

ERASMUS+ PROJECT 2023-1-RS01-KA220-HED-000156660

EPIR | E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition of
Foreign Higher Education Documents

Project Quality Assurance Plan

EPIR project partners:



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1. Introduction

The Project Quality Assurance Plan (QAP) is a meticulously crafted document designed to serve as the cornerstone of ensuring the success of the E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition (EPIR) project. It is developed to provide a comprehensive framework that outlines strategies, procedures, and delineated responsibilities necessary to maintain and elevate standards of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness throughout all phases of project implementation.

The primary purpose of this QAP is to establish a robust and structured approach to quality assurance within the EPIR project. It aims to instill confidence among stakeholders regarding the reliability and credibility of project outcomes, ensuring that the project achieves its intended objectives within defined timelines and budgetary constraints.

The scope of the QAP encompasses all aspects of the EPIR project, including but not limited to project planning, execution, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. It applies to all project personnel, partner institutions, stakeholders, and entities involved in project activities, ensuring consistency and alignment with project goals and standards.

The QAP is developed in accordance with industry best practices, relevant regulatory requirements, and standards applicable to project management and quality assurance. It reflects a commitment to upholding the highest standards of quality, integrity, and professionalism throughout the EPIR project lifecycle.

2. Quality Objectives

2.1. Supporting Digital Transformation:

The EPIR project is committed to playing a pivotal role in the digital transformation of the recognition process in higher education. This objective will be achieved through a series of targeted initiatives aimed at leveraging digital technologies to streamline and enhance the process of recognizing foreign qualifications. Key strategies include:

- The project will focus on developing innovative IT tools and platforms tailored to the specific needs of the recognition process. These tools will automate administrative tasks, facilitate information exchange, and enable seamless collaboration among stakeholders involved in the recognition process.
- Efforts will be made to integrate digital workflows into existing recognition procedures, eliminating manual processes and reducing the time and resources required for document evaluation and validation. This integration will ensure a smoother, more efficient recognition process for both applicants and educational institutions.
- Training programs will be organized to enhance the digital skills and competencies of staff involved in the recognition process. These programs will cover topics such as IT proficiency, data management, and cybersecurity, empowering staff to effectively utilize digital tools and systems.
- The project will actively promote best practices in digital transformation within the higher education sector. This includes sharing success stories, case studies, and lessons learned from implementing digital solutions for recognition processes, inspiring other institutions to embrace similar initiatives.

2.2. Enhancing Accessibility, Efficiency, and Sustainability

The EPIR project is committed to enhancing accessibility to higher education by removing barriers associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. This objective encompasses several key areas of focus:

- By digitalizing recognition procedures, the project aims to simplify and standardize the process of evaluating foreign qualifications. This will reduce bureaucratic hurdles and administrative burdens, making it easier for international students to have their qualifications recognized and access higher education opportunities.
- Digitalization will lead to increased efficiency in administrative processes related to recognition, such as document verification, data processing, and communication. Automation of routine tasks will free up valuable time and resources, allowing staff to focus on more value-added activities.
- The project recognizes the environmental benefits of digitalization and is committed to promoting sustainability through its initiatives. By reducing the reliance on paper-based processes, the project will contribute to environmental conservation efforts, conserving resources and minimizing carbon emissions associated with administrative tasks.

2.3. Management Recognition and Support

Ensuring that the management of partner institutions recognizes and actively supports the goals of the EPIR project is essential for its success. Key strategies to achieve this objective include:

- Project leaders will engage with senior management at partner institutions to raise awareness of the project's objectives and benefits. Consultation sessions will be organized to solicit input and feedback from management stakeholders, ensuring their perspectives are considered in project planning and implementation.
- Efforts will be made to align the goals of the EPIR project with the strategic priorities and objectives of partner institutions. By demonstrating how the project contributes to broader institutional goals such as internationalization and quality enhancement, management support can be garnered more effectively.
- Adequate resources, including funding, personnel, and infrastructure, will be allocated to support the implementation of the EPIR project. Management stakeholders will be involved in resource planning and decision-making processes to ensure their buy-in and commitment to project success.
- Regular communication channels will be established to keep management stakeholders informed about project progress, milestones, and achievements. Comprehensive reports and updates will be provided to management stakeholders, highlighting the impact and value of the EPIR project to their institutions.

