



STATE OF PLAY ON POST-ACCREDITATION PROCESS IN KOSOVO AND THE WAYS FORWARD



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ALLED II – “Aligning Education and Training with Labour Market Needs” Programme, funded by the European Union (EU) and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), implemented by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

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List of Acronyms

AVETAE - Agency for Vocational Education and Training and for Adults

CVETAE - Council of Vocational Educational and Training and for Adult Education

EHEA - European Higher Education Area

ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education

EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

ETF- European Training Foundation

HED-Higher Education Department (MES)

HEIs-Higher Education Institutions

HEMIS - Higher Education Management Information System

KAA - Kosovo Accreditation Agency

KCSAA - Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency

KESP - Kosovo Education Strategic Plan

MES - Ministry of Education and Science

MEDs - Municipal Education Directorates

MLSW – Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

NDS - Kosovo National Development Strategy

NQA - National Qualifications Authority

NQF - National Qualifications Framework

QA- Quality Assurance

VET- Vocational Education Training

VETI - Vocational Education Training Institutions

VTC – Vocational Training Centre

SAR - Self Assessment Report

WB – Western Balkan

1. Introduction

This paper/analysis is developed within the frame of the “Aligning Education and Training with Labour Market Needs – ALLED Phase II”, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation. The purpose was, to analyse the current procedures and processes applied in Kosovo on supporting the monitoring of the post-accreditation of HE and VET providers.

Based on the analysis the document aims to provide recommendations for further improvement of post-accreditation and monitoring process in the light of new developments and trends related to quality assurance, also taking into account consequences of COVID 19 pandemic. In line with efficiency principle the document is complementing ADA, EU and other donor funded project available documents contributing to comprehensive approach to this very important field .

During the developing of this paper the special focus has been given to key responsible agencies for quality assurance (QA) in the Kosovo education, namely: the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) and the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), which are responsible for the important function of accreditation of pre-university (vocational) and higher education programmes and institutions, within the respective quality assurance sub-systems and legal framework. The special focus was on analysis of policies, QA mechanisms, procedures, legal framework related to NQA and KAA for monitoring of the post-accreditation phase, assessment of the institutional capacities and their future needs in line with EHEA trends (national and EU level).

The Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications, adopted in 2008, has established Kosovo’s National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The responsibilities for implementation of the NQF are as following: a) NQA is responsible for the vocational education and training qualifications; b) Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the general education qualifications; c) The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is responsible for the higher education qualifications.

National Qualifications Authority is an independent public body, in accordance with National Qualifications Law in Kosovo and established by the Ministry of Education and Science. It acts in agreement with the Office of the Prime Minister and other relevant ministries. The NQA Governing Board consists of 13 members, representing ministries, organizations, social partners and universities. Its responsibility is to oversee the national qualifications

along with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Agency for Accreditation and other professional bodies, approved for this purpose with the government decision. In particular, NQA is responsible for professional qualifications.

Objectives of NQA are to:

- a) define the types and levels of certificates and diplomas, which will be included in NQF;
- b) Approve the proposed qualifications for inclusion in the NQF (approve standards arrangements, assessment and certification, for each qualification in NQF);
- c) Accredite and monitor assessment bodies;
- d) Withdraw the accreditation from irresponsible bodies, if necessary;
- e) Conduct external quality assurance, leading to the award of qualifications at;
- f) Handle complaints / appeals by candidates regarding controversial decisions of assessment;
- g) Approve the certificates and diplomas issued to qualifications in the NQF;
- h) Maintain database and verifiable documentary evidence of qualifications in the NQF, certificates and diplomas awarded¹.

Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), was established in March 2008 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in accordance with the Law on Higher Education (2003/14) in Kosovo, as the Agency that guarantees the quality of work of the educational and scientific research activities of the Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo. The Kosovo Accreditation Agency is an independent authority, which accredits and re-accredits public and private HEIs for a limited period of time.

Its mission is that through the accreditation process KAA supports the development of quality in the Higher Education Institutions and at the same time assures the society of Kosovo that the quality of teaching and learning is comparable to the level of international standards.

1. Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications, adopted in 2008 by Kosovo Assembly

The primary responsibilities of the KAA are the following: Accreditation of public and private institutions of higher education; Accreditation of new higher education institutions and their programs; Accreditation of new programs in accredited higher education institutions; Continuous quality control in accredited institutions and their programs (KAA 2020).

2. Methodology

The research analysis was conducted whilst the education sector in the whole globe was undergoing through sudden changes due to the spread of COVID 19 first wave, which influenced governments across the globe to undertake measures to prevent the spread of pandemic. Measures applied were based on full lockdown including educational institutions, where the schools and universities faced with a necessity for immediate response to organize learning processes online and digitally. Large-scale, national efforts to utilize technology in support of remote and online learning/education during the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and evolved quickly. In addition countries have explored and used different options for remote learning and use of other educational resources to keep educational processes ongoing. These kind of developments continued globally at all levels of education.

In the recent decades post-accreditation monitoring has gained a particular attention to increase quality assurance and develop further develop quality culture for the HEIs and VETI. For this purpose and by taking into account the new circumstances created in the education sector by the COVID 19, the research tries to answer to the following key questions:

1. Are there procedures and mechanisms in place to allow for effective post-accreditation monitoring of programs and providers in VET and higher education?
2. What are the key challenges and gaps towards the establishment of an effective system for post-accreditation monitoring in Kosovo?
3. What is the approach on the part of institutions towards monitoring procedures?
4. How can post-accreditation monitoring in Kosovo best contribute to the improvement of quality assurance system and quality provision in VET and higher education?
5. What would be the procedures and mechanisms to best meet the specific needs of Kosovo in the field of post-accreditation monitoring?
6. What are the new developments that Kosovo should embrace in the vocational education training and higher education sector in the light of the changes caused by COVID 19 pandemic situation?

These key questions served to design and implement the surveys and interviews with key staff and stakeholder representatives in the field of quality assurance (QA) in Kosovo VET and higher education.

Initially the following activities were expected to be carried out to collect the most relevant information on post-accreditation monitoring in Kosovo, but also to acquire a glimpse of the good practices in the regions and in Europe.

The research was foreseen to consist of two main parts: the desk research and the field study (qualitative research).

In the desk research part the following activities took place:

- Review and analysis of the relevant documents and provisions of the Kosovo legal framework regulating accreditation and quality assurance in pre-university and higher education;
- Review and analysis of the relevant secondary data project documents, assessments, evaluations and previous evaluation reports and studies)².
- Review and analysis of the good practices in the field of the post-accreditation monitoring processes in Europe, including the WB region;

Apart from these, the key decisions and internal regulations of KAA and NQA were studied to gain an insight into the post-accreditation monitoring to detect possible bottlenecks and/or room for improvement and to contribute to increasing the efficiency of of the two agencies.

A number of interviews were conducted with the staff of key education authorities, including key responsible staff of the Ministry of Education, Science, Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, National Qualifications Authority (NQA), Agency for Vocational Education and Training and for Adults (AVETAE) , and so on. In addition, other interviews took place with a representative sample of respondents (management / staff / students) from VET schools /, VTCs, centres of competence and HEI to find out about their reflections and experience on the issue related to post-accreditation monitoring. 14 interviews were conducted in total with representatives of the above stakeholders and authorities.

2. A list of key documents is included in the ToR for this assignment.

A brief online survey was expected to be conducted with the management, staff and students of the VET and higher education providers to find out about their understanding of and the need for the monitoring mechanism in VET and HED. The survey was foreseen to serve finding out how receptive VET schools and HEIs are to the idea of post-accreditation monitoring and the potential challenges lying ahead of the future implementation of the monitoring in these institutions.

The force majeure caused by COVID19 pandemic influenced the initial foreseen methodology to be substantially adopted and changed. Consequently, problems and complications to implement field research work as was initially planned affected research activities. Despite pandemic and the change on modalities (in vivo versus online) the objectives and the targeted institutions of the research work remained the same. Consequently, being unable to perform the field work in vivo, direct meetings with focus group or conducting field visits, there was a need to switch into full application of digital tools and the objectives were reached. In this regard, a detailed questionnaire was developed with following main parts:

- Establishment of effective post-accreditation process (8 questions);
- Identifying existing, procedures, legal framework which support/hinder the post-accreditation (6 main questions and different sub-questions);
- Assessment of human resources of NQA and KAA for monitoring the post-accreditation process (10 questions);
- Identifying existence of a functional information technology platform that supports accreditation and post accreditation process (11 questions);
- Additionally, the HEIs and VETIs were specifically asked about their experiences on post-accreditation monitoring process conducted by KAA and NQA, as well as their institutional practices on this field, training needs and recommendations to improve the system (11 questions in total).

Communication with the targeted institutions and the persons as planned were contacted via email and phone. Upon agreement with the targeted institutions the developed questionnaire was disseminated. However, again the difficult situation was not over crossed. Due to the staff shortages in the targeted institutions, most of the time responding to questionnaires were delayed. After receiving the questionnaire, if there was a need for further clarification on a specific issue the interviewed persons were contacted via phone, as a faster mean of communication. Nonetheless all relevant data for comprehensive analysis was collected and processed.

