

ENQA Strategic Plan 2011-15

ENQA's Strategic Framework

VISION

- European higher education committed to a culture of quality

MISSION

- To contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education at a high level, and to act as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance throughout the European Higher Education Area

PURPOSES

- To represent its members
- To function as a think tank
- To function as a communication platform

CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

- Appropriate governance and management structures
- A developed strategic planning framework
- Effective internal and external communications
- Effective internal quality assurance procedures and processes

GOALS

- **Association and membership issues**
 - ENQA aims at comprising quality assurance agencies from all countries in the EHEA in order to be as inclusive as possible
 - ENQA aims at an intensive involvement of members in internal discussion and decision-making processes
 - ENQA aims at offering services for members that help them to develop further
- **Policy-making role**
 - ENQA aims at being a main political actor with material influence on decision-making processes at the European level to deliver on the core values of quality assurance as enunciated in the ESG
- **Development of Quality Assurance in Europe**
 - ENQA aims at developing quality assurance processes as core instruments for both enhancement and accountability purposes
 - ENQA aims to be recognised as the core source of expertise and



information in the field of quality assurance at the European level

- **Co-operation with other organisations**
 - ENQA aims at being recognised as the preferred partner in all matters relating to the development of quality assurance at the European level

MEASURING AND REVIEWING SUCCESS

- Indicators showing that ENQA is successfully achieving its mission and vision are:
 - Stakeholders have a greater understanding of and confidence in the quality assurance processes in European higher education
 - Stakeholders have greater access to clear information on the quality of European higher education
 - European quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions are operating in a manner consistent with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*
 - A majority of the feedback from members agencies and stakeholders on ENQA's activities is positive
 - Stakeholder satisfaction with ENQA increases



Foreword from the President.....	3
I. Vision	4
II. Mission	4
III. Values	4
IV. Purposes	4
V. Corporate functions	5
VI. Goals, activities, and expected outcomes.....	5
1. Association and membership issues	5
2. Policy making role	7
3. Development of QA in Europe	8
4. Co-operation with other organisations.....	9
VII. Measuring and reviewing Success.....	10

Foreword from the President

The future of the European Higher Education Area

“The EHEA (...) is characterised by its diversity of political systems, higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations.”¹ ENQA considers this diversity as an important value for higher education in Europe and regards it as a basic principle for its activities in the future, too.²

Higher education is a driving force for the future economic and social well being of Europe. In a challenging economic environment, European higher education needs to be internationally competitive. The autonomy of European higher education institutions will enable them to capitalise on areas of competitive advantage and retain the flexibility to adapt programmes to external demands.

This autonomy relies, in turn, on the public’s confidence in the capacity of higher education institutions to deliver quality education outcomes. The primary means of achieving this confidence is by promoting a culture of quality within the higher education sector that is committed to continuous quality improvement.

ENQA is committed to continuing the development of quality assurance systems that enable a culture of quality to underwrite the contribution of its member agencies to the economic, cultural and social well being of Europe.

ENQA Strategy

This Strategic Plan presents ENQA’s vision, mission and purposes. It sets out the major strategic goals, priorities and derived activities of the Association for the period 2011-15, as well as how the attainment of the goals will be measured.

¹ *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. 3rd edition, Helsinki, 2009. p.11.

² ENQA Position Paper on Quality Assurance in the EHEA. Helsinki, 2009. p.3.



The Strategic Plan was drafted by the Board of ENQA, in consultation with the membership of the Association. It was approved by the ENQA General Assembly in Helsinki, on 24 September 2010.

I. Vision

The vision of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is a European Higher Education Area committed to a culture of quality.

II. Mission

The goal of ENQA is to contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education at a high level, and to act as a major driving force for the development of quality assurance throughout the European Higher Education Area.

III. Values

ENQA

- is committed to a culture of quality that meets international best practice;
- is committed to the delivery of high quality services to its member agencies;
- is transparent in all of its activities and is accountable to its stakeholders;
- supports the independence of its member agencies from governments and higher education institutions;
- is committed to maintaining and developing mechanisms ensuring the credibility of its member agencies;
- supports the autonomy of Europe's higher education institutions and their individual traditions and missions;
- supports the provision of clear and accessible information on the quality of European higher education to all stakeholders;
- values partnership and seeks to form strong and durable relationships with its partners in Europe and the wider international sphere.

IV. Purposes

ENQA's purposes are essentially threefold:

- **to represent its members** at European level and internationally, especially in political decision-making processes and in co-operations with stakeholder organisations;
- **to function as a think tank** for the further development of quality assurance processes and systems in the EHEA;



- **to function as a communication platform** for sharing and disseminating information and expertise in quality assurance among members and towards stakeholders.

