
| Methodology – Criteria and procedures | Defining procedures<br>Defining criteria<br>Defining data and information to be asked for |
| Methodology – Guidance to institutions | Manuals and handbooks to be prepared by the agency, guidance on preparing applications for accreditation<br>Guidance on self-evaluation |
| Methodology – Involving external experts | Selection of experts<br>Training of experts |
| Methodology – Site visits | Organisation of site visits<br>Implementation of site visits |
| Methodology – Evaluation of various aspects of study programmes | Evaluation of curriculum design<br>Evaluation of teaching methodologies<br>Evaluation of student assessment |

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[6] We use the word „evaluation" in the narrow sense here, referring to a special type of external investigations. At other places throughout the document the word is used in the wider, general sense, as an all embracing term in QA of higher education.

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| Topic | Contents |
|---|---|
| Methodology – Evaluation report | Report writing |
| Methodology – Feedback and follow-up | Feedback to institutions<br>Follow-up activities, responsibilities of the various actors |
| Information management – how to get information? | Data and information processing and retrieval<br>Interview methods<br>Survey methods, e.g. survey of students, graduates/alumni |
| Information management – how to spread information? | Presentation, communication and dissemination of QA relevant information |
| Organisational skills | Project management<br>Committee servicing<br>Teamwork and team building |
| Institutional development of ASHE | What makes a good organisation? From mission through policy and strategy to actual operation<br>SWOT analysis of ASHE<br>The future ahead |
| Overview and overall evaluation of the seminars | |

Seminars and workshops for Quality Assurance Units in Higher Education Institutions has been revised following change of the focus of the project, development in Croatian Higher Education since ToRs have been written and a logical approach to quality assurance. Themes have been grouped into six seminars/workshops, namely:

- strategic planning
- curriculum design
- quality of teaching and students assessment
- programme management
- institutional self-evaluation
- external evaluation of institutions,

which corresponds to the proposal in the Table 1. of the ToRs except that overall duration is 18 days (originally requested 20) due to limited resources.

As part of the Component 3, two workshops as requested by ToRs will be delivered after the QA Information system will be implemented.

Training will be provided for 30 participants from different higher education institutions. Participants will be selected from institutions that are establishing their QA Units and those who just started them, and short term experts from institutions that already have experience in QA activities will be included in seminars as resource persons to share experience and to network.

Seminars are planned to be carried out between February and June 2007.

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**Table 3b: Proposed trainings for QA Units in HEIs**

| Topic | Learning objectives | Contents | Methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| Planning, organisation, and participation in external evaluations and follow-up actions | At the end of this seminar the participants should be aware of procedures for external evaluation as part of the national quality assurance policy | design of an evaluation project<br>logistical preparation<br>communication with the organisation running external evaluation<br>evaluation techniques<br>drafting evaluation reports and conducting wrap-up presentations<br>monitoring & evaluation for follow-up techniques<br>evaluation of training<br>overview of different accreditation standards | lectures<br>analysis of evaluation reports from other countries<br>role plays |
| Curriculum design and programme evaluation | The participants will acquire the ability to convert classical teaching concepts into ECTS-based models, with all required planning, documentation and management tools | overview of Bologna rules<br>quality assurance policy development<br>introduction to ECTS requirements and ways for their application<br>curriculum design<br>curriculum development<br>documentation requirements<br>developing and supervising projects with companies | lectures<br>analysis of revised programmes<br>real case exercises (transformation of curricula and examination plans) |
| Methods of institutional self-evaluation, student assessment and certification (10) | The participants should feel capable to conduct in-house evaluation schemes successfully | overview of certification schemes<br>analysis of curricula<br>assessment of administrative databases<br>survey of students<br>evaluation of lectures and seminars<br>interviews of academic staff<br>survey of graduates | lectures<br>case studies<br>coaching on real cases |

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| Topic | Learning objectives | Contents | Methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quality assurance for teaching staff and for students assessment | The participants will be have an overview of modern teaching methods and methods of students assessment | learning outcomes<br>teaching, learning and assessment<br>modern teaching methods<br>students assessment methods<br>linking teaching and assessment | lectures<br>case studies<br>application to real cases |
| Programme management, monitoring the progress of degree programmes and their periodic evaluation | The seminar is expected to enhance competence building in the overall management of teaching facilities adjusted to the Bologna requirements | specifics about the three degree levels, changes compared with the classical model<br>promotion, management, and organisation of degree programmes<br>admission and retention schemes for different degree levels<br>indicators and procedures for continuous monitoring<br>facilitating interactive evaluations<br>evaluation and follow-up<br>measures for facilitating mobility | lectures<br>simulation of evaluation<br>exercises |
| Strategic planning, institutional development and institutional self-evaluation | The participants will be aware of the requirements to be fulfilled in the management of a modernised HEI | developing mission statements<br>drafting teaching profiles<br>communication tools<br>retention schemes<br>techniques for self-evaluation | lectures<br>case-study |

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## Study Tour

The training would be completed by a study tour to EU countries. In this context, the Consultant would provide the following support:

- select and approach appropriate target organisations;

- organise a programme;

- prepare the participants to the visit; and

- draft an evaluation report on this journey with conclusions for the working environment in Croatia.

The destination of the study tour should be selected in coordination with the beneficiary, and this after project commencement.

Preliminary proposals are as follows:

- Visit and taking part in an auditor training (QAA, United Kingdom, 2 staff members, 3 days)

Short additional visits could also be organised to neighbouring countries (e.g. Slovenia) to discuss issues of common interest.

## Coaching/Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring will help the staff members of ASHE and the HEIs to transfer the knowledge and know-how acquired during the training session to their working environment. It will be offered in the following form:

- hands-on assistance to the preparation of evaluations (e.g. definition of methods, procedures, and "tactical prerequisites");

- joint realisation of interviews (e.g. in view of developing interview techniques);

- preparation of presentations (in terms of content and communication quality);

- drafting of evaluation reports (e.g. form of presentations, content of conclusions, "message system"); and

- definition and implementation of follow-up measures (e.g. development of initiatives for change, involvement of appropriate partners, establishing monitoring tools).

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An additional approach for enhancing the human resource development process would be the participation of the Croatian representatives in an international reform network.

The Consultant will continue to offer assistance in

- establishing a collaboration platform with various foreign institutions entrusted with similar tasks as ASHE;

- preparing twinning arrangements between Croatian HEIs and similar institutions in EU member states

**Deliverables**

The main deliverables to be expected from this step are the following:

- institutional development plans;

- human resources development plans;

- two (2) reports on training needs analysis;

- training materials;

- evaluations of training;

- study tour concept;

- evaluation of the study tour;

- collaboration model with foreign partners; and

- twinning arrangements with foreign HEIs.

## 4.1.5 Step 5: Facilitate a template system

Templates do not fulfil their role if they are not applicable to all standards of the new system. As we take as starting point for quality assurance in HE standards proposed in Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area we designed training activities, seminars and workshops along the main areas in that document. Training will be carried out for a number of HEIs and ASHE staff (around 40 participants). Based on the experience of that training materials and procedures will be developed which will serve as templates for other institutions that will not take part in trainings. They will be developed alongside trainings and finished by project month 12 and then offered to interested institutions, with necessary guidance, if needed.

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Tasks, expected short-term benefits and mid term consequences as well as deliverables and a tentative timing of activities are summarised in the following table.

The most appropriate tool for coaching and mentoring would be a set of real cases. In light of this, we recommend selecting a certain number of HEIs as pilot cases. They could serve at the same time as

- a platform for staff development at ASHE; and

- templates for other organisations included in the reform effort

At these institutions, the Consultant offers to be personally involved in all steps for evaluation and improvements of the quality assurance scheme.

We propose that three institutions are selected. (*The Consultant will propose the PIU in Project Month 4 a list with proposed institutes.*)One would be an integrated university, the second would be university with faculties and the third one would be a higher education institution (Veleučilište). Following this scheme the project would cover different types of institutions and different conditions and challenges institutions are facing. We would also propose that University of Rijeka would be included in this step as judging from the data available it has been developing a sound quality assurance system that could serve also as one of the examples for the template system.

The processes itself would be evaluated as an example for a restructuring model.

**Deliverables**

The Consultant would hand in:
- a guideline for the execution of the template model and
- list of proposed Institutes.
- a monitoring & evaluation report;

### 4.1.6 Step 6: Establish an information system

The needs assessment started in month 1 of project implementation and has been finalised in the project month 2. The needs analysis has been agreed upon by all parties concerned (Agency, NCHE, etc.) and the logical system design started to be elaborated by experts of the Agency and SRCE. Support of the project is given regarding proposals and comments on the data and indicators QA system should provide. Actual development and implementation will be carried out by the Agency and SRCE, backed by resources provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. Project will provide continuing support during all phases.

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There will be additional support by project in the implementation period, as well providing some training and guidance for using QA data for ASHE and NCHE.

The development of an MIS for higher education was mainly tackled by component 3 of the project. The role of the project was clearly described in the ToR[7]. During the inception phase, there were two main shifts of the project focus:

- more support on development of quality assurance activities in the HEIs, including quality of teaching and students assessment

- refocus of the HEMIS component (component 3) from actual design and implementation of the QMIS to development of QA support system and defining sets of relevant indicators.

According to the proposed shift of the project focus, revision of activities for Component 3 is proposed as opposed to the original Terms of Reference. Focus of this component is proposed to be on the guidance on development of information system for quality assurance selecting and defining indicators that are relevant both for the level of institutions as for the national level. This work is done in the close cooperation of the ASHE experts which have been developing the system by providing additional input, support and advice.

Beside that, guidance will be provided for higher education institutions both for the implementation and use of the QA information system with appropriate mentoring and training. National Council for Higher Education will also be advised on the use of the information system, as well as on the indicators used.

Following discussions with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, ASHE, SRCE and NCHE the most logical approach to the development of system to support quality assurance, is the upgrade/redesigning of MOZVAG, system that served as support for accreditation of HE programs and was used by all HE institutions. Redesigning of the system would allow to establish a database of all HE programs, as well as to include all relevant data, information and indicators needed for different purposes, including annual reports, statistical and analytical reports and research, institutional performance indicators.

QA information system, based on MOZVAG, would allow access on different levels, from the level of individual HEIs to upper (university or polytechnics) level as well as access to (aggregated, if needed) data on the national level, at ASHE. As different institutions are using different MIS (although most of them ISVU) appropriate interface(s) would be developed to link to existing data.

System should not only be developed for the highest level but also for the QA units in HEIs that will provide necessary data., which they could in turn use for their own QA purposes.

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has provided support for this development seen as the optimal one for providing data needed also on the national level. System will be developed

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[7] Please refer to ToR, page 21

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and implemented by SRCE that has already developed the existing version of MOZVAG, in close collaboration with statistics and analytic department of ASHE.

**Activity 1: Needs analysis**

Activity 1 concentrates on the provision of expert overview and guidance to the team(s) developing an electronic information system, particularly on those aspects which are related to the quality assurance and quality management process.

The ToR explicitly refer to the ISVU system as providing information on students, teaching input, educational programmes, matriculations, and examinations. The ISVU is already operational in some of the HEI. Due to shift of focus, this activity will deal more generally with information regarding quality assurance in Croatian Higher Education system and set of indicators, including HEIs performance indicators, data on programs and other data.

**Activity 2: Expert guidance on QAIS design**

The Agency's department then will work on the design of the respective information systems, communicating with key expert 3. What seems to be even more important, that some work has to be done with regards to the overall QA system of Croatian higher education, and with regards to the institutional QA systems. The proposed information systems should precisely fit into these systems and not be separate and additional (duplicating) activities. Thus it makes sense that only after some more advances with component 1 an 2, key expert 3 returns to closely work together with the Agency's staff in finalising the design the information systems. A series of missions thus will follow from January through March 2006.

Experts for the Agency will also visit one of the EU institution (probably in UK) with the responsibility to collect and analyse data on higher education, though providing service both to HEIs as well as professionals and the public.

**Activity 3: Expert guidance on QAIS implementation**

Whatever has to be developed (in the sense of adjusting existing computer systems etc), will be done between May and September 2007. Another series of missions of key expert 3 will support the implementation and stabilizing of use of information systems in the context of quality assurance in Croatian higher education.

**Activity 4: Advice and Training for ASHE and NCHE**

The necessary training for Agency staff in accessing and analysing the information system/s developed under activity 1 in the context of their use in evaluations is defined as activity 4 within the ToR. Due to changes in the project, this activity will be mainly focused on giving some additional guidance and training in the possibilities of use information provided by the newly developed QAIS for different purposes.

**Deliverables**

The Consultant would hand in:
- QA IS needs analysis report;

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- list of data, indicators and functions of the new system;;
- initial training needs assessment; and initial training plan.

If necessary it is proposed to contract local application development experts to support the development teams on issues identified as critical in the needs assessment analysis. This can concern technical, administrative or managerial topics. The exact input needed will be defined during the needs assessment and then has to be prioritised so that the available project resources are used in the most efficient way to support the application development activities.

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## 4.2 Activities and Input

Following discussion with the different stakeholders, especially Ministry of Science, Education and Sports new activities have been introduced, *Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff* and *Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students.* Beside that, activities 2.1.1. to 2.1.4. have been revised according to the changed focus of the project. This makes part of the revised Terms of Reference which are annexed separately.

Below a summary of the activities is presented with the respective input.

| Activities | Means | Inputs/Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1.1.1. Training of Agency staff involved in QA including in-house seminars.* | • Meetings<br>• In-house seminars (see list in a separate document)<br>• Handouts<br>• Papers and other written materials | **TL (KE2), KE1, KE3, STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | Competent company/experts are engaged.<br>Agency staff motivated. |
| *1.1.2. Training in committee servicing for Agency staff who support the NCHE.* | • Meetings<br>• In-house seminars (see list in a separate document)<br>• Handouts<br>• Papers and other written materials | **KE1, STE**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.1.3. Mentoring of Agency staff* | • Meetings<br>• Personal discussions<br>• Mentoring at seminars and workshops abroad | **TL (KE2), KE1, KE3, STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |

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| Activities | Means | Inputs/Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1.1.4. Agency staff to observe evaluations conducted by foreign QA agencies* | • Visit and taking part in actual evaluation in a Western-European EU country (Denmark or Germany or the Netherlands, 2-3 staff members, 2-3 days)<br>• Visit and taking part in actual evaluation in an Eastern-European EU country (HAC, Hungary, 3 staff members, 3-4 days)<br>• Visit and taking part in an auditor training (QAA, United Kingdom, 2 staff members, 3 days) | **TL (KE2), KE1**<br>Incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.1.5. Agency staff involved in 1.1.4. reporting to their colleagues* | • Agency meetings<br>• Written reports by staff involved | **Agency staff involved, TL (KE2), KE1**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.2.1. Training evaluators appointed by the NCHE/Agency* | • Training seminar | **TL (KE2), KE1, KE3, STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.2.2. Key expert attending evaluations* | • Taking part in actual evaluations as observer and mentor for agency staff | **TL (KE2), KE1**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.2.3. Advice to NCHE on its policies and guidelines* | • Review of current situation (meetings, discussions)<br>• Analysis of current documents<br>• Discussion in in-house training seminar<br>• Proposals for the future | **TL (KE2), KE1,**<br>Fees. | |

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| Activities | Means | Inputs/Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1.2.4. Feedback to NCHE from evaluations and project workshops and seminars* | • Survey on evaluations<br>• Survey on workshops and seminars | **TL (KE2), KE1**<br>Fees. | |
| *1.2.5. Evaluation and feedback instruments to 1.2.4.* | • Questionnaires designed for feedback | **KE1**<br>Fees. | |
| *1.3.1. Advice and assistance in support of quality promotion units.* | • Visits to quality promotion units<br>• Review of current situation (meetings, discussions)<br>• Analysis of current documents<br>• Proposals for the future | **TL (KE2)**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.3.2. Mentoring of HEI staff with a role in QA, including staff associated with quality promotion units* | • Meetings<br>• Personal discussions<br>**Mentoring at seminars and workshops** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.3.3. Guidance to HEIs on curriculum development, including ECTS.* | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.3.4. Guidance to HEIs on monitoring the progress of degree programmes* | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| *1.3.5. Guidance to HEIs on the periodic evaluation of degree programmes* | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |

| Activities | Means | Inputs/Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.3.6. Guidance to HEIs on institutional self-evaluation | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 1.3.7. Guidance to HEIs on strategic planning | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 1.3.8. Guidance to HEIs on preparing for external evaluations | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **TL (KE2), KE1, STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 1.3.9 Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>• Papers and other written materials | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 1.3.10 Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>• Papers and other written materials | **TL (KE2), STEs**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 1.3.11. Participation, as invited, in relevant workshops or seminars organised by HEIs | **Visits**<br>**Presentations** | **TL (KE2)**<br>Fees and incidental expenditure. | |
| 2.1.1.- Guidance on development of Information System for Quality Assurance. | • Review of current situation (meetings, discussions)<br>• Analysis of current documents<br>**Proposals for the future** | **KE3**<br>Fees. | |
| 2.1.2. Guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System for Quality Assurance. | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **KE3**<br>Fees | |

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| Activities | Means | Inputs/Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| *2.1.3. Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance.* | • Meetings<br>• Seminars<br>• Visit to a HE information centre in EU country (2 staff members, 3 days)<br>• Handouts<br>**Papers and other written materials** | **KE3. TL (KE2)**<br>Fees | |
| *2.1.4. Advice to the NCHE on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance.* | • Meetings<br>• Personal discussions<br>• Proposals for the future | **KE3, TL (KE2)**<br>Fees | |

Following discussion with the different stakeholders, especially Ministry of Science, Education and Sports new activities have been introduced, *Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff* and *Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students.* Beside that, activities 2.1.1. to 2.1.4. have been revised according to the changed focus of the project. This makes part of the revised Terms of Reference which are annexed separately.