3. Review of the key relevant EU and national strategic documents

Kosovo ratified its national qualifications framework (NQF) in law in 2008. The framework comprises eight levels, embracing lifelong learning. NQF is designed based on the European Qualification Framework. The main goal of the NQF is to enhance the quality of the education and training system and to drive it towards EU standards. The NQF is explicitly intended as a reform instrument (Viertel, 2019, pg. 322).

Quality assurance is crucial for accountability, transparency as well as to support ongoing development of vocational education training institutions and higher education institutions. The ongoing improvement of quality assurance represents foundation for creation of sustainable teaching, learning and research processes in the VETI and HEIs. Well-functioning systems have mechanisms to support and balance vertical and horizontal, internal and external accountability. Thus, harmonization of the Kosovo VETI and HEIs QA processes to the EU benchmarks for quality assurance is vital for international comparability, mobility, transfer and qualifications recognition in VET, EHEA and beyond. It can be widely noticed that both NQA and KAA have been making huge progress in accreditation process. Thus, the standards and criteria's are met fully or substantially during the accreditation process. However the follow-up process looks like its lagging behind. This requests fast actions for improvement, because the accreditation and post accreditation period represents inseparable part for guaranteeing quality assurance. In this context, the NQA, however, conducts ad-hoc post-accreditation monitoring activities which are regulated by law, bylaws and guidelines.

The **Kosovo - European Reform Agenda (ERA) 2 (2020)** highlights the importance of improving Kosovo's overall education system by:

- a) Ensuring systematic implementation of all quality assurance mechanisms at all education level by increasing capacities of education inspectors, strengthening roles of quality coordinators and building monitoring capacities in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency;
- b) Establishing an institutional and sustainable form of teacher training and professional development;

- c) Finalising the new core curricula in VET and provide teaching staff trainings for its implementation;
- d) Providing basis for reform and quality assurance in higher education by adopting the law on Higher Education and the Law on Agency for Accreditation, in line with the EU/Council of Europe recommendations.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) remain the main document at the European level setting the standard for internal and external quality assurance of the higher education institutions, as well as for the quality assurance agencies. The ESG 2015 have been divided into three key pillars: a) Internal quality assurance; b) External quality assurance; c) Quality assurance agencies/institutions.

According to ESG standard for Implementing processes, external quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include: a) a self-assessment or equivalent; b) an external assessment normally including a site visit; c) a report resulting from the external assessment; d) a consistent follow-up (ESG, pg. 18).

In this regard, internal quality assurance of the ESG, specifically standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance asks for institutions to undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis. Quality assurance is a permanent activity that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one (Ibid., pg. 25) .

Additionally, standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose asks for external quality assurance to be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. In line with ESG 2015, stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement. This needs to result in clear information on the outcomes and the follow-up. The 2.3 standard on implementing process, asks that the external quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include self-assessment or equivalent; an external assessment normally including a site visit; a report resulting from the external assessment; a consistent follow-up. In this respect the guidelines are quite clear and indicate that: External quality assurance carried out professionally, consistently and transparently ensures its acceptance and impact. Additionally, ESG specifically underlines that external quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies need to

have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance (ESG 2015, pg. 18-19).

The higher education academic and professional institutions, should focus on development of study programs that are demand driven and oriented towards labour market needs. Consequently, the study programs should be updated and upgraded in compliance to the fluctuations at the national and global level. This would contribute to overall competitiveness of the study programs. Thus, the task of the KAA and the NQA should be to follow and respond the changes as updated by different EU documents, adjusting to the local context and developments.

The Kosovo higher education system in continuance has benefited from the international support, including development of internal and external quality assurance in order to achieve the standards based on the EU trends and developments. Here we need to highlight the strong support provided by the Austria, in the beginning through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and latter on through the Austrian Development Cooperation. It started during '90s, at the time when the UP and the entire education system in Kosovo had functioned as a parallel system in the private houses. The Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Austria, were pioneers that recognized the documents issued during '90s by the Republic of Kosova. The obtainable opportunity for Kosovar's youth to continue their studies at Austria, contributed to human capacity building of the new state, and today, these students of '90s, with Austrian degrees are respected professors, politicians and businessmen in Kosovo. After the War 1998-1999, the unreserved and continued support to the Higher Education sector in Kosovo is ongoing. The support continued from payment of salaries to the academic staff of the UP, to the improvement of infrastructure. Nowadays, this support is further continuing in other segments with the overall aim to improve quality of teaching, learning, research and administrative of the Kosovo HEIs.

Today, ADA, EU and many international development agencies consider the investment in education as vital for the improvement of Kosovo socio-economic outcome. Thus, all the recommendations given in different documents including the Kosovo Progress Report, are towards integration of the Kosovo Higher Education system in the European Higher Education Area.

In the EU Kosovo Country Report 2019 among the issues addressed in the chapter on education and culture are the adoption of new Law on Higher Education, which ensures the autonomy and independent operation of higher education institutions and quality assurance mechanisms, based on best standards and increase the provision of vocational education and training for professions in demand. The report further suggests that the

proportion of students in higher education is nearly double the EU average. However, the graduation rate is low .

Unemployment among university graduates is still relatively high, despite having declined to just above 20% in the last quarter of 2018, suggesting a mismatch between higher education programs and labour market needs (European Commission, 2019, pg. 71). Despite the problems identified in the higher education it also highlights the issues in the VET sector related to the fact that VET programs lack practical and applied courses, with a still insufficient number accredited by the National Qualifications Authority. As the link to the labor market remains weak. Kosovo should increase the quality of VET programs and qualifications also by developing new profiles that match labor market needs and are taken on board by the private sector (European Commission, 2019, pg. 72). These facts reinforce the importance of post-accreditation monitoring of the VETI and HEI to ensure implementation of the recommendations given by KAA and NQA and an increase of quality assurance.

The “Study to evaluate the progress on quality assurance systems in the area of higher education in the Member States and on cooperation activities at European level” praises the efforts of the Western Balkan countries for their continuing efforts for the implementation of ESG especially through different international projects that aim to develop QA in line with the ESG. However, notes also the issues of KAA’s independence. Due to the Kosovo Government’s decision to dismiss KAA’s Council and director, KAA was removed from EQAR in February 2018. The Report also pays attention to the quality culture concept in higher education. Quality culture concept is gaining increased attention from the EU institutions and national authorities because of its potential to improve higher education outputs and outcomes, as well as to ensure the accountability of higher education institutions to the public. It remains a joint responsibility of the leadership, staff and student to continuously improve quality of learning, teaching and research. Since, quality results from the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment there should be an adoption of a strategic approach and strong leadership, in the mean time cooperation with different stakeholders. For the HEIs it is not sufficient to comply only with external assurance requirements, but should also actively promote the development of an internal quality culture (Nakrošis et al., 2018, pg. 54). Thus, the main challenge in the management of the education system remains the coordination of plans and priorities within a coordinated framework for planning and monitoring (EACEA, 2017).

The coronavirus pandemic has brought new career challenges for many people in Europe and wider. In July 2020, the Commission presented the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. It sets ambitious, quantitative objectives for upskilling (improving existing skills) and reskilling (training in new skills) to be achieved within the next 5 years. Its 12 actions focus on skills for jobs by partnering up

with different stakeholders and by empowering people to embark on lifelong learning and boosting investment in people's skills. The Skills Agenda aims to improve the relevance of skills in the EU to strengthen sustainable competitiveness, ensure social fairness and build our resilience. It aims to achieve this through 12 "actions":

- 1) A Pact for Skills;
- 2) Strengthening skills intelligence;
- 3) EU support for strategic national upskilling action;
- 4) Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience;
- 5) Rolling out the European universities initiative and upskilling scientists;
- 6) Skills to support the green and digital transitions;
- 7) Increasing STEM graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills;
- 8) Skills for Life;
- 9) Initiative on Individual Learning Accounts;
- 10) A European approach to micro-credentials;
- 11) New Europass Platform;
- 12) Improving the enabling framework to unlock Member States' and private investments in skills (European Commission, 2020).

However, the developing countries that still are faced with an education system which might be fragile and not very sustainable, might face several issues connected to teaching and learning. As underlined, in the ETF Report 2020 **schooling and learning don't always go hand in hand and the time spent in school may translate unevenly into learning. Sometimes, the gap between schooling and learning can be as high as four years in one third of the partner countries, including Kosovo. In other words, this** can be considered a loss of human capital, as students go to school without learning with consequences later in life (Badescu, 2020, pg. 12).

Consequently, the importance of post-accreditation monitoring process is tremendously

important, to make sure that VETI and HEIs deliver the teaching, administrative and research activities according to the standards as per the received accreditation. This way quality assurance becomes an important task for NQA and KAA in implementing the strategic documents and relevant national and EU standards for the interest of the entire society.

Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 is highlighted in 7 strategic objectives which do have a strong emphasis on quality assurance improvement:

1. Participation and Inclusion: Increasing participation and providing equal opportunities for the development, training, and education of every individual in pre-university education;
2. Management of the Education System: Improving the quality and efficient management of the education system, based on transparency and accountability;
3. Quality Assurance: Developing a functioning quality assurance system, in accordance with international standards;
4. Teacher development: Enhancing teaching quality through an effective and sustainable system for teacher professional development and preparation;
5. Teaching and Learning: Maximizing learning through quality teaching, implementing competency-based curricula, and by using high-quality teaching resources;
6. Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education: Harmonizing vocational education and training with labor market requirements in the country and abroad, and creating an open system for adult education;
7. Higher Education: Upgrading the quality and competitiveness of higher education through the promotion of excellence in teaching, scientific research, artistic creation, innovation, and internationalization (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2017).

