

Call for applications – Peer Support on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Staff Mobility

Context

Within the IMINQA project, supporting the Bologna Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA), funding is available for staff mobilities among the partner countries of the group. The TPG C on QA was established with the aim of fostering peer support among countries. A system of mobility of staff members involved in QA within national authorities and/or quality assurance agencies and/or relevant stakeholder organisations is set up to cater these needs of the TPG C on QA.

Staff mobility

Through a system of mobility of staff members working in the field of quality assurance within national authorities (ministries), quality assurance agencies and/or stakeholder organisations, peer support can be facilitated in the TPG C on QA. All flows and directions of staff mobility between ministries, QA-agencies and stakeholder organisations are possible. As such, the system supports the professional development of staff by offering a work placement in another country. Each mobile peer will further develop its QA competencies through job shadowing, observation periods and/or training at a partner QA agency/ministry/organisation abroad. Every staff mobility will focus on specific needs of its home country.

All members of the TPG C on QA can send and receive staff for a limited period of time. A sending partner needs to demonstrate a need for peer support concerning a specific topic in QA and the willingness to learn in this thematic field. A receiving partner needs to demonstrate experience in a specific field in QA and offers a mobile peer a Professional Development Programme in this field. This programme includes the planned professional activities and the related learning outcomes for the work period abroad. Furthermore, the need for peer support should be related to the countries' action plan that was developed in the context of the TPG C on QA for the period 2021-2024.

Mobile staff members will write an observation report according to a fixed format detailing their experiences at another QA agency, ministry or stakeholder organisation and report back to the entire peer group.

In order to be able to match as many applications as possible, we invite countries and organisations to not only review their needs for peer support, but to also think about the strengths of their QA system and propose topics in which they can offer peer support.

Possible topics on which to focus during staff mobilities are:

- Legislative framework in line with the ESG
- Internal QA
- Enhancement-oriented use of the ESG
- European Approach for the QA of joint programmes
- Cross-border QA



- Stakeholders engagement
- Digitalisation of QA processes

These are topics that are covered within the TPG C on QA. In the application form up to three topics can be selected within the proposed staff mobility(ies). The applicant should elaborate intensively on each (of the) topic(s) in the next steps of the application form.

Good practices

Based on previous experiences¹, the following good practices are suggested and can be taken into account in the application:

- **Duo-exchange:** a mobility can significantly enhance its impact when it is done as a duo-exchange, i.e. mutual visits from one agency/organisation to the other. This enables prolonged exchanges on key topics that can be followed up during the second visit and may also lead to a greater engagement of the entire organisations and their staff. It should however be noted that this type of dual-mobility is not applicable in all cases and depends on the maturity and complementarity of the partners.
- **Internationalisation at home:** the visit of a colleague from abroad may be used as a good opportunity for internationalisation at home if the host organisation's staff are engaged in the different discussions and/or in a presentation by the mobile individual. Involvement of several people in the programme delivery at the host agency multiplies the opportunities for mutual learning and sharing, and provides non-mobile staff an opportunity for some international exposure.
- **Twin mobility of agency and ministry:** a combined mobility of staff members from the ministry and from the QA agency can be highly interesting, especially for systems in the development phase. Such twin mobility enables enhanced communication between the ministry and the agency of the sending country and supported joint reflections and the creation of a joint action plan for the future. The impact of the learning experience can be much enhanced through such twin mobility.
- **Small group mobility:** mobility of 2-3 people from different countries at the same time can be useful, particularly if the countries have an interest in the same topic(s). This enables not only mutual learning between the host and the mobile individual, but a more multidimensional exchange between people from 3-4 countries. Hosting 2-3 people at the same time is also less burdensome to the host than organising several individual visits. Participating entities should however be mindful not to organise staff mobilities with more than 3 or 4 visiting peers, so as to avoid the mobility to turn into a workshop or conference. A personalised approach, addressing the mobile staff members' needs, should remain at the centre of the mobility.

Furthermore, both the sending organisation and the host organisation are requested to reflect on the following:

- The value of a mobility can be enhanced if it is enriched by visits to other stakeholder bodies and/or a local higher education institutions, or if it can be combined with an event such as a training session, a conference, or observation of an external quality assurance site visit.
- Shared hosting (e.g. by an agency and the ministry, or other stakeholder body) can make the visit more interesting and diverse, and also decrease the burden on the host organisation.
- Leadership mobility has higher potential impact at the system and organisational level, while the benefits of mobility at the individual level are very high for junior/less experienced staff and people with lesser international exposure.

¹ Please find the full Final Report of the Matchmaking Committee [here](#).