3. Development of Strategies and Policies

3.1. Analysis and Assessment

The EPIR project will conduct a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the current national framework for recognizing foreign qualifications. This initiative will involve the following detailed steps:

- Gather relevant data and information pertaining to the existing processes, regulations, and practices related to the recognition of foreign qualifications. This will include reviewing documentation, conducting interviews with key stakeholders, and analyzing historical data on recognition procedures.
- Engage with a diverse range of stakeholders involved in the recognition process, including government agencies, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, and credential evaluation services. Consultation sessions will be organized to gather insights, perspectives, and feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) of the current framework.
- Conduct a gap analysis to identify areas where the current framework may fall short in meeting the needs and expectations of stakeholders. This analysis will highlight potential gaps, inconsistencies, or inefficiencies in the recognition process, providing a basis for targeted interventions and improvements.

- Benchmark the national framework against international best practices and standards for the recognition of foreign qualifications. Comparative analysis will help identify areas where the national framework can be strengthened or enhanced to align with global norms and expectations.
- Compile findings from the analysis and assessment process into a comprehensive report. The report will summarize key insights, highlight areas for improvement, and provide recommendations for policy development and strategic planning.

3.2. Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration

The EPIR project will prioritize knowledge exchange and collaboration initiatives to foster alignment with national and international standards and best practices. This will involve the following strategies:

- Organize study visits to institutions and organizations that have implemented successful practices in the recognition of foreign qualifications. These visits will provide project stakeholders with firsthand exposure to innovative approaches, technologies, and methodologies used in recognition processes, fostering cross-learning and knowledge sharing.
- Facilitate regular consortium meetings bringing together project partners, stakeholders, and experts from diverse backgrounds. These meetings will serve as platforms for exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, and discussing emerging trends and challenges in the recognition field. Agenda items will include updates on project progress, presentations on relevant topics, and interactive discussions on strategic priorities and action plans.
- Organize workshops and training sessions focused on capacity building and skill development in recognition-related areas. Topics may include credential evaluation techniques, quality assurance standards, legal frameworks, and intercultural communication. These sessions will enhance the knowledge and competencies of project stakeholders, enabling them to contribute effectively to project objectives.
- Encourage collaboration on joint projects and initiatives aimed at advancing the recognition agenda. Partnerships may involve research projects, pilot programs, or policy advocacy campaigns focused on addressing common challenges and promoting best practices. Collaborative projects will leverage the expertise and resources of project partners to achieve shared goals and objectives.
- Host networking events, conferences, and seminars to facilitate networking and relationship-building among stakeholders in the recognition community. These events will provide opportunities for stakeholders to connect, share insights, and explore potential areas for collaboration and partnership.

4. Quality Plan, Dissemination, Management

4.1. Clear Communication and Reporting

The EPIR project places a strong emphasis on clear communication and transparent reporting to ensure that evaluation findings and progress reports are effectively communicated to all stakeholders. The following strategies will be implemented:

- Develop a structured reporting framework that outlines the format, content, and frequency of project reports. Reports will be tailored to the needs and preferences of different stakeholder groups, ensuring that information is presented in a clear, concise, and accessible manner.
- Evaluation findings will be accompanied by actionable recommendations for continuous improvement. These recommendations will be based on evidence-based insights and best practices, providing stakeholders with practical guidance on how to address identified challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

- Establish feedback mechanisms to solicit input and feedback from stakeholders on project communication and reporting. Feedback will be actively sought through surveys, focus group discussions, and consultation sessions, enabling stakeholders to share their perspectives and suggestions for improvement.
- Maintain regular communication channels to keep stakeholders informed about project progress, milestones, and achievements. This will include newsletters, email updates, and social media posts, providing stakeholders with timely updates on project activities and outcomes.

