



**TEMPUS «ARMENQA» PROJECT
“IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL AND SECTORIAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS IN
ARMENIA”**

QUALITY EVALUATION and INTERNAL COORDINATION MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE QA INTERNAL AND COORDINATION MEETINGS

Wednesday, 22. August, 2016

The meeting was attended by the following members of the QA group:

1. Janerik Lundquist, Linkoping University, Sweden
2. Gehmlich Volker, Osnabruck University of Applied Sciences, Germany
3. Nicolae Postavaru, Romanian Qualifications Authority, Romania
4. Armen Budaghyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia
5. Mari Santurjyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia
6. Kristina Tsaturyan, Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Armenia

Janerik Lundquist has made an opening speech.

**Evaluation of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education of Armenia (NQFA)
developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project**

The first evaluated material was the Armenian Qualifications Framework. First, Janerik Lundquist introduced in short how the Armenian National Qualifications Framework was developed, the path the NQFA has undergone from development to approval. Then, for further clarifications Armen Budaghyan and Kristina Tsaturyan added that recently the NQFA was approved by the Government of Armenia, however it slightly differs to the one developed within TEMPUS ARMENQA. This was done with an aim to ensure the horizontal and vertical sequence and progress from level to level. To the questions, whether the SQFs developed within ARMENQA are compatible with NQFA developed by the working group or that approved by the Government, Armenian partners answered, that SQF's have been developed in accord with the NQFA developed within the program, though there are no big and conceptual differences between it and the one approved by the GoA. Besides, it mentioned that the SQFs will be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science in order to become obligatory for AM HEIs.

The QA working group decided that within the Project activities the NQFA developed in the frame of TEMPUS ARMENQA will serve as a reference for all the documentation. Nicolae Postavaru recommended to make use of the New Skills Agenda for Europe and revise the NQFA correspondingly. Accordingly, the new law on Higher and Postgraduate education should consider that the “Competence” should be changed with “Autonomy and Responsibility”.

R: The group decided to develop recommendation to the MoES on further review and keeping the NQFA up to date after the Project lifetime. Armen Budaghyan has put in that at this stage the ARMENQA working groups have provided all the necessary recommendations and references. Then, the body responsible for Qualifications implementation should take care of the review of the NQFA and follow the developments at national and EU level.

Evaluation of the 5 Sectorial Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs) for Higher Education of Armenia developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

The group confirmed that SQFs have been developed properly though it still needs further improvement. In future reviews the SQF working groups should ensure the readability of SQFs by the academic end-users. SQFs should be discussed during the upcoming trainings in Armenia for ensuring that the academic environment has common understanding of the terms and notions in SQFs.

Particularly, Nicolae Postavaru mentioned that the SQF for Engineering doesn't provide broader notions for Engineering, as well as knowledge of foreign language, etc.

R:

- Thus the working group decided to provide common guidelines to the working groups to review the SQFs accordingly by following several fixed criteria.
- Moreover, the QA working group members mentioned that the SQF working groups should review the number of LOs in SQFs, consider the repetition of several notions and try to express with less words. In order to show the vertical progression, the key verbs can be highlighted. Moreover, the progression from level 4 to level 6 shall be smooth, especially showing the qualifications at level 5 and making it explicit in the Self-evaluation report.

Evaluation of the Implementation Strategy of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education of Armenia for 2016-2020 developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

Armen Budaghyan presented the Strategy paper to the Working Group members. He mentioned that the Strategy was developed previous year and provided to the MoES for review and approval. However, since the NQFA wasn't approved by the Government of Armenia then, the discussion and approval of the strategy was delayed for a year.

R: After discussions several recommendations were provided, particularly:

- The introduction of the Strategy should be revised to give more information on who is the audience of this document, as well as that though the Strategy is written for the coming 5 years, however ARMENQA with its activities contributes to most of the objectives set in the Strategy.
- Some points in English should be revised to comply with the Armenian version.

- If the SQFs are going to be obligatory, then the Strategy should make the references to SQFs either.
- The Strategy and, particularly, point 1.8 should make clear that the Universities are autonomous and they can realize recognition of prior learning.
- The numbering in the strategy should be improved.

Evaluation of the Glossary of NQFA Terms developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

Armen Budaghyan presented the Glossary developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project. He introduced how the work was organized and that the current glossary has 101 terms that are used in NQFA or are somehow concerned. The Glossary was also provided to the MoES upon their request during the development of the new National Law on Higher Education. During the discussion several questions were raised, particularly, why this or that term has been included in the Glossary. All the clarifications were provided to the WG members and the work has been highly evaluated by the WG members.

Evaluation of the 3 Guides & Kits for NQFA Stakeholders (HEIs, Students and Employers) developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

The AM Working group presented the Guides and Kits for NQFA, the work done. However, the group members mentioned that the work is partly incomplete, since the 3 kits do not differ from each other in content, it is difficult to understand who the auditorium is, and the information is not comprehensible from the first view. The EU partners also mentioned that it should be revised correspondingly to provide user-friendly information. The EU partners also will share information on the kits available in their countries for making some study of international experience in that field.