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**4.3 Logframe**

The following LogFrame is a revised version. A number of new **Objectively verifiable indicators** have been proposed whereas some have been proposed for omission.

As regards the activities the following are the proposed changes;
Under Component 2. two activities have been added:

1.3.9  Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students
1.3.10 Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff

Under Component 3, activities have been changed to:

2.1.1 Expert guidance on development of Information System for Quality Assurance
2.1.2 Expert guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System for Quality Assurance
2.1.3 Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance
2.1.4 Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system for Quality Assurance

| Intervention logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall objective:**<br>To promote the reform of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia in line with best practice in the EU Member States. | • Increased mobility of Croatian students wishing to study in the EU within the next 5 years<br>• More applications from EU students wishing to study in Croatia<br>• Increased percentage of graduates in the total population of the Republic of Croatia within the next 10 years | • MSES statistical data/publications<br>• Evaluation reports (MSES, Agency and HEIs)<br>• Student feedback and success record (HEIs and Agency)<br>• NARIC/ENIC records of student mobility<br>• Revised strategic documents or medium-term action plans for HE reform | |
| **Specific objectives (or Project purposes):**<br>1. Support to the development of Quality Assurance processes, procedures, systems and structures in Croatian Higher Education which will stimulate and establish the quality of the Higher Education being provided for students.<br><br>2. Support to the development and implementation of an Information System, so that it can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes. | • Improvement in the quality of HE delivered to students within the next 3 years:<br>  o improved student retention rates<br>  o improved student success rates<br>  o increased number of enrolled students<br><br>• Users manual developed<br>• Data inputs being made<br>• Reliable analysed data are available and are being used as inputs to QA by both HEIs and the Agency<br>• Reliable analysed data being used for Quality Management, including strategic planning | • Final project report<br>• Agency evaluation reports<br>• MSES statistical data<br>• Student feedback and success record (HEIs and Agency)<br>• Student retention records (MSES, Agency & HEIs)<br><br>• Final project report<br>• Programme monitoring reports<br>• Institutional self-evaluations<br>• HEI plans/publications<br>• Agency evaluation reports<br>• National short-term action plans for HE | • The Government of Croatia remains committed to the reform of HE<br>• The MSES will actively support the development of HE<br>• The funding of HEI follows the August 2003 Law on Scientific Activity and Higher Education<br>• There is relaxation of state control over staffing establishments in HEIs<br>• The NCHE is proactive in its promotion of HE reform<br>• The HEIs are committed to the quality of student learning<br>• The chosen Information System enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation. |

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| Intervention logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Results:** | | | |
| 1.1. The staff of the Agency for Science and Higher Education who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, will have been enabled to perform their duties in a way comparable to best practice in the rest of Europe, and a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established. | • Rate of satisfaction expressed by stakeholders in the performance of the staff<br>• Rate of satisfaction expressed by evaluators and HEIs<br>• Number of the Agency staff trained/mentored<br>• SWOT analysis produced | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Project Steering Committee minutes<br>• Staff appraisal on behalf of the NCHE<br>• Training evaluation reports<br>• Reports of experienced foreign participants in evaluations | • In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA<br>• The Agency will in all respect be independent from the Ministry , Government, Parliament or any other political influence.<br>• There will have been a synergy between the implementation of the CARDS 2002 project "HE mobility" and this CARDS 2003 project |
| 1.2. The NCHE will have refined its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation so that they are fully in line with best practice elsewhere in Europe, and have the capacity to keep these under review. Those who will have been appointed as evaluators by the Agency/NCHE will have been led to set sustainable precedents of good practice in the evaluation of HE programmes and institutions. | • Agency has a candidate status at ENQA<br>• The level of compliance with "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)"<br>• Number of seminars for training evaluators<br>• Recommendations to the NCHE drafted<br>• Evaluation and feedback instruments designed<br>• Number of evaluations carried out according to new Guidance<br>• Policy mixed model prepared | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Training evaluations<br>• ENQA publications<br>• Reports of experienced foreign participants in evaluations<br>• NCHE decisions/working reports<br>• Accreditation decisions<br>• Relevant meeting minutes<br>• Reports<br>• Study tour reports<br>• Training materials | • The NCHE is dynamic in its promotion of HE reform<br>• In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA<br>• Appropriate evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE |

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| Intervention logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| • 1.3. Quality Promotion Units in the HEIs will have become well established and recognised as authorities on Quality Assurance in their own institutions, including in the provision of support for monitoring and internal evaluation. They will be the main actors in the Quality Assurance Network and an efficient working model of partnership between them and the Agency/NCHE will be established. The HEIs will have made significant progress in Quality Management (including academic and strategic planning). | • Number of relevant staff trained/mentored<br>• Notes of guidance drafted<br>• Improved student assessment<br>• Strategic institutional plans developed<br>• Number of HEI that have fully introduced ECTS<br>• Strategy papers elaborated by MSES and Agency<br>• Survey of HEI carried out<br>• Classification scheme hor HEI institution produced<br>• Evaluation procedure designed<br>• Phasing model produced<br>• Concept for monitoring and evaluation proposed<br>• Institutional and human development plans prepared<br>• Training materials prepared<br>• Study tour design and implementation<br>• Study tour evaluations<br>• Model for collaboration foreign partners prepared<br>• twinning arrangments with foreign HEI implemented<br>• Guidelines for executinon of template model prepared<br>• Monitoring and evaluation report prepared | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Training evaluations<br>• Agency evaluation reports<br>• Student feedback<br>• HEIs periodical publications<br>• Survey report<br>• Reports | • Universities will operate as integrated HEIs<br>• HEIs have been able to establish Quality Promotion Units<br>• QA units located in HEIs are integral to these institutions and do not have, even collectively, the potential to be considered a national QA body, or part of one.<br>• HEIs committed to teaching and the quality of student learning<br>• HEIs committed to good practice in the assessment and certification of students<br>• The TEMPUS QA project will have provided a useful foundation on which the CARDS 2003 project can build |

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| Intervention logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| • 2.1. Information system for quality assurance based on agreed indicators will have been developed and implemented so that it can be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level. | • QA information system anaylsis report prepared<br>• Information system for QA designed and implemented<br>• List of data, indicators and functions of the new system<br>• Initial training needs assessment<br>• initial training plan.<br>• Number of Agency staff trained<br>• Reliable analysed data being used as inputs to QA by HEIs, Agency and MSES<br>• Reliable analysed data being used for Quality management, including strategic planning<br>• Number of HEIs that have implemented the management information system<br>• Further training and equipment needs analysis drafted<br>• | • Programme monitoring report<br>• Institutional self-evaluations<br>• HEI plans<br>• Agency evaluation report<br>• Training evaluations<br>• National plans for HE | • The chosen information system enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation<br>• There is sufficient funding beyond that resulting from the project, for the chosen Information System to be developed and implemented.<br>• University Computing Centre (SRCE) is committed to updating of existing version of MOZVAG. |

| *Activities* | *Means* | *Costs* | *Assumptions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1.1. Training of Agency staff involved in QA including in-house seminars. | Technical Assistance | Fees and incidental expenditure | Competent company/experts are engaged |
| 1.1.2. Training in committee servicing for Agency staff who support the NCHE. | | | |
| 1.1.3. Mentoring of Agency staff | PIU staff | | Tendering / procurement carried out without delays |
| 1.1.4. Agency staff to observe evaluations conducted by foreign QA agencies | | | |
| 1.1.5. Agency staff involved in 1.1.4. reporting to their colleagues | | | |
| 1.2.1. Training evaluators appointed by the NCHE/Agency | | | |
| 1.2.2. Key expert attending evaluations | | | |

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| Activities | Means | Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.2.3. Advice to NCHE on its policies and guidelines | | | |
| 1.2.4. Feedback to NCHE from evaluations and project workshops and seminars | | | |
| 1.2.5. Evaluation and feedback instruments 1.2.4. | | | |
| 1.3.1. Advice and assistance in support of quality promotion units. | | | |
| 1.3.2. Mentoring of HEI staff with a role in QA, including staff associated with quality promotion units | | | |
| 1.3.3. Guidance to HEIs on curriculum development, including ECTS. | | | |
| 1.3.4. Guidance to HEIs on monitoring the progress of degree programmes | | | |
| 1.3.5. Guidance to HEIs on the periodic evaluation of degree programmes | | | |
| 1.3.6. Guidance to HEIs on institutional self-evaluation | | | |
| 1.3.7. Guidance to HEIs on strategic planning | | | |
| 1.3.8. Guidance to HEIs on preparing for external evaluations | | | |
| 1.3.9. Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students | | | |
| 1.3.10. Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff | | | |
| 2.1.1. Expert guidance on development of Information System for Quality Assurance | | | |
| 2.1.2. Expert guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System. for Quality Assurance | | | |
| 2.1.3. Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance | | | |

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| Activities | Means | Costs | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1.4. Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system | | | **Preconditions:**<br>● Agency for HE founded<br>● Appropriate staff appointed (QA officers and information system managers) have been made to the Agency and the Ministry<br>● There is sufficient funding, beyond that derived from the project, for the chosen Information System to be fully developed and implemented<br>● Quality Promotion units established at universities |

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## 4.4 Project organisation

The supreme body of the project is the Steering Committee. Its actual members will be decided by the beneficiary institution, i.e. the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (MSES), which is the formal and main beneficiary of the project, but according to the TORs its composition will be as follows.

- One or more members nominated by the principal project partner.
- One member nominated by each of any other Ministry or institution with an interest in the project's activities.
- One member nominated by the NCHE.
- One member nominated by the Croatian Student Union.
- One or more members nominated by the EC Delegation in Zagreb or the Contracting Authority
- The Team Leader or in his absence another international expert nominated by him/her.
- A representative of the CARDS 2002 "Higher Education Mobility" project, while that project is being implemented.

In view of the focus of the project and according to revised TORs we would like to take into consideration to include the representative of SRCE as one of the stakeholders. As the CARDS 2002 "Higher Education Mobility" project already finished this should be changed accordingly.

## 4.5 Project management

Project management will be based on the quality management system that GOPA Consultants has implemented in its organisation (pursuant to ISO 9001:2001). This means that all responsibilities are clearly defined, representation is modelled and a clear contact point for the SIS and the CA is established.

The following figure shows the management structure of the project:

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**Figure 3: Project management structure**
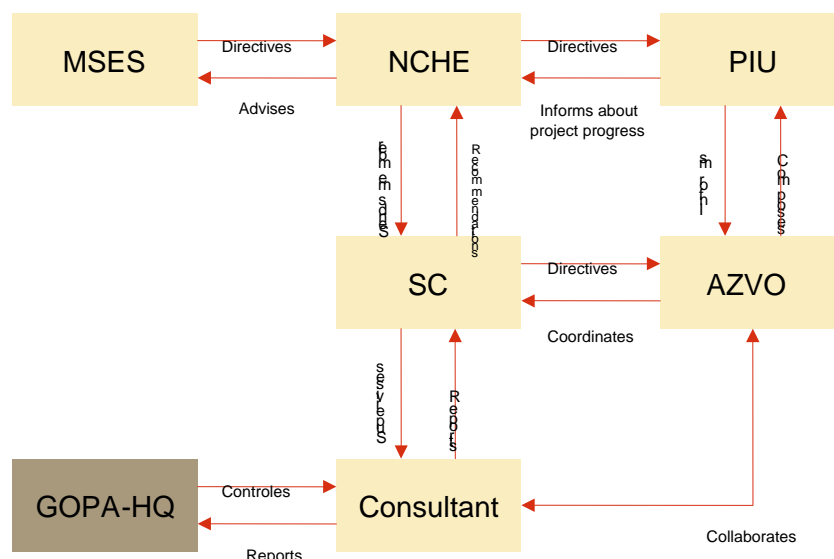


The Project Leader is the main actor on behalf of the project team assigned by the tenderer. He will participate in the coordination meetings with the beneficiary and the Steering Committee and will manage the project's activities. He is responsible for reporting to the Consultant's Project Director as the tenderer is obliged to report to the project partner and the CFCU.

Within the tenderer's organisation a clear internal reporting scheme is defined. Meetings of the project team or between a member of the project and decision makers from the beneficiary or CFCU must be documented by minutes. Deliverables have to be sent to the Document Reviewer at GOPA for a quality check, and internal contractual matters have to be agreed between the Project Leader and the Project Director.

The short-term experts, if required, are provided with clear ToR for their missions, and have to submit a mission report to the Project Leader at the end of their assignment. A copy of the STEs' ToR and mission report will be kept by the Project Director at GOPA head office. As a result, the project is always fully documented and all files are available in the GOPA office. That ensures management and performance continuity and thus supports the achievement of the project's objectives.

At project start, the Project Leader in cooperation with the decision makers from the beneficiary will prepare and agree on the inception report of the project, which will then need the approval by the Steering Committee.

## 4.6  Backstopping team

A team of professionals from GOPA form the backstopping team responsible for the technical and administrative support of the Project. The members of the backstopping team and their specific areas of expertise in relation to the project are introduced below:

**Table 4:    Members of the backstopping team**

| Members of the backstopping team | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Mr Sinan Oezel | Project Director: Overall contract responsibility |
| Mr Jost Guntermann | Technical backstopping regarding the supporting information system |
| Mr Wolfgang Hellwig | Technical backstopping regarding quality assurance in higher education |
| Mr Juergen Kaiser | Project administration and financial controlling |

All proposed members of the backstopping team have working experience with projects in South East Europe.

## 4.7  International Backstopping

Whenever necessary the backstopping team undertakes trouble shooting measures such as assisting in screening new priorities, reallocation of staff and budget resources if bottlenecks happen to appear.

The team will sit with the support office team at GOPA HQ, Bad Homburg and ensure that every detail concerning project mobilisation and implementation can be discussed and agreed upon before the key experts arrive in Croatia.

