



**2020-  
2022**

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

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The Strategic Plan approved by the Council of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), the meeting protocol No. TP-3 of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

# INTRODUCTION

The year of 2020 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter – the Center, SKVC). Our activities remain characterized by two essential features – continuity and gradual change. For the strategic planning period of 2020-2022, two main goals for SKVC are identified as follows: to promote the quality of higher education institutions and to create favorable conditions for the free movement of persons. They are implemented through the activities of an external quality assurance (QA) agency and the work of the academic information and recognition center. Changes in the implementation of the tasks set for SKVC are inspired by two sources: external political, economic, social, technological factors (both in Lithuania and more general international context), as well as the organization's internal development and environment (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

The strategic plan is based on the fact that SKVC acts as a national center of competence in the field of recognition and quality assurance of qualifications acquired abroad and in Lithuania, is an active member of international professional associations, such as ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE, as well as EQAR and ENIC and NARIC networks. The Center is a part of the Lithuanian higher education system, therefore the administration and academic staff of higher education institutions, students, representatives of the business world and employers, state institutions and other organizations in the field of education are the main stakeholders of SKVC. The quality of studies is primarily the responsibility of the universities and colleges themselves, the conditions for them are defined by the institutions formulating state policy and financing studies and research (arts).

An analysis of the Centre's past strategic period shows that SKVC is among the leaders in Europe, both as an external QA agency and as a center for academic information and recognition. Out of the 55 full members of ENQA, as judged by the international panel and the ENQA Board, the Center is among the top 10 QA agencies rated in accordance how they comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). According to the data covering 2014-2018, as an ENIC / NARIC center, we are the fourth among 34 centers in terms of activity in international projects, which enables SKVC to be among the leaders in developing and applying advanced academic recognition tools and practices for both ENIC / NARIC centers and higher education institutions. We participated in the development of a quality assurance mechanism for ENIC / NARIC centers and are among the first 12 out of total 54 academic recognition centers to voluntarily test the self-assessment methodology, to pass an international peer review, and receive a positive evaluation. This attests to SKVC's international recognition and proves our serious commitment to achievement of the best quality at work by reflecting on our activities, constantly learning, and improving according to recommendations. Over the next three years, the Center will undergo an external evaluation as a quality assurance agency and will prepare for its external evaluation as a center for academic information and recognition.

In the future, it is important not to lose momentum in the implementation of the Centre's main goals. In addition to evaluation of study fields and the new type of institutional reviews, SKVC is launching other tools to promote excellence in higher education. The Centre aims that external evaluation would have a positive impact on Lithuanian higher education, and services related to the recognition of foreign qualifications would reduce obstacles to academic mobility and increase opportunities for high-quality internationalization of organizations.

The principles of sustainable development, transparency, efficiency and moder approaches are mandatory for SKVC as a public administration institution. We are open to change and innovation, together with Lithuanian and foreign partners we create and apply them in practice. The competences and further professional development of the Centre's staff, coupled with sufficient funding for our activities are prerequisites for continued successful work.

Prof. dr. Kęstutis Petrikonis, Chairman of the SKVC Council

Almantas Šerpatauskas, Director of SKVC

## OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONS

SKVC is a public administration institution that implements the Lithuanian state research and education policy within the limits of its competence. The Center acts as an autonomous budgetary organization, established by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1995. SKVC plans its activities taking into account the strategic goals of the long-term development of the state, the needs of the implementation of Lithuania's international obligations, and the expectations of the target groups.

Since its foundation, SKVC has performed two main functions as follows:

