

Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

Mission Report

Short-Term Mission on Activity 1.5. Provide recommendations for improvement of education standards for qualification for programmes in the priority areas (incl. legislative arrangements) with a view to describing achievements based on competences and skills, considering the AzQF

(September 23–27, 2019)

1. Name and Function of the Expert:

Full name of expert

Ms. Dovilė Krupickaitė, Lithuania

Signature



2. Objective and Tasks of the Mission:

The mission is carried out within the framework of:

COMPONENT 1: SELECTED NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS ARE ALIGNED TO INCLUDE A COMPETENCE-BASED FOCUS

Activity 1.5. Provide recommendations for improvement of education standards for qualification for programmes in the priority areas (incl. legislative arrangements) with a view to describing achievements based on competences and skills, considering the AzQF

Benchmarks for this activity are:

- **State standards for selected study programmes (Geography state standard) are revised**, with a view to describing achievements based on competences and learning outcomes, considering AzQF;
- **Other relevant documents/ methodology materials are prepared.**

3. Time schedule of the mission:

Date and Time	Activity
Monday 23 rd of September 2019	10:00-11:00 Meeting with RTA Ms. Elizaveta Bydanova and Ms. VusalaGurbanova, Component Leader I, Senior Advisor at Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education. 11:00 –13:00 / 14:00-16:00 Deskwork.
Tuesday 24 th of September 2019	10:00-13:00 Deskwork. 14:00-16:00 Meeting with Working Group on Geography and relevant employers.
Wednesday 25 th of September 2019	10:00-13:00 Deskwork. 14:00-17:00 Deskwork.
Thursday 26 th of September 2019	10:00-11:30 Meeting with RTA to discuss preliminary conclusions 14:00-17:00 Deskwork
Friday 27 th of September 2019	10:00-12:00 Meeting with MoE Higher Education Department to debrief about the results of the mission 14:00-17:00 Report writing

4. Relevant Background Information/State of Affairs regarding the mission

The work during the mission was well organized, all the needed documents were prepared in advance. Unfortunately, there was no possibility to visit Faculty of Geography of Baku State University, because of time of state exams.

5. Achievement of the Expected Results

Planned action was achieved:

- Geography state standard was revised and proposals for the new state standard are formulated;
- Classifications of bachelor and master level specialties (programmes) of higher education regarding geography state were revised and recommendation for its improving are given.

6. Unexpected Results

No unexpected results were identified during the mission.

7. Issues Left Open After the Mission

All planned issues were done during the mission.

8. Recommendations (including recommendation for future missions)

1. The first recommendation should be regarding classification of specialties (programmes) of higher education (bachelor and master), because the documents decides the further system of studies:

- There are in the classification of bachelor and master programmes many specialties related with geography (see table in the annex), especially in master studies. The system is very complicated and has not clear systematical approach. It is not flexible for creating new, with development of science and requirements of developing society, related disciplines. There is no clear relation between the both – of the master and of the bachelor studies – classifications, they have different coding.

Recommendation is to systemize and simplify the system: join the classification in one and remain only the main specialty without the subspecialties (please see as example Lithuanian study classification in the Annex). Creation of subfields should be in competence of universities regarding to its specialization.

- Another big problem is regarding of place of Geography in the classification. Geography is a complex science and belongs to two fields – to social (Human Geography) and natural (Physical Geography) sciences.

Recommendation: there are two ways to solve “the problem of Geography”. One is to create the new specialty (Human Geography) in field of social sciences and rename Geography in the natural sciences as Physical Geography (please see as example Lithuanian study classification in the Annex). It could be instead of Regional studies and create joint programmes for studies, or displace Geography from natural sciences in to the last group (10. Special specialties group).

Geography could be also located like Philosophy in group of Humanitarian and Social specialties.

2. The next recommendation is regarding relation between state standard for geography bachelor studies and real study programmes. There is only one study program named "Geography" (in the Baku State University, no information about geography studies in Azerbaijan Cooperation University) and many geographical study programmes of Faculty of Geography of the Baku State University with other names: Environmental Protection and Rational Utilization of Natural Resources, Hydrology, Meteorology and Climatology, Oceanography, Cartography, Tourism and Social-Cultural Service (information from http://geography.bsu.edu.az/en/content/faculty_of_geography_299). This disciplines are no named in the classifications. For the master studies situation is the same: only part of study programmes corresponds with the classification. Conclusion: the state standard is required only for one study programme and other geographical programmes are taught without any standards.

Recommendation is to make one standard for all geographical programmes after making essential correction of the classification.