Prior to their departure on assignment, the long and short-term experts will be fully briefed on the main issues, counterparts, and institutions as well as potential problems, so that they are fully operational within a very short time.

- **Project director :**

**Mr Sinan Oezel**, is assigned as the Project Director and will hold the overall contract responsibility. He has more than 5 years of experience in international project management.

- **Information systems related backstopping**

The ITD Department of GOPA mbH has appointed one of their senior staff members, **Mr Jost Guntermann** as the responsible person for providing project management and backstopping services regarding all information system issues of the project.

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- **Higher education related backstopping**

GOPA's Human Resources and Social Development Department has appointed **Mr Wolfgang Hellwig** to provide the management and coordinate backstopping services for the human resource part of this project.

- **Administrative backstopping**

**Mr Juergen Kaiser** is responsible for invoicing and related assignments. He has been with GOPA for 27 years and holds a degree in Economics. Mr Kaiser has gathered extensive experience in project administration, including financial controlling and legal questions. He is very familiar with rules and regulations governing EC funded projects/programmes.

- **Local office manager**

**Mrs Vesna Vrga** is assigned as the Local Office Manager and coordinates the local support to the project team.

## 4.8 Processes supporting project management

Besides the tasks already mentioned in the previous chapter, project management involves a number of important specific managerial task which are described in the following sections.

## 4.9 Quality management

GOPA takes all necessary steps to guarantee high output quality from the beginning to the end of the project. This is usually ensured by the preparation of a project quality plan at the beginning of each project. The project quality plan is then regularly part of the inception report, even if not explicitly demanded by the client. In this project the initiators have already anticipated the importance of such a plan and introduced the Global Implementation Plan, which is another name for the same document.

## 4.10 Document Management

The Team Leader will specify the method of identification, storage, approval, access right control, archiving, and other criteria with regard to individual types of documents. He will set the rules for project correspondence. Typical documents include: project plan, expert work assignment documentation, correspondence, minutes of meetings, work documentation, deliverables, reports, etc.

All created documents will be copied to the GOPA head office on a regular basis, so that a duplicate of the project documentation exists there, and the project director can always access it.

## 4.11 Reporting

The project reports will be provided according to the following schedule:

Table 5:    Reports to be prepared by the project

| Report | Month | Contents |
|---|---|---|
| Inception Report | 2 | Objectives of the project |
| | | Action plan |
| | | Changes agreed with the beneficiary |
| | | Detailed description of the contents |
| | | Revised log frame |
| Project Progress Reports | 1-18 | Project activities and achievements |
| | | Work plan for the following period |
| | | Problems and suggestions for remedial actions |
| Interim Reports | 6, 12 | Achievements in regard to planning |
| | | Financial status |
| | | Problems and corrective measures |
| | | Work plan |
| Final Report | 18 | Overview of project activities |
| | | Summary of outputs and major obstacles |
| | | Impact assessment |

Monitoring and evaluation

The details on measurable indicators for project success will be determined during the inception phase, when the project will be specified in more detail and agreed with the SIS, the PIT and the CFCU.

The indicative table below shows the indicators for the results to be achieved according to the Terms of Reference and the deliverables which could be used for evaluation of the success of the related project component.

Table 6:    Deliverables for measuring project indicators

| Indicator | Deliverable |
|---|---|
| Rate of stakeholder satisfaction | Results of a survey to be produced at the end of the project (PM 18) |
| Rate of satisfaction expressed by evaluators and HEIs | Results of a survey to be produced at the end of the project (PM 18) |
| Number of agency staff trained | Evaluation reports about training activities |
| SWOT analysis produced | SWOT analysis (PM 4) |
| Agency has a candidate status at ENQA | Membership document enclosed with one of the progress reports (PM 18) |
| The level of compliance with "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area | Documents of ASHE and NCHE (PM 18) |

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| Indicator | Deliverable |
|---|---|
| (ESG)" | |
| Number of seminars for training evaluators | Evaluation reports about training activities (PM 18) |
| Recommendations to NCHE | Plans for quality assurance system, policy implementation mechanism and institutional development (PM 8 latest) |
| Evaluation & feedback instruments | Ditto (PM 8 latest) |
| Number of evaluations carried out | Evaluation statistics enclosed with progress reports for months 12, 15, 18 |
| Policy mixed model prepared | Policy document prepared (PM 12) |
| Survey of HEI carried out | Report of the survey (PM 6) |
| Classification scheme for HEI institution produced | Classification scheme produced (PM 8) |
| Evaluation procedure designed | Procedure designed (PM 8) |
| Phasing model produced | Model (PM 10) |
| Institutional and human development plans prepared | Draft of plans prepared (PM 10) |
| Concept for monitoring and evaluation proposed | Concept proposal (PM 8) |
| Training materials prepared | Training materials (PM 12 latest) |
| Study tour design and implementation | Study tours (by PM 12) |
| Study tour evaluations | Evaluation reports (PM 13) |
| Model for collaboration with foreign partners prepared | Model prepared (PM 12) |
| Twinning arrangements with foreign HEI implemented | Example of at least one twinning arrangement (PM18) |
| Guidelines for execution of template model prepared | Guidelines published (PM 18) |
| Monitoring and evaluation report prepared | Monitoring and evalution report (PM 18) |
| Number of relevant staff trained/mentored | Evaluation report on training activities (PM 18) |
| Notes of guidance drafted | Plan for quality assurance system (PM 18) |
| Improved student assessment | Review of assessment practice in HEIs (enclosed with progress report for PM 12, 15, 18) |
| Strategic Institutional Plans developed | Institutional development plan (step 4) |

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| Indicator | Deliverable |
|---|---|
| Number of HEIs with ECTS | Review of documentation practice in HEIs (enclosed with progress report for PM 12, 15, 18) |
| Strategy papers elaborated by MSES and Agency | Review of policy material (enclosed with progress report for PM 12, 15, 18) |
| QAIS Needs Analysis undertaken | Needs Analysis is approved (PM 6 latest) |
| List of data, indicators and functions of the new system | List approved (PM 6 latest) |
| QAIS[8] Information system for QA designed | QAIS Design Document is prepared (PM 8 latest) |
| QAIS[9] Information system for QA implemented | First version of QAIS prepared for piloting (PM 12 to 15) |
| Initial training needs assessment and training plan | Training needs assessment and plan prepared (PM 8 latest) |
| Reliable analysed data being used as inputs to QA by HEIs, Agency and MSES | Survey analysis report prepared (PM 18) |
| Reliable analysed data being used for Quality management, including strategic planning | Survey analysis report prepared (PM 18) |
| Number of HEIs that have implemented the Quality Assurance information system | Survey analysis report prepared (PM 18) |
| QAIS Training is provided | Staff has been trained in the use of the application (PM 15 to 18) |
| Further training and equipment needs analysis drafted | Draft for training and equipment needs analysis prepared (PM 18) |

[8] NB: Actual design, development and implementation will be done by AZVO and SRCE, project will provide only support needed in design phase and additional expertise, if needed.
[9] NB: Actual design, development and implementation will be done by AZVO and SRCE, project will provide only support needed in design phase and additional expertise, if needed.

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**Annex 1**

**Terms of Reference**

# ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Programme: CARDS 2003

Partner country: The Republic of Croatia

Area of Cooperation: Economic and Social Development. Social Cohesion.

Title of the Project: Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role and the development of a supporting Information System

Project budget: €600,000

<u>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</u>

| | |
|---|---|
| CFCU | Central Finance and Contract Unit |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer System |
| ENIC | European Network of Information Centres |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| ISVU | Information System of Higher Education Institutions (*Informacijski sustav visokih učilišta*) |
| MSES | Ministry of Science, Education and Sport |
| NARIC | National Academic Recognition Information Centre |
| NCHE | National Council for Higher Education |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SRCE | University Computer Centre (*Sveučilišni računarski centar*) |

**Terms of reference**

# 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## 1.1 Beneficiary country

The Republic of Croatia

## 1.2 Contracting Authority

The Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Croatia (ECD), on behalf of the beneficiary country or the Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Republic of Croatia, if accredited at the moment of contract signature.

## 1.3 Relevant country background

In July 2004 the Government of the Republic of Croatia established the National Agency for Science and Higher Education. A constituent part of the Agency is the National Centre for Academic Mobility and Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (ENIC Office of the Republic of Croatia). Moreover, the Agency has a special Quality Assurance Department. The funding for the operation of the Agency for Science and Higher Education has been allocated in the 2004 national budget. The Government Decree on the establishment of the Agency stipulates that the Agency shall establish the national network for quality assurance in higher education and integrate it into the European Network of Quality Assurance.

At present the Republic of Croatia has six universities. There are sixty-one such legal entities, so that including the universities themselves, five polytechnics, six "Public Schools of Professional Higher Education"[1] outside the university sector, and twelve private Institutions of Higher Education (HEIs) which have been accredited by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), it can be said that there are eighty-four HEIs in Croatia.

Higher Education (HE) is largely concentrated around the capital, Zagreb, but HE is also to be found in twenty other places[2] in Croatia.

The University of Zagreb is the oldest university in South East Europe.[3] It has twenty-eight Faculties, a Teacher Education Academy, an Academy of Dramatic Arts, an Academy of Fine Arts and an Academy of Music. It also has one separate "university programme of study" (in Croatian Studies). With about 60,000 students it is much the largest university in Croatia.

The University of Split has nine Faculties, an Academy of Art, a Teachers' School of Professional Higher Education, a Maritime School of Professional Higher Education and two University Departments (for Humanities and for Professional Courses of Study).

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[1] Schools of Professional Higher Education are defined as providing "professional study" as distinct from "academic" study.

[2] Where a university is located in one city, university sites tend to be scattered across that city.

[3] Tracing its history back to 1669.

The University of Rijeka was established in 1973 and now includes ten Faculties (seven in Rijeka, two in Pula and one in Opatija) and three Teachers' Schools of Professional Higher Education (in Rijeka, Gospić and Pula respectively). In the 2002/2003 academic year the University had 16,523 students.

The University "J.J. Strossmayer" in Osijek was established in 1975. It now includes nine Faculties (seven in Osijek, one in Glavina and one in Slavonski Brod), one Teachers' School of Professional Higher Education and one University Department (Mathematics). In the 2002/2003 academic year the University had 12,785 students.

The University of Zadar was established in 2002. It comprises sixteen University Departments including a Teacher and Day-care Teacher Training Department. In the 2002/2003 academic year the University had 3,517 students.

The University of Dubrovnik was established as a university in 2003.[4] It has been a Polytechnic, and currently comprises six Departments.

In addition to the six universities there are now five Polytechnics: Karlovac Polytechnic (with five Departments), Požega Polytechnic (with three Departments), Rijeka Polytechnic (with four Departments), Zagreb Polytechnic for Social Sciences (with two Departments) and Zagreb Polytechnic for Technical Sciences (with five Departments).

There are six "Public Schools of Professional Higher Education" outside the university sector which are also included in the state funded Higher Education system. These are: the Police School of Professional Higher Education – Police Academy of the Ministry of Interior, Zagreb; the School of Professional Higher Education in Agriculture, Križevci; the School of Professional Higher Education in Health Services, Zagreb (with six Departments); the School of Professional Higher Education in Tourism, Šibenik (with four Departments); the Teachers` School of Professional Higher Education, Čakovec; and the Teachers` School of Professional Higher Education, Petrinja.

There are, additionally, twelve private HEIs which have been accredited by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. These are: the Accredited School of Professional Higher Education in Occupational Safety, Zagreb (three Departments)**;** the American College of Management and Technology (accredited), Dubrovnik; **t**he "Baltazar Adam Kršelić" School of Professional Higher Education for Business and Management, Zaprešić; the Business School of Professional Higher Education, Višnjan; th**e "**Ino Mirković" Accredited School of Professional Higher Education in Music, Lovran (licensed by Moscow State Conservatory "P. I. Tchaikovsky" Visoka and comprising five Departments); the School of Professional Higher Education for Entrepreneurship and Economics, Zagreb (VERN); the Technical School of Professional Higher Education in Pula - Accredited Polytechnic Course of Study; the Zagreb School of Economics & Management; the Zagreb School of Management (accredited); the "Matija Vlazić Ilirik" Faculty of Theology (accredited); the School of Professional Higher Education in Electrical Engineering (accredited); and a Master in Business Administration (MBA) programme in Zagreb.

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[4] With effect from the 2004-5 academic year.

Under the Higher Education Institutions Act of 1996 (subsequently amended in the year 2000) undergraduate programmes have been intended to be taken in at least four years and lead to a Diploma, with Master's degree programmes lasting for a minimum of a further two years, and doctoral programmes lasting for a minimum of a further three years. "Professional programmes" have been defined as undergraduate programmes of professional study lasting for a minimum of two years, with a postgraduate programme lasting for at least one further year[5].

The state funding of HE in Croatia has been centralised at the level of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, with funds allocated directly to HEIs, including directly to University Faculties and Academies. Apart from the state budget, sources of funding for HE and research have been Foundations, donations, tuition fees and entrepreneurial activities.

Full-time students in public HEIs do not pay tuition fees provided they fall within the quota of student numbers which the state has agreed to fund. Full-time students who fall outside these quotas do pay fees, as do foreign nationals. "Irregular students", i.e. students who are not in a position to attend on a full-time basis, also pay fees.

All students in private HEIs pay tuition fees, although such HEIs may also have other sources of income such as donors and entrepreneurial activities.

Each HEI annually advertises, subject to the approval of MSES, a competition for the enrolment of students. The selection of applicants is then made through an entrance examination, with the applicants gaining the highest marks in the entrance examination gaining the right to admission.

Private HEIs also admit students on the basis of competitive examination.

A National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established by Act of Parliament in 1993, as a body advising both MSES and the Croatian HEIs. The nineteen members have been nominated by the Rectors Conference and appointed for four year terms by Parliament. The NCHE has been required to report annually to Parliament, and has been funded through MoST on a specific budget line determined by the Parliament.

From the year 2000 the NCHE has been evaluating HEIs and their programmes of study, and advising the Minister for Science, Education and Sports on their accreditation. By the end of 2003 the NCHE had completed about 45% of its schedule of evaluations. Accreditation was withheld from one HEI, the Polytechnic of Split, and its programmes of study, with the students, were assigned by a Ministerial decision to the University of Split from October 2003. The evaluation procedure has begun from an institutional self-

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[5] The situation has changed since the writing of these Terms of Reference. On the basis of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (Official Gazette 123/03 and 105/04), currently more than 800 study programmes at the Bachelor and Master levels, designed or restructured in accordance with the Bologna cycles and the introduction of ECTS, are undergoing a process of evaluation and accreditation by the National Council for Higher Education, assisted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education. These programmes will be implemented from Autumn 2005. The Terms of Reference were revised in July 2005.

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evaluation, followed by a visit made by external evaluators appointed by the Minister on the nomination of the NCHE.

Higher Education in Croatia is still grounded in the Humboltian tradition, which has for long been the model for universities in Central and South East Europe. In this tradition university professors are very powerful, virtually autonomous, while Faculties are the primary institutional units, reinforced by being separate legal entities. A university is little more than an association of Faculties. Faculty Deans are elected for a limited period, but they are in a stronger position than University Rectors, who frequently need the support the Deans to maintain their own, elected, short-term positions. Lectures are the dominant means of instruction, with oral examinations as the dominant assessment method. A high status is given to theoretical studies and pure research, with lesser regard given to the application of theory.

Under Communism this tradition was retained but the Higher Education systems came under stronger state control, such control matching the tradition by being focussed on the Faculties rather than mediated through university structures (Rector's Office and Senate). This state control was reinforced through the direct state funding of Faculties and state determination of Faculty staffing. Only the state could establish or close a university Faculty, merge Faculties or reallocate resources between Faculties.

The graduates emerging from such a tradition have been of high quality, but the quality of the education being delivered to students can be questioned through reference to the high rate of student wastage. It appears that in Croatia only about 30% of those who enter Higher Education complete their education and obtain a degree (Diploma), while those that do take an average of more than seven years to complete a programme designed to be taken in four. (These figures are not exceptional for the region).