- **External quality assurance agency for higher education.** We organize external evaluation of higher education institutions and their studies, on the basis of which we accredit higher education institutions, the study programs, and study programmes clustered by study fields. Through external evaluation, SKVC contributes to the systemic improvement of the quality of higher education with the help of Lithuanian and foreign experts – academics, students and representatives of the world of work. By developing a culture of quality in higher education, the Center gives advice helping higher education institutions to prepare for external evaluation and to improve their activities by learning from each other. There is a growing focus on follow-up, as evaluation does not end with the preparation and publication of findings; it is essential that the recommendations made by experts are implemented and that the findings and results of the evaluation are available to all stakeholders. Through external quality evaluation, SKVC has collected various data on the activities of higher education institutions, which are used in various reviews and analyses. Since 2009, SKVC has started another system-level activity – coordination of preparation of study field descriptors.
- **Academic information and recognition center.** SKVC has been performing the functions of such a center since 1999, and has accumulated extensive experience in the field. The Center carries out the assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications related to higher education and provides information, methodological and consulting services in the field of countries' education systems and qualifications, helping higher education institutions, employers and other legal entities to decide on acceptance of foreign qualifications for further study or professional practice purposes. The Center also monitors the decisions made by higher education institutions authorized to carry out academic recognition of foreign qualifications in order to ensure the application of the general principles and criteria established in the Lisbon Recognition Convention in all institutions implementing academic recognition in Lithuania. SKVC also helps developing the competencies of foreign qualifications' assessors: training events are organized annually for higher education institutions, as well as for employers or other interested parties, on issues relevant to them in the field of recognition. SKVC is active in international projects aimed at developing methodological and information tools for solving issues and challenges related to the recognition of qualifications. The Center disseminates the gained experience by providing recommendations and information to Lithuanian higher education institutions, employers, other legal entities, as well as natural persons.

# VISION, VALUES, MISSION

## VISION

**Based on competence and partnership, together with the main stakeholders, we strive to create in Lithuania and Europe the dynamic, cohesive, efficient higher education, which would be based on common values and would be attractive and valued by individuals, organizations and society.**

## OUR VALUES

- **Professionalism** – we work competently and efficiently; in order to achieve quality of our activity, we analyse it and strive to improve together.
- **Impartiality** – we are an independent organization; we carry out our activities in a transparent, public manner, without prejudice and in accordance with pre-established and published criteria and procedures; we base our decisions on facts and their expert assessment.
- **Openness** – we are open to change and innovation, we constantly learn and share our experiences.
- **Cooperation** – we base our activities on respect, trust, partnerships within the organization and with stakeholders in Lithuania and abroad.

## MISSION

**The mission of SKVC is to contribute to the improvement of quality of higher education studies through mutual accountability and fostering of a quality culture, and to create conditions for the free movement of persons in the world by increasing transparency of qualifications and the realization of their value.**

It should be noted that in accordance with the ESG, as well as the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, higher education institutions themselves are primarily responsible for the quality of higher education. SKVC's role is to be an impartial evaluator, information provider and advisor, as external quality assurance is only one of the tools for the quality of higher education. Other instruments are also very important for quality, such as the general legal regulation of education and specifically higher education, funding from the Lithuanian state budget and other sources, as well as the established cultural traditions and organizational maturity. The Center is part of this system and works together with other stakeholders.

In the field of academic recognition of qualifications, SKVC acts as an information and methodological center, developing and implementing good practices and ensuring that all decisions in the decentralized academic recognition system are made in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, regardless the fact who makes decisions – SKVC or authorised HEIs. The Center does evaluation and makes academic recognition decisions for formal final qualifications from abroad for study and work purposes; meanwhile, the competence of HEIs is the credit transfer, validation of RPL and admission to study on the basis of formal final qualifications after fulfilling the academic and other selection requirements. Thus, academic recognition is of different types and is not just a field of activity of SKVC alone, but the informational and methodological functions of the Center are very significant. The decisions made by SKVC and the recommendations provided to employers on the value of qualifications are often important for the professional recognition of qualifications acquired abroad by both Lithuanian and foreign citizens, both in terms of state-regulated and non-regulated professions.

## ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION AND GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE

2017-2019 was a **transitional period** for the Center in many respects. The focus has been on the new study programs, all of which are being evaluated not only formally but also with the help of local experts. In 2018, individual evaluations of study programs were completed and re-evaluations of negatively evaluated higher education institutions were performed. Several of SKVC's accreditation decisions have been painful enough for communities and led to the reorganization of the two universities to end their operations as independent institutions. Higher education institutions re-created, and SKVC re-evaluated study programs for teacher training; what result it will give will be revealed after five years. Meantime, the legislative process in the field of study quality assessment and monitoring was very active, by end of 2019 it was still not completed.