V. Corporate functions

To achieve its purposes, ENQA must ensure that it has in place:

- appropriate **governance and management** structures;
- a developed **strategic planning** framework;
- effective **internal and external communications**;
- effective **internal quality assurance** procedures and processes.

ENQA's corporate functions must ensure the efficient and effective delivery of its quality assurance and corporate outputs. These functions include financial planning and reporting and human resourcing.

ENQA must ensure that the association:

- is suitably situated;
- has sufficient and sustainable financial resources;
- has sufficient and suitable human resources in its Secretariat.

VI. Goals, activities, and expected outcomes

1. Association and membership issues

ENQA aims at comprising quality assurance agencies from all countries in the EHEA in order to be as inclusive as possible.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will

- While sustaining the principle of accordance with ESG as a prerequisite for full membership provide other agencies and organisations with different opportunities to participate in the activities of the association;
- seek to ensure that all countries in the EHEA are represented in ENQA in some form and will promote the active progression of candidate members to full membership of the Association;
- continue to provide quality assurance advisory support. ENQA will actively seek applications from non-member agencies to full or candidate membership of the Association. ENQA will explore the difficulties of potential member agencies in meeting the membership requirements and will assist such agencies in overcoming these difficulties.

ENQA aims at an intensive involvement of members in internal discussions and decision-making processes.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will



- from 2011, organise – in addition to the General Assembly – an annual Members’ Forum and establish standing working groups or ad hoc working groups, as appropriate, to share experience and develop new standards, approaches or policy papers. Member agencies can thus become more active and be even more intensively involved in the activities of the Association;
- strengthen the role of its website as a news and discussion forum.
- continue to seek other ways of involving members.

ENQA aims at offering services for members that help them to develop further.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will

- promote staff development at member agencies by elaborating (together with members) and providing training materials. It will act as a think tank and mediator and will provide, on its website, a platform for staff exchange issues, where offers and requests can be posted;
- continue to co-ordinate agency reviews not only for the purpose of granting membership but also for giving advice for further development of agencies. For the purpose of agency reviews, ENQA will continue the series of training seminars for agency reviewers and will employ in review panels only persons who have participated in such training seminars;
- draw conclusions from the analysis of reports on reviews of agencies which may result in recommendations for amending part III of the ESG and the ENQA membership criteria;
- address the relevant issues in the field of quality assurance and organise events like workshops and seminars, working groups etc. (see chapter 3 below), to share expertise and knowledge among members;
- promote co-operation between quality assurance agencies;
- promote the independence of quality assurance agencies.

Expected outcomes

- increased ENQA membership and group of associates/affiliates;
- more intensive involvement of member agencies in the activities of the Association;
- workshop and seminar reports;
- enhanced training materials developed by ENQA for agency staff;
- better preparation of members of the review panels to perform their task properly and efficiently;
- cooperation agreements between agencies, jointly organised evaluation and accreditation procedures;
- access by quality assurance agencies to more and improved information.



2. Policy making role

ENQA aims at being a main political actor with material influence on decision-making processes at the European level to deliver on the core values of quality assurance as enunciated in the ESG.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will

- continue to function as a European policy forum for developing and proposing standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and finding common points of convergence between the European quality assurance systems;
- support and represent its members in the political dialogue with actors such as the European Commission, the EU member states and countries in the wider EHEA. ENQA will promote the independence of quality assurance agencies from national governments, higher education institutions, and any other third parties;
- attend, report on and follow-up to the Bologna Process Ministerial meetings of 2012 and 2015. ENQA will produce, in the context of these conferences, statements and policy papers on current features in quality assurance of higher education;
- provide public authorities and political decision makers with relevant expertise to facilitate informed political decision-making;
- safeguard the seriousness of quality assurance and the credibility of QA agencies by helping to improve awareness of all partners and stakeholders about what can be expected of sound quality assurance mechanisms and the extent to which their outcomes are valid;
- promote the implementation of joint projects, efforts and schemes aimed at the mutual recognition of the results of external quality assurance activities;
- encourage the co-operation of quality assurance agencies and their regional and project-based networks both at the European and wider international levels, based on common values and principles.

Expected outcomes:

- concerns and interests of quality assurance agencies will be brought forward, in the form of statements and reports, in the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) and Bologna Ministerial meetings;
- awareness-raising about quality assurance in higher education will be directed towards public authorities, decision-makers and all other stakeholders;
- better informed decision-making on quality assurance in higher education.