Kosovo National Development Strategy 2016 – 2021 (NDS) identifies the strengthening of the examination, inspection and accreditation functions as crucial in the education system. As a result the document recognizes the following measures as immediate to improve the current situation:

- 1) Increased capacities of the National Quality Council to implement the Standard

European Instructions and Recommendations from European Association for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education (ENQA) and the European *Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education* (EQAR), as well as complement the accreditation process with a more comprehensive process of ranking the programmes under European Multidimensional Framework;

- 2) Implementation of a more credible final test for pupils – including the test after grade 5, semi-matura and PISA. Pupils' aptitude will be comparable with and standardized according to international tests PISA, TIMSS, PIACC.;
- 3) Improved final examination for regulated professions (in conformity with EC Directive 2005/36 of the EU). For this purpose, the Standards and Evaluation Agency will be established along with State Council on Regulated Professions;
- 4) Expansion and enhancement of the inspections system in education system and aspects of teacher performance evaluations, including managerial, pedagogical and legal;
- 5) Improved quality of autonomy and accountability of the accredited institutions through development and expansion of Accreditation Authorities' capacities (KAA and NQA);
- 6) Development of a teacher performance assessment system and a teacher grading system. The grading system will take into account the qualification, good performance and experience. Pupils' aptitude and inspection reports will be an essential part of evaluation criteria.

Additionally, the Kosovo National Development Strategy 2016 – 2021 seeks to optimize expenditures in education through data system. This is due to the fact that the funding of education system has not been related to any demographic trends and needs assessment for developing teaching capacities. Expenditures are committed in a rather non-systematic manner. This makes it difficult to forecast the trends and needs in a timely manner and results in inefficiencies during resource allocation. Improving the quality and measures set out under NDS require additional resources, which should be taken into account during financial planning. They may partially be done through effective action in the current system, subject to more efficient information system (Republic of Kosovo, 2016b).

Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 through its strategic objective number 3 recognizes quality assurance as a priority. The aim of this objective is to develop a functioning quality assurance system, in accordance with international standards. In addition

to creating a quality management system and developing the relevant processes and tools, capacity building at all levels will be necessary for making any new quality assurance system operational. Moreover, in the current climate in Kosovo, awareness raising activities that create an environment where accountability is fostered will also be needed (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2016) Science and Technology (MEST . No evidence is found on the progress regarding the SO no.3 of KESP.

In the VET Governance Kosovo –ETF, 2017 in terms of coordination mechanisms for VET policy making developing skills and capacities of staff in agencies involved in VET governance and policy making, focusing particularly on monitoring, evaluating and reporting is very crucial. However, assessment of the feasibility of establishing mechanisms for skills forecasting as a basis for VET policy making, and empower them is another major topic that would have an effect on increasing quality assurance (European Training Foundation, 2017).

3.1 Report of the European Association for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education (ENQA) about Kosovo Accreditation Agency

The KAA needs to increase capacities and take into consideration and at the same level of importance pre-accreditation and post accreditation processes. This is due to the fact that there might be cases on place when during the pre-accreditation process HEI is completely compliant with the KAA requirements, thus the study programs to be accredited. On the ground, the situation might be completely different, being the changes in the teaching, human resources of the HEI, or substantial changes on the teaching methodology, technology, literature... which will not guarantee reaching program learning outcomes as set in the self-evaluation reports. Post monitoring process should be treated with the same importance as pre-accreditation part.

The shortage of human resources of the KAA, as well as the missing yearly action plans by the HEI on implementation of suggestions of the external evaluation statements, are highlighted also in the Report of the European Association for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education (Lanares, Vries & Bezjak, 2019, pg. 27).

The ENQA Report listed the shortage of staff by the KAA, and impossibility to undertake field monitoring of HEIs on a regular basis. “At the end of each academic year, all accredi-

ed HEIs are obliged to submit to KAA an Implementation Plan of Recommendations, which in principle allows for desk-monitoring by KAA. However, the analysis of these plans is limited due to shortage of staff (Ibid, pg. 14).

At the time when the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was completed (Nov. 2018), the secretariat was down again to an (Acting) Director and five permanent employees. The reason why KAA is led by the Acting Director is that procedures for the election of a permanent Director of KAA have yet to be completed. Permanent employees are civil servants and they are recruited according to Law with a procedure defined by the Government, with limited workplace, and extreme workload (Ibid, pg. 25). Certainly these conditions makes difficult to implement all foreseen tasks and duties of the KAA, and looks like the post monitoring stage is among first parts that was not implemented substantially.

Furthermore, the ENQA report recommends to the KAA to further develop the follow-up procedures, in particular the follow-up on improvement plans and the length of re-accreditation cycles, and to become more specific on conditional (re-)accreditations.

On the recommendation on follow-up procedures in PR 2015 it is mentioned, that to carry out monitoring two officers had been appointed in 2014 with the explicit task to work on follow-up procedures, improvement plans and to analyse the extent to which institutions have met the conditions of approval (Ibid, pg. 7)

The SAR mentions that since the last revision of the Administrative Instruction (AI 2017) it had become more clear how KAA should conduct monitoring as prescribed by the Law on Higher Education. Article 29 of the AI (2017) defines the process of Monitoring and Control as follows (Ibid, pg. 35) :

- KAA performs monitoring and quality control with prior notification at accredited HEIs
- Monitoring and quality control is carried out by international external evaluators
- The cost of the monitoring is covered by KAA
- The monitoring of accredited HEIs is organized twice within one academic year.

According to the SAR over the past three years KAA has consistently collected evidence from HEIs in order to assess their level of compliance with formal requirements concerning sufficiency of academic staff per programme. For this matter the computerized system e-accreditation has been established, which allows HEIs to submit details in a less compli-

cated way than before. During the site visit this was confirmed by HEIs and there is wide support for this system. According to the SAR HEIs are also obliged to submit to the KAA at the end of each academic year an implementation plan to address the recommendations of the review-team. However, limited financial resources prevented KAA from conducting field monitoring, as HEIs don't pay for monitoring and Government grants are limited. Also, the fact that earlier appointed staff had left KAA prevented KAA from conducting field monitoring on a regular basis. KAA is working on drafting Monitoring Standards (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, there are no evidence that post monitoring process is taking place, which can be also supported by the ENQA report which states: "The processes of accreditation contain the elements asked for in the present Standard. A self assessment is foreseen, as well as a site visit, reports and a follow-up. The clear prescriptions of AM 2018 should contribute positively to processes, which are predefined and published well. However, over the last 1,5 year no reviews of full applications have taken place. In 2018 a full year extension of current accreditations has been allowed. There has been no monitoring of follow-up of recommendations in earlier reviews. Monitoring has been limited to formal requirements only, that is: limited to control rather than to quality enhancement. For this matter the 2014 recommendation has not been followed up. While the introduction of accreditation manual (AM2018) and the intentions to apply more intensive and quality-oriented monitoring look positive no evidence could be provided yet on the consistent implementation, reliability and usefulness of the processes. As to the quality of SERs no evidence could be supplied either for lack of recent SERs, prepared according to the new accreditation manual (Ibid., 35).

4. Post-accreditation and monitoring

Processes and procedures according to Kosovo legal framework

The aim of this chapter is to provide a short overview of the current legal basis with regard to post – accreditation and monitoring in all the levels of education. The legal base is regulated within the following laws : Law on Higher Education; Law on National Qualifications no. 03/L-060; Law on Pre-University Education; Law on inspection of education; Law on education in the municipalities; Law for Vocational Education and Training; Law no. 04/L-143 on Adults education and training in the Republic of Kosovo as well as through the other laws and legal provisions.

The purpose of the *Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosova* is to create a system which is in compliance to the European standards, in order to enable a fast integration of the Kososvar Higher Education System into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Based on Higher Education Law, Article 15 on Accreditation and Quality Assessment: higher education providers shall be subject to procedures for audit procedures and quality valuation by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) in accordance with this Law and sub-legal acts. A provider of higher education seeking accreditation for the first time, makes a request to the KAA at least a year before the expected date to obtain accreditation. Where a new public provider of higher education has been established and licensed under the provisions of this law, this requirement for accreditation shall not be applied. However, such a provider must meet the criteria set out in this law and must apply for accreditation to KAA within twelve months from the date of its first licence. Re-accreditation of providers shall be carried out by the KAA at intervals of not more than five (5) years. Re-accreditation is not done without a review of the provider self-evaluation report, except in exceptional circumstances. This review by the experts includes an inspection of direct service delivery. Re-accreditation of an institution or one or more of its programs may require the board of KAA or the Ministry within a period shorter than five (5) years. Every public provider, subject to compliance with licensing requirements, should seek institutional accreditation every five years. Academic units and its programs will undergo

regular assessment of quality. Accreditation certificates shall be issued by the KAA. Failure by a licensed provider of higher education to obtain institutional accreditation or re-accreditation, will result in a different organization for accreditation no later than one year. A second failure to obtain accreditation will result with the revocation of the license. Against revocation provider may appeal to a competent authority according to the Law on Administrative Procedures and Law on Administrative Conflict. Quality assessment of programs of accredited providers of higher education shall be conducted from KAA for each program within the cycle time that lasts no more than 5 years, KAA appoints international expert panels of relevant fields. KAA publishes on its website procedures, criteria and results of quality assessments.