Following the amendments to the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania in 2016, the **transition from the evaluation of individual study programs to the evaluation of study fields** was programmed. It is hoped that this will lead to a better assessment of each higher education institution's portfolio of programs, and will encourage higher education institutions to cluster their academic and administrative staff and resources, improve management, abandon weak programs, highlight synergies between different programs in the same direction and emphasize their uniqueness. For all programs, evaluation is expected to lead to savings in human and financial costs as the intensity and volume of evaluations will decrease. The impetus for strategic development and internal quality management, effectiveness and internationalization are the main highlights of **the new cycle of institutional reviews**, which are provided for in the forthcoming legislation. The law also provides for an evaluation cycle of at least 7 years for both types of evaluations. By **strengthening the annual monitoring, the follow-up** of evaluations and the dissemination of evaluation results, greater responsibility for the quality of studies will be given to higher education institutions themselves. The evaluations will use not only the data provided by higher education institutions, but also other, collected from various state registers, which will allow obtaining accurate and objective information. Over the last three years, it was hard to reach an agreement among the legislators and other stakeholders, and lack of it has prevented implementation of new types of evaluations during the previous strategic planning period (as planned). However, this experience has once again demonstrated the importance of **reaching consensus among all stakeholders on an external quality assurance model** – its objectives, expected results and indicators for measuring success, as only consensus enables the whole system to move forward. New types of evaluations of study fields and institutional reviews begin with the new strategic planning period of the Center in 2020.

To foster a culture of quality, SKVC **continues and intensifies a mutually beneficial dialogue** with universities and colleges of higher education, students and representatives of the world of work through various bilateral consultations, participation in meetings of associated structures, and events with local and foreign experts. In the future, the voice of students, who will be given a new tool – **the mobile app of the national student survey**, will gain more weight. The agreement of the local community on the quality of studies between the academic and world of work is reflected in the **descriptors of study fields**, which are being prepared and/or updated. They serve as guidelines for higher education institutions for the development and updating of study programs, as well as for local and foreign experts when evaluating

them, as well as providing information to students and employers about the achieved learning outcomes of future graduates. Descriptors of study fields supplement the hierarchical structure of learning outcomes typical for studies in Lithuania – the description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and the descriptor of study cycles approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports. Over the next three years, this work on improvement of the regulatory framework will be completed, at the same time contributing to the more comprehensive realization of the learning outcomes paradigm.

During the last three years, the **decentralized system of academic recognition** has expanded: in 2016 three universities participated in it, and at the end of 2019 – ten HEIs, who have the right to independently, on the basis of the methodological assistance of the Center, to carry out academic recognition of qualifications acquired abroad for the purpose of studies there. The implementation of these activities has been monitored, reports have been prepared and discussed with universities, including how the recognition of qualifications could and should be improved. In three years, the Center has expanded services giving advice to higher education institutions and employers on the assessment of qualifications acquired abroad in Lithuania for the purposes of studies and work as many as 12 times – from 84 (in 2016) to 1,043 recommendations (in 2019). A new trend in SKVC's activities is that although applications from individuals still account for the majority of all applications for recognition, the need for services for employers and higher education institutions is growing every year.

During the previous strategic planning period, the concept of **automatic recognition of foreign qualifications** was formulated, it was launched in the Baltic region, and in the coming period it will expand to the Benelux region, and possibly other countries in the European Higher Education Area. As a center for academic recognition, SKVC continues to work actively on international projects, theoretically and practically developing the concept of automatic recognition and the recognition of non-traditional learning (so-called micro-credentials and massive open courses). Due to active work outside Lithuania, SKVC has become known and well appreciated in the international space, as evidenced by the abundance of implemented projects, also our employees are continuously invited to share the acquired knowledge with Lithuanian higher education institutions and other organizations.

With this in mind, SKVC aims **to provide more information** to all stakeholders about the Centre's services, performance, provide advice based on facts about the quality of higher education institutions, the recognition of foreign qualifications and Lithuanian qualifications. SKVC provides objective and comprehensive information without pursuing one-day sensations, but at the same time there remains a challenge to make this information accessible and impactful. Using the collected data, SKVC has expanded its analytical activities, performed more reviews and analysis relevant to the academic community – 14 of them have been prepared since 2017, and active work in this direction continues. There are still various myths about the quality of studies, therefore we need to improve information provision to learners, students, employers and the general public. During 2019, SKVC's presence on social media has increased, more qualitative, not only informational content, but also photos are published. The communication strategy will be updated to make communication activities more systematic. However, the limiting factor is that to increase visibility and impact, greater investment is needed, which the Center does not have at its disposal.