This situation represents a waste of the talents of the average university student. It also means that while the average expenditure by the state per student is low the cost per graduate is high.

Despite the efforts of able and dedicated but lone individuals, there is considerable scope for improvement in a large number of aspects of HE in Croatia.

- An underlying problem is the limited extent to which professors see themselves as accountable. Weakening the autonomy of Faculties (see Section 1.2, below) will not necessarily remove the tradition of autonomy without accountability which professors have continued to enjoy. HE needs to become more student centred rather than professor centred, and there needs to be a greater acknowledgement of an ability to stimulate student learning as an aspect of professorial status. Systems of staff appraisal, while they exist, need to be improved and extended.

- Teaching and learning methodologies could be much better, while learning support services (e.g. libraries) could be integrated more into the planning of student learning opportunities.

- More attention needs to be given to good curriculum design, including the updating of curricula, and there needs to be more integration of the application of theory and,

where appropriate, work experience, into the curriculum. The relationship between curriculum design and resource planning on the one hand and employment opportunities on the other could be improved. Potential employers need to be seen more as legitimate stakeholders in HE. The extent to which graduates find appropriate employment needs to be monitored.

- The relationship between the curriculum and research being carried out in the institution could be more developed, with a greater development of interdisciplinary studies.

- The concept of "Life long learning" has still to be realised, and curricula need to be designed specifically to meet the needs of part-time study. The status of part-time students should be improved and support given to them.

- There needs to be more objectivity and impartiality in the methods and procedures for student assessment (examination), with a greater stress on integrity and accountability.

- There should be more corporate responsibility for the quality of students' education, and the management of degree programmes could be improved.

- There could be a greater appreciation of the value of Quality Assurance systems, apart from their introduction as a matter of public policy, the latter simply being informed by a need to "conform to European norms". The importance of monitoring the progress of degree programmes, as well periodically re-evaluating them, needs to be recognised. There could also be a greater acceptance of students' feedback on the quality of their education.

- More progress still needs to be made in the recognition of student rights, including the rights of the disadvantaged to Higher Education, and procedures for considering student complaints which guarantee impartiality need to be introduced.

- The role of the academic administrator as a support to the academic process needs greater development.

- HEIs need to develop strategic planning and resource management as aspects of Quality Management.

- The development and use of Management Information Systems is still at a formative stage.

Each HEI has a system of student representation, but, as is recognised by student representatives themselves, the system is weakened by there not being any recognised quorum for student elections.

The research system in Croatia includes, twenty-six "Public Research Institutes" registered as legal entities for Scientific Research, eleven "Commercial Research Units" (state and private) similarly registered as Scientific Research Legal Entities, at least three other types

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of institution registered in the same terms and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (comprising nine Departments and twenty associated research units, mainly Institutes).

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## 1.4    Current state of affairs in the relevant sector

Croatia joined the Bologna process by becoming a signatory of the Bologna Declaration at the European Education Ministers' Conference in Prague in May 2001[6].  It also signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the Croatia and the European Union in 2001 (October)[7].

A primary specific objective of the Bologna process has been the mutual development and recognition of a common currency in Higher Education qualifications, facilitating ease of movement of students, academics and graduates within Europe.

The Bologna Declaration encourages the use of a credit transfer system such as ECTS[8] and the introduction of the Diploma Supplement[9].

In October 2002[10] the Croatian Government ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region" (i.e. the "Lisbon Convention").  The Convention operates to "improve current recognition practice and to make it more transparent and better adapted to the current situation of higher education in the European region.  …. Each Party [to the Convention] shall ensure that the procedures and criteria used in the assessment and recognition of qualifications are transparent, coherent and reliable....."

The countries concerned undertake that "In order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education, [they will] undertake to establish transparent systems for the complete description of the qualifications obtained."  This includes promoting the use of the Diploma Supplement, as already encouraged by the Bologna Declaration.

Each country must also establish a National Information Centre (an ENIC/NARIC office) to provide "relevant, accurate and up-to-date information" both on Higher Education in the country and for students wishing to spend periods of study abroad, and guarantee that this ENIC/NARIC office "shall have at its disposal the necessary means to enable it to fulfil its functions".  Such an ENIC/NARIC office would then form part of the European network of

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[6] The Bologna Declaration had initially been signed by twenty-nine European countries in June 1999, pledging themselves to "engage in the endeavour to create a European area of higher education, where national identities and common interests can interact and strengthen each other for the benefit of Europe, of its students, and more generally of its citizens."  A series of specific but common objectives have progressively been added at subsequent meetings of the European Ministers (most recently in Berlin in September 2003), hence the now usual reference to the "Bologna process" rather than to the original Declaration.

[7] Since the writing of these ToR, Croatia has been granted the status of EU Candidate Country (June 2004).

[8] I.e. the European Credit Transfer System. This was initially developed to promote student mobility by providing a means whereby part of one degree programme could be compared with part of another degree programme.  The intention was that studies undertaken at one university could more easily be matched with studies undertaken at another, so that a mobile student could be exempted from having to retake comparable studies.

[9] The introduction of a document to accompany a diploma in Western Europe followed the development of modular degree programmes which were more open in structure, and optimised students' choice of module.  A degree diploma which provided only the name of the overall programme structure within choices had been made ceased to be informative, and different forms of "student profile" or "diploma supplement" came to be used in order to provide the missing information.  In 1996 the EU's Council of Ministers invited the European Commission to develop a common European Diploma Supplement model, and a joint EC, Council of Europe and UNESCO working party was established for the purpose.  The resulting format is what is now known as "the Diploma Supplement".

[10] The Convention was originally signed by twenty-six European countries in March 1997.

such offices.  An ENIC/NARIC office has yet to be established for Croatia.[11]

A new Scientific Activity and Higher Education Law was enacted in August 2003[12].  This is intended to support both the specialist education offered in Polytechnics, independent Schools of Professional HE and Universities on one hand, and the academic education which is conducted solely in the Universities on the other. The Law treats private and public higher education institutions equally.

Under the new Law, university education will be organised according to the ECTS system of transferable points.  It will have three levels, which are intended to be consistent with the cycles outlined in the Bologna Declaration.

1. Undergraduate courses, intended to be taken in three to four years are ascribed 180 to 240 ECTS points. On successful completion, students are awarded the academic title baccalaureate, with their profession also indicated, unless the law specifies otherwise.
2. Graduate programmes, typically designed to be taken in one or two years, indicated by 60 to 120 ECTS points, leading to a Master's degree.
3. Postgraduate programmes, only to be taken after completion of a graduate programme, typically lasting three years, bestowing the academic title doctor of science (dr.sc.) or doctor of arts (dr.art) is upon completion.

Universities will also be able to offer postgraduate specialist programmes lasting one to two years, by which a student can acquire the title of a specialist (spec.) in a particular field.

Professional degree courses will last for two to three years and carry 120 to 180 ECTS points. On completion of a professional degree programme, students are to be awarded a "professional baccalaureate", with an indication of the profession. Polytechnics and schools of professional higher education can also offer a specialist professional graduate degree programme for students who have completed either a professional degree course or an undergraduate university course. As in the universities, a specialist professional graduate degree programme will last for one to two years, after which the title of specialist of a certain profession (spec.) will be awarded.

The process of establishing this structure of undergraduate and graduate studies is intended to begin from the 2005/2006 academic year at the latest, which is also when the ECTS system will become compulsory.

Postgraduate courses are to be established and their implementation initiated in accordance with the provisions of the new Law, starting with the 2004/2005 academic year at the latest.

The new Law encourages much greater transparency, including the use of Diploma

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[11] The establishment of a Croatian ENIC/NARIC office is supported by the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation"

[12] The Act on the Amendments of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education was adopted in 2004 (Official Gazette 105/04). Apart from prolonging some implementation deadlines, this Act has introduced some amendments which facilitate the implementation of the reforms foreseen by the Act.

Supplements and the publication of curricula and syllabuses on the internet.

One intention behind the new Law is to strengthen the university position as against that of Faculties, and it is hoped to secure full legal integration of the universities by 2007. The 2003 Law provides for public Universities, Polytechnics and independent Schools of Professional Higher Education to be funded from the state budget through one lump sum of money granted to what will become the primary academic unit (i.e. the university, or comparable institution, itself). The latter will then distribute the budget to its composite units such as Faculties, taking into account their capacities, relative costs of academic work in different subjects and an evaluation of their quality.

Apart from the state budget, funding for public HEIs are also to be obtained from the budget of the counties, towns and districts, the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia, the institution's own funds generated from tuition fees, research, art and expert projects, surveys, consultancy, publishing and other activities, university and other foundations, direct investments, companies and other legal persons, and from donations.

Private HEIs will be able to obtain finance from the state budget in accordance with rules to be set by the National Council for Higher Education.

The financing of HE in accordance with the provisions of the new Law was to begin from the beginning of January 2004, but was deferred to 1 January 2006.

Under the new Law, enrolment in a course of study will continue to be based on a public competition announced by the HEI, but the selection criteria are to be established by the institution itself.

Croatia's response to an EU questionnaire in the autumn of 2003 included the following: "The enrolment process in higher-education institutions has met with increasing public criticism. As a result, intensive preparation is underway for a state school-leaving exam (*matura*) to be introduced by 2005". This projected development had not been referred to in the August 2003 Scientific Activity and Higher Education Law.

One innovation in the 2003 Law is that "Scientific research institutes shall co-operate with higher education institutions in scientific work and implementation of programmes according to the scientific programme of the institute, as well as the scientific programmes and curricula of higher education institutions…..Higher education institutions and institutes shall agree on establishing scientific research infrastructure of interest for the overall system of scientific research activity and higher education" (Article 27).

Under the new Law the composition of the NCHE is revised and it is given terms of reference which include proposing a coherent strategic plan for public HEIs in Croatia (i.e. "creating a plan for creating a network of public higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia"). It is also given tasks to undertake jointly with the National Science Council, including proposing to the Government "how to distribute financial resources allocated for scientific activity and higher education in the budget of the Republic of Croatia". This is to be undertaken through a joint body to be known as "The Board for Financing Scientific Activity and Higher Education".

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The NCHE is to retain a role in assessing higher education institutions and programmes, proposing accreditation decisions which are to be made by the Minister. However, a new Agency for Science and Higher Education is to be established to "carry out professional tasks related to the assessment procedure for: scientific research organisations, or higher education institutions, respectively; scientific research projects and collaborative scientific research programmes …. ; programmes at higher education institutions; quality assurance systems which are being established at higher education institutions, or for the accreditation of programmes, respectively; [and] the collection and processing of data related to the system of scientific activity and higher education at the national level".

In order to support its purposes, the Agency is to "engage (national and international) external associates – experts in specific fields of scientific activity or higher education"[13].

The Agency is to establish a "national network for quality assurance in higher education, integrated into the European Network of Quality Assurance[14]".

Based on regulations passed by the Minister after having been proposed by the NCHE, the Agency is also to support the ENIC/NARIC office and a "national network of offices for recognition of diplomas and qualifications obtained in foreign higher education systems, integrated into the European Network of Information Centres".

The Agency for Science and Higher Education was established in July 2004 by a decree of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Agency will report to the National Science Council and to the NCHE (as appropriate) on the results of its activities, and the Councils will then make the substantive decisions.

The organisational structure of the Agency has been determined by a "foundation charter".

One of the early decisions of the Government which was elected to office towards the end of 2003 was to merge MoST with the Ministry of Education and Sports to form the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

In the period 1999 to 2003 the number of students studying HE in Croatia increased by 45%, while the number of teaching staff increased in the same period by only 3%.[15]

In the totality of Croatian HEIs there are, annually, about 120.000 matriculations, more than a million examinations, and more than 400,000 standard documents of various kinds issued. Managing all the necessary documentation and implementing all of the related procedures, as well as maintaining the reliability of the information and preparing reports for various purposes, places a heavy burden on administrative staff.

Fewer than 50% of HEIs [16] manage their data and the resulting documentation

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[13] It is not altogether clear how this relates to the NCHE's terms of reference, which include to "appoint evaluators".

[14] ENQA, which has its organising centre in Helsinki, Finland.

[15] "Due to financial difficulties, or to be more precise, due to years-long administrative freeze on hiring new staff, the average age of teachers has risen significantly." From Croatia's National Report for the meeting of European HE Ministers in Berlin, 2003.

[16] Counting university faculties and academies as institutions separate from the universities themselves.

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electronically. Moreover, different information systems which are used by individual HEIs are mutually incompatible, do not offer suitable information, and do not enable standard reporting for the needs of a university and the HE system as a whole. Information about HE in Croatia is often inaccessible or unreliable.

For these reasons a HE information system called "ISVU" (*Informacijski Sustav Visokih Učilišta*) has been in process of development since 2001, with the support of MoST. The intention has been that data in all HEIs would be managed electronically, and it was hoped that the development of the system would have been completed before the end of 2003 so that it could then be implemented in at least the majority of university institutions. At the start of 2004, ISVU had been developed to a point where it supported standard activities for undergraduate students and enabled an HEI to manage a data base concerning students, teaching input, educational programmes, matriculations and examinations. In this form it had been fully implemented in seven HEIs, although still in a pilot stage.

The ISVU computer communicational infrastructure consists of a central node, further local nodes, the CARNet network, and the local networks of individual HEIs. The central node is located at the University of Zagreb's computer centre (SRCE) and contains a central server for a database, a central server for authorisation, and a WEB server. The central server for a database contains all common data, i.e. catalogues, basic information about students, and a connection with the information system on the state aid to students' nutrition/alimentation which exists on the national level (ISSP). Local nodes consist of a server for a database, a server for data warehouse, an application server, a server for authorisation, and a WEB server. All user data is in a local database, while these are synchronised through the base in the central node. All nodes contain the INFORMIX 9 database which is running on Sun computers on a Solaris (UNIX) platform. The data warehouse is realised in MS SQL 2000, the tool used for browsing through the data warehouse is Business Object. The application server and client's applications were developed by using the Java programming tool

The CARNet network connects central and local nodes, as well as local networks of HEIs. It is a private Wide Area Network (WAN) covering greater distances and covers the Croatian academic, scientific and research community; it was founded by MoST. Within Croatia, the CARNet network connects all the major Croatian cities, at several levels of different technologies and access speeds. The CARNet backbone connects all the major university centres (Dubrovnik, Osijek, Pula, Rijeka, Split, Zadar and Zagreb) by high-speed links (155 Mbps), whereas it links other minor centres through standard modem connections via leased lines (usually using speeds of 2 Mbps). The infrastructure in Zagreb itself is especially advanced, enabling connection between major faculties and scientific institutions with speeds of up to 622 Mbps.

At the start of 2004 all of the three local nodes were located at the computer centre in the University of Zagreb (SRCE). SRCE is a professional IT centre, a centre for support and education in IT application and the central backbone of the information infrastructure serving the country's Science and Higher Education community. Serving the needs of the University of Zagreb on a permanent basis, the main activity lies in providing computing and information technology support to scientific, HE and other institutions. SRCE also serves the country's other university centres, as well as scientific and other institutions throughout Croatia and abroad.

It is feasible for ISVU, which is flexible even though very complex, to be distributed and established in the university computer centres being planned for Rijeka, Dubrovnik, Split, Osijek and possibly Zadar.

## 1.5 Related programmes and other donor activities

In 1994 and 1995 representatives of the Council of Europe visited Croatia to advise on HE law.

A Tempus JIP project "Development of Quality Assurance in HE" began in February 2001, and was coordinated by the University of Zagreb. Other partners in Croatia were the University of Rijeka, the University of Osijek, the University of Split and the NCHE. There were also seven foreign partners. The objectives included designing types of quality standards and criteria, drafting model standards based on European Quality Criteria and Quality Assurance systems, developing a Quality Culture and promoting Quality Management. Work was also done on a sustainable enrolment policy. The project was scheduled to end in May 2004 with the production of a "Handbook for an intended Quality Assurance System and Quality Management in Croatia".

