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 an external consultant to support ASCAL's preparation for membership in ENQA and 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 align its activities with European practices and standards for quality assurance in higher education, hereby issues this open call for expressions of interest for the engagement of 1 (one) foreign expert as an external consultant, with proven experience in higher education quality assessment and assurance.

2.2. The engagement aims to provide professional support to ASCAL in its preparation for membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ENQA") and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter "EQAR"), through a preliminary analysis of ASCAL's institutional activities, documentation and practices in relation to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter "ESG").

2.3. The engagement is advisory and supportive in nature. It does not constitute an official external review by ENQA, a decision on membership, or a replacement for that organisation's official procedures.

**3. Duties and expected outcomes**

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

a) a preliminary analysis of ASCAL's activities and documentation against the relevant ESG standards;

b) the identification of shortcomings and areas for improvement;

c) the development of concrete recommendations to address the identified shortcomings;

ç) providing advisory support for the preparation and improvement of documentation for the ENQA and EQAR membership process;

**4. Eligibility criteria**

4.1. Candidates must:

a) be a foreign expert with at least 5 (five) years of professional experience in national higher education quality assurance systems, particularly in external institutional evaluation, the operation of quality assurance agencies, and the implementation of the ESG;

b) have documented experience in higher education quality assessment in their own country or in other national higher education systems;

c) have knowledge of European quality assurance practices;

ç) have advanced knowledge of the ESG and the requirements for membership in ENQA and EQAR;

d) have experience in drafting evaluation reports, analysing institutional documentation, and formulating recommendations for improvement;

dh) have advanced English-language proficiency, including the ability to analyse and draft professional documentation in English.

4.2. The following will be considered an advantage:

– service as an external evaluation expert, member of evaluation panels, or expert at quality assurance agencies operating in accordance with the ESG, with experience involving ENQA and EQAR;

– experience in the evaluation of quality assurance agencies or in preparing them for membership in ENQA and EQAR.

**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.

**6. Application documents**

6.1. Candidates must submit:

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

b) professional documents or references demonstrating experience in higher education quality assessment;

c) a brief summary of relevant experience and the contribution they could make to ASCAL's process;

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:

| No. | Evaluation criterion | Points |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | At least 5 (five) years of professional experience in national higher education quality assurance systems, particularly in external institutional evaluation, the operation of quality assurance agencies and implementation of the ESG; service as an external evaluation expert, member of evaluation panels or expert at agencies operating in accordance with the ESG, with experience involving ENQA | 30 |
| 2 | Documented knowledge and experience in higher education quality assessment in the candidate's own country or other national systems, and in implementing the ESG and ENQA and EQAR requirements | 30 |
| 3 | Experience in preparing agencies for membership in ENQA and EQAR or in similar processes | 20 |
| 4 | Experience in drafting evaluation reports, analysing institutional documentation and formulating recommendations for improvement | 10 |
| 5 | Knowledge of English and ability to draft professional documentation | 10 |
| | **Total** | **100** |

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

**8. Method and deadline for applications**

The application deadline is 1 September 2026.

**9. Terms of engagement**

The duration, specific duties, 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 an external consultant to support ASCAL's preparation for membership in ENQA and EQAR**

## 1. General information

| Item | Description |
|---|---|
| **Contracting institution** | Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (hereinafter "ASCAL") |
| **Scope of service** | Provision of international consultancy services to conduct a preliminary analysis of ASCAL's activities against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter "ESG"), and to provide professional recommendations to support preparation of documentation for membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter "ENQA") and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter "EQAR"). |
| **Number of consultants** | 1 (one) foreign expert |
| **Expected duration** | 1 (one) month from the date the contract enters into force |
| **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 with the objectives of strengthening quality standards and aligning with European practices.

3.2. In preparation for membership in ENQA and EQAR, professional support is needed from foreign experts with direct experience in higher education quality assessment and assurance within their respective national systems.

3.3. The external expertise is intended to provide an independent professional perspective on the alignment of ASCAL's practices, procedures and documentation with the relevant ESG standards, and to identify measures that may be taken to improve institutional readiness for the ENQA and EQAR membership process.

**4. Purpose of the engagement**

4.1. The purpose of the engagement is to support ASCAL through international consultancy services, focusing on:

a) a preliminary analysis of ASCAL's institutional activities against the relevant ESG standards;

b) identifying areas of compliance, shortcomings and areas requiring improvement;

c) providing concrete and actionable recommendations to strengthen quality assurance systems and practices;

ç) providing professional support in preparing and improving documentation for the ENQA and EQAR membership process.

4.2. The engagement is advisory and preparatory in nature. It does not constitute an official review of ASCAL by ENQA/EQAR and does not guarantee ASCAL's admission to these organisations.

**5. Duties and responsibilities of the consultant**

The consultant shall perform the following tasks in cooperation with the relevant ASCAL structures:

**5.1. Review of institutional documentation**

a) review ASCAL's legal, strategic, organisational and procedural documentation insofar as it relates to the scope of the consultancy;

b) analyse quality assurance policies, procedures and practices against the relevant ESG standards;

c) identify any additional documents or evidence needed to support the analysis.

**5.2. Preliminary analysis against the ESG**

a) conduct a professional analysis of the alignment of ASCAL's activities with the relevant ESG standards;

b) identify areas where institutional documentation and practices are well established, as well as areas requiring improvement;

c) highlight issues that may require further documentation, procedural changes or institutional measures.

**5.3. Recommendations for improvement**

a) draft substantiated recommendations based on the consultant's experience in the quality assurance systems of the relevant countries;

b) propose concrete measures to address the identified shortcomings;

c) identify intervention priorities, taking into account their importance and the time required for implementation.

**5.4. Support for ENQA and EQAR documentation**

a) provide professional advice on structuring and improving the relevant application documentation;

b) review draft documents prepared by ASCAL and propose substantiated improvements;

c) ensure that recommendations are linked to the relevant ESG requirements and ENQA and EQAR guidance documents.

**5.5. Cooperation and reporting**

a) hold working meetings with ASCAL's management and relevant structures;

b) present preliminary findings and discuss recommendations with the working group appointed by ASCAL;

**6. Duration and place of performance**

6.1. The engagement shall last one month from the date the contract enters into force.

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 consultant's work, manage institutional communication and administer the documentation.

7.2. The consultant reports to the person designated by ASCAL and submits the 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 and accepted, in accordance with the conditions set out in the contract.

**11. Final provisions**

11.1. These Terms of Reference constitute the technical document defining the needs, duties and expected outcomes of engaging a foreign expert as an external consultant.

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.