In order to strengthen confidence in Lithuanian higher education in the international arena, SKVC is launching two new initiatives: a voluntary **quality label in internationalisation** in order to attract foreign students, and a mandatory even **more careful evaluation of medical training** according to the requirements of the World

Federation for Medical Education. These measures will help to better realize the rights of students coming from abroad to study in Lithuania or locals intending to leave to work abroad after they received quality education (and services during their studies) in Lithuania. For higher education institutions, this will be an incentive to better administer the study process, to focus on the proper formulation of learning outcomes and their achievement. The goal is not to commit to the extensive development of studies, but to high quality. Additional state incentives will be provided for high-quality internationalisation, thus protecting Lithuania's reputation as a country.

As an EQAR registered agency, we receive inquiries about the possibilities for us to organize the **evaluation of foreign higher education institutions and their studies**. We are open to such suggestions, but focus on the assessment of those, who are prepared for a demanding look from the outside, applying the learning outcomes paradigm and other provisions of the ESG. We communicate with potential customers and other stakeholders abroad to identify mutually beneficial terms of cooperation. Although the initiative for evaluation abroad is in the hands of foreign higher education institutions, we will strive to organize at least one evaluation abroad over the next three years.

Much attention is paid to self-reflection and performance improvement, learning from similar foreign organizations by way of benchmarking. In 2017, the second ENQA-coordinated **external review of SKVC** in terms of compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) showed significantly better results than in 2012, when our first international review took place. According to the provisions of ESG-2005, in 2012 the Centre's activities fully met the six groups of requirements and were substantially in line with three requirements. Meanwhile, according to increased expectations in the ESG-2015 version, in 2017, SKVC fully complied with nine standards and substantially complied with five standards. In 2019, the Center took stock of the progress made in implementing the proposals made by ENQA experts three years ago on how to improve our work, and reported on this. There was a very positive response from both the ENQA Board and the experts, who arrived for the follow-up visit in the autumn. Currently, SKVC is among the top 10 quality assurance agencies out of 55 ENQA members in terms of how they meet ESG-2015 expectations. This encourages us to continue to set ambitious targets, the level of implementation of which will be revealed in the next external review by ENQA, which will take place starting 2021.

Introspection, **alignment with international standards** and performance improvement also pertain to our activities as the center for academic information and recognition, member of ENIC / NARIC networks. The Center was among those who developed common requirements for all ENIC / NARIC centers, and is among 22 of the 54 organizations that have carried out voluntary self-assessment and passed international external evaluation over the past seven years. Beyond analysis of our own work, SKVC is currently conducting an analysis of the entire academic recognition system in Lithuania and, taking into account the recommendations of foreign experts, will make proposals for improvement of the regulation of this system, in order to achieve greater autonomy and responsibility of higher education institutions in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

During the previous strategic planning period, the Center developed an innovative product, LIREQA Recommendations how to **link academic recognition and internal and external quality assurance**, using the accumulated subject-specific expertise in our two areas of activity, together with other academic recognition centers, quality agencies and major stakeholder organizations in Europe, such as ENQA, EUA, and ESU. These recommendations show the way to put into practice the common political commitment of European Ministers of Education to improve student mobility by overcoming differences in systems and

institutional practices. Over the next three years, SKVC will test the operation of these recommendations in life through targeted assessments, and intends to further develop a theoretical model for linking academic recognition to quality assurance.

The Center will further **develop cooperation** with similar organizations in Lithuania and abroad, giving priority to the European region, first of all – the Baltic States, the Benelux countries and the Nordic countries. Study visits, joint implementation of projects and legal agreements serve as tools for this.

