REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË

AGJENCIA E SIGURIMIT TË CILËSISË NË ARSIMIN E LARTË

No. _____ Prot. Tirana, on ____.____.2026

OPEN CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

for the engagement of 1 (one) foreign expert as a strategic adviser to support ASCAL's pathway towards membership in ENQA and registration in EQAR

1. Legal basis

This call is issued pursuant to:

a) Article 14, paragraph 1, of Law No. 80/2015, "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", as amended (hereinafter "Law No. 80/2015");

b) Points 5, 6, 11(gj), and 24 of Council of Ministers Decision No. 109, dated 15 February 2017, "On the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Accreditation Board, and on the determination of fees for quality assurance processes in higher education", as amended (hereinafter "CMD No. 109/2017").

2. Subject of the call

2.1. The Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ASCAL"), as part of its efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and advance its European integration, hereby issues this open call for expressions of interest for the engagement of 1 (one) foreign expert as a strategic adviser with substantial experience in the strategic development of quality assurance agencies and in ENQA and EQAR processes.

2.2. The engagement aims to provide high-level strategic advice to ASCAL on its overall approach, priorities, sequencing and institutional readiness for membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ENQA") and registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter "EQAR"), taking account of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter "ESG") and the relevant ENQA and EQAR frameworks.

2.3. The engagement is strategic, advisory and supportive in nature. It does not constitute an official external review by ENQA or EQAR, a decision on membership or registration, or a replacement for their official procedures.

3. Duties and expected outcomes

3.1. Upon completion of the engagement, the consultant is expected to contribute to:

a) the development or refinement of a strategic approach and roadmap for ASCAL's ENQA membership and EQAR registration processes;

b) the identification of strategic priorities, decision points, dependencies, risks and institutional measures relevant to these processes;

c) strategic recommendations on institutional positioning, governance, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement and sequencing of actions;

ç) strategic advice to ASCAL's leadership on the overall approach to the ENQA and EQAR processes, including the preparation and positioning of key application documents.

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1. Candidates must:

a) be a foreign expert with at least 5 (five) years of senior-level professional experience in higher education quality assurance, quality assurance agency leadership or governance, or strategic development of national quality assurance systems;

b) have documented experience advising quality assurance agencies or comparable public or independent bodies on institutional development, strategic planning or external quality assurance;

c) have a strong understanding of European quality assurance practices and the institutional context of the European Higher Education Area;

ç) have advanced knowledge of the ESG and the strategic, institutional and procedural expectations associated with ENQA membership and EQAR registration;

d) have experience developing strategic roadmaps, advising on institutional readiness, identifying risks and priorities, and supporting decision-making in ENQA/EQAR or comparable international processes;

4.2. The following will be considered an advantage:

- previous senior-level involvement in ENQA and/or EQAR processes, including advising agencies on their strategic approach, institutional readiness or application strategy;
- experience as a senior leader, board member, governing-body member or strategic adviser in a quality assurance agency, or direct experience supporting agencies through external review and international recognition processes.

5. Independence, impartiality and conflict of interest

Candidates must ensure professional independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and the absence of any conflict of interest throughout the engagement. Candidates should disclose any current or recent role that could reasonably be perceived as affecting their independence.

6. Application documents

6.1. Candidates must submit:

a) an up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV) in English;

b) professional documents or references demonstrating relevant strategic advisory, leadership or ENQA/EQAR experience;

c) a brief statement outlining the candidate's relevant strategic experience and proposed contribution to ASCAL's ENQA and EQAR pathway;

d) a declaration confirming the absence of any conflict of interest and undertaking to maintain confidentiality;

6.2. The application documents must be submitted in English.

7. Evaluation and selection

7.1. Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria and scores:

1	Senior-level experience in quality assurance agency leadership, governance or strategic development of national quality assurance systems	25
2	Demonstrated knowledge of the ESG and strong understanding of ENQA membership and EQAR registration frameworks and processes	25
3	Experience providing strategic advice to quality assurance agencies on ENQA/EQAR pathways, institutional readiness, strategic positioning or comparable international recognition processes	30
4	Experience developing strategic roadmaps, prioritising actions, assessing risks and advising senior management or governing bodies	15
5	English-language proficiency and ability to communicate strategic advice and prepare professional written outputs in English	5
	Total	100
	Total	**100**

7.2. Selected candidates will be notified following completion of the procedure.

8. Method and deadline for applications

8.1. Applications must be submitted electronically to aplikime@ascal.al, with the subject line: "Expression of Interest – Strategic Adviser for ASCAL's ENQA and EQAR Processes".

8.2. The application deadline is 30 October 2026.

9. Terms of engagement

The duration, strategic advisory tasks, expected deliverables, deadlines and financial terms of the engagement shall be defined in the Terms of Reference and the relevant documentation, in accordance with the legal basis and applicable procedure.

10. Personal data protection

Candidates' personal data will be processed solely for the purposes of this procedure, in accordance with the legislation in force on personal data protection.

11. Additional information

For questions or clarifications regarding the application procedure, candidates may contact ASCAL at info@ascal.al.

DIRECTOR GENERAL

Assoc. Prof. Anisa Subashi

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

for the engagement of 1 (one) foreign expert as a strategic adviser to support ASCAL's pathway towards membership in ENQA and registration in EQAR

1. General information

Item	Description
Contracting institution	Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (hereinafter "ASCAL")
Scope of service	Provision of high-level strategic consultancy to advise ASCAL on its overall pathway towards membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ENQA") and registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter "EQAR"), including strategic priorities, institutional readiness, risks, sequencing, stakeholder engagement and a practical roadmap, taking account of the relevant ESG and ENQA/EQAR frameworks.
Number of consultants	1 (one) foreign expert
Expected duration	Throughout ASCAL's ENQA membership and EQAR registration processes
Place of performance	Remotely or at ASCAL's premises, in accordance with the agreed work plan

2. Legal basis

The engagement of the consultant is based on:

a) Article 14, paragraph 1, of Law No. 80/2015, "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", as amended (hereinafter "Law No. 80/2015");

b) Points 5, 11(gj), and 24 of Council of Ministers Decision No. 109, dated 15 February 2017, "On the organisation and functioning of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Accreditation Board, and on the determination of fees for quality assurance processes in higher education", as amended (hereinafter "CMD No. 109/2017").

3. Background and rationale

3.1. ASCAL operates in the field of quality assurance in higher education in accordance with the applicable legal and sub-legal framework and seeks to strengthen its institutional capacity and alignment with European practices.

3.2. As ASCAL advances its pathway towards ENQA membership and EQAR registration, it requires high-level external strategic advice from an expert with a strong understanding of quality assurance agencies, European quality assurance frameworks and the institutional implications of these processes.

3.3. The expertise is intended to provide an independent strategic perspective on ASCAL's overall approach, institutional readiness, priorities, sequencing, risks and decision-making. The consultant will advise ASCAL on how best to organise and progress the ENQA and EQAR processes; the engagement is not intended primarily as a technical document-review or drafting assignment.

4. Purpose of the engagement

4.1. The purpose of the engagement is to provide strategic international consultancy to ASCAL, focusing on:

a) advising on the overall strategy and pathway for ENQA membership and EQAR registration, taking account of the relevant ESG, ENQA and EQAR frameworks;

b) identifying strategic priorities, institutional readiness considerations, dependencies, risks and key decision points;

c) recommending a realistic roadmap, including the sequencing of actions, milestones, responsibilities and resource implications;

ç) providing strategic advice to ASCAL's leadership on institutional positioning, governance, stakeholder engagement and the approach to the ENQA and EQAR processes.

4.2. The engagement is strategic, advisory and preparatory in nature. It does not constitute an official review of ASCAL by ENQA or EQAR and does not guarantee ASCAL's admission to ENQA or registration in EQAR.