Moreover, based on Article 18, of the Law on Higher Education, The Governing Structure of Higher Education Providers shall be responsible for development of a three-year Strategic Plan, which shall be updated annually. In preparing its Strategic Plan and annual updates, the Governing Council shall consult the Ministry regarding the compliance of its objectives and plans with the state strategy for higher education and the resources likely to be available from the Ministry. The scope of such consultation shall be determined by sub legal act that Ministry issues. The Governing Council takes measures for the publication of an annual report on the performance of the provider and gives information as may be required by the Ministry and the KAA.

The accreditation procedure consists of the following steps: the application institution can get information about the application procedure and other steps related to it from the KAA Office; The application should be submitted to the KAA Office; Before the application goes through evaluation, a careful check are made in order to ensure that the formal criteria have been met and if it appears necessary, additional documents might be requested that have to be submitted within a given deadline. To assess the quality of the applicant institution, international experts (2-7) are appointed and the institution itself has the right to make opinion about the experts' team. The experts are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The details corresponding to the site visit are announced in advance to the applicant institution and the site visit might last up to two days. The team conducting site visit is composed of: international experts, one member of the State Council of Quality and the representative of the KAA, while a foreign observer may join the team of experts. Upon finishing the site visit, experts prepare a joint evaluation report. The report is sent to the applicant institution for reviewing and making any comments. By relying on the submitted documents by the applicant institution (including self-evaluation report, experts' report and additional information asked upon request), the State Council of Quality takes decision on accreditation. KAA issues a Certificate of Accreditation, which becomes effective upon the date of the official decision.

Thus, based on the competences as set out in the Law on Higher Education, KAA is among others is responsible for: 2.1. advising with the Ministry on applications from institutions for licences to offer courses or programs forming part of or otherwise leading to higher education qualifications 2.2. inspecting providers of higher education and advising with the Ministry related to granting, modification or revocation of licences; 2.3. performing periodic audits over the quality of licensed providers of higher education and taking decision on accreditation or their re-accreditation including the right to award titles and diplomas; 2.4. undertaking periodic quality assessment of programs offered by accredited providers of higher education; 2.5. advising the Ministry, on the results of quality assessment and its implications for financing public providers of higher education, regarding the allocation of funds for private providers of higher education and with the support of free discretion to students who attend study programs to private providers of higher education and; 2.6. Carrying out, on behalf of the Ministry, such functions as may be delegated to it relating to the recognition of academic and professional qualifications and, in particular, acting as the competent authority for the regulation of higher education qualifications in accordance with of the Law on state qualifications. 2.7. Undertaking other activities that conform to European standards and coherent for higher education that are aimed at ensuring and improving the quality and standards in higher education in Kosovo.

Post-accreditation monitoring requires a mobilization of all resources and active cooperation of all relevant stakeholders. In this regard there should be an active involvement of the HEIs, as well. As the Law on higher Education obliges the Governing Structure of the HEIs to develop three-years strategic plan and also publish annual performance report, implementation of the KAA's recommendations should be part of it. Among others, this would increase accountability and transparency of the public and private HEIs towards, students, academic and administrative staff, business community and wider public.

KAA, by inspecting inspecting providers of higher education it advises the Ministry related to granting, modification or revocation of licences. However, as foreseen by the Law it is equal important that the outcome of quality assessment by the KAA during and after accreditation to be taken into consideration for financing public providers of higher education, or regarding the allocation of funds for private providers and not just for modification or revocation of licences.

Formally KAA's Administrative Instruction foresees organization of the visits after the accreditation is granted. The Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo (No. 15/2018); KAA performs monitoring and quality control with prior notification at accredited HEIs; Monitoring and quality control is carried out by international external evaluators; The cost of the monitoring process is covered by KAA; The monitoring of accredited HEIs is organized two times within one aca-

demical year. In this regard the Administrative Instruction foresees also the development of regulations and monitoring policies. However, so far this has not been implemented. KAA only asks from the HEIs for improvement plans, that also are facing either weaknesses or hasn't been developed as planned, but were referred during reaccreditation process. In the improvement plans HEIs have to state on how they have addresses experts' recommendations. In the last years, State Council of Quality has started to implement distance monitoring of the academic staff, to check whether the academic staff fulfills formal criteria based on the existing laws. It also evaluates competences of the academic staff in relation to the study program i.e. if the head of the study program fulfills competences for that specific study program. However, also this part is technically checked. There is check if the teaching staff has sufficient academic degree, but not monitoring the implementation of syllabi as set in the SER.

The benefits of the monitoring procedures among others consist on the fact that study programmes maintain the same criteria and standards, and they improve the findings and make actions on the remarks which were given by the experts, in an attempt to improve quality.

Based on the Law on National Qualifications no. 03/L-060, among others, the objectives of National Qualification Framework (NQF) are to: increase quality and relevance of education and training by stimulating the development of qualifications, based on internationally comparable standards of knowledge, skills and competences and supported by rigorous quality assurance; improve employability and learning opportunities for individuals by providing a basis for recognition and certification of learning and achievements; support the continuation and sustainability of demand-led education and training system reforms.

In addition to the responsibilities relating to the NQF, the NQA functions in relation to regulating the award of qualifications, based on Article 15 Regulation of the award of qualifications are to: approve (and, as necessary, re-approve) standards, assessment and certification arrangements for each qualification in the NQF; accredit, regulate and monitor assessment bodies, and bodies which carry out other functions on behalf of the NQA to ensure compliance with the requirements for each approved qualification; carry out external quality assurance of assessments leading to the award of qualifications in the NQF; maintain databases and verifiable documentary records of qualifications, in the NQF and of certificates or diplomas awarded; consider appeals from candidates in respect of disputed assessment decisions by and assessment bodies and bodies which carry out other functions on behalf of the NQA; carry out periodic evaluative reviews and international comparisons of qualifications provision; advise institutions responsible for recognizing foreign qualifications either for academic or for employment purposes on issues of comparability and/or equivalence; exercise such additional functions complementary to those

listed on the above subparagraphs of this paragraph.

While based on, Article 17 responsibilities of assessment bodies are to: enroll and register candidates for qualifications; assess candidates' formal, non-formal and informal learning and maintain records of candidate assessments; recognize credits achieved by candidates and enable their transfer; implement internal quality assurance of assessments leading to approved qualifications, to ensure consistency in the application of standards; issue qualification certificates or diplomas endorsed by the NQA; report to the NQA on certificates or diplomas awarded to individual candidates; such other responsibilities as may be defined in regulations issued by the NQA. Assessment bodies shall be required to ensure access to assessment and certification for candidates other than those following specified education and training programs, including candidates providing evidence of prior achievements acquired through non-formal or informal learning.

Based on Article 18, NQA is responsible to monitor assessment bodies and bodies which NQA has accredited to carry out functions in the national qualifications system to ensure compliance with the requirements to be set out in the regulations referred to at paragraph 2 of Article 16 and paragraph 1 of Article 17 of this law. In cases where a failure to comply with the stated requirements is identified, the assessment centre or other accredited body shall be required to implement changes. In such cases the NQA shall issue a written statement explaining the grounds for the finding of non-compliance, specifying the actions to be taken by the assessment centre or other accredited body concerned and the date by which the actions shall be taken. In cases where continued non-compliance with requirements is found, the NQA may withdraw accreditation.

The Law on National Qualifications no. 03/L-060, creates the legal basis for the post-accreditation monitoring of the VETI. However, as underlined in several parts of the reports there is a need for an Administrative Instruction to support this process. The Administrative Instruction should be design based on the EU latest developments with regard to vocational education training and by taking into account the recent changes that the education sector is undergoing. It means utilizing more the technological tools to conduct this process. This would enable a more cost-efficient process.

Based on Law on Pre-University Education, monitoring and quality assurance issues are regulated with article 5, that sets the following duties for the Ministry: to design effective and impartial forms of education administration and management of education and training institutions for implementation by municipalities and to establish criteria and procedures for monitoring the performance of governing boards; to promote and improve the quality and efficiency of education and training through the mechanisms provided in Article 8 of the Law for inspection, monitoring and evaluation; to enhance the quality of

education; and to ensure compliance with the Constitution and applicable law;

Law on Pre-University Education through Article 8 regulates inspection of education. This article foresees the following: Inspection of educational and training institutions³;

The authority for inspection derives from the Ministry; directors of educational and training institutions and Municipal Education Authorities shall co-operate with authorised inspectors, provide all necessary documentation and access to the institution, and attend the inspection personally or through an authorised deputy; Inspection shall be organised in an annual planning cycle, with the possibility of special inspections in specific circumstances as decided by the Inspectorate Department.