The planned improvement of SKVC activities by **digitalisation of activities and services** will allow to better meet the needs of the target audiences. However, the growing volume of work is a challenge as financial, human resources and infrastructure development opportunities are limited. The overall optimization of the activities of public sector organizations poses a number of challenges for the Center as a small institution; declining project funding and a lack of adequate core funding lead to staff turnover and difficulties in applying innovation. Over the next three years, the challenge for the organization is to stabilize budget funding at a sufficient level and to diversify revenue sources more, thus partially compensating for the lack of state funding. To this end, project activities will be further developed and services will be offered more actively on a commercial basis. Insufficient funding and lengthy and inflexible recruitment procedures have a negative impact on the Centre's staffing. Neutralizing **negative funding trends**, together with the Council and the founder of the Center, will be an important challenge for the next three years.

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of SKVC are to promote the quality and quality culture of Lithuanian higher education, to create favorable conditions for study and professional activities, free movement of persons, to achieve compatibility of Lithuanian higher education system and the European Higher Education Area, to develop comparability of qualification recognition system with principles of recognition in Europe, to promote awareness of the quality and internationalization of higher education.

## Medium term objectives of SKVC for 2020-2022

The long-term goal of SKVC as an external quality assurance agency is to promote the quality of the activities of Lithuanian higher education institutions, their quality culture and to improve awareness. For the coming period it will be done through the following means:

1. implementation of quality assurance of higher education institutions in accordance with the renewed external evaluation framework,
2. fostering of a quality culture,
3. systemic monitoring of follow-up and study activities,
4. the development of the system of descriptors of study fields has been completed,
5. promotion of excellence.

SKVC's long-term task as an academic information and recognition center, a member of the ENIC / NARIC networks, is to create favorable conditions for the free movement of persons. In the nearest future it will include:

1. assessment of foreign qualifications and provision of related services,
2. development of internal and external quality assurance processes for the recognition of foreign qualifications related to higher education,
3. development of automatic recognition of qualifications,
4. harmonization of the system for the recognition of academic qualifications.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the Center will nurture partnerships and improve activities, strengthen the organization, as well as strengthen its role in promoting the quality of higher education, recognition and clarity of qualifications and internationalization by improving SKVC's external communication.

The activities to meet the objectives, their expected results and impact are presented in the next section. The medium-term objectives set out the main criteria for drawing up the annual work plan. The work and results of this strategy will be translated into annual work plans with a specific identification of those responsible for a task and sources of funding; internal control of their implementation (quarterly, annually) and analysis will be performed. The risks of implementing the plan are defined in the annual work plan and in the individual annual tasks of the employees. The main **risk factors** of SKVC activities are:

1. changes in legislation in the fields of higher education and public administration;
2. insufficient budget funding and project funding constraints;
3. additionally delegated work or functions without allowing for a corresponding increase in staff or funding;
4. staff turnover, lengthy and inflexible centralized recruitment procedures for the civil service;
5. protracted public procurement processes and delays in the execution of contracts by suppliers.

SKVC publishes yearly activity reports and is periodically evaluated externally by both Lithuanian and foreign organizations, after these evaluations it draws up activity improvement plans and carries out other follow-up activities.

# ACTIVITIES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACT

Mid-term goals	Activities	Expected results	Impact
<p><b>The long-term goal of SKVC as an external quality assurance agency is to promote the quality of the activities of Lithuanian higher education institutions, their quality culture and improve awareness.</b></p>			
Implementation of quality assurance of higher education institutions according to the new external evaluation framework	Institutional review of HEIs and their accreditation	An external evaluation of 29 HEIs was carried out, and decisions on accreditation were made	A functioning external quality assurance system that gives the public confidence in Lithuanian higher education
	Ex-post evaluation and accreditation of study fields	Evaluated and accredited study programs in 55 study fields	
	Ex-ante evaluation and accreditation of study programmes	All submitted new study programs have been evaluated	
Development of quality culture	Organization of events for HEIs and provision of advice	At least 19 training events for representatives of HEIs and students, 2 seminars for employees of quality departments of HEIs, 3 international conferences were organized. Twice a year, forums for students and staff of HEIs quality units were organized	Fostering a culture of discussion, trust between SKVC as a quality agency and higher education institutions
	Analysis and dissemination of evaluation and monitoring results to different SKVC audiences	At least 6 thematic analyses have been prepared and published through various channels	
			Connections created between SKVC internal information resources and external databases (DEQAR)
Sistemic follow-up and monitoring of provision of studies	Providing advice to higher education institutions and preparation of recommendations for the implementation of follow-up activities following an external evaluation	Higher education institutions were consulted as necessary on follow-up measures and their implementation	Timely and planned implementation of expert recommendations, risk management
	Carrying out annual monitoring (according to the set indicators) and publishing the results	Annual monitoring of all study fields has been performed, the results of which are made public	