4.2. Effective Dissemination

The EPIR project is committed to effective dissemination of project-related information to stakeholders through various communication channels. The following strategies will be employed:

- Maintain a functional project website as a central repository of information for stakeholders. The website will feature project updates, resources, publications, and contact information, providing stakeholders with easy access to relevant information.
- Utilize a variety of communication channels, including email, social media, and online platforms, to disseminate project-related information to stakeholders. Regular updates will be shared through these channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.
- Tailor dissemination activities to specific stakeholder groups and audiences. This may include organizing webinars, workshops, and conferences targeted at different segments of the higher education community to raise awareness and engagement with project objectives.
- Publish project-related articles, reports, and case studies in relevant journals, newsletters, and publications to reach a wider audience. Outreach activities will be conducted to engage with policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders to promote project outcomes and lessons learned.

4.3. Stakeholder Engagement

Fostering stakeholder engagement is a key priority for the EPIR project, and the following strategies will be implemented:

- Establish formal feedback mechanisms to capture stakeholder input and feedback on project activities and outcomes. This may include surveys, focus group discussions, and stakeholder consultations to gather insights and suggestions for improvement.
- Organize regular consultation sessions with stakeholders to solicit input and feedback on project strategies, priorities, and decisions. These sessions will provide stakeholders with opportunities to contribute to project planning and implementation, ensuring alignment with their needs and expectations.
- Encourage active participation of stakeholders in project activities, working groups, and committees. Stakeholders will be invited to contribute their expertise, perspectives, and resources to support project objectives and initiatives.
- Maintain regular communication with stakeholders through various channels, including email updates, newsletters, and meetings. This will ensure that stakeholders are kept informed about project developments, progress, and opportunities for involvement.

4.4. Project Management Structure

Establishing a clear project management structure is essential for facilitating coordination, oversight, and decision-making within the EPIR project. The following strategies will be employed:

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities for project team members, partners, and stakeholders. This will ensure clarity and accountability in project management and implementation, with each stakeholder aware of their respective duties and obligations.
- Schedule regular review meetings with project team members, partners, and stakeholders to monitor progress, address challenges, and make decisions. These meetings will provide

opportunities for collaboration, problem-solving, and alignment of project activities with strategic objectives.

- Establish reporting mechanisms to track project progress, milestones, and achievements. Regular progress reports will be prepared and shared with stakeholders to provide updates on project activities, outcomes, and performance against targets.
- Implement robust risk management processes to identify, assess, and mitigate project risks. Risks will be monitored regularly, and contingency plans will be developed to address potential issues and disruptions to project delivery.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1. Continuous Monitoring

Continuous monitoring mechanisms will be implemented to track progress against project milestones and objectives in the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be employed:

- Define and establish a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with project objectives and outcomes. These KPIs will serve as benchmarks for measuring progress and performance across different project activities and work packages.
- Monitor project progress regularly through ongoing data collection, analysis, and reporting. This will involve tracking key indicators, such as completion of deliverables, adherence to timelines, and achievement of milestones, to identify deviations and areas needing attention.
- Implement proactive monitoring systems to detect potential issues and challenges early on. This may include regular reviews of project metrics, trend analysis, and risk assessments to identify emerging issues and trends that may impact project success.
- Engage stakeholders in the monitoring process by soliciting feedback and input on project progress and performance. This will provide valuable insights and perspectives from stakeholders, helping to identify areas for improvement and optimization.
- Prepare regular progress reports documenting project achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. Reports will highlight key findings, trends, and recommendations for corrective action, ensuring transparency and accountability in project management.

5.2. Periodic Evaluations

Periodic evaluations will be conducted to assess the effectiveness and impact of project activities in the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be employed:

- Develop an evaluation framework outlining the scope, objectives, and methodologies for conducting periodic evaluations. The framework will define evaluation criteria, data sources, and analysis methods to ensure consistency and rigor in evaluation processes.
- Define clear criteria for assessing the effectiveness and impact of project activities. These criteria will be aligned with project goals, objectives, and expected outcomes, providing a basis for evaluating project performance against predefined standards.
- Collect data from multiple sources, including project documentation, stakeholder feedback, surveys, and performance metrics. Qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered to provide a comprehensive understanding of project outcomes and impacts.
- Analyze evaluation data using appropriate methods and techniques to assess the effectiveness and impact of project activities. Data analysis will involve identifying trends, patterns, and correlations to draw meaningful conclusions and insights.
- Prepare evaluation reports documenting findings, conclusions, and recommendations for improvement. Reports will communicate evaluation results to stakeholders, highlight achievements, identify areas for enhancement, and propose actionable recommendations for optimizing project outcomes.