The purposes of inspection of the operation of educational and training institutions at ISCED Levels 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 are to check, in co-operation with inspectors from other fields (employment, sanitary, construction, financial, etc) and record: 4.1. compliance with the respective duties and functions of the institution according to this Law, other applicable laws and bylaws; 4.2. the functioning of the governing board of the institution, the Parents' and Pupils' Councils, the financial operations, accuracy of records of numbers of pupils by level and grade, accuracy of pedagogical and school documents, organisation of classes and examinations; 4.3. the numbers, qualifications and arrangements for professional development of staff; 4.4. the working environment including compliance with standards of health and safety of pupils and staff, records kept of disciplinary action and its outcome; 4.5. compliance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, including the core, and school-based curriculum, assessment and examination procedures, and the use of approved textbooks, educational learning resources and learning materials; 4.6. and, where non-compliance in any field is observed, to give the director of the institution concerned specific advice or recommendation for compliance within a specified timescale. 5. If adequate measures are not taken by the director of the institution to redress the deficiencies in any area listed in paragraph 4. of this Article, the inspector may institute disciplinary procedures against the director or any member of staff of the institution. 6. Following the report of the inspector, signed by the inspector and by the director of the institution concerned: 6.1. the Ministry may terminate the work of educational and training institutions which are unlicensed, or are operating in an unsafe or unhealthy environment; 6.2. the Ministry may instruct the municipality to terminate the employment of a teacher appointed contrary to the criteria established in this Law, or who is barred from work due to a medical condition or the order of a court, or who is otherwise disqualified according to the provisions of this Law or other applicable law; 6.3. if deficiencies relate to non-observance of the curriculum, the Ministry

3. For the purposes set out in sub-paragraph 1.9 paragraph 1 of Article 5 of this Law is a function of the Inspectorate Department of the Ministry

may require compliance through additional or alternative classes; 6.4. the Ministry may annul marks when assessment procedures have not been respected, and annul diplomas and other documents gained in contradiction with this Law or other applicable law. 7. The Inspectorate Department shall also have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the academic work of educational and training institutions, as part of the annual cycle of inspections.

The Ministry shall, in consultation with the Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency (KCSAA), establish criteria and procedures for national inspection, which may include experts in specific academic or professional fields, in accordance with paragraph 4. of Article 25 of this Law. 8. Appeals against any actions or recommendations of an inspector may be made to the Appeals Committee of the Ministry.

The aspects of monitoring are set out, in the article 30 that requires the following:

1. Delegating authorities shall monitor the exercise of delegated authority;
2. The financial autonomy granted to institutional governing boards and directors shall be subject to accountability to the delegating authority in the form of annual audited reports to the delegating authority;
3. The delegation of authority may be suspended or revoked if the delegating authority determines that funds have been mismanaged or applied to purposes other than those for which they were delegated;
4. Revocation of delegated authority under paragraph 3. of this Article shall take place only after consultation between the parties, and except in urgent cases of alleged misapplication of funds, shall require the delegating authority to give at least thirty (30) days notice of the planned revocation;
5. Any dispute between a municipality and an institutional governing board in relation to this Part shall be referred to the Ministry for determination.

Thus, even though the Law on Higher Education foresees cooperation with the Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency, which is s foreseen to be established by the Law on Regulated Professions (the Law is drafted around three years ago, however it is not promulgated at the Assembly) the KCSAA is not yet established. Meanwhile, there are initiatives by MES that Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency as well as the Agency for Regulated professions to be established and function. There is a decision for building the premises where these two agencies will be located close to Kosovo Juridical Center. However, until today, there is not still construction executed.

The Law on inspection of education in Kosovo regulates implementation of the laws and sub-law acts of the inspections of education in all levels of public and private education. The main duties of education inspectors, comprises of:

- a) Organizing the duty and activities of the education institutions in harmony with establishment act and licensing act;
- b) Conditions on which is organized the education process (Local, inventory, education tools, environment (etc) which are determined with working programs;
- c) Harmonization of Acts and regulations for the education institutions by the Law and with other Acts issued by MEST;
- d) Realization of the annual program of the institution's work;
- e) Functioning of the governing and professional organs and education institutions;
- f) Children registration, pupils and students in correspondence with conditions and criteria's determined by the law ore with any other act;
- g) Number of children, pupils, students in group, level and grade;
- h) Admission of educative, administrative and technical staff pursuant to law and sub-legal acts;
- i) Realization of curriculum and realizing conditions;
- j) Realization of school calendar;
- k) Respecting the school and working shift;
- l) Organizing the regular and extramural exams in correspondence with law and other legal acts;
- m) Organizing non-formal education;
- n) Respecting the obligations of education institutions towards parents and children, pupils, students, employees and vice versa;
- o) Pupils and student evaluation;

- p) Form for professional and scientific teacher development;
- q) Health protection for children, pupils, students, teachers, and other educational institution employees;
- r) Supervising and providing the transport for children, students and teachers;
- s) Realization of the rights and duties for pupils, students and other employees in correspondence with law;
- t) Disciplinary measures enounced toward pupils, students, teachers, and other institutional employees;
- u) Manners for creating institutional education funds and their managing;
- v) Keeping the evidence for pedagogical and school documents in correspondence with and by the law and acts law;
- w) Regulation of the issuing the public document for student and pupil;
- x) Realization of different programs and projects in the education system. Additionally, upon requirement the education inspector may cooperate with the inspectors of other fields: employment inspector, sanitary inspector, construction inspector, financial inspectors etc.

Even though the Law on inspection of education in Kosova foresees the examination of all the levels of education (Preschool education, elementary education, lower and upper secondary education, higher education, Special Education, Non-formal Education, Vocational Education, Organized settlement for children, pupils and students (children gardens, pupil and student dormitory), Education in Diaspora, Correctional houses and prison it is still not clear the cooperation with the NQA and KAA for conduction of inspection visits. We have also received a response by the Higher Education Department of MES, that they do not conduct planned monitoring visits to the HEIs. In the ETF Report, is the one that also highlights that “the current role of education inspectors remains unclear as regards quality assurance in VET and its specific emphasis on developing skills and competences, as required by the labour market” (Viertel 2019, pg. 31).

The Law on education in the municipalities through Article 5 regulates Competencies of the Municipalities in Public Education Levels 0, 1, 2, and 3 (PrePrimary, Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary):

- 1) monitoring and reporting on students' educational and social progress to parents and other responsible authorities as determined by legislation; and article 6 Administrative Responsibilities of the Municipalities: c) monitoring of and reporting on educational management and operations in municipalities shall be performed through the municipal administrative body identified as competent for that function by the Mayor of the municipality. As far the occupational standards are concerned, this is set in the article 12 of the Law. Occupational Standards are developed in cooperation which Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), NQA, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) and other relevant ministries and other social partners.
- 2) Occupational Standards are approved by Council of *Vocational* Educational and *Training* and for Adults' (CVETA);
- 3) Verification of Occupational Standards is carried out by the NQA;
- 4) Assessment of students' achievement is based on qualification standards for the specific profile.

The Law on education in the municipalities via Article 14 sets Enhanced Competencies of the Municipality in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North, which underlines that: c) Decisions on the conformity of the statute with central framework legislation, European standards and best practices and on matters concerning the accreditation of the university within the Kosovo university system shall be taken by the independent commission established by Article 14.b of this law

Competencies of the Municipalities in Public Education Levels 0, 1, 2, and 3 (Pre- Primary, Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary), among others include: supervision and inspection of the education process in accordance with guidelines established by the MEST; development, approval, and implementation of the Rules of Procedure for schools, including the Code of Conduct for managerial staff, teachers, other personnel, and students as well as disciplinary measures; reporting on pre-primary level education, budgetary and management operations to municipal governments and the MEST in accordance with municipal and central legislation; application of such delegated functions or competencies as shall be determined by formal agreement between the municipality and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo; monitoring and reporting on students' educational and social progress to parents and other responsible authorities as determined by legislation.

The Law for Vocational Education and Training, through Article 18 has set the basis for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training:

1. Institution of *vocational* education and *training* (IVET) shall prepare annual self-evaluation reports according to the criteria set by NQA.
2. Self-evaluation reports should be published and transparent.
3. External inspection shall be conducted by inspectors of MEST;
4. The regulation of the award of qualifications shall be determined under Article 15 of the Law on National Qualifications;
5. Accreditation of the assessment institutions shall be determined under Article 16 of the Law on National Qualifications.;
6. Quality assurance of the assessment shall be carried out by NQA pursuant to the Law on National Qualifications. Based on Article 32, System Evaluation can be done as following:
 - 1) System evaluation of VET can be done with request of: 1.1. MEST; 1.2. MLSW and other ministries; 1.3. CVETA; 1.4. NQA; 1.5. joint request of at least two (2) social partners;
 - 2) Evaluation process, including election of evaluator, should be undertaken in that way to secure independence from political or institutional influence;
 - 3) Working rules for such evaluation should be based in the legislation of VET and NQF and/or are decided with a joint agreement between MEST, MLSW and other ministries;
 - 4) Report and recommendations should be public.

The Law no. 04/L-143 on adults education and training in the Republic of Kosovo, through Article 10 sets the framework with regard to assessment of programs: 1. Formal education and training programs for adults' shall be assessed according to standards compiled by MEST until the establishment of the Agency for Curricula, Standards and Assessment; 2. Educational and professional training programs for adults shall be submitted to validation and accreditation process of NQA in compliance with criteria, standards and procedures according to legislation into force.