5. Duties and responsibilities of the consultant

The consultant shall work in cooperation with ASCAL's management and relevant structures, with a focus on strategic advice and decision support rather than routine technical review or document drafting.

5.1. Strategic assessment and orientation

a) review the current status of ASCAL's ENQA and EQAR processes, relevant strategic decisions, existing plans and key institutional considerations;

b) discuss with ASCAL's management the main strategic challenges, opportunities, assumptions and choices affecting the pathway towards ENQA membership and EQAR registration;

c) identify any critical information or evidence needed to provide well-founded strategic advice, without undertaking a comprehensive technical audit of all institutional documentation.

5.2. Strategic priorities and institutional readiness

a) provide an expert perspective on ASCAL's overall readiness and the strategic implications of the relevant ESG, ENQA and EQAR frameworks;

b) identify priority areas requiring management attention, strategic decisions or coordinated institutional action;

c) advise on dependencies, risks, possible obstacles and measures to mitigate them.

5.3. Strategic roadmap and implementation

a) propose or refine a practical strategic roadmap for the ENQA and EQAR processes, identifying key stages, milestones and decision points;

b) recommend sequencing and prioritisation of actions, taking account of institutional capacity, timing and resource implications;

c) advise on allocation of responsibilities, internal coordination, stakeholder engagement and monitoring of progress.

5.4. Strategic advice on ENQA and EQAR approach

a) advise on the overall approach, positioning and preparation strategy for the ENQA membership and EQAR registration processes;

b) provide high-level feedback on the intended structure, messages and strategic coherence of key application and self-assessment documents, where requested;

c) clarify relevant strategic considerations arising from ENQA and EQAR requirements and guidance, distinguishing strategic advice from formal interpretations or decisions that remain the responsibility of ENQA and EQAR.

5.5. Consultation and reporting

a) hold strategic consultation meetings with ASCAL's management and designated staff, remotely or in person as agreed;

b) present and discuss strategic findings, options and recommendations with ASCAL's leadership and/or the working group appointed by ASCAL;

6. Duration and place of performance

6.1. The engagement shall continue for the period required to provide strategic advice throughout ASCAL's ENQA membership and EQAR registration processes.

6.2. The service shall be provided remotely and, where necessary and agreed, at ASCAL's premises.

6.3. Travel, accommodation or other additional expenses shall be covered only if expressly provided for in the engagement documentation and in accordance with the legislation in force.

7. Coordination and supervision

7.1. ASCAL shall appoint a person to coordinate the engagement, facilitate communication with management and relevant structures, and provide the consultant with information necessary for the strategic advice.

7.2. The consultant shall report to the person designated by ASCAL and submit the agreed deliverables before the contract completion deadline.

8. Impartiality and conflict of interest

8.1. The consultant shall act independently, objectively and professionally.

8.2. Before commencing the engagement, the consultant shall submit a conflict-of-interest declaration identifying any professional relationship or interest that could affect their impartiality.

8.3. The consultant shall notify ASCAL of any new circumstance that may give rise to a conflict of interest during the engagement.

9. Confidentiality and document management

9.1. The consultant shall maintain the confidentiality of all documentation and information made available during the engagement, in accordance with the legislation in force and the contractual terms.

9.2. Documentation received from ASCAL shall be used solely to perform the specified tasks. Its use or distribution for any other purpose requires the relevant authorisation.

10. Financial terms and payment

10.1. The service fee, method and deadlines for payment, and treatment of tax obligations shall be specified in the individual contract.

10.2. Payment shall be linked to the services performed and the deliverables submitted in accordance with the conditions set out in the contract.

11. Final provisions

11.1. These Terms of Reference define the strategic advisory needs, tasks and expected outcomes of engaging a foreign expert to support ASCAL's pathway towards ENQA membership and EQAR registration.

11.2. Selection, engagement and payment shall be carried out in accordance with the legislation in force and the applicable procedure, following completion of the relevant legal and financial checks.