6. Risk Management

In the EPIR project, proactive risk management is crucial to identify potential risks to project success and develop mitigation strategies to address them effectively. The following detailed strategies will be implemented:

- Conduct thorough risk identification exercises to identify potential threats and uncertainties that may impact project objectives, timelines, and outcomes. This will involve engaging project team members, stakeholders, and subject matter experts to identify risks across different project dimensions.
- Evaluate and prioritize identified risks based on their likelihood of occurrence, potential impact, and severity. Risks will be categorized according to their nature, such as technical, operational, financial, or external risks, to facilitate targeted mitigation efforts.
- Develop proactive mitigation strategies to address identified risks and minimize their impact on project success. Mitigation measures may include risk avoidance, risk transfer, risk reduction, or risk acceptance, depending on the nature and severity of the risk.
- Develop contingency plans to manage residual risks that cannot be fully mitigated. Contingency plans will outline alternative courses of action, resources, and timelines to respond to unexpected events or disruptions and ensure continuity of project operations.
- Continuously monitor and review identified risks throughout the project lifecycle to track their status and effectiveness of mitigation measures. Regular risk reviews will enable timely adjustments to mitigation strategies and proactive management of emerging risks.
- Engage stakeholders in the risk management process by soliciting their input and feedback on identified risks and mitigation strategies. Stakeholders' perspectives and insights will enhance risk identification, assessment, and mitigation efforts, ensuring comprehensive risk management.
- Communicate risk management activities, findings, and decisions to relevant stakeholders through regular updates, reports, and meetings. Transparent and timely communication will foster awareness, understanding, and ownership of risks among project stakeholders.

7. Communication and Collaboration

7.1. Clear Communication Channels

Establishing clear channels of communication among project partners is paramount to fostering collaboration and information sharing in the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be implemented:

- Develop and document communication protocols outlining the preferred methods, frequency, and channels of communication among project partners. Protocols will define roles and responsibilities for communication, ensuring clarity and accountability.
- Schedule regular updates and meetings to facilitate communication and collaboration among project partners. Meetings will provide opportunities to discuss project progress, challenges, and decisions, fostering a shared understanding of project objectives and priorities.
- Utilize project management tools and platforms to streamline communication and collaboration processes. Online collaboration tools, such as project management software, document repositories, and communication channels, will enable real-time sharing of information and resources.
- Establish mechanisms for sharing project-related information, updates, and resources among project partners. This may include centralized repositories, shared drives, or collaborative platforms accessible to all stakeholders, promoting transparency and accessibility.
- Implement feedback mechanisms to solicit input, suggestions, and concerns from project partners regarding communication processes. Regular feedback sessions and surveys will enable continuous improvement of communication strategies and practices.

7.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Encouraging active participation and input from stakeholders is essential to ensuring the success and relevance of project activities in the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be implemented:

- Identify and prioritize key stakeholders involved in or affected by the project, including students, faculty members, administrative staff, policymakers, and external experts. Stakeholder mapping will inform targeted engagement strategies tailored to the needs and interests of different stakeholder groups.
- Develop stakeholder engagement plans outlining objectives, approaches, and activities for engaging with key stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. Plans will define communication channels, consultation sessions, and feedback mechanisms to facilitate meaningful engagement and collaboration.
- Maintain regular communication with stakeholders through updates, newsletters, and targeted communication campaigns. Timely and relevant information will keep stakeholders informed about project progress, achievements, and upcoming events, fostering transparency and trust.
- Organize consultation sessions and focus groups to gather input and feedback from stakeholders on project activities, decisions, and outcomes. Consultations will provide opportunities for stakeholders to voice their perspectives, concerns, and suggestions, ensuring their perspectives are considered in project planning and implementation.
- Establish formal feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, feedback forms, and suggestion boxes, to solicit input and suggestions from stakeholders. Feedback will be collected regularly and used to inform decision-making, prioritize actions, and address concerns, enhancing stakeholder satisfaction and engagement.