In March 2001 UNESCO - CEPES[17] launched a programme "Regional University Network on Governance and Management of Higher Education" in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM and FRY. The University of Split was selected to be a pilot institution for the implementation phase.

The British Council and MoST co-financed and organised a workshop on Quality Assurance in April 2001.

The CARDS 2001 Regional programme contained a project: "Regional university network" for a total value of €0.5 million. The specific objectives of this project have been to: (a) integrate the universities and HE authorities of SEE into existing European networks and (b) develop HE policies that are based on European standards and international best practice in the areas of strategy management, financial management, relations with civil society and Quality Assurance.

In October 2002 the British Council and MoST co-financed and organised a workshop on managing HEIs during HE reform.

The CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation", scheduled to last for eighteen months from September 2004, includes components which support (a) the design and implementation of management information systems, (b) the development and implementation of systems of Quality Assurance in HEIs and (c) the institutional development of a Croatian ENIC/NARIC office[18].

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[17] UNESCO's European Centre of Higher Education, based in Bucharest, Romania.

[18] At the time of the revision of these Terms of Reference (July 2005) it is still difficult to predict whether the CARDS 2002 will be able to implement at a satisfactory level the cluster related to the development of the HE Management Information System.

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## 2.    CONTRACT OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED RESULTS

### 2.1    Overall objective

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be a part is to promote the reform of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia in line with best practice in the EU Member States.

### 2.2    Specific objectives

The objectives of this contract are as follows:

1. Support to the development of Quality Assurance processes, procedures, systems and structures in Croatian Higher Education which will stimulate and establish the quality of the Higher Education being provided for students.
2. Support to the development and implementation of an Information System, so that it can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes.

### 2.3    Results to be achieved by the Consultant

1.1.    The staff of the Agency for Science and Higher Education who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, will have been enabled to perform their duties in a way comparable to best practice in the rest of Europe, and a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established.

1.2.    The NCHE will have refined its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation so that they are fully in line with best practice elsewhere in Europe, and have the capacity to keep these under review. Those who will have been appointed as evaluators by the Agency/NCHE will have been led to set sustainable precedents of good practice in the evaluation of HE programmes and institutions.

1.3.    Quality Promotion Units in the HEIs will have become well established and recognised as authorities on Quality Assurance in their own institutions, including in the provision of support for monitoring and internal evaluation. They will be the main actors in the Quality Assurance Network and an efficient working model of partnership between them and the Agency/NCHE will be established. The HEIs will have made significant progress in Quality Management (including academic and strategic planning).

2.1.    Information system for quality assurance based on agreed indicators will have been developed and implemented so that it can be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level.

### 3.    ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

### 3.1    Assumptions underlying the project intervention

- The Government of the Republic of Croatia remains committed to the reform of Croatian HE.
- The new Ministry of Science, Education and Sport will actively support the development of HE in Croatia without seeking to control it.
- The NCHE is dynamic in its promotion of HE reform.
- In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA.
- The Tempus Quality Assurance project will have provided a useful foundation on which the CARDS project can build.
- The funding of HEIs follows the August 2003 Law on Scientific Activity and Higher Education**.**
- There is a relaxation of state control over staffing establishments in HEIs.
- The HEIs can establish and resource Quality Promotion Units.
- There is the necessary synergy between the implementation of the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" and the implementation CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role and the development of a supporting Information System" project.
- The chosen Information System enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation.
- There is sufficient funding, beyond that resulting from the project, for the chosen Information System to be developed and implemented.
- The members of the projects target groups are encouraged to be available for project activities.
- HEIs are committed to teaching and the quality of student learning.
- HEIs committed to good practice in the assessment and certification of students.
- Appropriate evaluators appointed by the Agency / NCHE.
- Agency will in all respects be independent from the Ministry, Government, Parliament or any other political influence
- QA units located in HEIs are integral to these institutions and do not have, even collectively, the potential to be considered a national QA body, or part of one.

### 3.2    Risks

- The universities fail to move to become integrated institutions.
- Redundant staff from the merged Ministries might be placed on the Agency staff, without proper consideration being given to their suitability.
- There are pressures which could result in the Agency becoming a bureaucratic body simply affirming the acceptability of the *status quo*.

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## 4.    SCOPE OF THE WORK

### 4.1    General

*4.1.1    Project description*

This project is to support the development of the HE system in Croatia so that it can rapidly come to share the values and principles which have been developing in HE Western Europe, in particular supporting the development of processes, procedures, systems and structures which stimulate and establish the quality of the HE being provided for students.

In addition, the project will support to the development and implementation of information systems which, *inter alia*, will provide inputs for the Quality Assurance and for Quality Management.

The primary focus of project activity will be support to the development of a national system of Quality Assurance through the new Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Council for Higher Education.  This will be complemented by the establishment of a National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the support to the development of QA in the HEIs, including support for the Quality Promotion Units which are being established.

The primary intention of the support to the development and implementation of a national Information System for HE is so that it can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for QA and Quality Management purposes.

During the six week Inception Phase, the Consultant will establish the project offices and staffing and, having reassessed the needs and project circumstances, confirm an action plan, gaining approval for changes before submitting an Inception Report.

In order to enhance the awareness of the project within the beneficiary institutions and the wider community, the Consultant will organize at least one project presentation for stakeholders at the end of the Inception Phase.

The project will support the new Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role, by mentoring the Agency staff in the course of their work and conducting regular in-house seminars. Agency staff will also participate in training workshops and seminars.  The Consultant will also arrange for Agency staff (and other evaluators) to observe evaluations conducted by a Quality Agency in an EU state, and report back on his or her observations, critical as well as positive, for debate with their colleagues.

The Consultant will enhance the work of the National Council for Higher Education by training Agency staff in the professional skills of committee servicing necessary for its administrative support, and by providing direct advice to it on its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation. The latter advice will also relate to the feedback from those participating in evaluations (both evaluators and HEIs) through evaluation instruments designed and produced by the Consultant.

The Consultant will attend evaluations to provide advice and guidance on good practice. Where necessary, and after consultation with the Agency/NCHE, the Consultant will employ short term international experts with appropriate expertise and experience to participate in evaluations.

The project will support the establishment of a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The HEI staff associated with the Quality Promotion Units being established in the HEIs will, therefore, be key target participants in appropriate training workshops organised by the Consultant, and the Consultant will, as often as possible, meet with these staff and be prepared to attend and participate in any relevant workshops or seminars organised by the HEIs themselves.

The Consultant's support for the development and implementation of Information System for quality assurance based on agreed indicators, particularly to be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level, will be effected through the provision of expert guidance to the team/s developing such system/s, and the provision of advice on their implementation and use to HEIs, and, on their use, to the Agency/NCHE.

The Consultant will initiate, organise and fund training workshops, study visits and seminars in curriculum design and programme evaluation, methods of student assessment and certification and their evaluation, programme management and monitoring, institutional development and institutional evaluation, and the generation and use of student feedback.

The Consultant will similarly organise workshops on the implementation of the Information System/s.

The Consultant will appoint local and international experts to contribute to seminars and workshops. The local experts will have a role in following up the lessons of these events with HEIs.

All seminars and workshops will be evaluated by the participants through an analysable instrument devised by the Consultant and approved by the NCHE. These evaluations will be used in monitoring and reporting the progress of the project.

At the conclusion of the project the Consultant will organise a conference in order to present the final project results and underline the impact of the CARDS programme to the involved institutions and a broader public.

In addition to the "visibility" activities during the Inception and Final Phases, the Contractor will determine, together with the beneficiary and in consultation with the EC Delegation in Croatia, the specific activities to be carried out in order to promote this project, including a project web page and a brochure (in both Croatian and English) reporting the most successful activities financed under the project.

*4.1.2   Geographical area to be covered*

The contract covers all of the territory of the Republic of Croatia in which HEIs operate. It

can be assumed that the majority of the project activities will be in Zagreb, but visits to locations throughout Croatia will be necessary.

### 4.1.3 Target groups

All stakeholders who are affected by the Higher Education process in Croatia but in particular:

a)  The National Council for Higher Education.
b)  The staff of the Agency for science and Higher Education, at all levels, who are involved in Quality Assurance and support for the NCHE.
c)  Members of Quality Promotion Units and other HEI staff identified as having a crucial Quality Assurance role in their institutions.
d)  HEI staff who are involved in the development and/or implementation of Information Systems.

The principal project partner is the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

## 4.2    Specific activities

4.2.1 Inception Phase:

During the first six weeks of the project the Consultant shall carry out the following activities:

1. Establishment of the project headquarters at the offices designated by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.
2. Recruitment of Local support staff.
3. Mobilisation of the project team.
4. Meetings with the relevant institutions to ensure their awareness of the project and to confirm their support for and participation in the project.
5. Action planning. During the inception phase the Consultant will be expected to confirm and detail the action plan from the technical proposal (including a timetable for each of the components of the project identified in the activities below, a schedule for the achievement of results, an input schedule and, if necessary, a revised Logical Framework) and review it with the project partner as well as obtaining formal agreement from the Contracting Authority.  It is essential that the Project Partner and any other related institutions are directly involved in project planning during the Inception Phase and retain a sense of ownership of the project.
6. In order to enhance the awareness of the project within the beneficiary institutions and the wider community, the Consultant will organize at least one project presentation to the stakeholders (minimum 30 people) on which the project will impact.  The presentation should include reference to the role of EC assistance in promoting institution building in Croatia.

4.2.2. <u>Detailed activities</u>

The project activities will be organised around the following three interrelated components to be pursued concurrently. Through these activities the Contractor is expected to ensure the achievement of the results listed under 2.3 above. Based on the assessment undertaken in the Inception Phase, the Contractor may propose alternative and/or complementary project activities, which will have to be formally approved by the Contracting Authority.

The contractor is asked to carry out the following activities:

**Component 1: support to the new Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National Council for Higher Education.**

1.1.1   Extensive training for the staff of the Agency who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, including conducting regular in-house seminars on the planning, organisation and reporting of evaluations and follow-up action (see Table 1)

1.1.2   Training in committee servicing for Agency staff who work in support of the NCHE  (see Table 1).

1.1.3   Mentoring of the Agency staff in the course of their work (including evaluations).

1.1.4    Arranging for Agency staff to observe evaluations conducted by Quality Agencies in EU Member States (at least one programme evaluation and two institutional evaluations, involving a total of at least three members of the Agency staff for a minimum of 5 days each).

1.1.5   Arranging for the members of the Agency staff involved in 1.1.4. to disseminate reports of their observations, critical as well as positive, for discussion with their colleagues.

1.2.1.  Training evaluators appointed by the NCHE/Agency in their evaluation role (see Table 1).

1.2.2   In agreement with the Agency/NCHE, attending evaluations to provide advice and guidance on good practice.

1.2.3   Advising the National Council for Higher Education on its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation.

1.2.4   Reporting to the NCHE on the feedback from those participating in evaluations (both evaluators and HEIs) and from the workshops and seminars organised by the Consultant.

1.2.5   Designing and producing evaluation and feedback instruments for the purposes of 1.2.4.

In consultation with the NCHE/Agency, and as the occasion requires, the Contractor will employ short term international experts with appropriate expertise and experience who will participate in evaluations.

**Component 2: support to the establishment of the National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the development of Quality Assurance in the Institutions of Higher Education**

1.3.1 The provision of advice and assistance in support of the establishment of a National Network for QA in HE and the Quality Promotion Units being established in Croatian HEIs.

1.3.2 Mentoring of HEI staff with a designated role in Quality Assurance, including staff associated with Quality Promotion Units.

1.3.3 Guidance to HEIs on curriculum development, including ECTS (see Table 1 below).

1.3.4 Guidance to HEIs on monitoring the progress of degree programmes (see Table 1).

1.3.5 Guidance to HEIs on the periodic evaluation of degree programmes (see Table 1).

1.3.6 Guidance to HEIs on institutional self-evaluation (see Table 1).

1.3.7 Guidance to HEIs on strategic planning (see Table 1).

1.3.8 Guidance to HEIs on preparing for external evaluations (see Table 1).

1.3.9 Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students

1.3.10 Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff

**Component 3: support to the development of a Management Information System for Higher Education**

2.1.1 Expert guidance  on development of Information System for Quality Assurance

2.1.2 Expert guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System. for Quality Assurance

2.1.3 Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance

2.1.4 Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system for Quality Assurance

The three project components will be underpinned by at least ten residential workshops or seminars.  These will include workshops for evaluators and others on curriculum design and evaluation, student assessment and evaluation, as well as seminars or workshops in the use of student feedback, institutional development and evaluation and the implementation and use of the Information System.

*Table 1*

| Minimum number | Content | Participants to include | Relevant components |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-house seminars (at least 18), of the duration of one or two days, for officers and staff of the Agency (activity 1.1.1). | Planning, organisation and reporting of evaluations and follow-up action. | Officers and staff of the Agency involved in its quality assurance role (around 8-10 participants)., | Component 1. |
| Two @ 3day workshops; at least one each for (i) laboratory-based subjects, (ii) library-based subjects, (iii) studio-based subjects and (iv) curricula which include supervised work experience and curricula designed to be followed by part-time study. (Activities 1.3.3 & 1.3.8) | Curriculum design and programme evaluation, including matters such as target students and their admission, aims and objectives, competencies and their assessment by different methods, curriculum structures, ECTS credits, teaching and learning methodologies, progression and coherence. They will take account of the need for curriculum design to take place within resource constraints. | Evaluators in relevant subjects appointed by the Agency/NCHE, Agency staff, HEI staff associated with Quality Promotion Units and relevant staff in HEIs (around 30 participants) | Component 2 reinforced by (i) visits by experts to HEIs, (ii) the development of NCHE policies and guidelines, and (iii) guidance to evaluation teams in the field |
| One @ 3 day seminar (activity 1.1.2, 1.3.6.) | Methods of institutional self-evaluation, student assessment and certification | Agency staff, HEI staff associated with Quality Promotion Units and other appropriate HEI staff, as well as evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE (around 30 participants) | Components 1 and 2 reinforced by (i) visits by experts to HEIs, (ii) the development of NCHE policies and guidelines, and (iii) guidance to evaluation teams in the field |
| One @ 3 day seminar (activity 1.2.1., 1.2.5.) | Designing and producing evaluation and feedback instruments | Agency staff, HEI staff associated with Quality Promotion Units and other appropriate HEI staff, as well as evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE and students (around 30 participants) | Component 1 reinforced by (i) visits by experts to HEIs, (ii) the development of NCHE policies and guidelines, and (iii) guidance to evaluation teams in the field |
| One @ 3 day seminar (activity 1.3.4, 1.3.5) | Programme management, monitoring the progress of degree programmes and their periodic evaluation | Agency staff and appropriate HEI staff, as well as evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE (around 30 participants) | Components 2 reinforced by visits by experts to HEIs, |
| One @ 3 day seminar (activity 1.3.6 & 1.3.7) | Strategic planning, institutional development and institutional self-evaluation | Heads of HEIs and appropriate HEI staff, Agency staff, and evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE (around 40 participants) | Components 2 reinforced by (i) visits by experts to HEIs, (ii) the development of NCHE policies and guidelines, and (iii) guidance to evaluation teams in the field. |
| Two @ 3 day workshops (activities 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 & 2.1.4) | Development, upgrading and implementation and use of the Information System/s (or inter-related systems) | Those responsible for the system's development, HEI staff responsible for implementation, as well as Ministry and Agency staff (around 30 participants) | Component 3 reinforced by visits by experts to HEIs. |

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The above seminars and workshops will provide inputs for the development of Notes of Guidance, to be recommended to the NCHE. Participation in all seminars and workshops will be open to the members of the NCHE.

