

Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

Mission Report

Short-Term Mission on Activity 4.1. Assess the current legal and regulatory framework on education standards, quality assurance, credits and recognition of parts of studies

(January 28 – February 1, 2019)

1. Name and Function of the Expert:

Full name of expert

Ms. Aurelia Valeikiene, Lithuania

Signature



2. Objective and Tasks of the Mission:

The mission is carried out within the framework of:

COMPONENT 4: RECOMMENDATIONS ON AMENDMENTS OF LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATIVE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED

Activity 4.1. Assess the current legal and regulatory framework on education standards, quality assurance, credits and recognition of parts of studies

Benchmarks for this activity are:

- A final draft of the new state standards for Higher Education is prepared;
- Any other relevant documents are reviewed and revised, if necessary.

3. Time schedule of mission:

Date and Time	Activity
Monday 28 January 2019	Meeting with MoE representatives to discuss the draft of Higher Education Standards: <i>Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL I</i> <i>Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL IV</i> <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova, Chief Specialist at Accreditation Department, ANO</i> <i>Mr. Anar Naghiyev, Deputy Director, Education Institute</i>
Tuesday 29 January 2019	A joint deskwork and discussion with MoE representatives to draft the updated version of Higher Education Standards: <i>Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL I</i> <i>Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL IV</i>
Wednesday 30 January 2019	A joint discussion with MoE representatives regarding the new format of state standards suggested by Twinning experts under Activity 1.5.3 <i>Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL I</i> <i>Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL IV</i>
Thursday 31 January 2019	A joint deskwork and discussion with MoE representatives to draft the updated version of Higher Education Standards: <i>Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL I</i> <i>Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL IV</i>
Friday 1 February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A joint deskwork and discussion with MoE representatives to draft the updated version of Higher Education Standards: <i>Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL I</i> <i>Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at HE Dept., MoE, CL IV</i>- Report writing Debriefing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mr Yagub Piriye

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

This mission is as a continuation of the first mission carried out under the same activity in December 2018 (Activity 4.1.).

The objective of the first mission carried out in Dec. 2018 was to assess the current legal and regulatory framework on educational standards, quality assurance, credits and recognition of periods of studies. This second mission specifically focuses **on supporting the Ministry of Education to draft a new version of state standards in higher education, considering best European practices and international experience.**

5. Achievement of the Expected Results

Planned action was achieved.

The new State Standard for Higher Education was drafted (see attached).

The STE got acquainted with the comments of another STE from Latvia regarding the State Standard of The Study Field of Physics Teacher; an example approach to the matter as in Lithuania is given below (see section 8).

6. Unexpected Results

State if any unexpected results were identified during the mission. Add any relevant comments.

7. Issues Left Open After the Mission

State if any issues were left open. Add any relevant comments.

8. Recommendations (including recommendation for future missions)

- ***Recommendations for development of the state standards in particular study fields***

All state standards in the parts describing learning outcomes per different study cycles shall be checked for correspondence against the revised qualifications framework for EHEA, agreed by Ministers of Education in Paris on May 14-15, 2018. See here

http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf

It is proposed to structure the text and use more of numbering or bullet points, e.g. when listing the purposes to which the state standard serves or constituent parts of what makes 240 or 120 credits respectively.

In the introductory parts of the standard, it should be made clear if the standard applies to Azerbaijani HE institutions abroad (in case there are such established) or in case they will be applicable if established in the future. It is also important to clearly state if branches of foreign institutions have to follow Azerbaijani state higher education standards or not. Currently such information is omitted from the text.

The role of foreign languages should be clearly established, clarifying which languages are necessary / desired for studies and successful employment in a given field (e.g. giving clear reference to first and second foreign languages). English does not appear as mandatory language, yet it emerges from the text it may be obligatory.

Coding of competences and learning outcomes in the main body text of the standard shall coincide with the coding in Annex 1. Currently, generic and professional competences and learning outcomes have their own (repeating) codes and do not align with codes in Annex 1.

Teaching and learning methods, as well as assessment methods within the main body text and in annexes should match, as currently in the text, more examples are listed, whereas in the tables No.6-8 in Annex No. 2 less are found. To be more precise, the main body text provides references to far more new methods than are listed in the annex.

Currently, the requirements on the content, volume, structure of master thesis (in the text of the Chemical Engineering Standard it is called “master dissertation”) are set by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is proposed to leave this question for the self-regulation by universities, as is the usual practice in majority of countries belonging to the European Higher Education Area.

The upper limit of required reading sources should be established, as well as the limit for pages to read should be clear – in order to assure students get credit for all work and there is no more work to do than credits are assigned.

- ***Recommendations for improvement of the language of the state standards***

All state standards should be proof-read by a team including an expert in the field, an expert in pedagogy and a native English speaker to ensure the standard is well written, well understood and conveys the message it is intended to convey. Currently, the text is difficult to understand which may lead to difficulties in applying it for development of study programmes and assessment thereof when undergoing internal and external quality assurance.

In case services of a native English speaker are not available, it is proposed to use free web-based dictionaries to check for selection of terms (e.g. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>) and free software *Grammarly* which automatically detects grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and style mistakes in writing and helps improve the text (<https://www.grammarly.com/>).

- **Regarding state standards in the field of teacher education**

For teacher training, in Lithuania, there are no standards for study programmes according to education levels (such as pre-primary, primary, basic, secondary, secondary vocational and vocational teachers), but there are study field descriptors for education and pedagogy in general and they are structured per study cycle and per academic qualification (first cycle professional bachelor, first cycle bachelor, second cycle master). The legal text in original is available here:

<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/5185b730a00011e58fd1fc0b9bba68a7>

In addition, there are requirements for persons wishing to work as a teacher, which is a regulated profession, are defined and approved separately; they are issued by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Requirements are structured in terms of general requirements and specific for certain subjects and for educational levels. The legal text in original is available here:

<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/7367f7d02fbf11e4b487eaabe28831e8/OZyUEiZGac>

9. Acknowledgments (if any)

Appreciation is expressed to Ms Lisa Bydanova for effective organization and hosting of the mission as well content-wise support; to Mr Tarlan Arzumanov for language support; and Ms Aytaj Atakishiyeva for all logistical support.

Dedication of Ms. Vusala Gurbanova, Senior Advisor at Higher Education Department, MoE, Component Leader I and Ms. Nargiz Garakhanova, Senior Advisor at Higher Education Department., MoE, Component Leader IV to the mission was remarkable and worth mentioning.

Annexes

Annex I: Revised version of state standards for Higher Education study programmes in chemical engineering

Annex II: Any other relevant documents.