R:

- The toolkits need some visualization and pictures,
- The WGs should work with students in order to finalize the toolkit for students,
- How the non-formal learning will be accommodated within NQFA,
- Make the toolkit simple.

Tuesday, 23 August, 2016

Evaluation of the NQFA Implementation Manual for Stakeholders developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

The next day started with the discussion of the NQFA implementation Manual. Kristina Tsaturyan has presented the Manual, how it was developed, what kind of Chapters are included there, what information is included in each of the Chapters. Since the Manual is intended for the use of Armenian Stakeholders and contains about 40 pages it wasn't fully translated into English. However, Kristina Tsaturyan presented the content of all the Chapters, what information is included there. The EU partners have asked several questions regarding the sequence of the Chapters and whether reference to SQF's is done within the Manual. Kristina Tsaturyan clarified that the Manual was developed during the years 2014-2015, when the SQF's haven't been developed yet, however the WG will revise the Manual to include all the changes done since then. Overall the EU partners highly evaluated the Manual and the work done.

R: Some recommendations were made, particularly:

- In chapter 2.4 first the qualification should be defined and then all the other components of the NQFA.
- Include Chapter on SQFs.
- Since the Manual was developed in 2014-2015 it should be revised to consider the latest developments in the field, the approval of NQFA and SQFs.

Evaluation of the Content of the NQFA Self-Certification Report to be developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

Kristina Tsaturyan has presented the work done towards the Self-Certification report on NQFA. Particularly, she introduced that the work has started in not so far 2012 when the WG on Self-certification report including 2 international experts and based on the self-evaluation recommendations were provided to the MoES that the NQFA doesn't reflect on the needs of the Armenian Higher Education.

K. Tsaturyan mentioned that though the WG within the TEMPUS ARMENQA Project started the elaboration of the new report, however, it is difficult to complete it at this point, since NQFA has been recently approved by the GoA and there isn't any evidence that it is applicable in AM HEIs. Thus it was decided to request extension of the ARMENQA Project to complete the activities due to some delays in the implementation of core actions. The new timing will be considered in the new working plan provided to the EC for the extension of the Project.

Evaluation of the Concept Paper on Functionalities of the Body in Charge of Implementation of the NQFA developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

Armen Budaghyan introduced the work done within this objective of TEMPUS ARMENQA Project. Particularly, he mentioned that though the functionalities were developed before the study tour to the Romanian Qualifications Authority, but were reviewed and finalized after it, when administrative representatives of Project participants got acquainted with the RQA functionalities, activities and procedures. A. Budaghyan also informed that the Concept was provided to the MoES for their review and consideration. The EU partners were concerned with the rationale of assigning those functions to the MoES and not independent body and whether the functions of this body will not coincide with those of the Licensing agency acting within the MoES. The AM participants clarified that the functions were developed and provided to the Ministry and due to the limited financial resources it will be difficult to create new body. However, the MoES can decide whether to keep those functions within the Ministry or to assign to any other independent body functioning in the field of Higher Education.

R:

- It was decided to make recommendations to the MoES on future body responsible for the NQFA to provide it with some independency and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Review the functionalities of the Body.
- Do some editing.

Evaluation of the Criteria and Procedures for Aligning and Including HE Qualifications in the NQFA developed within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

The AM WG introduced the concept for the Criteria and Procedures for Aligning and including HE qualifications in the NQFA. It was mentioned that this document is not fully developed due to the fact that the NQFA wasn't approved by the time the working group started the work. However, the draft concept and the outline were developed and discussed several times not only with partners in TEMPUS ARMENQA but also those consulting the MoES within the TWINNING project.

R:

The QA WG decided to continue the work taking into account recently adopted NQFA and the SQFs.

Evaluation of the Referencing Exercise of 10 Study Programmes to the Developed SQFs implemented within the TEMPUS ARMENQA project

Armen Budaghyan introduced the work done within this component of the Project. Particularly, he mentioned that each University has chosen 1 BA and 1 MA study program and based on the format and recommendations provided by the SQF WGs made referencing to the particular SQF (based on the specialization). The QA WG highly evaluated the work done within this component and made recommendation to discuss it once again and make adjustments during the trainings to be held in Yerevan in November with EU partners involved.

R: In the template add the third column mentioning the assessment method for the achievement of particular learning outcomes.

Friday, 24, August, 2016

On the third day an internal coordination meeting was held attended by the Coordinator Janerik Lundquist and national Coordinators of the TEMPUS ARMENQA Project A. Budaghyan, K. Tsaturyan and M. Santurjyan. During the meeting the Coordinators discussed the rationale and the work plan to be presented with the request to the EACEA for the extension of TEMPUS ARMENQA Project for another 6 months.

It followed with the discussion of the financial issues of the Project. Local Coordinators handed the financial and technical documentation gathered through the past 1 year. Janerik Lundquist informed that due to the pass of Lena Sjöholm some issues arose due to the technical management of the Project. The situation will be settled in September 2016, after hiring new person for the current position and organizing a special training for that purpose.

Some issues concerning the study tour to Aarhus, Denmark and November trainings in Armenia were discussed locally. Particularly, they have discussed the essence of the anticipated study tour, agenda, participants from Armenia and the following activities.