All seminars and workshops will be evaluated by the participants through an analysable instrument devised by the Consultant and approved by the NCHE. Members of the target groups participating in project activities should be asked to complete questionnaires indicating, through a system of quantifiably analysable scoring, their satisfaction with the activity and its impact on their own development.

The Consultant will conduct the project in a way which recognises that the Croatian universities are moving to become integrated institutions within which Faculties and Academies will cease to retain the status of legally separate HEIs. It is also important that all Croatian HEIs, and not just the universities, are included in project activities, and that care is taken to ensure that the significant concentration of HE in Zagreb does not mean that HEIs outside Zagreb are excluded from a fair representation in project events, or that visits to HEIs outside Zagreb by the project team are neglected.[19]

The Consultant will ensure collaboration with related concurrent projects, especially the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation".

### 4.2.3. Reporting instructions

Inception report:

An Inception Report must be submitted within six weeks after the start of project. The Inception Report will:

- Define clearly the objectives of the technical assistance,
- Detail any changes agreed with the main Project Partner that were not specified in the ToR,
- Set out a detailed work plan and time schedule for the project duration,
- Contain an overall plan of action for the whole project duration,
- Provide a detailed description of the content of the individual components of the project.

The Consultant shall submit the Inception Report to the addressees listed under point 7.2. The Consultant will be expected to have obtained the support of the relevant beneficiary institutions for the Inception Report prior to its submission to the Contracting Authority.

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[19] HE in Croatia tends to be dominated by the capital, Zagreb, and particularly by the University of Zagreb. The latter is by far the oldest, largest and most eminent university in Croatia, and in recent times, along with Belgrade, Ljubljana and possibly Sarajevo, was recognised as one of the great universities of Yugoslavia. One of the effects of the break-up of Yugoslavia has been that in some of the newly independent countries HE is dominated by a particular university. This introduces problems for the development and implementation of nation-wide policies for Quality Assurance, particularly when, despite their well-earned reputations, the complexity of these universities, their pride in their traditions and their historical eminence may mean that they are slower in their response to the need for change.

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<u>Additional reporting:</u>

<u>Monthly progress reports:</u> The Consultant should produce on a monthly basis and one week before each project meeting a short report (maximum two pages) highlighting the progress made (milestones, outputs…) during the previous month, the work plan for the following month(s), information on problems encountered and recommendations for remedial actions. The structure of the report will be agreed with the EC sector manager and the project partner.

In addition to any formal reports otherwise mentioned in these Terms of Reference, the Consultant will provide information on project progress as it is reasonably required by the principal partner or Contracting Authority, and will inform the principal partner or Contracting Authority of any political, economic or institutional developments which are of concern to the project.

The Consultant will in particular provide the principal partner with electronic and hard copies of:

- Policy documents;
- Training material prepared under this project;
- Technical reports prepared by the short-term experts;
- Any other technical reports.

### 4.2.4. <u>Final phase</u>

The Contractor will organise a final wrap-up event in order to present the final results of the project and to underline the impact of the CARDS programme to the involved institutions and a broader public. Invitees to this event should include representatives from all beneficiary institutions, relevant Ministries, employers, NGOs, and members of the international donor community. The media should be encouraged to cover the event in order to ensure publicity.

### 4.2.5. <u>Visibility</u>

In accordance with the Financing Agreement signed each year between the EC and the Croatian Government regarding the national CARDS allocations, the beneficiaries of the CARDS project have the obligation to take a certain number of measures in order to promote the project.

In addition to the visibility activities during the Inception and Final phases, the contractor will determine, together with the beneficiary and in consultation with the EC Delegation in Croatia, the specific activities to be carried out in order to promote this project, including a web page and brochure (in both Croatian and English) reporting the most successful activities financed under the project. This will include a selection of activities, with relevant photographs taken during their implementation, providing a list of all activities financed under the project, ensuring editing, design and printing and providing a distribution list for copies. The EC Delegation must be informed and consulted about all

steps taken under this heading, and must approve the following: texts, designs (including cover) structure of the brochure, lay out, printing format and number of copies.

Any visibility activities must follow the Visual Identity Guidelines for Contractors and Implementing Partners[20].

4.2.6. Other Consultant tasks and responsibilities

The Consultant will be responsible for the organisation and implementation of the activities described in these Terms of Reference. Especially, the Consultant will be responsible for:

- Project backstopping, administration and financial management.

- Provision of technical experts as defined in the Terms of Reference, the Technical Proposal and the Inception Report.

- Providing the necessary technical and administrative facilities to fulfil the requirements of the Terms of Reference and provide administrative and logistical support to the project activities, including translation services where necessary. The Consultant shall be responsible to the Contracting Authority and shall ensure that adequate staffing and administrative procedures are in place at all times to permit the efficient implementation of this project. The Consultant shall make every effort to ensure that the Work Programmes included in the periodic reports are adhered to.

- Providing administrative, financial and accounting services as required, maintaining proper management and financial control over the project implementation. The Consultant will be responsible for all costs associated with project activities related to the preparation of any training materials, training, seminars, workshops, provision of training including training facilities, provision of interpreters, local services and communication and liaison with the beneficiary and the relevant Croatian institutions.

- Preparing and submitting reports on the activities which are the subject of these Terms of Reference.

- The proper functioning of the Steering Committee.

- Co-ordination with other EU funded projects, and other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies in order to achieve synergies as well as to avoid any overlapping.

- Informing the beneficiaries of the project that the services from which they are benefiting are financed by the EU.

- Information that the project is being financed from EU resources, along with the EU logo, should be included in all published materials resulting from the contract, as well as during the training sessions, seminars or conferences organised by the

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[20] These can be found on the website <www.euvisibility.net>

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Consultant. Any visibility activities must follow the Visual Identity Guidelines for Contractors and Implementing Partners.

The Consultant will ensure co-operation and co-ordination between the constituent components of the project.

Generally, the Consultant will be required to show due diligence in all matters arising from his responsibilities, including the management of the team of experts, the timely submission of reports and all project outputs, the timely payment of all project staff and the maintenance of good working relations with beneficiaries, all relevant Croatian institutions, the EC Delegation Sector Manager and the Contracting Authority.

## 4.3 Project management

### 4.3.1 Responsible body

The European Commission on behalf of the beneficiary country or the CFCU, if accredited at the time of contract signature will be the Contracting Authority and responsible body.

### 4.3.2 Management structure

<u>Supervision of the project</u>

A Steering Committee (SC) will supervise the project. Its composition will be as follows.
- One or more members nominated by the principal project partner.
- One member nominated by each of any other Ministry or institution with an interest in the project's activities.
- One member nominated by the NCHE.
- One member nominated by the Croatian Student Union.
- One or more members nominated by the EC Delegation in Zagreb or the Contracting Authority
- The Team Leader or in his absence another international expert nominated by him/her.
- A representative from SRCE – University Computer Centre

Chairmanship and final composition shall be decided by the principal project partner.

The SC will meet for the first time upon the submission of the inception report, then every six months and upon the submission of the final report. Its main functions are:

- to assess project progress
- to assess the performance of the Consultant
- to jointly discuss any critical points or bottlenecks for further project implementation
- to propose and discuss remedial actions to be taken in order to meet any problems which are identified
- to jointly take decisions affecting timing, cost or project contents
- to comment on and/or discuss the Consultant's Inception and Interim Reports.

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Representatives from other international donor agencies may be invited to attend as observers. The first meeting will be held at the end of the Inception Period in order to consider the Inception Report.

The Consultant will ensure the proper functioning of the Steering Committee, including the holding of regular meetings, the preparation and circulation of the agenda, the writing and distribution of minutes, and follow-up to the Committee decisions. These will be kept in a file as project documentation. These tasks will be performed in coordination with the principal project partner.

Role of the Project Partner in the implementation of the project

The Project Partner will:

- Facilitate the nomination of the members of the SC and collaborate with the Consultant in the above-mentioned tasks.
- Appoint a senior member of its staff to liaise with the Consultant, and ensure that staff at an appropriate level are made available to work alongside the staff of the Consultant. The staff of the Project Partner will not be paid from project funds.
- Appoint the PIU who will provide the necessary support in implementation of the project, and facilitate the work with the Contracting Authority.
- Provide the project experts with copies of legislation, regulations, and other relevant documents necessary for the implementation of the project.
- Provide logistical support for the various training activities.

The Project Partner should also provide all possible assistance to solve unforeseen problems that the Consultant may face. The possible failure to solve some of the Consultant's problems encountered locally will not free the Consultant from meeting its contractual obligations *vis-à-vis* the Contracting Authority.

### 4.3.3 Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

The Project Partner will provide, free of charge to the Consultant, furnished office space (of at least 10 sq m per person working on a long-term basis for the project) with office equipment such as PC equipment and telephones (2 sets of each item). The Project Partner will also provide an internet link and facilitate the use and access to a fax machine and photocopier.

## 5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

### 5.1 Location

The project will be located in the Republic of Croatia. The offices will be based in the capital, Zagreb, but project activities will involve travel throughout Croatia.

### 5.2 Commencement date & Period of execution

The intended commencement date is February 2006 and the period of execution of the contract will be eighteen months from this date.  Please refer to Articles 4 and 5 of the Special Conditions for the actual commencement date and period of execution.

## 6.  REQUIREMENTS

### 6.1  Personnel

*6.1.1  Key experts*

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

**Key expert 1: with particular responsibility for support to the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role**

*Duration and location of assignment:*

- At least 80 working days over 18 months
- During the assignment, he/she will be based in Zagreb (but it is possible that he/she will make  visits to HEIs elsewhere in Croatia)

*Qualifications and skills:*

- A postgraduate degree, preferably a PhD.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

*General professional experience:*

- At least five years experience in HE Quality Management and/or Quality Assurance in an EU member state.
- Experience in advising institutions engaged in HE reform.

*Specific professional experience:*

- At least two years experience of working in a national Quality Assurance agency in an EU member state.

*Minimum scope of responsibilities:*

In his /her role as the expert acting in support to the Agency in its Quality Assurance role the key expert will be responsible for:

- Co-ordination and implementation, in cooperation with Key expert 2, of Component 1, as defined in these Terms of Reference and its integration with Components 2 and 3.
- Ensuring effective collaboration and synergies between this component and other projects, taking into account results of the programme to support development of institutional quality assurance units projects launched by the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of

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Croatia.

- Briefing the other two key experts, as necessary, on Higher Education issues, particularly with regard to Quality Assurance and Quality Management.
- The minimum percentage of time which this expert should work in Croatia is 95%.


**Key expert 2, Team Leader: with particular responsibility for the development of the National Network for QA in HE**

*Duration and location of assignment:*

- At least 198 working days over 18 months
- During the assignment, he/she will be based in Zagreb but will make a significant number of visits to HEIs elsewhere in Croatia.

*Qualifications and skills:*

- A postgraduate degree.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- Good knowledge of Croatian is a distinct advantage.

*General professional experience:*

- At least ten years work experience in the HE sector.
- Experience in advising institutions engaged in HE reform.

*Specific professional experience:*

- At least three years substantial experience of curriculum design and the exercise of Quality Assurance methodologies, preferably at an institutional level.
- Experience and local knowledge of the Croatian HE system is a distinct advantage.

*Minimum scope of responsibilities:*

In his /her role as the expert with particular responsibility for the development of Quality Assurance in the HEIs the key expert will be responsible for:

- Co-ordination and implementation of Component 1 and 2, as defined in these Terms of Reference and its integration with Components 1 and 3.
- Ensuring effective collaboration and synergies between these component and other projects,
- Briefing the other experts, as necessary, on Higher Education issues, particularly with regard to Quality Assurance and Quality Management.
- The minimum percentage of time which this expert should work in Croatia is 95%.

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**Key expert 3: with particular responsibility for Information Systems**

*Duration and location of assignment:*

- At least 66 working days over 18 months.
- During the assignment, he/she should ensure their presence in Zagreb but will make a number of visits to centres of HE elsewhere in Croatia.

*Qualification and skills:*

- University degree in a relevant discipline. A post-graduate qualification in information management or a related discipline will be an asset.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

*General professional experience:*

- At least five years experience in designing, costing and overseeing the implementation of large Management Information Systems.

*Specific professional experience:*

- Experience of professional work in the context of Education (ideally in Higher Education).

*Minimum scope of responsibilities:*

- Co-ordination and management of all the aspects relating to the achievement of Component 3 as defined in these Terms of Reference.
- Expert guidance to the team/s developing, upgrading and implementing an Information System on those aspects which can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes.
- Organisation and leadership of workshops on the implementation of the information system/s.
- Advice to HEIs on the implementation of the information system/s.
- Participation in seminars and workshops on institutional development and programme management and monitoring.
- Advice to the Agency for Science and Higher Education on the use of electronic data.
- Collaboration with other project inputs
- The minimum percentage of time which this expert should work in Croatia is 95%.

*6.1.2   Other experts*

CVs for experts other than the key experts are not examined prior to the signature of the contract. They should not have been included in tenders.

The Consultant shall select and hire other experts as required according to the profiles identified in these Terms of Reference. These profiles must indicate whether they are to be regarded as long-term/short-term, international/local and senior/junior so that it is clear which fee rate in the budget breakdown will apply to each profile. For the purposes of this contract, international experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is outside the beneficiary country while local experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is in the beneficiary country.

The Consultant should pay attention to the need to ensure the active participation of local professional skills where available, and a suitable mix of international and local staff in the project teams. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities accorded to them.

The selection procedures used by the Consultant to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel shall be recorded. The selection of experts shall be subject to approval by the Contracting Authority.

*The Consultant will have to include in its organisation and methodology the contribution of a number of non-keys experts that will carry out the following activities:*

- *design and maintenance of a web page, in order to enhance the visibility of the CARDS project and the transparency of all the activities that will be carried out;*
- *design and preparation of a project's brochure;*
- *specific lecturing at several trainings for different target groups;*
- *revision of the documentation related to the evaluation of HE programmes and institutions.*

*The local experts selected (except those charged with the task of designing the web page/brochure) should have a strong background in Higher Education reform, particularly in terms of Quality Assurance, or have had a substantial involvement in the theory, development and/or implementation of Information Systems. These experts will be highly professional and with experience of the Croatian Higher Education system. Ideally they will have knowledge and some experience of Higher Education in a member state of the European Union. A balance of academic disciplines in the team of local experts would be useful.*

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the beneficiary country cannot be recruited as experts.

*6.1.3 Support staff & backstopping*

The tenderer is expected to provide a sound backstopping system of services to be provided and to put down in the technical offer the mechanisms of backstopping.

A Project Director from the Consultant's headquarters shall be appointed for the whole duration of the project. He/she shall have the overall responsibility for the smooth and timely implementation of the Project and the efficient use of project funds. The Project

Director must be an efficient senior manager with experience from similar assignments.

He/she will have the following responsibilities:

- Co-ordinate the overall project activities from the Consultant's headquarters;
- Ensure proper reporting to the Contracting Authority according to EC reporting guidelines and requirements;
- Ensure co-ordination between the project office, the Consultant's headquarters, the Contracting Authority, the European Commission and the Project Partner;
- Ensure proper administrative control of the project's expenses, preparation of invoices with supporting documentation, and the timely delivery of reports.

*Backstopping costs are considered to be included in the fee rates.*

The Consultant should hire a local long-term office manager / secretarial support as well as translation support as required, allowing professional staff to concentrate on their core tasks. The local long-term office manager will be in charge of the day-to-day management of the office and will, in particular, assist the Team Leader in liaison with project beneficiaries. Preferably he/she should have previous experience of office management in the context of other international, preferably EC supported projects.

*The costs of support staff must be included in the fee rates of the experts.*

## 6.2 Office accommodation

Office accommodation will be provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. This will be of a reasonable standard, with approximately 10 square metres space for each expert.