Post-accreditation monitoring should be part of the working activities of the KAA. This would enable that KAA not to have only a focus on accreditation but also to conduct post-accreditation monitoring activities that has same importance. Accreditation and post-accreditation processes are complementary and inseparable parts for quality assurance. There should be an effective communication system established among the KAA and HEIs in order to implement an efficient and transparent post-accreditation monitoring. Additionally, this should be

accompanied with a budget increase for KAA and an increase of human capacities.

A European and Training Foundation as a policy recommendation gives the importance to revisiting agencies and multilevel management arrangements., based on the fact that the 2013 Law on VET (no. 04/L-183) envisaged different management arrangements, MEST and municipal education directorates (MEDs) continue to manage 62 out of the 68 VET institutions, following earlier provisions of the 2011 Law on Pre-University Education. In these VET institutions, VET offers and enrolment planning primarily take account of the conditions prevailing in schools and the teaching staff available. There is little room or incentive to depart from this supply driven approach: neither MEST nor MEDs have in the past years been making major adjustments to bring VET offers and enrolment numbers better in line with labour market demand. Municipal education directorates manage VETIs in a same manner as secondary general schools. Although, the requirements are different for VETIs compared to secondary general schools. Other problems underlined are related to: autonomy, budgets, staff and the offered courses of the VETIs (Viertel 2019, pg. 30).

4.1 Analysis of the needs for documentation to support post-accreditation monitoring at NQA and KAA

NQA: Monitoring process of the VETI by the NQA is conducted based on the Law on National Qualification Framework no. 03/L-060, specifically articles 18 and 19. Furthermore, monitoring process is conducted based on the Administrative Instruction 35 – 2014 on criteria and procedures for validation and approval of national qualifications and accreditation of the institutions that offer qualifications in Kosova, which explicitly underline the criteria upon which VETI should be monitored by the NQA up to level 5th of the NQF.

Currently, the following legal documents exist:

Law on National Qualification no. 03/L-060

Administrative Instruction no. 35-2014 for criteria and procedures for validation and approval of national qualification and accreditation of institutions that offer qualification in Kosova

Guidelines for monitoring of accredited VETI, which is focused in two parts: quality assurance based on self-evaluation report and improvement plan and the part on delivering, evaluation and certification of qualifications.

Even though NQA has developed and approved a guideline for monitoring of the accredited VETI (supported through ALLED 1), a key issue it is the development of Administrative Instruction, which would determine in the legal and practical aspects the whole monitoring process. During the monitoring process, when NQA finds out that the quality delivered is not at a satisfactory level, it gives professional recommendations for improvement and increasing of quality. If the NQA finds out that the procedures determined by the AI have been breached, it might recommend to remove validation and accreditation. Additionally, the institutions that continue to keep a satisfactory level of quality are encouraged to do so.

NQA needs to increase number of human resource for monitoring, as well as their professional training. Additionally, to establish an effective post-monitoring system there is a need for upgrading the digital platform⁴ and ensure its interoperability with KAA digital tools, that would enable distance monitoring, having in mind the increase of the number of accredited programs in the recent years. Ideally, this could be combined also with the training of quality assurance coordinators at the VETI.

There is no need for the revision of current legal framework, but for the administrative instruction, which would determine in the legal and practical aspects the whole monitoring process.

However, the ETF Report underlines that “there is an issue of creating an all-encompassing, clear legal framework for VET, ensuring also coherence with the Law on National Qualifications and other relevant laws. VET must increasingly become a valid alternative to academic education in Kosovo, because the labour market demands vocational skills. Hence, it is advisable to think of VET as one system that serves various clients, including young people and adults. The VET law could be turned into a law that covers VET for all target groups at different stages of people’s lives, that is delivered in different forms and by different public, private or other providers and that leads to different levels of competence”, (Viertel 2019, pg. 32).

KAA: The Law on Higher Education foresees accreditation process, while the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation has a specific article on monitoring. However,, there is no monitoring manual or guideline, as a part of other accreditation documents.

The terminology used in the Law on Higher Education regarding responsibilities on accreditation is quite confusing. In many cases the following notions are used: inspections, monitoring, quality control etc. The terminology has to be unified since KAA does not perform inspection. Concerning the Administrative Instruction on Higher Education there is

4. First version developed by Alled1 in 2017

a need for a detailed description with regard to post-accreditation monitoring procedure, as there is only an article describing this process. Since the aim of the Law on Higher Education seeks to make the Kosovar higher education system, part of the European Higher Education Area it creates the basis to develop other documents in line with the European trends on quality assurance.

As for the barriers there are two issues that causes difficulties:

1. There are still no standards and guidelines on how to do monitoring,
2. According to the Administrative Instruction, monitoring is done only with international experts, which reduces know-how transfer.

Therefore, this part of the AI should be revised and allow for KAA staff to conduct monitoring, as well as allow for invite of international experts if KAA officers and SCQ considers as necessary.

In a vulnerable system with a tendency of financial benefit, post-accreditation monitoring is a very important tool in order to prohibit the kind of misuses . In order to establish an effective post-accreditation monitoring the following steps have to be undertaken:

1. Drafting the legislation, standards, criteria on monitoring
2. Establishing of monitoring guidelines,
3. Establishing of follow up procedures,
4. Conduct training in terms of staff development,

There is a lack of:

- Law on Accreditation Agency
- Standards and Guidelines on post-accreditation monitoring
- Different templates accompanying the Manual i.e. template for preparation of annual post-accreditation reports
- Update of other relevant documents and include the process of post-accreditation monitoring (i.e. Code of Conduct to include also ethical issues related to post-accreditation monitoring)

5. Existing institutional capacities (NQA and KAA) for implementation of the post-accreditation monitoring process.

The aim of this chapter is to present the current state of play and the results of the analysis of the capacities of NQA and KAA for the implementation of the post-accreditation monitoring process based on the interviews realized with the key staff working in both institutions.

Vocational Education and Training Institutions (VETI) are a subject of monitoring by National Qualification Authority (NQA) during the validation and accreditation procedure.

Accredited institutions and bodies shall be subject to monitoring and auditing by the NQA. Monitoring of the VETI ensures internal quality assurance in terms of maintaining performance based on the granted accreditation. Additionally, monitoring aims to ensure that delivery, evaluation and certification of the professional criteria is based on criteria set from the process of validation. This also ensures that knowledge, skills and competences gained by the pupils / candidates are within the legal framework and the process of validation and accreditation.

The accreditation by National Qualification Authority consists of four phases:

Phase 1: The fulfilled application should be handed over by the applying institution. The application has to contain detailed justification related to qualification / module and other details as asked by the NQA.

Phase 2: The application is evaluated by the team of experts selected by the NQA. Team of experts is supported by the NQA Officer. Draft-Report along with NQA recommendation is sent to the Institutions that has applied for validation. In between, the applying institution can give additional explanations with regard to the comments / questions given by the experts within the given deadline by the NQA.

Phase 3: Experts' Report along with the recommendations, explanations or comments

made by the applicant is sent to Governing Board of NQA. Afterwards, it takes a decision for validation based on the Working Regulation of Governing Board.

Phase 4: Upon approval by the Governing Board, qualifications / modules become part of the National Qualification Framework and are made publicly available from NQA.

Based on Administrative Instruction the foreseen period for validation of qualifications is up to 6 months, from the application date.

As mentioned by Mr. Lah Nitaj, NQA Director for around decade NQA has function with a critical number of staff (6+1). Currently, only one person works for the monitoring process (for this sector at least 2 persons need to be employed). Further on this topic, Mr. Avni Gashi (June 2021), current NQA Acting Director, NQA, over the years has developed monitoring activities through various forms:

1. Through verification and stamping of certificates (this process is continuous for all IAAP accredited in NQA);
2. By reviewing the conditions for Accredited Institutions with external experts;
3. By declaring the registered number of candidates in the training groups and the staff engaged for these groups;
4. Through the submission of Self-Assessment Reports on an annual basis, as well as;
5. Monitoring visits of the institutions.
6. It is worth mentioning that all these activities are carried out by all existing professional and administrative staff of NQA⁵.

NQA needs to increase number of employed staff and especially for the monitoring activities. Moreover, during the data gathering phase of this study, current NQA staff expressed that they have not received training for the implementation of post-accreditation monitoring process except one advisory session during ALLED1 project implementation.

5. Executive Director (1 person), Senior Officer for Post-Accreditation Monitoring Process (1 person), Expert for Occupational Standards (1 person), Expert for Qualification (1 person), Expert for Quality Assurance (2 person), Senior Officer for RPL (1 person), Senior Officer for Budget and Finances (1 person), Senior Officer for IT and Logistics (1 person), Senior Legal Officer (1 person), Administrative Assistant (1 person). There is one more vacant positions which is expected to be filled, and it includes Senior Officer for Monitoring for Post Accreditation Process (1 person)

Thus, trainings for monitoring, exchange of experiences or would be very useful.

The post-accreditation monitoring has an equal importance also on checking whether HEIs and VETI⁶ are fulfilling the criteria upon which the accreditation is given, as well as if the recommendation given by the experts are being fully implemented.

As related to HEIs, in general implementation of post-monitoring accreditation ensures:

- That HEIs are fulfilling accreditation criteria and standards
- Have not handed over fictitious facts and proves only to get accreditation
- Increases transparency

Based on received and analyzed questionnaires, interviews with relevant stakeholders as well as several meetings performed to find out current situation related to this part is promising. Beside some difficulties that KAA has been going through in last 2-3 years, there can be noticed that the accreditation process has been going quiet well, the sub phases and standards have been substantially met. There is always space for improvement, however there is quiet good base and a good tradition established and present on place .