8. Training and Capacity Building

Providing tailored training sessions to enhance the digital skills and competencies of staff and students involved in the recognition process is essential for the success of the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be implemented:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of training needs among staff and students involved in the recognition process. This assessment will identify existing skill gaps, knowledge deficits, and training requirements essential for effectively utilizing digital tools and systems.
- Develop customized training programs tailored to address specific needs identified during the training needs assessment. Training programs will cover a range of topics, including IT skills, digital literacy, use of information systems, and best practices in digital workflows and processes.
- Implement multimodal training delivery methods to accommodate diverse learning preferences and schedules. Training sessions may include workshops, seminars, webinars, online courses, self-paced modules, and hands-on practical sessions to cater to different learning styles and needs.
- Engage expert trainers and facilitators with relevant expertise and experience in digital skills training and capacity building. Trainers will possess strong communication skills, pedagogical knowledge, and technical proficiency to deliver effective and engaging training sessions.
- Incorporate practical exercises, case studies, and real-world scenarios into training programs to reinforce learning and application of digital skills. Hands-on activities will provide participants with opportunities to practice newly acquired skills in simulated environments and gain confidence in using digital tools.
- Establish mechanisms for ongoing learning and support to sustain and reinforce training outcomes over time. This may include access to online resources, communities of practice, peer mentoring, and helpdesk support to address questions, challenges, and troubleshooting needs.

- Conduct evaluation surveys and feedback sessions to assess the effectiveness and impact of training programs. Participant feedback will be collected to measure satisfaction levels, identify areas for improvement, and inform future iterations of training initiatives.

9. Documentation and Reporting

Maintaining comprehensive documentation of project activities, outcomes, and lessons learned is critical for ensuring transparency, accountability, and knowledge sharing in the EPIR project. The following detailed strategies will be implemented:

- Establish a robust document management system to organize, store, and archive project-related documents, reports, and resources. The system will provide secure access controls, version control mechanisms, and search functionalities to facilitate efficient document retrieval and management.
- Develop standardized document templates and formats for project reports, progress updates, meeting minutes, and other documentation. Standardization will ensure consistency, clarity, and professionalism in document presentation and content across different project deliverables.
- Prepare regular progress reports summarizing project activities, achievements, milestones, and challenges encountered. Reports will be submitted to project stakeholders, funding agencies, and oversight bodies to provide updates on project status and performance.
- Document evaluation findings, lessons learned, and best practices emerging from project implementation and evaluation activities. These insights will inform decision-making, identify areas for improvement, and guide future project planning and implementation.
- Establish a centralized knowledge repository to capture and disseminate project-related knowledge, resources, and insights. The repository will serve as a repository for project documentation, research findings, case studies, and other relevant materials accessible to project stakeholders and the wider community.
- Implement version control mechanisms to track revisions, updates, and changes made to project documents over time. Access permissions will be set to ensure that only authorized individuals have access to sensitive or confidential information, safeguarding data integrity and security.
- Conduct periodic audits and reviews of project documentation to ensure compliance with project requirements, standards, and regulations. Audits will verify the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of documentation and identify any gaps or discrepancies for corrective action.
- Communicate project findings, outcomes, and recommendations to stakeholders through various channels, such as reports, presentations, workshops, and online platforms. Transparent and timely communication will foster engagement, learning, and accountability among project stakeholders.

10. Conclusion

The Project Quality Assurance Plan serves as a comprehensive framework to ensure the success of the E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition (EPIR) project. By adhering to the strategies and procedures outlined in this plan, we are committed to achieving our objectives of enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability in higher education through digital transformation.

Throughout the implementation of the EPIR project, we will prioritize regular monitoring, evaluation, and communication to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with project goals. By systematically tracking progress, assessing impact, and engaging stakeholders, we will remain agile and responsive to evolving needs and challenges.

The success of the EPIR project hinges on our collective efforts to uphold high standards of quality, transparency, and accountability. Through collaborative endeavors and a commitment to excellence, we are confident in our ability to drive positive change and transformation in the recognition process for foreign qualifications.

As we embark on this journey towards digital transformation in higher education, we express our gratitude to all stakeholders for their unwavering support and commitment to this endeavor. Together, we will overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and create lasting impact in the higher education landscape.

With a clear focus on our objectives and a dedication to quality assurance, the EPIR project is poised to make significant strides towards a more accessible, efficient, and sustainable future for higher education.