## 6.3 Facilities to be provided by the Consultant

The Consultant shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support the activities carried out under the contract and ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

If the Consultant is a consortium, the arrangements should allow for the maximum flexibility in project implementation. Arrangements offering each consortium partner a fixed percentage of the work to be undertaken under the contract should be avoided.

## 6.4 Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority/beneficiary country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contacting authority/beneficiary agency at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract, which is to be acquired

by the beneficiary country, must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

Under such a separate supply tender procedure, equipment in support of the Information System will be purchased.

## 6.5    Incidental expenditure

The provision for Incidental Expenditure covers the eligible expenditure incurred under this contract. It cannot be used for costs which should be covered by the Consultant as part of its fee rates, as defined above. Its use is governed by the provisions in the General Conditions and notes in Annex V of the contract. It covers the following:

- Travel costs and subsistence allowances for missions to be undertaken as part of this contract from the base of operations in Croatia by the team of experts.

- Costs of training/workshops/seminars to be organised under these Terms of Reference (see table 1 in page 21) (catering, hand-outs, possibly interpretation and rent of premises).

- Costs of the sort of study tour under activity 1.1.4.

- Costs of project presentation for a wider community at the end of the Final Phase. These costs would include a reception and possibly rent of conference centre/facilities and interpretation.

- Visibility materials such as brochures and leaflets (at least 1,000 copies of each issue).

- Costs for subsistence allowance for participants at seminars and workshops.

**The provision for Incidental Expenditure for this contract is €130,000**. This amount must be included **without modification** in the Budget breakdown.

Please consult the Contracting Authority before submitting the offer for the exact amount of the per diem that can be applicable.

## 7.    REPORTS

### 7.1    Reporting requirements

Please refer to Article 26 of the General Conditions.  Interim progress reports must be prepared every six months during the period of execution of the contract. They must be accompanied by a corresponding invoice.

There must be a final progress report and final invoice at the end of the period of execution.  The draft final progress report must be submitted at least one month before the end of the period of execution of the contract. Note that these interim and final progress reports are additional to any required in relevant sections of these Terms of Reference.

In addition, an updated financial report must be submitted with each of the above progress reports.  The updated financial report must contain details of the time inputs of the experts and of the incidental expenditure.  The final progress report must be accompanied by the final invoice and an audit certificate (as defined in Article 30 of the General Conditions and in accordance with the template in Annex VI of the contract) confirming the final certified value of the contract.

### 7.2    Submission & approval of progress reports

Copies of the progress reports referred to above must be submitted to the Contracting Authority.  The progress reports must be written in English.

Electronic and, where required, paper copy recipients include:

- The State Secretary for Higher Education
- The Head of the PIU at the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport
- The Chairperson of the Steering Committee
- The project manager at the CFCU, if decentralised
- The Sector Manager of the EC Delegation, Zagreb
- The Assistant Minister at the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) in charge of CARDS co-ordination
- The Team Leader for the EC CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" (while that project is under implementation)

## 8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Consultant will continuously monitor the project according to standard procedures (inception phase monitoring, periodic monitoring and final assessment). Project monitoring and evaluation will be based on a periodic assessment of progress on delivery of specified project results and towards achievement of project objectives.

The Contracting Authority will monitor the project and ensure implementation in a timely and efficient manner, in particular through commenting on inception, interim progress and final reports, and advising on progress on the delivery of specific project results and towards achievement of project results.

### 8.1 Definition of indicators

Suitably objective quantifiable indicators will be agreed between the Contracting Authority and the Consultant.

Indicators will be based on expected results/outputs and may take the form of:
1) Descriptive indicators
2) Management and policy indicators
3) Performance indicators
4) Qualitative indicators
5) Quantitative indicators

The attached Log frame will be adjusted accordingly during the Inception Phase and it will be updated throughout the implementation of the project.

### 8.2 Special requirements

It is important that there is a close and demonstrable collaboration and synergy between this project and the CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" while the latter is still being implemented, particularly in the fields of its work in regard to (a) the institutional development of a Croatian ENIC/NARIC office as part of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, (b) the development and implementation of Quality Assurance in HEIs, and (c) the design and operationalisation of information systems.

| Logical framework | | Country: | Croatia |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Project no: | Project duration: | 18 months |
| | **Project title:** CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | **Prepared on:** | 20/12/2006 |

| Intervention logic | Objectively verifiable indicators | Sources of verification | Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall objective:** To promote the reform of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia in line with best practice in the EU Member States. | • Increased mobility of Croatian students wishing to study in the EU within the next 5 years <br> • More applications from EU students wishing to study in Croatia <br> • Increased percentage of graduates in the total population of the Republic of Croatia within the next 10 years | • MSES statistical data/publications <br> • Evaluation reports (MSES, Agency and HEIs) <br> • Student feedback and success record (HEIs and Agency) <br> • NARIC/ENIC records of student mobility <br> • Revised strategic documents or medium-term action plans for HE reform | |
| **Specific objectives (or Project purposes):** <br> 1. Support to the development of Quality Assurance processes, systems and structures in Croatian Higher Education which will stimulate and establish the quality of the Higher Education being provided for students. <br><br> 2. Support to the development and implementation of an Information System, so that it can be used for reliable inputs of analysable data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes. | • Improvement in the quality of HE delivered to students within the next 3 years: <br> ○ improved student retention rates <br> ○ improved student success rates <br> ○ increased number of enrolled students <br><br> • Users manual developed <br> • Data inputs being made <br> • Reliable analysed data are available and are being used as inputs to QA by both HEIs and the Agency <br> • Reliable analysed data being used for Quality Management, including strategic planning | • Final project report <br> • Agency evaluation reports <br> • MSES statistical data <br> • Student feedback and success record (HEIs and Agency) <br> • Student retention records (MSES, Agency & HEIs) <br><br> • Final project report <br> • Programme monitoring reports <br> • Institutional self-evaluations <br> • HEI plans/publications <br> • Agency evaluation reports <br> • National short-term action plans for HE | • The Government of Croatia remains committed to the reform of HE <br> • The MSES will actively support the development of HE <br> • The funding of HEI follows the August 2003 Law on Scientific Activity and Higher Education <br> • There is relaxation of state control over staffing establishments in HEIs <br> • The NCHE is proactive in its promotion of HE reform <br> • The HEIs are committed to the quality of student learning <br> • The chosen Information System enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation. |
| ***Results:*** | | | |

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| Logical framework | Project no:<br>Project title: | CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | Country: Croatia<br>Project duration: 18 months<br>Prepared on: 20/12/2006 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1. The staff of the Agency for Science and Higher Education who are involved in its Quality Assurance role, both officers and administrative staff, will have been enabled to perform their duties in a way comparable to best practice in the rest of Europe, and a functioning National Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established. | • Rate of satisfaction expressed by stakeholders in the performance of the staff<br>• Rate of satisfaction expressed by evaluators and HEIs<br>• Number of the Agency staff trained/mentored<br>• SWOT analysis produced | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Project Steering Committee minutes<br>• Staff appraisal on behalf of the NCHE<br>• Training evaluation reports<br>• Reports of experienced foreign participants in evaluations | • In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA<br>• The Agency will in all respect be independent from the Ministry, Government, Parliament or any other political influence.<br>• There will have been a synergy between the implementation of the CARDS 2002 project "HE mobility" and this CARDS 2003 project |
| 1.2. The NCHE will have refined its policies and guidelines for evaluation and accreditation so that they are fully in line with best practice elsewhere in Europe, and have the capacity to keep these under review. Those who will have been appointed as evaluators by the Agency/NCHE will have been led to set sustainable precedents of good practice in the evaluation of HE programmes and institutions. | • Agency has a candidate status at ENQA<br>• The level of compliance with "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)"<br>• Number of seminars for training evaluators<br>• Recommendations to the NCHE drafted<br>• Evaluation and feedback instruments designed<br>• Number of evaluations carried out according to new Guidance<br>• Policy mixed model prepared | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Training evaluations<br>• ENQA publications<br>• Reports of experienced foreign participants in evaluations<br>• NCHE decisions/working reports<br>• Accreditation decisions<br>• Relevant meeting minutes<br>• Reports<br>• Study tour reports<br>• Training materials | • The NCHE is dynamic in its promotion of HE reform<br>• In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA<br>• Appropriate evaluators appointed by the Agency/NCHE |

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| Logical framework | Project no:<br>Project title: | Country: Croatia<br>Project duration: 18 months |
|---|---|---|
| | CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | Prepared on: 20/12/2006 |
| 1.3. Quality Promotion Units in the HEIs will have become well established and recognised as authorities on Quality Assurance in their own institutions, including in the provision of support for monitoring and internal evaluation. They will be the main actors in the Quality Assurance Network and an efficient working model of partnership between them and the Agency/NCHE will be established. The HEIs will have made significant progress in Quality Management (including academic and strategic planning). | • Number of relevant staff trained/mentored<br>• Notes of guidance drafted<br>• Improved student assessment<br>• Strategic institutional plans developed<br>• Number of HEI that have fully introduced ECTS<br>• Strategy papers elaborated by MSES and Agency<br>• Survey of HEI carried out<br>• Classification scheme hor HEI institution produced<br>• Evaluation procedure designed<br>• Phasing model produced<br>• Concept for monitoring and evaluation proposed<br>• Institutional and human development plans prepared<br>• Training materials prepared<br>• Study tour design and implementation<br>• Study tour evaluations<br>• Model for collaboration foreign partners prepared<br>• twinning arrangments with foreign HEI implemented<br>• Guidelines for executinon of template model prepared<br>• Monitoring and evaluation report prepared | • Final/interim project reports<br>• Training evaluations<br>• Agency evaluation reports<br>• Student feedback<br>• HEIs periodical publications<br>• Survey report<br>• Reports | • Universities will operate as integrated HEIs<br>• HEIs have been able to establish Quality Promotion Units<br>• QA units located in HEIs are integral to these institutions and do not have, even collectively, the potential to be considered a national QA body, or part of one.<br>• HEIs committed to teaching and the quality of student learning<br>• HEIs committed to good practice in the assessment and certification of students<br>• The TEMPUS QA project will have provided a useful foundation on which the CARDS 2003 project can build |

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| Logical framework | Project no: Project title: | Country: Croatia |
|---|---|---|
| | CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | Project duration: 18 months<br>Prepared on: 20/12/2006 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1. Inter-related and analysable Information Systems will have been developed and implemented so that they can be used for reliable and appropriate inputs of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level. | • QA information system anaylsis report prepared<br>• Information system for QA designed and implemented<br>• List of data, indicators and functions of the new system<br>• Initial training needs assessment<br>• initial training plan.<br>• Number of Agency staff trained<br>• Reliable analysed data being used as inputs to QA by HEIs, Agency and MSES<br>• Reliable analysed data being used for Quality management, including strategic planning<br>• Number of HEIs that have implemented the management information system<br>• Further training and equipment needs analysis drafted<br>• | • Programme monitoring report<br>• Institutional self-evaluations<br>• HEI plans<br>• Agency evaluation report<br>• Training evaluations<br>• National plans for HE | • The chosen information system enjoys the level of consensus support necessary for its further development and successful implementation<br>• There is sufficient funding beyond that resulting from the project, for the chosen Information System to be developed and implemented.<br>• University Computing Centre (SRCE) is committed to updating of existing version of MOZVAG. |

| *Activities* | *Means* | *Costs* | *Assumptions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1.1. Training of Agency staff involved in QA including in-house seminars.<br><br>1.1.2. Training in committee servicing for Agency staff who support the NCHE.<br><br>1.1.3. Mentoring of Agency staff<br><br>1.1.4. Agency staff to observe evaluations conducted by foreign QA agencies<br><br>1.1.5. Agency staff involved in 1.1.4. reporting to their colleagues<br><br>1.2.1. Training evaluators appointed by the NCHE/Agency<br><br>1.2.2. Key expert attending evaluations<br><br>1.2.3. Advice to NCHE on its policies and guidelines<br><br>1.2.4. Feedback to NCHE from evaluations and project workshops and seminars<br><br>1.2.5. Evaluation and feedback instruments 1.2.4. | Technical Assistance<br><br><br>PIU staff | Fees and incidental expenditure | Competent company/experts are engaged<br><br>Tendering / procurement carried out without delays |

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| Logical framework | Project no:<br>Project title: | CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | Country:<br>Project duration:<br>Prepared on: | Croatia<br>18 months<br>20/12/2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1.3.1. Advice and assistance in support of quality promotion units.

1.3.2. Mentoring of HEI staff with a role in QA, including staff associated with quality promotion units

1.3.3. Guidance to HEIs on curriculum development, including ECTS.

1.3.4. Guidance to HEIs on monitoring the progress of degree programmes

1.3.5. Guidance to HEIs on the periodic evaluation of degree programmes

1.3.6. Guidance to HEIs on institutional self-evaluation

1.3.7. Guidance to HEIs on strategic planning

1.3.8. Guidance to HEIs on preparing for external evaluations

1.3.9. Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students

1.3.10. Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff

1.3.11. Participation, as invited, in relevant workshops or seminars organised by HEIs

2.1.1. Guidance on development of Information System for Quality Assurance

2.1.2. Guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System. for Quality Assurance

2.1.3. Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance

2.1.4. Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system

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| Logical framework | Project no: | Country: | Croatia |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Project title: CARDS 2003 "Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role, with the development of a supporting information system" | Project duration: | 18 months |
| | | Prepared on: | 20/12/2006 |

**Preconditions:**

- Agency for HE founded
- Appropriate staff appointed (QA officers and information system managers) have been made to the Agency and the Ministry
- There is sufficient funding, beyond that derived from the project, for the chosen Information System to be fully developed and implemented
- Quality Promotion units established at universities

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**Note on changes to the original ToRs (Revised version December 2006)**

The following changes have been implemented to the original ToRs following analysis and discussions during the inception period:

**2.3. Results to be achieved by the Consultant**

Original paragraph 2.1. has been changes to:

2.1.    Information system for quality assurance based on agreed indicators will have been developed and implemented so that it can be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level.

**3. Assumptions and risks**

The following assumptions have been added:

- HEIs are committed to teaching and the quality of student learning.
- HEIs committed to good practice in the assessment and certification of students.
- Appropriate evaluators appointed by the Agency / NCHE.
- Agency will in all respects be independent from the Ministry, Government, Parliament or any other political influence
- QA units located in HEIs are integral to these institutions and do not have, even collectively, the potential to be considered a national QA body, or part of one.

 and one assumption has been changed to:
- In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is either seen as an Agency of the NCHE or as the Agency having full responsibility for external QA.

replacing the original  text: »In terms of its Quality Assurance role, the Agency is seen as the Agency of NCHE«

**4.1. Project Description**

Paragraph regarding management infomation system has been changed to:

»The Consultant's support for the development and implementation of Information System for quality assurance based on agreed indicators, particularly to be used for reliable and appropriate inputs and use of data for Quality Assurance and Quality Management processes at every level, will be effected through the provision of expert guidance to the team/s developing such system/s, and the provision of advice on their implementation and use to HEIs, and, on their use, to the Agency/NCHE.«

The paragraph
»The Consultant will also be responsible for preparing the tender dossier that should lead to the procurement of equipment (ref. page 19 below), purchased under the separate contract as support to an Information System for Higher Education in Croatia (ISVU).«
has been deleted.

### 4.2.2. Detailed activities

Under Component 2. two activities have been added:

1.3.9    Guidance to HEIs on assessment of students
1.3.10. Guidance to HEIs on quality assurance of teaching staff

Under Component 3, activities have been changed to:

2.1.1    Expert guidance  on development of Information System for Quality Assurance
2.1.2    Expert guidance to HEIs on the implementation of the Information System. for Quality Assurance
2.1.3    Guidance to HEIs on the use of the Information System for Quality Assurance
2.1.4    Advice to the NCHE on the use of the information system for Quality Assurance

Table 1 on page 22, the second items has been changed from 4@2 day workshops to 2@3 day

### 4.3    Project management
### 4.3.1    Responsible body

Additional member of the Steering Committee has been proposed:
- A representative from SRCE – University Computer Centre

### 6. Requirements
### 6.1. Personel

Number of days for individual Key Experts have been changed to reflex changes in the Terms of Reference. References to the CARDS 2002 project have been deleted.