The situation looks differently when it came up for the post-accreditation phase. According to the legal framework, the key phases of post-accreditation monitoring encompasses:

1. Monitoring whether the academic staff is conducting the teaching ours as set out on the Self Evaluation Report,
2. Executing the follow up procedures to make sure that HEI's are implementing the recommendations issued by the experts team.

These sub phases of post-accreditation stage are clearly and usefully listed, but the situation on the ground is far from desirable. There is still a lack of quality culture within the system of Higher Education, therefore post-accreditation monitoring is a key component in ensuring quality, as long as there is a tendency for misuse of the criteria by the HEI's.

At the moment, due to shortage in human resources and lack of guidelines on monitoring, KAA is only conducting desk monitoring, which means that KAA makes sure that the aca-

6. In the period that the report is drafted only private VETI and public VTCs (managed by EARK) were accredited and no public VET school were accredited

demographic staff has only one engagement as a full time staff in one institution, and that the staff is spending their workload accordingly as set out on the standards. The only issue in regards to desk monitoring is that the electronic system is not reliable, and that information/documents that are submitted are suspicious and might be fake.

KAA is composed of:

- Executive Director (1 person)
- Senior Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation (3 persons)
- Senior Officer for Accreditation and Evaluation (1 persons)
- Senior Officer for Budget and Finances (1 person)
- There are 5 more vacant positions which are expected to be filled, and they include Senior Legal Officer (1 person) IT (1 person), Officer for Personnel and Administration (1 person), Senior Officer for Accreditation and Evaluation (2 persons)

3 Senior officers in total who are responsible for monitoring are responsible at the same time for evaluation and accreditation procedures. There should be a division of tasks among officers, who are responsible for evaluation and those who are responsible for post monitoring.

Beside the current 3 persons who are responsible for monitoring (but also deal with evaluation and accreditation procedures), KAA needs at least 5 more officers for this purpose. Therefore, with 8 employed officers for Monitoring, KAA would be able to conduct an efficient and fruitful monitoring process in the entire Kosovo.

Emergency needs for hiring the new staff at the KAA, represents half of the problem. The second part consists of the needs for capacity building with priority on:

1. Training based on implementation of a manual (for KAA staff and the HEIs), which would be drafted in line with the guidelines on monitoring the post accreditation process.
2. Acquisition of international practices (including study visits)⁷ on quality assurance related policies and mechanisms including the post accreditation and monitoring of the accredited providers.

7. The visits would enable KAA monitoring officials, to gain experience and first hand information on how these countries are performing monitoring of the post accreditation process (countries such as United King-

6. Digitalization of operations and overall functioning of the KAA and NQA

There is an opportunity for VET and higher education sector to reflect and undertake its reforms towards digitalization. Kosovo education system should pay attention to ensure access to digital tools and technologies for every learner, teacher and trainer, as well as appropriate guidance measures. Digital tools such as simulators, virtual and augmented reality have the potential to increase the accessibility and efficiency of the education sector as a whole. To this extent, NQA and KAA should consider to benefit from the digitalization of its operations of all processes:

1. Monitoring and evaluations systems;
2. Mechanisms to assess and assure quality;
3. Evaluations to support the delivery and review of VET and higher education policies;
4. Statistical systems adapted to monitor the labour market and/or undertake skills needs analysis;
5. Research functions to support the development of policies; and
6. Post-accreditation monitoring.

There are a lot of opportunities that both the NQA and KAA can benefit from SMART tools, Evidenced based policy making, register of qualifications as a tool for postaccreditation monitoring, interoperability of the databases and real time data.

NQA: There is an IT platform which is not used for monitoring. The current software can be further upgraded to conducts post-monitoring accreditation and in line with the latest demands. Along with the further software upgrade also a Manual on its used can be de-

veloped, which can be used by the staff.

KAA: There is no a functional IT system that support post-accreditation monitoring. However, there is a software used for accreditation purposes (<http://e-akreditimi.rks-gov.net/>). In this regard it has to be further investigated in terms of technical infrastructure, prerequisites and demand.. Due to the large number of accredited HEIs and study program, managing part of post-accreditation monitoring via software is much convenient.

There is no manual or guideline with regard to post-accreditation monitoring, but KAA is in the process of drafting them, as there are 2 experts appointed with the support of donors.

7. Way forward for the post-accreditation and monitoring processes

7.1 Way forward for the post-accreditation and monitoring processes for NQA

The Law on National Qualifications asks for implementation of rigorous quality assurance standards which are internationally comparable and also that would drive on creation of a demand-led education and trainings system reforms, In addition, this also supported by the demands in Kosovo National Development Strategy 2016 -2021 that asks for and improved quality of autonomy and accountability of the accredited institutions through development and expansion of the NQA, as well. Kosovo National Development Strategy 2016 - 2021 . Besides, the NDS seeks to optimize expenditures in education through data system, specifically through more efficient information system.

While in the VET Governance Kosovo –ETF, 2017 there is a strong emphasis on developing the skills and capacities of staff in agencies involved in VET governance and policy making, focusing particularly on monitoring, evaluating and reporting. In this regard quality assurance standards need to be more rigorous in terms of developing a feedback mechanisms, while information system is quite important to support this process.

Aproper post-accreditation system for vocational education and training have to be accompanied with the increase of the number of staff working for NQA as well as proper human development policies and methodologies. Continuous capacity building should be core activity for embracing smooth post-accreditation process. This can be achieved through knowledge transfer, peer learning, capacity building programs, study visits. This learning involves individuals exchanging knowledge and experience with each other, and potentially diffusing this learning back to their organisations to ensure an impact—at scale—on reform initiatives. This way it is acknowledged that learning takes place between individuals and it facilitates interpersonal interchanges that are well-matched and that are based on trust and commitment.

The Law on inspection of education in Kosovo foresees the examination of all the levels of

education and cooperation across different settings. Thus, the role of education inspectors should become clear in the post-accreditation monitoring process.

As advised by the ETF, as well it is desirable in Kosovo to develop VET as one system that serves various clients, including young people and adults. The VET law could be turned into a law that covers VET for all target groups at different stages of people's lives (Viertel 2019, pg. 32).

7.2 Way forward for the post-accreditation and monitoring processes for KAA

The Law on Higher Education by aiming to make the Kosovar higher education system part of the European Higher Education creates the basis to develop other documents in line with the European trends on quality assurance. On the other hand, all the accreditation procedures and guidelines in Kosovo are written in the spirit of the ESG and other EU trends and developments.

As it is underlined in several parts of this report, KAA due to the limited human capacities has not conducted post-accreditation monitoring for the HEIs. Even though in order to regain ENQA membership, it is very crucial for the KAA to reach most of the standards and guidelines as set out in the ESG. In this respect, ESG specifically highlights that external quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies need to have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance. This allows flexibility to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency to design its own post-accreditation monitoring system based on the accreditation procedures, as well as available resources.

In any case, post-accreditation monitoring cannot be implemented without an active involvement of the higher education institutions. Moreover, based on Article 18, the Governing Structure of Higher Education Providers are responsible for development of a three-year Strategic Plan, which shall be updated annually. Beside preparation of a Strategic plans, it obliges the HEIs to publish an annual report on the performance of the provider and gives information as may be required by the Ministry and the KAA. Since the Law on Higher Education asks HEIs to publish annual performance report by containing information required also by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, reporting on the progress of

implementing recommendations of the KAA could be part of it. This could increase HEIs transparency and accountability towards students, academic and administrative staff as well as wider public.

Formally KAA's Administrative Instruction foresees organization of the visits after the accreditation is granted. However, so far this has not been implemented. KAA only asks from the HEIs for improvement plans. In the improvement plans HEIs have to state on how they have addresses experts' recommendations. This is not sufficient, as it hard to get evidence-based situation if the recommendations are implemented for real by the HEIs. Thus, establishment of an effective and efficient post-accreditation monitoring system is crucial for enhancing quality culture in the higher education system of Kosova that the post-accreditation monitoring is established and implemented effectively and efficiently.

Emergency needs for hiring the new staff at the KAA, represents half of the problem. The second part consists the need for trainings. Thus, the following but not limited to: knowledge transfer, peer learning, capacity building programs, study visits are essential activities that should be offered to the KAA staff in a continuous manner not only for installing a successful post-accreditation and monitoring process, but also to keep up with the latest EHEA trends on quality assurance.

The outcome of quality assessment by the KAA during and after accreditation to be taken into consideration by MES for financing public providers of higher education, or regarding the allocation of funds for private providers and not just for modification or revocation of licences.