The development of the system of study fields descriptors has been completed, the requirements for the preparation and evaluation of programs by fields have been established, ensuring the necessary quality of studies	Preparation of new study fields descriptors	22 new descriptors of study fields have been prepared	Completeness of the Lithuanian qualifications framework and legal regulations regarding studies in terms of the description of learning outcomes
		Trained representatives of higher education institutions (developers and teachers of study programs - 100 persons)	
	Update of previously approved study field descriptors	Descriptors of 37 study fields reviewed, updating them as needed	
	Organization of seminars regarding the use of study field descriptors in the development of new and updating of currently offered study programmes	At least 4 seminars were organized for the developers and teachers of higher education study programs	Increased competence of higher education specialists
Promoting excellence	An instrument for evaluation of quality of internationalisation implemented	A methodology for evaluation of higher education institutions according to compliance with the Quality Guidelines on Attracting Foreign Students and Internationalization of Studies developed	Greater student confidence in the quality of studies and Lithuania as an export country of higher education
		The instrument has been piloted in at least 2 HEIs	
		At the request of HEIs, assessment is carried out and an internationalisation quality label is awarded	
	Preparations made for the assessment and demonstrated compliance of the quality assurance of the medicine studies in Lithuania with the international quality requirements	An application submitted for Lithuania to gain recognition of NCFMEA <sup>1</sup>	
		An application submitted for Lithuania to gain recognition of training of medical doctors in Lithuania in accordance with WFME <sup>2</sup> standards	
		Training of medical doctors evaluated in 2 universities regarding their adherence to WFME standards	

<sup>1</sup> – National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation, NCFMEA

<sup>2</sup> – World Federation for Medical Education, WFME

Mid-term goals	Activities	Expected results	Impact
<b>SKVC's long-term goal as an academic information and recognition center, a member of the ENIC / NARIC networks, is to create favorable conditions for the free movement of persons.</b>			
Assessment of foreign qualifications and provision or related services	Recognition of foreign qualifications	Carried out as necessary while consistently applying good practice in the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	services provided timely and properly, allowing holders of foreign qualifications to enter the labor market and continue their studies in Lithuania
	Recommendations regarding foreign qualifications provided to HEIs and employers		
	Determining the correspondence of school subjects and transferring of grades to applicants for state-funded places in the first cycle and integrated study programs of Lithuanian higher education institutions		
Development of internal and external quality assurance processes for the recognition of foreign qualifications concerning higher education	Review and improvement of the processes of academic recognition of foreign qualifications in authorized higher education institutions	Recognition processes have been reviewed and improved in 5 authorised higher education institutions	Recognition processes in higher education institutions that are consistent and in line with the best international practice
	Assistance in implementation of foreign qualification recognition processes in unauthorized higher education institutions	Preparations done for academic recognition in 7 unauthorized higher education institutions	
		Recommendations have been developed for the implementation of recognition processes in higher education institutions	
	Incorporation of recognition into external quality assurance procedures	A model for incorporation of recognition into external quality assurance procedures has been developed and is being applied	
Dissemination of the best practice among HEIs	A training event or a seminar for Lithuanian higher education institutions organized at least once a year		

Development of automatic recognition of qualifications	Introduction of a simplified recognition process for relevant qualifications in the European Higher Education Area	The recognition process has been updated and the speed of provision of services doubled, and the EPE information system has been adapted to it	Faster integration of holders of qualifications from the European Higher Education Area into the studies and labor market
	Participation in the preparation of an automatic recognition agreement between the Baltic and Benelux countries	The recognition procedure has been abandoned and automatic recognition has been introduced for the Benelux countries	
Harmonization of the academic recognition system	Proposals for the development of a legal framework covering the recognition of formal qualifications at all levels	Proposals on the draft resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania were prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science	According to the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, holders of foreign qualifications at all levels have equal opportunities to obtain recognition of qualifications and thus enter the labor market or study
	Preparation for academic recognition of foreign vocational education and training qualifications at SKVC	A methodology for the recognition of foreign vocational education and training qualifications has been developed and tested, and the Electronic Recognition Space has been adapted for this purpose	
	Preparation for academic recognition of doctoral degrees in research and art at SKVC	Methodology for recognition of doctoral degrees in research and art developed and tested, Electronic Recognition Space adapted for this purpose	