- Establishing clear topics and questions beforehand helps the host to organise a meaningful schedule for the visit and helps the mobile person to enhance the concrete impact of the visit. In addition, clarifying expectations beforehand (e.g. during an online preparatory meeting) will help to ensure a good match between the mobile person and the host.
- When creating the visit programme, it is important to build in some time for reflection, and for catching up with work at home. Also, the importance of social elements of the programme should not be neglected.
- Be aware of language issues: this may make attendance to some activities of the host organisation difficult. It is useful for mobile peers to have access to documents in a language he or she understands and it is highly appreciated if the host translates essential documents.
- In order to avoid a mismatch in expectations by the host and the mobile person, it is important to set clear priorities and topics and to ensure a good match of what the mobility is to achieve and what the host is able to offer.

Selection procedure

A matchmaking committee will review the applications and match the staff members based on thematic interest, relevance and geographical spread. The matchmaking committee is composed of the co-chairs of the TPG C on QA and three experts of related stakeholder organisations ENQA, EQAR and EUA.

On 31 August 2022 the matchmaking committee will hold a physical meeting to match the requests and offers for peer support. There is no guarantee on funding, the selection will be made based on the quality of the proposed staff mobility. Therefore it is in your best interest to be as specific as possible concerning your need and/or offer of peer support and the possible learning outcomes related to the proposed topic.

Priority will be given to applications, where the needs and offers for peer support are attuned and agreed upon beforehand, because this will enhance the chances of a customized and therefore successful learning experience. Although, one-sided applications are admissible as well. If your organisation is applying for peer support and/or is prepared to offer peer support related to a certain topic, please fill in the corresponding section of the application.

In some cases, the matchmaking committee may propose a different destination than the one(s) chosen by the applicant, in order to provide a better match between need and offer.

The funding for staff mobility is directly related to the work of the TPG C on QA, hence this call is only open to countries or organisations taking part in the TPG C on QA. The applications need to be tuned to the work of the TPG C on QA. Therefore the link with the topics of the peer group needs to be clear in the application. Countries or organisations applying for peer support need to relate the proposed staff mobility project to the countries' action plan for the TPG C on QA for the period 2021-2024. It is the aim that the staff mobility would contribute to the progress to be made in the field of QA by June 2024.

Each country or stakeholder organisation can send out maximum two staff members on staff mobility. The proposed staff mobilities are aimed at a learning experience into a specific QA topic(s). There is one application per country, in which maximum two staff members can travel. Therefore, it is necessary for organisations within the same country, such as ministries and QA agencies, to agree on who applies for a staff mobility and who will be sent out to travel. The proposed staff mobilities are aimed at a learning experience into a specific QA topic(s).



Participation is pending on the approval and selection of the matchmaking committee. Applicants are advised not to make travel arrangements before approval by the matchmaking committee, as the mobility costs cannot be reimbursed without this approval.

A second call for staff mobility will be published in January 2023, allowing for mobilities from June 2023 until the end of February 2024.

Please note that the maximum of 2 staff members per country applies to the two calls combined. Hence, countries that have had two mobile staff members in call 1 can in principle not apply in call 2 (unless there would still be budget available).

Eligibility criteria & modalities

- Every country/organisation taking part in the TPG C QA can send maximum 2 members for a mobility period.
- Receiving organisations need to demonstrate experience in a specific thematic field in QA, related to the topics of the TPG C QA.
- Organisations in need of peer support are able to demonstrate the need for peer support in a specific thematic field in QA, related to the topics of the TPG C QA.
- All staff members from a ministry, a quality assurance agency or a stakeholder organisation working on quality assurance in Higher Education can be mobile.
- The mobility shall take place between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023
- The duration of the mobility is minimum 3 days. This may include travel.
- Upon completion of the mobility all staff members are expected to submit an observation report, to be sent in one month after the end of the mobility at the latest. The (partial) reimbursement of the travel and accommodation costs will be paid after reception of the observation report.

Travel arrangements

The travel and accommodation costs will be (partially) covered, but the mobile peer's salary will continue to be paid as if the person is working at the sending partner.

The duration of exchange can be from only a few days (3 days as a minimum) to a longer period of time, decided by the two partners involved. The reimbursement for staff mobilities will however be limited to a maximum of 6 days (5 nights). Participants will be reimbursed max. €120 for accommodation costs per night. Travel costs will be reimbursed up to a maximum amount of €360 for travels of 2999 km or less; travel costs for longer distance mobilities of over 3000 km will be reimbursed up to €530. Travel and accommodation costs are based on actual costs.

For ecological considerations, the matchmaking committee strongly recommends to travel by train or bus (or other means of sustainable travel) for shorter distances of under 500 km.



Timing

- Launch of the call for applications: June 2022
- Applications to be sent to: staffmobilityQA@gmail.com
- Deadline for applications: 31 July 2022
- Matchmaking committee meeting to evaluate the applications: 31 August 2022, Brussels (Belgium)
- Announcement of selection results: September 2022
- Staff mobility: October 2022 – March 2023
- Deadline observation report: 1 month after the end of the mobility at the latest
- Matchmaking committee meeting to review the observation reports: May 2023 (Kazakhstan)