



MINUTES ON

DISCUSSING THE PERSPECTIVES OF INCORPORATING C3QA PROJECT OUTCOMES AS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MOES ARMENIA ACTIVITIES IN CYCLE 3

Participants: Arayik Navoyan (UFAR), Siranush Seyranyan (UFAR), Arevik Anapiosyan (MoES Armenia), Edgar Aleksanyan (MoES Armenia), Anna Babajanyan (MoES Armenia), Syuzanna Ghazaryan (MoES Armenia), R. Sukiasyan (MoES Armenia), Armen Budaghyan (YSU), Ruben Topchyan (ANQA), Nune Minasyan (SAFAA), Mariam Hovhannisyan (SAFAA), Lusine Shakhazizyan (SAFAA)

Meeting Venue: MoES Armenia

Date: 18 September, 2018

On September 18th, 2018, the stakeholders of the Armenian partner institutions under the Erasmus+ C3QA project had a meeting hosted by the MoES Armenia to outline the works carried out under the C3QA project, the results achieved so far and how the project outcomes could be integrated in the working agenda of the MoES Armenia to improve and further develop the existing regulatory framework for Cycle 3 education in the light of the new governmental changes and newly established priorities.

The discussion was launched by Mr. Navoyan, C3QA project coordinator, who presented the project's mission, the works on the Training kit, elaboration of the national level guidelines on establishment of QA systems for Cycle 3, as well as the synthesis of issues and suggestions on improvement of legal framework of the Cycle 3 programme in Armenia jointly prepared by the Armenian partners of the project.

As further steps of activities Mr. Navoyan mentioned that it is foreseen to identify 1 Cycle 3 program per partner University of the project to be externally reviewed against the EQA standards for pilot accreditation involving ANQA and the MoES Armenia, in case of Armenia. It was stressed that as far as C3QA was envisioned as a continuation of VERITAS project and the latter was aimed at internal QA, the former would be mainly focused on external QA.

Further, Mrs. Anapiosyan, Deputy Minister, presented how the MoES Armenia anticipates the C3QA contribution to the amendments and developments that the MoES Armenia currently undertakes with regard to the established system, regulations and challenges of Cycle 3 education in Armenia. As stated, the MoES Armenia is open to changes and improvements both for the system components individually and for the more large-scale changes of the whole system.

In response, Mr. Topchyan, Head of ANQA, inquired regarding the main directions and the global idea of changes by the MoES Armenia so that it could be more visible how the project partners could bring their contribution.

As presented by Mr. Sukiasyan, Department Head of Higher and Postgraduate Education, one of the changes in the area of doctorate studies is the need of transition from the two-level awarding to one-level awarding, however in case the transition process is lengthy the current system might be temporarily maintained until the necessary developments are carried out. Therefore, the common perspective voiced by

Mrs. Anapiosyan and Mr. Sukiasyan was that the MoES Armenia expects from the Erasmus+ C3QA project to come up with their suggestions on improvement for Cycle 3 education system by presenting a concept note, if necessary.

In order to involve the views of all the stakeholders in the academic sphere of C3, Mr. Budaghyan, YSU Deputy-Vice Rector, Director of Quality Assurance, mentioned that it would be necessary to include more stakeholders in charge of the organization and administration of C3 studies in Armenia.

As Mr. Navoyan noted, based on the works and documents elaborated so far under the project, C3QA has all the potential to draft a model or working pattern involving the ideas and suggestions of the Armenian project partners with regard to the developments needed for the 3 phases of Cycle 3 education, i.e. admission, studies and defense. It was also highlighted that all the developments and suggestions generated could be further presented at the Astana meeting as sample and inspiration for the other country partners of the project.

The meeting participants also addressed the role of the Supreme Certifying Committee (SCC) as an agency affiliated to the MoES Armenia and in charge of specialized councils for degree awarding and maintenance of scientific quality standards.

It turned out that S. Gogyan, Head of the SCC, was invited to the MoES Armenia for a separate discussion on the relevant issues and taking the opportunity the C3QA project partners had a non-scheduled meeting with Mr. Gogyan to discuss the activities of SCC relating to the Cycle 3 education QA.

Firstly, Mr. Gogyan presented the challenges faced by the SCC, including the problem of plagiarism, content-related matters, the role of the opponent in the defense phase, as well as the internationalization issues of the Armenian scientific potential.

During this joint discussion, the C3QA project partners expressed their views on the current challenges and came up with suggestions in line with the documents elaborated so far under the project, including the document on the criteria/standards and guidelines for quality assurance of doctoral education in Armenia. Consequently, it was identified that there is a need for additional meeting that would include all the parties interested in the improvements and amendments with regard the Cycle 3 education system, its organization, regulations, as well as standards and criteria for QA and many other issues. Therefore, it was suggested that one of the most productive approaches will be organizing a conference and involving larger audience of stakeholders to open the floor for further discussions and idea-sharing to reach the common objective.

Hence, as a result of discussions it was decided:

- To convene internal discussions, as suggested by Mr. Navoyan, within each project partner institution in order to come up with a set of suggestions and propositions in line with the MoES Armenia vision and the foreseen changes with regard to the established system, regulations and challenges of Cycle 3 education in Armenia. After elaboration and follow-up the generated suggestions and propositions will be presented to the MoES Armenia.
- To contact Mr. G. Gevorgyan, Vice-Rector on scientific policy and international cooperation at YSU, in order to organize a large-scale discussion involving all the relevant stakeholders and open the floor for further discussions and idea-sharing to reach the common objective.