Mid-term goals	Activities	Expected results	Impact
<b>Fostering partnerships and improvement of performance</b>			
Development of social partnership in Lithuanian higher education	Cooperation with higher education institutions, students, employers' organizations	Participation in the events of the Conference of Rectors of Lithuanian Universities, the Conference of Directors of Lithuanian Colleges, the Lithuanian Students' Union and other student representations, discussing the main issues related to the tasks of the Center	The concept of quality assurance as a joint responsibility implemented

		Targeted consultations with higher education institutions and student representatives (meetings, forums, focus groups) initiated	
	Participation in the preparation of draft legal acts and provision of expert opinion	Contribution to drafting of legislation and provision of expert opinion to public authorities	Dissemination and application of the best practice in Lithuania
Sustaining partnerships and developing international cooperation in the field of academic recognition	Lithuania is represented in networks for academic recognition of qualifications	Active participation (speaking, moderating sessions) in all joint meetings of ENIC / NARIC networks and events of other international organizations	Lithuania develops and applies recognition practices in line with the latest trends, is regarded as a reliable partner and a country applying advanced qualifications' recognition practices
		Attended all annual meetings of the NARIC network	
		In 2022, the application submitted to organize a joint ENIC / NARIC network event in Lithuania	
	Development of Baltic cooperation	Active participation in three annual meetings of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian ENIC / NARIC centers	
		One meeting of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian ENIC / NARIC centers in Lithuania organized	
	Development of innovations in recognition	Participated in at least two transnational projects as a project partner and / or coordinator	
Implementation and development of international cooperation in the field of quality assurance	Representation of Lithuania in quality assurance professional networks	Participated in all ENQA member forums and general assemblies (2 events per year)	The image of Lithuania as a reliable partner and a country applying innovative (impactful) quality assurance practices
		Participated in CEENQA general assemblies every year	
		Participated in INQAHE forums and conferences according to financial possibilities	

	Development of Baltic-Nordic cooperation	Actively participated in all annual meetings of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian quality agencies	
		One meeting of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian QA agencies in Lithuania was organized	
		Actively participated in joint meetings of Nordic and Baltic QA agencies	
	Development and dissemination of best practices	At least three SKVC employees are included as experts in the ENQA list of experts and are invited for evaluations and / or consultations	
		Involvement in at least one ENQA informal working group and / or project	
		The experience of SKVC and Lithuania was shared with the help of targeted visits and other measures	
Improving the Centre's activities on the basis of self-evaluation, external evaluation and feedback	An external evaluation of SKVC as an external quality agency has been prepared and carried out (coordinated by ENQA)	A self-assessment of appropriate quality in 2021 was prepared and submitted in time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Centre's external accountability as required by the law</li> <li>• SKVC is assessed as a reliable QA agency operating in the EHEA</li> <li>• Possibilities for SKVC to conduct assessments abroad</li> <li>• The maturity of the Lithuanian external QA system</li> </ul>
		In 2022, SKVC's membership in ENQA was extended on the basis of a visit and a positive evaluation report	
		Application and extended membership in EQAR	
		Better SKVC's external evaluation result according to at least 2 ESG standards	
	Areas for improvement have been identified and corrective measures have been implemented	Feedback from higher education institutions, experts, students, applicants gathered and analyzed	
	Internal audits performed, 2 per year		