3. Development of QA in Europe

ENQA aims at developing quality assurance processes as core instruments for both enhancement and accountability purposes. This will be accomplished by strengthening the core values (such as independence) and by integrating all types of higher education provision into regular quality assurance schemes. Furthermore, ENQA aims at being recognised as the core source of expertise and information in the field of quality assurance on the European level.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will:

- contribute to the European Higher Education Area by promoting compatibility and comparability of quality assurance processes based on common principles outlined in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*;
- collect and analyse experiences on the implementation of ESG, thereby contributing to their development/revision, clarification, interpretation, and catering for different needs (e.g. differing national contexts, all-purpose versus specific agencies);
- identify the future trends, challenges and perspectives of quality assurance by conducting a project on "the future of quality assurance", as a follow-up of the Quality Procedures Project;
- assist quality assurance agencies in working with higher education institutions to help them finding the appropriate balance between internal and external quality assurance in their given national contexts;
- elaborate, based on receiving experiences and examples of good practice from its members, quality assurance processes for specific areas such as qualifications frameworks and quality assurance, learning outcomes and their attainment, and recognition of prior learning;
- devote special effort to address more thoroughly the issues and specificities of quality assurance in developing areas (such as the quality of e-learning/distance and lifelong learning, transnational education (TNE) - with particular regard to the external quality assurance of joint international study programmes), as well as the new topics mentioned in the ministerial Leuven – Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué and the Budapest-Vienna Declaration (e.g. mobility of staff and students, the social dimension in higher education and the diversity of programmes).
- after the first such exercise in 2010, summarise and analyse the results of (the second round of) agency reviews in a survey, the results of which will be published;
- disseminate quality assurance information through its website and publications (ENQA Statements, Occasional Papers, Workshop and Seminar Reports);



- address the information issue related to the quality assurance of higher education and develop appropriate ways to help member agencies to meet the information demand in general, and to take strong and public view on degree and accreditation mills.

Expected outcomes

- a project report on the application and implementation of the ESG that will be presented in the ministerial conference in April 2012. This may include a revision of the ESG to match the current challenges for higher education;
- a project report on the quality of life-long learning (LLL);
- a (second) survey on the results of agency reviews;
- events and publications on new areas of quality assurance;
- enhanced compatibility and comparability of quality assurance processes.

4. Co-operation with other organisations

ENQA aims at being recognised as the preferred partner in all matters related to the development of quality assurance at the European level ENQA aims at maintaining and developing constructive international co-operation and dialogue with its key European partners and with other quality assurance networks and regions in order to build globally competitive European higher education.

To achieve this goal, ENQA will

- continue the co-operation with the E4 organisations. In this framework ENQA will actively participate in the E4 meetings and work together with the other members of the E4 on general higher education and quality assurance policy issues, especially those related to the EHEA.
- continue to co-operate with EQAR and contribute to its operation by being an active member of EQAR, by maintaining the delegation of one person to the Executive Board, attending the General Assemblies of EQAR and by nominating two independent candidates to the Register Committee. ENQA will continue this co-operation on the basis that EQAR remains a web-based list of quality assurance agencies and does not seek to acquire any additional functions.
- continue to be actively involved in international developments and promote the European Quality Assurance Dimension world-wide, to widen the impact of its activities. This will increase the global visibility of ENQA and of quality assurance in the EHEA. ENQA, for its part, will learn from the international and regional good practices, which it can use to improve its operations. ENQA will continue to co-operate with quality assurance networks, especially with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Central and Eastern European Network (CEE Network) and the European Consortium of



Accreditation (ECA). ENQA will explore the possibilities of launching projects of mutual interest with these bodies.

Expected outcomes

- EQAF as a common platform and forum for quality assurance-related issues with E4 partners;
- co-operation agreements with other quality assurance networks;
- participation in the INQAAHE Members' Forum, CEE Network annual workshops, meetings of regional representatives, etc;
- reports on projects of mutual interest with the other quality assurance networks.

VII. Measuring and reviewing Success

ENQA is committed to continuously monitoring and evaluating the attainment of its goals and the implementation of the activities outlined in this Strategic Plan. Indicators showing that ENQA is successfully achieving its mission and vision are:

- stakeholders have a greater understanding of and confidence in the quality assurance processes in European higher education;
- stakeholders have greater access to clear information on the quality of European higher education;
- European quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions are operating in a manner consistent with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*;
- a majority of the feedback from member agencies and stakeholders on ENQA's activities is positive;
- stakeholder satisfaction with ENQA increases.

ENQA's Operational Plan sets out the detailed objectives and associated plans and targets through which this Strategy will be implemented. The Operational Plan will be reviewed and updated annually in the light of achievements and changes in external circumstances.

The ENQA Board and Secretariat will ensure that the present Strategy is effectively disseminated to ENQA member agencies and communicated to external stakeholders. For this purpose, the President of ENQA, in co-operation with the Board and the Secretariat, commits to reporting on the implementation of this Strategy to each General Assembly from 2011 onwards. A special emphasis will be laid to the outcomes and impact of the activities outlined in the present Strategy.

The ENQA Board wishes to continue this practice of elaborating strategic plans in consultation with the membership of the Association after 2015.