3. Recommendations regarding Geography state standard are given as proposal for the new state standard. Comments regarding changes of list of subjects:

- System of credits is complicated and do not suppose easy election of elective subject and to combine its. Recommendation is to build modules each 5 ECTS (or to multiply).
- Competences in the present study standard were formulated well according to the programmes in the standard. The new proposal is oriented to analytical and critical thinking, applied geography and using of modern geographical technologies and methods.
- The present study standard is more knowledge oriented. The new proposal is competences oriented. Proposed competences are oriented to professional development according to actual state of discipline. There are several important aspects: 1) using of GIS and other modern technologies; 2) ability to critical thinking, discussing on actual problems, present results of analytical work, 3) participating on spatial and regional planning and landscape management process, 4) ability to use applied geographical methods.
- The recommended system of modules did not mean to teach its one after another, but to select the adequate subjects according to obtained knowledge. Nevertheless, it is recommended to teach Module 3 before Module 4 and the Module 5 on the last semesters of studies.
- It is strongly recommended to implement field practices to develop skills in practical research work, using of applied methods and GIS technologies.
- It is strongly recommended to include Bachelor theses, because it shows al the achieved competences in a complex way.

There are many possibilities to construct a study programme, as examples please see programmes from Latvian State University and from Greifswald University in Germany.

4. Recommendations for master study programs. The existing state standard for master in geography is formulated well according to the existing standard for bachelor studies. Several

specialties or competences (especial related to applying of modern technologies, of critical thinking) should be moved in to the bachelor level. The Master studies should be more oriented to constructive (spatial and regional planning) and scientific work. The master study programmes should be revised after revision of classification of master specialties (programmes) of higher education and of state standard for geography bachelor studies.

9. Acknowledgments (if any)

I am very thankful for Resident Twinning Advisor Mrs. Lisa Bydanova and the team for the good organized work during the mission.

Annexes

1. Draft of “State standard of bachelor programme of geography” (see separate file).

2. Table of geography related study programmes in the classification of specialties (programmes) of higher education

Bachelor	Master
050103Geography teacher	060112Geography teacher
050212Regional studies (by region)	060211Regional studies
	060404Economy / Economics of nature management and forecasting, Environmental Economics
	060410State and municipal management / Regional management
	060412Management of sustainable development / Political management of sustainable development / Human potential in sustainable development / Sustainable development planning / Sustainable human development / Management of natural resources in the sustainable development
050503Geography	060506Geography / Economic and social geography / Landscaping / Physical geography of Azerbaijan / Geomorphology / Economic and social geography of Azerbaijan and its neighbouring countries / Economic and social geography of the world / Territorial planning and regional planning
	060507 Hydrometeorology / Climate science / Hydrology / Physical oceanology / Aviation meteorology / Agro meteorology / Integrated management of water resources
050504Ecology	060510 Ecology / Methods of protection and restoration of environment / Environmental protection in the field of agriculture / Biodiversity and nature conservation / Bio ecology
050637Town planning (it is separately from 050626Architecture and there is lack of Regional	060633Architecture / Town planning

planning, or in total Spatial planning)	
050612 Geomatics and geodesy engineering	060640 Geodesy and map engineering / Applied geodesy / Aero photo geodesy / Cosmic geodesy / Geomatics / Mapping 060649 Ecological engineering / Protection and comprehensive utilization of water resources / Melioration, recultivation and land protection / Conservation and recycling of natural resources / Environmental protection and efficient use of natural resources / Environmental landscape formation
050709 Soil studies and agrochemistry	060701 Soil studies and agrochemistry / Agro-ecological evaluation and classification of soils / Agro geochemistry of landscape / Ecological monitoring and protection of soil / Soil science
050710 Surface structure and real estate cadastre	060705 Surface structure, soil and city cadaster / Surface structure and land inspection / Land cadaster / City cadaster
050810 Tourism organization	060803 Tourism and hotel business / International tourism and country studies

3. Lithuanian study classification (in Lithuanian) <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/ae5d5730b7c211e693eea1ef35f20da9>

4. “Descriptor of the Study Fields of Physical and Human Geography” (approved by Order No V-928 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 July 2015) <https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/documents/files/EN%20versija/Quality%20Assurance/Study%20program%20descriptions/Geography.pdf>

5. Geography study programme of Latvia State University https://www.lu.lv/en/nc/studies/study-process/courses/programme-search/?tx_lustudycatalogue_pi1%5Bprogram%5D=21120&tx_lustudycatalogue_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_lustudycatalogue_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=Course&cHash=c1add4f6a7d99598205ae9db308a1a1b

6. Geography study programme of Greifswald University (translated from German) <https://geo.uni-greifswald.de/studium/bsc-studiengaenge/bachelor-geographie/>