Mid-term goals	Activities	Expected results	Impact
<b>Strengthening of the Organization</b>			
To ensure the development of knowledge and skills of the staff necessary for the implementation of the Centre's goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of in-service training needs, identification of priority areas and organization of training</li> <li>• Collection of feedback after training</li> <li>• Selection and integration of new employees</li> </ul>	At least 6 general competence development training events have been held for the target groups of employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded general skills, foreign language and subject-specific competencies</li> <li>• Effective and balanced involvement of new staff in the Centre's activities</li> <li>• Stable work of the Center and ability to improve its activities</li> </ul>
		At least 9 employees who developed competencies in external training events, a total of 9 trainings	
		There were at least 6 subject competence development events for the target groups of employees (according to the two functions of the Center), a total of 12 events	
		Head of the institution and deputy head of the institution, as well as middle managers have participated in at least one training for managers	
		At least 9 employees completed English language training	
		Employees trained to work with the Electronic Recognition Space Information System (as needed)	
		Further development of a mentoring program for new employees	
		Testing of specific subject competence models (ENQA competence model for measuring quality assurance professionals and ENIC / NARIC network qualifications' assessor profile)	
Increase employee commitment through the creation of a positive work environment	Promoting employee cooperation	At least 9 events for employees were organized	Motivated employees

	Opportunities have been created to get involved in the general activities of the Center and closer cooperation is encouraged by strengthening knowledge and skills	Active participation of employees in formal and informal working groups, activities and projects set up by the Center	
	Strengthening internal communication by ensuring effective provision of reliable information	An internal communication strategy has been developed and is being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better organizational microclimate</li> <li>• Higher operational efficiency</li> </ul>
Electronisation of the Centre's services and internal administration	Continue transferring the services provided by the Center to the electronic space	Letters sent and decisions made and signed by the Center electronically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater availability of the Centre's services</li> <li>• Reduced internal administration burden on employees, implementation of the green office</li> </ul>
	Ensure the security of the information and infrastructure managed and processed by SKVC (with a special focus on personal data and confidential information)	An Information Security Policy has been developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimized incident risk</li> <li>• Trust in the Center as a responsible organisation in terms of handling personal data</li> </ul>
		Information resources (both hardware and software) of SKVC are upgraded in line with the provisions of the Information Security Policy Self-Assessment	
To optimize internal administration processes and documents, part of which is managed in the Document Management System	Requests of employees and civil servants, the process of coordination of requests have been transferred to the electronic space	The director's orders on business trips and holidays have been transferred to the electronic space, the coordination process done electronically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More efficient administration of internal processes</li> <li>• Implementation of the "Green Office" concept</li> <li>• Employee satisfaction</li> </ul>
Ensuring the financial resources of SKVC	A plan for securing financial resources drawn up and discussed with the founder	Recommendation of 2017 offered by ENQA experts being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable operation of the organization,</li> <li>• Opportunities for development</li> <li>• Opportunities to keep motivated</li> </ul>

		Development of new project activities in Lithuania and with foreign partners in at least two projects	existing staff and attract new qualified employees
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Mid-term goals	Activities	Expected results	Impact	
<b>To strengthen the role of SKVC in the areas of promoting the quality of higher education, recognition of qualifications and increasing their clarity, and internationalization by improving SKVC's external communication</b>				
Disseminate objective, relevant, clear information on the quality of higher education, recognition of qualifications, internationalization and SKVC activities in order to establish and foster a culture of quality and clarity of qualifications in society	Updating of the external communication plan	Updated external communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better public awareness of the quality of Lithuanian higher education, recognition of qualifications and internationalization</li> <li>Greater public and partner confidence in SKVC as a transparent, reliable expert organization</li> </ul>	
	Reliable, relevant and detailed information on the quality of higher education, recognition of qualifications, internationalization as well as SKVC's mission, goals, objectives, activities, events, meetings, ongoing projects, etc. provided to the public and stakeholders through various means of communication and channels (SKVC website, social media, e-mail, events)	Smoothly functioning modern SKVC website with up-to-date, clear and comprehensive information		
		Regular, timely dissemination of information on social media		
		The SKVC newsletter is published quarterly		
		Active participation in large public information events on higher education, at least once a year		
		Prompt response to request for consultation by the public, media, higher education institutions, and representatives of employers		
		Dissemination of expert information, new ideas, good practices, preparation and publication of reviews and analyses		
Move the Centre's website to the <i>My Government</i> portal (according to the general plan)	The Centre's website runs smoothly on a common platform for public sector organizations	Easier access to information and services provided by SKVC		