Last but not least, as the Law on inspection of education in Kosova foresees the examination of all the levels of education, the role of education inspectors should become clear in the post-accreditation monitoring process.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations for NQA

- Even though NQA has developed and approved a guideline for monitoring of the accredited VETI, a key issue it is the development Administrative Instruction, which would determine the legal and practical aspects of the whole process, accreditation and post accreditation monitoring process⁸.
- Development of manuals and guidelines for the NQA and VETI for post accreditation and monitoring process.
- Specification of the role of inclusion of education inspectors in the post-accreditation monitoring and cooperation with NQA.
- For around decade NQA has function with a critical number of staff (6+1). NQA needs to increase number of employed staff and especially for the post-accreditation monitoring activities. Based on regulation for the systematization of NQA jobs (which is under approval process), 3 persons are planned to work for the post-accreditation monitoring activities.
- Trainings for NQA staff on implementation of post-accreditation monitoring process. Thus, trainings focusing on post- accreditation monitoring and exchange of experiences with the similar agencies form the EU countries would be very beneficial for the NQA staff.
- The training of quality assurance coordinators at the VETI on participating in the post-accreditation monitoring.
- The sound reporting system (tracking system on regular basis) should be embedded in NQA on implementation of the recommendation⁹ set to VETI by NQA¹⁰

8. However, NQA considers that this process should be preceded by the development of a policy document on which this AI is based.

9. Conditions and requirements based on set deadlines

10. This has to do with regard to the establishment of a more convenient reporting system for the VETI to NQA. In addition, it is also linked to the follow-up recommendations on development of a digital platform.

- To establish an effective and functional post-accreditation and monitoring system there is a need for creation of a digital platform that would enable distance monitoring, having in mind the increase of the number of validated qualifications and accredited institutions in the recent years,
- Digitalization of the content for specific courses, modules and VET programs with the purpose of being offered online (to explore the possibilities to increase the number of specific courses, modules and VET programs).
- Development of QA tools to monitor e-Learning and blended learning of VET programs.

Due to the change of the way that the education is being delivered because of the pandemic situation with COVID 19 there is a need that the NQA considers the new circumstances and take into account the following recommendations given by the European Commission for the VET system:

- A more **learner-centred system**, giving students flexibility in when and how they study, linking up different learning systems.
- Increase mobility of students to make VET programs more attractive
- Increase the resilience and digital readiness of VET institutions and trainers
- More on the job learning opportunities, especially through internships.
- A more inclusive approach, removing any barriers to accessibility
- Make sure that VET curricula correspond to the needs of the green and digital economy.
- Consider the option of development of one VET system in Kosova

8.2 Recommendations for KAA

The key problems related to post-accreditation monitoring in higher education include: non-completion of the documentation by the HEIs, lack of human resources and guidelines by the KAA to effectively conduct post-accreditation monitoring, monitoring of the

eventual change in curricula or the impossibility of post-accreditation monitoring due to the large number of study programs and limited KAA capacities.

In order to establish an effective post-accreditation monitoring there should be a formal regulation or guidelines drafted which is transparent, public for all the parties that undergo the accreditation procedure and in accordance with the ESG.

In order to establish an efficient post-accreditation monitoring KAA the following steps are recommended:

- In terms of regulations, procedures and guidelines the following documents are recommended to be developed in the light of national regulations, European trends and developments in the field of quality assurance and ESG:
 - Law on Accreditation Agency
 - Standards and Guidelines on post-accreditation monitoring
 - Different templates accompanying the Manual i.e. template for preparation of post-accreditation report
 - Update of other relevant documents and include the process of post-accreditation monitoring (i.e. Code of Conduct to include also ethical issues related to post-accreditation monitoring)
- Specification of the role of inclusion of education inspectors in the post-accreditation monitoring and cooperation with KAA.
- Increase of Budget for activities of KAA: This implies an increase of budget for the recruitment of additional staff, as well as covering the expenses of activities related to post-accreditation monitoring.
- Increase of the number of staff working at the KAA: At the moment, due to shortage in human resources and lack of guidelines on monitoring.
- There should be distinguishing of the officers who are responsible for accreditation and those who are in charge for post-accreditation monitoring.
- Trainings for KAA's staff development: Since this is a new development, the staff of KAA should receive trainings on post-accreditation monitoring. The trainings should be offered by the member agencies of ENQA, which have consolidated component of post-accreditation monitoring. There should be 2 kind of trainings:
 - Training based on implementation of a handbook (for KAA staff and the HEIs), which would be drafted in line with the guidelines on monitoring the post ac-

creditation process.

- Study visits and workshops to some developed countries that has good reputation on assuring the quality assurance. These visits in duration of 1-2 weeks or longer, would enable KAA monitoring officers, to gain knowledge and experience and see from first hand these countries are performing monitoring of the post accreditation process (workshops in some countries such as United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, etc).
- The trainings should be done also for the staff of the HEIs. The KAA staff and or international / local experts can further train HEIs (management, academic staff, administrative staff) on the importance of implementation of KAA's recommendations and their implementation and further reporting. This would enable to establish a feedback mechanism among KAA and HEIs.
- KAA staff should conduct post-accreditation monitoring visits to the HEIs (once or twice a year, based on the availability of the budget and availability of the human resource).
- HEIs in their annual performance documents to report about the implementation of KAA's recommendations.
- MES to take into account the outcome of quality assessment during and after accreditation for financing public HEIs or granting private HEIs.
- Due to the budget efficiency, these visits might be performed by combined international and local experts; transfer of know-how. Involvement of national and international experts in the post-accreditation monitoring visits would be of great importance and would also relieve work burden from the KAA staff.
- Reporting on implementation of the KAA's recommendation becoming part of the annual reports published by the HEIs, as required by the Law on Higher Education.
- Establishment of an effective communication of KAA with the HEIs, ideally via an electronic platform.
- All HEIs reporting once or twice per year to the KAA on implementation of recommendations, ideally via an online reporting system (through QA officers or any other position as assigned by the institution).
- Upgrade and update of KAA software. There is no a functional IT system that sup-

port post-accreditation monitoring. However, there is a software used for accreditation purposes (<http://e-akreditimi.rks-gov.net/>). Due to the large number of accredited HEIs and study program, managing part the process of post-accreditation monitoring via software is much convenient.

- KAA staff preparing reports, mid-term evaluation reports on the implementation of the recommendations by the HEIs.
- KAA to promote the concept of quality culture among the HEIs for a shared responsibility among the management, staff and students.
- Development of a strategic approach by the HEIs to constantly improve quality of learning, teaching and research,
- KAA and MES to cooperate together on reducing dropout and improving retention rates.
- Supporting innovative learning;
- Ensuring that learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences required for an inclusive society, active citizenship, lifelong learning and employability, regardless of their social and economic backgrounds and able to cope with uncertainties.
- Internal QA to be more related to the establishment of ICT-based systems for providing comparable data and indicators, e.g. for monitoring and benchmarking.
- Good use of monitoring data also contributes significantly to developing the “quality culture” in higher education institutions through collecting and disseminating high quality evidence about the impact of QA procedures.
- Effective use of monitoring data – very important for developing quality culture in higher education institutions
- Higher education institutions to publish standard comparable information in different areas;
- HEIs have to commit to the regular monitoring and evaluation of their progress in achieving their strategic goals and recommendations given by KAA.
- Establishing a baseline of shared values that define high quality teaching, learning and research.

- Involvement of all stakeholders in development of QA tools and policies.
- Introduction of performance agreements with the HEIs.
- Introduction of a standard on student-centered learning.
- Encouraging HEIs to include more practical work in their curricula;
- More emphasis placed on collecting, analyzing and using data for management and decision making
Encouraging HEIs and initiatives at national level to implement European Skills Agenda, especially:
 - Strengthening skills intelligence;
 - Strategic national upskilling action;
 - Rolling out the European universities initiative and upskilling scientists;
 - Provision of **skills for jobs in a green and digital economy**
 - Increasing STEM graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills;
 - Provision of skills for Life;
- Increasing the number of courses being offered online.
- A stronger emphasis on using the digital technologies in the teaching and learning processes
- Developing QA tools for blended and online learning.

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10. Annex 1

List of interviewed stakeholders

1. Mr. Lah Nitaj, Director, National Qualification Authority, Prishtina
2. Mr, Avni Gashi, Acting Director, National Qualification Authority, Prishtina
3. Mr. Naim Gashi, Executive Director, Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Prishtina
4. Dr. Sc. Bekim Samadrxha, Head of the Division for Development, Monitoring and Quality in Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
5. Dr. Sc. Drita Kadriu, Head of Department for the Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
6. Mr. Besnik Loxha, Head of Academic Development Unit and Office for Quality Assurance, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”
7. Mr. Gani Ismajli, Head of the Division for Quality Development and Certification, Prishtina, Employment Agency of Republic of Kosova / Department for Vocational Training
8. Mr. Ymridin Tershnjaku, Coordinator for Quality Assurance, SHMLP “Shtjefen Gjeçovi” Prishtina
9. Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti, Head of Quality Assurance Office, AAB College, Prishtina
10. Ms. Majlinda Qato-Decani Trainer and Quality Control Coordinator, Vocational Training Center Peja
11. Mr. Sadri Kukaj, Trainer / Head Coach, Vocational Training Center Peja
12. Ass. Dr. Sc. Arber Hoti, Teaching Assistant, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”,
13. Prof. Ass. Dr. Avni Hajdari, FMNS - UP Head of the Biology department, Prishtina
14. Prof. Ass. Dr. Gentrif Berisha, Professor, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”
15. Prof. Ass. Dr. Vlora Prenaj, Academic Development Officer at the Faculty of Economics, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”
16. Prof. Dr. Tahir Arbnesi, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”

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