For KE3, the following point has bee deleted:
- »Responsibility for initiating the procurement of equipment purchased under the project as support to an Information System for Higher Education in Croatia.«
as not relevant.

### Logical Framework

Logical Framework has been revised, updated and harmonised including all proposed changes due to different focus of the project.

**Annex 2**

**List of Meetings**

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

## CARDS 2003 – September 2006

### Organized Meetings:

**Week 04-08.09.2006.**
- 04.09. 2006. Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, prof. Slobodan Uzelac, State Secretary for Higher Education
- 04.09. 2006. Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Kick-off meeting of the project
- 04.09. 2006 Antonija Gladović, PIU, Ana Kurpes, CFCU
- 04.09. 2006 ASHE, Presentation of the Agency and its activities in QA
- 04.09. 2006 Delegation of European Commision, Vedrana Ligutić, Sector Manager
- 05.09.2006. Nobium, meeting with the local partners, Predrag Pale, Vesna Kezdorf

**Week 11-15.09.2006.**
- 12.09.06.   ASHE       Jasmina Havranek, CEO
  Agency for Science and Technology - Overview
- 12.09.06.   ASHE Sandra Bezjak, Head of Higer Education Department,
  Višnja Petrović, Head of Quality Control Department, Department Activities
- 13.09.06.   ASHE Goran Grubišić, Head of Analytics and Statistics Department, Davor Jurić,
  Maja Ivanišević, Department Activities, MOZVAG system
- 13.09.06.   ASHE Emita Blagdan, Head of International Department, Katarina Šimić
  ENIC office Activities
- 14.09. SRCE – Denis Kranjčec and Dubravko Hunjet,
  Information Systems: ISVU and Mozvag
- 14.09. SRCE, Antonija Gladović
  Infomation on other CARDS projects
- 14.09. Zagreb School of Economics and Management – Dean Djuro Njavro,
  Quality Assurance at Private High Schools
- 15.09. Prof. Mladen Andrassy, Project Leader of Establishment of the Quality Management within Zagreb University Quality Assurance in Zagreb University
- 15.09.2006. Mr Predrag Pale and colleagues, Nobium
  Meeting with the local partner

**Week 18-22.09.2006.**
- 18.09.2006. Prof . Damir Magaš, President of the Rectors' Conference, Rector of Zadar University
- 19.09.2006. ASHE, Prof. Marija Ivezić, President of the National Council for Science
- 19.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department – Infomation Systems
- 20.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department
- 21.09.2006. ASHE, Prof Pavao Barišić, President of the Board of the Agency, Deputy Minister of Scence; Education and Sport; Prof. Franjo Parać – President of the National Council for Higher Education; Prof. Marija Ivezić, President of the National Council for Science
- 21.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department
- 21.09.2006. ASHE financing, Ana Smajlović
- 22.09.2006. Rectorat of Rijeka University, Rijeka, prof. Pero Lučin, President of the Board of the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development; Vice

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

Rector of University in Rijeka; Member of the Negotiating Team responsible for the chapters Science and Research

- 22.09.2006. Faculty of Philosophy at the Rijeka University, Dean prof. Elvio Baccarini, doc.dr.sc.Rajka Jurdana-Šepić, Vice-dean,
Sanja Smojver Ažić, project leader – Development of the quality assurance system at the,
Patricia Matić, ISVU coordiantor

**Week 25.- 29.09.2006.**

- 25.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

- 25.09.2006. 14,30  State Office for Statistics, Branimirova 19, Mrs Mila Butigan, Deputy Director for Social Statistics and Mrs Matija Škegro Vdović, Head of the Education Statistics Department with A&S, ASHE

- 25.09.2006. 15:00  Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, meeting of the National Group for the Bologna Process Follow up – Team Leader

- 26.09.2006. 9:30 prof. Mirta Baranović, Faculty of Electrical Enginering and Computing, University of Zagreb, Head of ISVU development team

- 26.09.2006. Prof Branko Jeren, Faculty of Electrical Enginering and Computing, University of Zagreb; mr. Predrag Pale, Nobium

- 26.09.2006. 13:00 SRCE, Denis Kranjčec and ISVU team– Details of ISVU and Mozvag, A&S, ASHE

- 27.09.2006. 10:00 - Prof. Petar Bezinović, Deputy Rector of Rijeka University responsible for Promotion of Quality within University; Amruseva 8/II

- 27.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

- 28.09. 2006. Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, prof. Slobodan Uzelac, State Secretary for Higher Education; Antonia Gladović, PIU

- 28.09.2006. ASHE Quality Assurance Department - Accreditation of the Institutions

- 29.09.2006. 9:00 – Workshop: presentation of the projects financed by the National Foundation on Zagreb Universiyt and the presentation of the CARDS 2003 project; Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Zagreb – Team Leader

- 29.09.2006. ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

**Week 2.- 6.10.2006.**

- 02.10.2006. ASHE Quality Assurance Department

- 02.10.2006 ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

- 04.10.2006 ASHE Quality Assurance Department

- 05.10.2006 ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

**Week 9.- 13.10.2006.**

- 09.10.2006. ASHE Higher Education Department

- 10.10.2006 ASHE Quality Assurance Department

- 11.10.2006. Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, prof. Slobodan Uzelac, State Secretary for Higher Education; Antonia Gladović, PIU

- 11.10.2006. SRCE – Denis Kranjčec and Dubravko Hunjet,
Information Systems

- 11.10.2006. Mr Predrag Pale, Nobium, local partner

- 12.10.2006 Monthly meeting EC/PIU

- 13. 10. 2006 ASHE Analytics and Statistics Department

**Annex 3**

**List of Documents**

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

## CARDS 2003 – September 2006

**Documents:**

**GOPA Consultants:**

1. Contract No.: EuropeAid/119818/C/SV/HR
   Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role and the development of a supporting Information System – Republic of Croatia
   **Terms of Reference**

2. GOPA Consultants & Nobium: Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance role and the development of a supporting Information System – Republic of Croatia
   **Technical Proposal, January 2006**

3. CARDS 2002 Project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" - Final Report, 12.06.2006.

4. CARDS 2002 Project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation": Quality Assurance In Higher Education - A Manual, Hugh Glanville, March 2006

5. Report of a STE mission in Croatia under a Contract for CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation"
   Technical specification of a Management Information System and its development, IJ. Werkman M.Sc., May 2005

6. Final Report of a STE mission in Croatia under a Contract for CARDS 2002 project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation"
   Technical specification of a Management Information System and its development, IJ. Werkman M.Sc., January 2005

**Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (Antonija Gladović, PIU)**

7. The Quality Assurance System in the Republic of Croatia – Overview (EN) – given at the Kick-off Meeting in the Ministry, 4 September 2006.

8. Croatia – Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010

9. Croatia Country Report – UNESCO (Sept 2005)

10. National Report – Croatia –Bergen (2004-2005)

11. EUA report Croatia (2005)

12. OECD – Final Report (May 2006) – Unofficial version

13. Tender documents for IT component (EN)

14. Pravilnik o mjerilima i kriterijima za osnivanje visokih učilišta (HR)
    Ordinance On Measures And Criteria For Establishing Higher Education Institutions (EN)
    29.12.2004.

15. Pravilnik o mjerilima i kriterijima za vrednovanje kvalitete i učinkovitosti visokih učilišta i studijskih programa (HR)
    Ordinance On Measures And Criteria For The Evaluation Of Quality And Efficiency Of Higher Education Institutions And Study Programmes (EN), 29.12.2004.

16. Ordinance On The Content Of Diplomas And Diploma Supplements (EN) 29.12.2004.

17. Ordinance On The Content Of The Student Document (EN) 29.12.2004.

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

18. Ordinance On Keeping Records On Students Of Higher Education Institutions (EN) 29.12.2004.

19. TEMPUS - CARDS SCM 2006 Structural Measure C028A06-2006 Project: Quality Assurance in University Teaching – Project in Brief, Rijeka University

**Agency for Science and Higher Education**

20. The Agency for Science and Higher Education – Overview (EN)

21. Audits Of Quality Assurance System  In Higher Education Institutions (EN)

    - word
    - ppt July 2006

22. Handbook for Auditors (EN)

    - word Juny 2006
    - ppt Juny 2006

23. Quality Assurance system for Higher Education Institutions, ppt July 2006

24. The Act On Scientific Activity And Higher Education (EN)

25. Uredba o osnivanju Agencije (HR)

26. Statut Agencije (HR)

27. Izvješće o radu Agencije za znanost I visoko obrazovanje (2005 i prva polovice 2006 godine) (HR)

28. Sustav upravljanja kvalitetom (HR) – Agency's web site

    - Priručnik SUK-a prema normama HRN EN ISO 9001_2002;
    - Struktura SUK-a;
    - Upravljanje odgovornostima, ovlastima i komunikacijom;
    - Politika kvalitete.
    - Nadzor sustava osiguranja kvalitete u Visokoobrazovnim institucijama RH
    - Odrednice Sustava osiguranja kvalitete u Priručniku za visoka učilišta RH

29. Upute za sastavljanje prijedloga preddiplomskih i diplomskih studijskih programa (Rectors' Conference Gudelines on preparation of proposals of the undergraduate and graduate) HR – 14.12.2004.

30. Upute za sastavljanje prijedloga poslijediplomskihstudijskih programa Rectors' Conference Gudelines on preparation of proposals of the postgraduate studies HR – 08.02.2005.

31. National Council For Higher Education, Republic of Croatia (EN):

    - Guidelines For Referees: General Requirements For Study Programmes
    - Memorandum for writing the reports by the teams engaged in the evaluation of Institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia
    - Questions addressed during the evaluation of institutions of higher education Questions addressed to the administration of the institution
    - Tabular Survey for the Final Report of the Commission for the Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Learning
    - The Evaluation Procedures of Higher Education Institutions

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

**Zagreb University**

32. Constitution of Quality Management System at the University of Zagreb, prof. dr.sc. Mladen Andrassy,  (EN)

33. TEMPUS project – QUASYS, Development of Quality Assurance System at Zagreb University –

   - Handbook on Implementation of Quality Management (HR)
   - Final Report (EN)

34. Workshop on University management Strategic Planning, institutional research and Organizational Motivation: Knowledge-based Decision making on the University, prof. Mirta Baranović, FER, University of Zagreb


**Rijeka University**

35. Strategija Sveučilišta – radni materijali (HR)


**SRCE**

36. ISVU – Overview (01.09.2006) (HR)

37. Mozvag

   - Overview (13.09.2006.) (HR)
   - Description (EN)


**Other documents:**

38. CARDS 2002 Project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" – Project Documents CD

39. CARDS 2002 Project "Higher Education Mobility: Diploma Recognition Policy and Legislation" Short Report for the Steering Committee meeting (EN) prof. Slobodan Uzelac, 10.05.2006.

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**Annex 4**

**ESG standards for quality assurance external to HEIs**

**CARDS: 2003**

„Furtherance of the Agency of Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and the Development of a Supporting Information System"

## ESG standards for quality assurance external to HEIs

External quality assurance varies from system to system and can include

- institutional evaluations of different types

- subject or programme evaluations

- accreditation at subject, programme and/or institutional levels

- combinations of these.

Such external evaluations largely depend for their full effectiveness on there being

1. an explicit internal quality assurance strategy, with specific objectives, and on
2. the use, within institutions, of mechanisms and methods aimed at achieving those objectives.

"External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the [ESG] standards are being met."

"The aims and objectives of [external] quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible [for QA] including higher education institutions and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used."

"As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions."

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and Agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure.

Experience has shown that "there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance."

Amongst these elements the following are "particularly noteworthy":

1. insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
2. the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
3. the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;

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4. the use of international experts;
5. participation of students;
6. ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
7. the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/followup model of review;
8. recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership.

> "External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives."

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. Quality Assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not "once in a lifetime". It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed.

Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event.

Quality Assurance agencies should produce, from time to time, summary reports describing and analysing their general findings. This provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

### Criteria for the international recognition of QA Agencies

Agencies should conform to the ESG standards for external Quality Assurance and expect observation of the ESG standards in internal Quality Assurance.

Agencies should be formally recognised by "competent public authorities in the EHEA" as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis.

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 and procedures".

Agencies should be independent to the extent both

1. that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and
2. that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties "such as higher education institutions, Ministries or other stakeholders".

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For international recognition an Agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as that:

1. Its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts).
2. The definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken "autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence".
3. While relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of Quality Assurance processes, the final outcomes of the Quality Assurance processes remain the responsibility of the Agency.

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability. These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the Agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
   a. the Agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of Quality Assurance;
   b. the Agency has in place, and enforces, a "no-conflict-of-interest" mechanism in the work of its external experts;
   c. the Agency has in place internal Quality Assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. the means to collect feedback from its own staff and Council / Board), and an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. the means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement);
   d. and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. the means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.

The procedures that Agencies seeking international recognition should have in place for their own accountability are also expected to include:

3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the Agency's activities at least once every five years.

It is not yet clear how the European Register of Recognised QA Agencies, with its European Register Committee acting as "gatekeeper", will operate in practice. The Bergen Ministers' Conference Communiqué says:

"We welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review. We ask that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group." [I.e. in London in May 2007.]

**Annex 5**

**ESG standards for Quality Assurance within HEIs**

## ESG standards for Quality Assurance within HEIs

Every HEI should have a published policy on its own Quality Assurance.

- It should commit itself "explicitly" to the development of a culture that recognizes the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in all its work.

- It should also develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The HEI's strategy, policy and procedures should include a role for students and other stakeholders (e.g. [graduates], employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations). Students should participate in all Quality Assurance activities.

An HEI's policy statement on its Quality Assurance should include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the HEI;

- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organizational units and individuals for the assurance of quality; and

- the ways in which the policy itself is to be implemented, monitored and revised.

### Programmes of study

HEIs should give careful attention to programme design, including the specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and different types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional).

HEI's should ensure:

- that all programmes of study have clear, explicit, published and intended learning outcomes.

- that the staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help students achieve these outcomes.

ESG standards go on to state that HEI's should ensure that there are appropriate learning resources (whose continuing appropriateness and availability should be regularly reviewed).

HEIs should also ensure that:

- They have formal procedures for the approval of any new programme of study - by a body inside the HEI other than the group of staff who will be teaching it.

- They should procedures for monitoring the progress of programmes and the achievements of students. (Students' assessment results provide valuable information about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.)

HEIs should also ensure that they have procedures for the regular review of programmes - by panels that include panel members from outside the HEI.

Moreover, HEIs should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

## The assessment of students

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures, which are applied securely and consistently. The regulations should take account of all the possible consequences of student failure as well as success. There should be clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances.

Students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

Assessment should be carried out professionally at all times and take into account the extensive knowledge, which exists about testing and examination processes.

Student assessment procedures should be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives, and be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification.

Wherever possible, the assessment of a student should not rely on the judgement of one examiner alone.

### Assurance of the quality of teaching staff

"It is important that those who teach have

- a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching,

- have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and

- can access feedback on their own performance."

Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence.

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that [all] staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so.

Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

An HEI should also ensure that there is "full, timely and tangible" recognition of the contribution to the quality of its work made by those of its staff who "demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication".

## Information systems

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

"Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance."

The quality-related information systems required by individual HEIs will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

1. student progression and success rates;

2. employability of graduates;

3. students' satisfaction with their programmes;

4. effectiveness of teachers;

5. profile of the student population;

6. learning resources available and their costs;

7. the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

## Public information

HEIs should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative about the programmes they are offering.

This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity.