

---

# ENQA AGENCY REVIEW: THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION AGENCY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA (RS HEAA)

---

BERNARD COULIE, STEPHEN JACKSON, ĐURDICA DRAGOJEVIC, OANA ONICAS  
13 SEPTEMBER 2017

---

# Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
<b>BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>REVIEW PROCESS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RS HEAA'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>RS HEAA'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RS HEAA'S FUNDING.....</b>	<b>8</b>
FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF RS HEAA WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG).....	9
<b>ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ESG 3.5 RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ESG 2.6 REPORTING.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS .....	22
CONCLUSION .....	23
<b>OVERALL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>24</b>

ANNEXES.....	25
ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME .....	25
ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW.....	29
ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY .....	35
ANNEX 4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW .....	36

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses the compliance of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina (RS HEAA) with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. It is based on an external review conducted between March 2016 and September 2017. It is the first review of the agency conducted for membership of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher education (ENQA) and for registration on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

The principal purpose of the agency is the organisation and implementation of external quality evaluation processes and the accreditation of higher education institutions and applied study programmes. Its mission is to promote the ‘...continuous build-up and improvement of quality assurance in Republika Srpska higher education system through the implementation of European standards and best practice in the area of quality assurance.’ The Agency is based in Banja Luka and has a staff of six full-time employees and three part-time employees.

The review considered all of the activities of RS HEAA that were within scope of the ESG. In particular it addressed the procedures for the institutional accreditation of higher education institutions and the accreditation of study programmes.

The panel for the external review of RS HEAA was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following members:

- Professor Bernard Coulie (Chair), Honorary Rector, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium (EUA nomination);
- Dr Stephen Jackson (Secretary), formerly Director of Quality Assurance, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK;
- Durdica Dragojevic, Expert Advisor for International Cooperation, Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatia;
- Oana Onicas, Student representative, University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (ESU nomination)

Following its detailed consideration of the documentation, and discussions during its visit to the agency, the panel’s conclusion was that the agency has demonstrated that it is fully compliant with ESG standards 3.2, 3.7, 2.5 and 2.6; substantially compliant with standards 3.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4; partially compliant with standards 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6; and non compliant with standards 3.4 and 2.7.

In light of the documentary and oral evidence presented herein, the review panel does not consider that, in the performance of its functions, RS HEAA complies with the ESG. The agency is recommended to take appropriate action to achieve at least substantial compliance in all standards at the earliest opportunity.

# INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the compliance of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina (RS HEAA) with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). It is based on an external review conducted between March 2016 and September 2017.

## BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

### BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

ENQA's regulations require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they act in substantial compliance with the ESG as adopted at the Yerevan Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process in 2015.

As this is RS HEAA's first external review, the panel is expected to pay particular attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place, being aware that full evidence of concrete results in all areas may not be available at this stage.

### REVIEW PROCESS

The 2017 external review of RS HEAA was conducted in line with the process described in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The panel for the external review of RS HEAA was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following members:

- Professor Bernard Coulie (Chair), Honorary Rector, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium (EUA nomination);
- Dr Stephen Jackson (Secretary), formerly Director of Quality Assurance, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK;
- Durdica Dragojevic, Expert Advisor for International Cooperation, Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatia;
- Oana Onicas, Student representative, University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (ESU nomination)

### Self-assessment report

RS HEAA submitted a self-assessment report (SAR) in January 2017, which provided an explanation of the context of the higher education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and included a description and assessment of all the quality assurance activities for which the agency is responsible. It also provided an account of the extent to which the agency addressed the expectations of each of the standards in parts 2 and 3 of the ESG and included a SWOT analysis of the agency's current strengths and weaknesses. The Report was supplemented by a number of documents available on the agency's website and materials provided during the site visit.

The SAR was the principal document used by the panel to evaluate the agency's activities and to assess compliance with ESG. It allowed the panel to determine the principal lines of enquiry, followed during the site visit to RS HEAA, and informed the discussion about the review outcomes. Some additional information was requested by the panel, following its initial meeting in preparation for the site visit, and some further documents were provided during the visit to clarify and exemplify issues that had been discussed in the various meetings. The panel were also able to access information about the activities of the agency from its website.

### Site visit

The panel's visit to RS HEAA was conducted between 20 and 22 February 2017, with meetings being held in the agency's offices in Banja Luka and in the business facilities of a nearby hotel. The visit programme was prepared by The Head of Quality Assurance and International Cooperation in

collaboration with the review secretary. The panel held 12 meetings in total including with the staff of the agency, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, heads of higher education institutions, quality assurance officers, RS HEAA reviewers, the Director of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (Bosnia and Herzegovina), employer representatives and members of the Students' Union.

The panel were grateful for the help and support provided by RS HEAA in the preparation and organisation of the review visit and for ensuring that all the requirements of the panel were fully catered for.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

### HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The state of Bosnia-Herzegovina is comprised of three entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brcko District. Responsibilities for education are devolved to the local level and in Republika Srpska they are based in the republic's Ministry of Education and Culture. There are 22 institutions listed in the official Register of higher education institutions of Republika Srpska, nine universities and 13 colleges. Two of the universities and two of the colleges are public institutions, the rest are private organisations. To date twelve institutions have been accredited by RS HEAA and one was in the process of accreditation at the time of the review (SAR p.11) Over 90 per cent of students are studying at institutions that have received accreditation. The total student numbers for 2014-15 were 39,735 (the most recent figures provided for the panel), the largest numbers being in the fields of social sciences, business and law. Undergraduate programmes typically last four years, although some private institutions have moved to a three-year programme.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has overall responsibility for higher education within the Republic. It determines the implementation of the Law on Higher Education and it seeks advice from the Council for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance on higher education policy matters, including the establishment of new higher education institutions.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

Arrangements for quality assurance are shared between the state and the republic. There is a federal Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), also based in Banja Luka, responsible for the development of standards and for defined aspects of the accreditation process for all districts of the country. RS HEAA's primary function is the organisation and implementation of the external quality evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes. RS HEAA was established on 24 February 2011 by the Government of Republika Srpska under the terms of 2010 amended Law on higher education. The law states that the agency should integrate and further contribute to the development of activities for internal and external quality assurance through formalised accreditation processes. RS HEAA is directly responsible to the Government to whom it submits annual reports and work plans.

The agency's mission is '...continuous build-up and improvement of quality assurance in Republika Srpska higher education system through the implementation of European standards and best practices in area of quality assurance' (SAR p.14). Its vision is for the higher education system to be recognised in the European higher education area through membership of the agency in international networks, associations and registers (SAR p.14). RS HEAA has produced a Rulebook on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs (2016). It describes in detail the processes of accreditation and the selection of expert reviewers as well as the pre-conditions for application for accreditation. The Rulebook is publically available on the agency's website in English.

The Law on Higher Education makes reference to the responsibilities of higher education institutions to conduct their own procedures for internal quality assurance, including self-evaluation of quality procedures and the assessment of study programs. Institutions are expected to make the outcomes of their quality activities available to academic staff and students. This information may also be requested by the Ministry of Education and Culture and by expert panels involved in accreditation review (SAR, p.11).

The procedures for establishing new higher education institutions, study programs and courses are the responsibility of the Ministry. New organisations are required to meet legally regulated requirements with regard to staff, premises and teaching provision. The Ministry seeks the opinion of the Council for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance before completing the licensing process. The process is also referred to as initial accreditation and results in the addition of the institution to the Register of Higher Education Institutions (SAR, p.11).

A programme of institutional accreditation was initiated by RS HEAA in 2012 and is now close to completion. The accreditation of study programs is due to commence in 2017. The scale of the process for the accreditation of all higher education study programs is a major challenge for the agency and it has adopted an approach that will allow the work to be completed within the resources available. The proposals involve the selection of a range of study programs for review and an initial assessment by an independent professional expert reviewer (or two experts if appropriate) from the subject discipline concerned. Experts will evaluate the structure and content of the study programs and write a report that will form part of the evidence base available for the re-accreditation of the institution. The outcomes of institutional accreditation will include the accreditation of study programs that have been independently reviewed, and endorsed by the panel of experts for the institutional accreditation.

The public call and selection of experts for the conduct of institutional accreditation is conducted by the HEA. Once completed the list is made available to RS HEAA to identify experts for the individual reviews. The Self Assessment Report identifies a number of issues with the list including the lack of sufficient experts in specified academic disciplines, the currency of the list and the difficulties faced by student experts who may graduate before their inclusion on the list is confirmed.

There is also some dispute between RS HEAA and the HEA about the registration of accredited institutions. RS HEAA is responsible for the conduct of accreditation and issues a decision on the completion of the process. The HEA is responsible for maintaining the register of accredited institutions and does not consider that the process is completed until the institution has been listed in the register. In some cases there may be a considerable delay before the listing is completed (SAR, p.36).

#### **RS HEAA'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE**

The 2010 higher education legislation defined the status of the agency as an independent and non-profit making organisation and also specified its managerial structure. The agency currently has a staffing complement of six full-time members of staff and three part-time employees. The Director and Deputy Director are appointed by the government following a public invitation for applications.

The Director's term of office is five years with the option to renew for one further term of five years. The Deputy Director's position is currently unoccupied. The agency is divided into three operational units: the Department for Accreditation in Higher Education, the Department for Quality Assurance and International Cooperation and the Department for General Affairs, Human Resources and Finance. Staff take-on a range of administrative and operational duties to ensure that the agency can deliver its programme of activities.

The work of the agency is overseen by a Steering Board consisting of five members. The Board members are also appointed by the government following a public invitation for applications and have a term of office of four years renewable for a further four years, except for the student member, whose term is of one year. The chairman is elected among and by the members of the Board. The members are representatives of the academic community and students organisation. The Board has overall responsibility for the administration and financial management of the agency.

In addition there are two other bodies that contribute to the work of the Agency: the Accreditation Council and the Accreditation Forum. The Council is an expert body that ensures that there is consistency of practice in the conduct of reviews and that the standards and criteria for accreditation are adhered to. It includes two representatives of the Council for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of the Republika Srpska, one representative of the Students' Union, one member of the Accreditation Forum, one representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture and three expert staff of the agency.

The Accreditation Forum is an informal body comprised of experts working in the area of quality assurance and other key stakeholders. It is a voluntary discussion forum that provides the opportunity for matters of policy and practice in quality assurance to be debated and for recommendations to be made about the development of the agency's external evaluation and accreditation procedures.

#### **RS HEAA'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES**

Initial approval for institutions and study programmes is provided by the Ministry through a process of licensing. The agency's primary functions include the accreditation of higher education institutions within the Republika Srpska and the accreditation of individual study programmes. It also has a more general commitment to supporting the development of internal quality assurance arrangements and promoting the adoption of European standards and best practice.

Institutional accreditation is available for higher education institutions on a voluntary basis providing that they can fulfil specified eligibility criteria. These criteria include the availability of regular self-evaluation reports, established internal quality assurance arrangements, legal preconditions (including a licence from the government) and the provision of established study programmes. At the time of the submission of the agency's self-assessment report, 12 of the 22 institutions listed on the Register of Higher Education Institutions in the Republika Srpska had been accredited. A number of other institutions are currently in the process of accreditation, or considering application. The majority of students studying for higher education awards (91 per cent) are studying in accredited institutions (SAR p.11). Institutional accreditation takes place on a 5 year-cycle. The agency is planning arrangements for the second cycle of reviews to commence in 2017.

The procedures for the accreditation of study programs are included in the Rulebook on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs (RSHEAA 2016). Program accreditation is an integral part of the institutional accreditation process. The Rulebook has been developed in consultation with the academic community through discussions at the Academic Forum and will be subject to further discussion. It is intended to devote the 2016-17 academic year to the implementation of the revised procedures for study program accreditation (SAR, p.22).

Selected programs will be evaluated prior to the institutional review, or re-review. The method includes an assessment of the program structure, its aims and objectives, curriculum and the arrangements for teaching and learning. The agency will appoint reviewers for each study program, with approval from the Accreditation Council, and identify a member of staff from the agency to act as coordinator. The outcomes of the review will be included in a report that identifies compliance



with standards and criteria as well as recommendations for improvement. These reports will be made available to the institutional accreditation panel.

The agency's other activities include the provision of training on RS HEAA procedures for institutional reviewers, quality coordinators within institutions, and for senior managers with responsibility for quality assurance. Meetings and seminars are organised to assist institutions in the preparation of their applications for accreditation. In addition briefing is provided for students, employer representatives and international reviewers to ensure familiarity with the higher education system in Republika Srpska and with the significance of accreditation.

The agency is also involved in a range of international activities. It is a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It has been involved in two TEMPUS projects on benchmarking and doctoral education, and it is a partner in the Erasmus + project on capacity building in higher education. It has also been involved in a twinning project on strengthening institutional capacities for quality assurance.

#### **RS HEAA'S FUNDING**

The funding arrangements for the agency are defined by the 2010 Law on Higher Education. The government provided a one-off payment in 2011 for the establishment of the agency and pays for the wages of the staff employed. The costs of running the agency and of conducting reviews are met by the charges to institutions for external evaluation and accreditation – including the fees and expenses of experts. The charges for external evaluation depend on the size of the institution, the number of study programs reviewed, the size of the review panel and the number of days involved in the review. Approximately 83 per cent of the agency's income was from the Republika Srpska budget in 2015 (SAR p. 39). The Ministry of Finance provided some additional financial support to cover the costs of the external review of RS HEAA.

# FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF RS HEAA WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

## ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

### ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Standard:**

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

#### **Evidence**

RS HEAA has a clear statement about its mission and vision on its website, together with a statement of its principal policies and goals. It aims to implement external quality evaluation processes and accreditation of institutions and study programs in accordance with European standards and procedures.

The agency conducts external quality assurance activities based on the self-evaluation of internal quality assurance arrangements by higher education institutions. External reviews are conducted by an independent panel of experts with representation from the international community, the local academic community, employers and students.

Information about the agency's procedures for institutional accreditation are provided on the RS HEAA website and the detailed specification about the evidence requirements and the conduct of reviews is included within the Rulebook on Accreditation, also available on the website. The Self-Assessment Report provided an explanation of how RS HEAA fulfils the requirements of the standard and the panel were able to confirm these arrangements through the various meetings held during the site visit. The selection of experts for review panels is made from the national list maintained by the HEA, which checks whether the proposed experts are included on the list.

Reports on the outcomes from review and decisions on accreditation are published on the RS HEAA website. Follow-up procedures have been developed and the implementation of actions and recommendations are monitored by the agency.

#### **Analysis**

The agency is in the initial phase of establishing its external review activities. The initial programme of accreditation of institutions began in 2011 and is yet to be completed. The accreditation of study programs is planned for 2017, but work on this is still in progress. Whilst due attention has been given to the expectations in the ESG, there are a number of constraints that have made it difficult for the agency to fully address all the requirements. These include the limitations on the agencies resources, the shared responsibility for the selection and approval of experts with the HEA, the need for fully developed internal procedures for quality assurance and the lack of a national qualifications framework. Due consideration has been given to the involvement of stakeholders in the accreditation process, including the commitment to include representatives of employers and students as members

of the institutional review panels. Stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about the agency's operations through membership of the Accreditation Forum.

The arrangements for the accreditation of study programs are under development. The proposals involve a less formal procedure of review than the institutional accreditation process. One or two subject experts for each subject discipline will be appointed by RS HEAA. The conduct of the review can vary between subject disciplines, depending on the the nature of the subject and the evidence that is available. The outcomes from the reviews will need to be endorsed by the next appointed institutional accreditation panel. It is not clear how study programs, not selected for review, will achieve accreditation.

The agency acknowledges that the accreditation of study programs is its greatest professional challenge that it currently faces, particularly because of constraints on financial and human resources (SAR p.57). A number of alternative approaches to the accreditation of individual study programs have been considered including cluster accreditation and system accreditation, but all will require additional resources.

The review panel was also of the view that the proposed arrangements, based on selected sample subjects and the judgments of individual professional reviewers, may not be sufficient to meet the expectations for the external accreditation of study programs. The less formal review arrangements may vary between institutions and subject disciplines and there is an apparent lack of consistency in the way in which the subject reviews are conducted. The panel also expressed some concern about the apparent lack of involvement of students and other stakeholders in the subject review process (See ESG 2.3 below, page 19).

Overall the panel recognised that the agency has defined goals and objectives in its mission statement and has developed procedures for external quality assurance activities. However, the recently developed arrangements for study program accreditation are constrained by resource limitations and may require further consideration to ensure that the agency is able to provide consistent and comprehensive evaluation of individual subjects (See also ESG 3.5 below, p.15).

This standard provides a general overview of the whole of Part 2 of the ESG. More specific issues are discussed under the standards listed below

#### **Panel recommendations**

RS HEAA should re-assess its planned procedures for the accreditation of study programs to address the expectations that review procedures are applied consistently and all programs are considered for accreditation.

#### **Panel conclusion:**

**Substantially compliant**

#### **ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS**

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

#### **Evidence**

The Agency was established in accordance with the Law on Public Service System (RS Official Gazette, No 68/07), the Law on Republic of Srpska Government (RS Official Gazette, No 118/08), and the Law on Higher Education of the Republika Srpska (RS Official Gazette, No 73/10) which made provision for

the conduct of accreditation by RS HEAA in cooperation with the HEA for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance. RS HEAA was established in 2011 as an independent and non-profit organisation with statutory responsibilities for accreditation and quality assurance. It is formally recognised and funded by the government of the Republic.

### **Analysis**

The evidence provided in the self-assessment report, and confirmed in discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and from the reading of the documentation, indicates that there is a clear legal basis for the establishment and operation of the agency within the jurisdiction of the Republika Srpska. In addition there is a Framework Law for Higher Education at the level of BiH that the Republic's law is expected to be in accordance with. The self-assessment report indicates that there have been some difficulties in interpreting and reconciling the expectations of both legal frameworks, in particular regarding the division of competences between the federal and the RS agency. However, it is apparent that RS HEAA is operating within the legal context of the Republic's legislation.

### **Panel conclusion:**

**Fully compliant**

### **ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE**

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

### **Evidence**

The Self Assessment Report draws a distinction between the organisational independence of the Agency, defined in legal terms, and operational independence that refers to the conduct and management of accreditation procedures that it is required to do in cooperation with the HEA. It also makes reference to the independence of outcomes from accreditation that are assured by the Rulebook and overseen by the Accreditation Council.

RS HEAA has been established as a public body with legal independence and with rights and liabilities established by the Law on Higher Education (2010). The independence of decision-making is assured by the Agency's Steering Board and the Accreditation Council and provision is made to ensure that all of the agency's processes are free of influence from third parties. Procedures are in place to prevent any conflicts of interest in the operation of the agency's activities. The Rulebook on accreditation of Higher Education Institutions includes instructions for the work of expert panels and requires individual experts to sign a conflict of interest statement. The independence of formal outcomes from accreditation are assured by the RS HEAA Accreditation Council, which approves the final reports from the panel of experts, confirming that the process has been conducted in accordance with ESG and HEA criteria for accreditation (SAR, p.37).

### **Analysis**

The self-assessment report claims that the agency's organisational independence and the impartial assessment of institutions and study programs are secured by the statutory provision of the Law on Higher Education (SAR p.37). However, there are concerns about the limitations on the operational independence because of the reliance on the cooperation of the HEA, particularly regarding the selection and appointment of experts to review panels. There are also concerns about the complementarity of the Framework Law on Higher Education, that applies across Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the local law for Republika Srpska (see above, p.7). RS HEAA has established its procedures in accordance with the RS Law on Higher Education.

There are other concerns about the operational independence of the Agency including the appointment by government of the Director and Deputy Director of RS HEAA and the influence that the government has as the primary funder of the agency. In discussions during the review visit the panel were also made aware that Rectors of higher education institutions, or owners in case of private HEIs, may make direct informal contact with the Ministry about the conduct of the review process, although it seems that it did not happen so far. The higher education system in Republika Srpska is relatively small and the networks of contact and communication make it difficult for the agency to function without any perceived problems with conflicts of interest.

The Accreditation Council is an expert body of the Agency and includes three members of Agency staff. Its principal function is to approve the arrangements for each review and to ensure to coherence and consistency of review outcomes. The panel considered that if one of its functions is the assurance of the independence and objectivity of reviews, it should be constituted as a fully independent body. Alternatively its remit should be limited to making recommendations about concerns regarding the impartiality of reviews to the Steering Board for decision.

The panel recognised that there are administrative and political misunderstandings and lack of cooperation between RS HEAA and the HEA that add to the complexity and confusion about the responsibilities for the management of quality assurance processes. There are also questions about the extent of the Agency's independence from the Ministry and the independence of the Accreditation Council. This makes it difficult for the Agency to demonstrate that it exercises full responsibility for all of its operations and outcomes.

#### **Panel recommendations**

The agency should discuss with the government enhanced arrangements for securing the operational independence of the RS agency and for promoting improved cooperation with the HEA.

RS HEAA Steering Board should review the role of the Accreditation Council to clarify its remit and responsibilities

#### **Panel conclusion: Partially compliant**

#### **ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

Standard:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

#### **Evidence**

The self-assessment report makes reference to the agency's annual reports that include some details of matters of common interest to the higher education sector and key stakeholders such as engagement with employers and the numbers of students studying at accredited institutions (SAR p.38). A number of publications were also provided for the panel during the review visit including conference papers, a report on benchmarking from the TEMPUS project and a pre-publication copy of a book edited by the Director on knowledge management in the quality system.

#### **Analysis**

At present there is very little systematic analysis of the outcomes of institutional accreditation and no regularly published reports that discuss the findings of quality activities. No information about lessons learned or identified good practice is available on the English language version of the agency's website,

and it seems that such material is made available on the local language only, on an ad hoc basis within various other presentations and publications. The provision of outcomes reports is work that the Agency is planning to consider in future if resources can be made available. RS HEAA has proposed the idea of a joint project for establishing knowledge bases in higher education at regional level and is considering the publication of an annual journal with professional articles on quality matters. The agency is looking at the possibility of attracting project funding to progress these initiatives (SAR p.38).

With only 12/22 institutional accreditations completed to date there is a limited amount of information available for the analysis of general findings. The publication of regular thematic reports may be a more general challenge for small higher education systems with reviews spread over a five-year cycle.

The panel considered that this was an area of activity that the Agency has yet to engage with on a systematic basis. Its ability to do so is currently limited by a lack of resources. The panel was not made aware of any plans to address this expectation in the near future.

### **Panel recommendations**

As part of its strategic planning the agency should consider how it could review the outcomes from its quality assurance activities and make the analysis available to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Panel conclusion:**

**Non-compliant**

### **ESG 3.5 RESOURCES**

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

### **Evidence**

The agency provided details about its staffing arrangements, an account of its financing system and an outline copy of its financial report for 2015. It also provided a SWOT Analysis that identified a number of current challenges and areas for future development of the agency that commented on resourcing issues. The agency has a staff of six full-time employees and three part-time employees. Staff have a number of different roles to ensure that they can cover the range of activities necessary to fulfil its requirements through multi-tasking. The total annual budget is around 130.000,00 Euros, the majority of which comes from the government, although the direct costs of accreditation are covered by charges to higher education institutions (SAR p.38-9). The panel discussed resources with the management of the agency and with representatives from the Ministry for Education and Culture.

Statements in the self-assessment report presented a varied picture of the adequacy of resources. It is claimed that there is a sufficient number of employees for the conduct of the agency's activities (SAR p.38) but also it is acknowledged that the financial resources are very 'modest' and one of the biggest challenges that RS HEAA is currently facing. The SWOT analysis is more definitive. It states that the agency does not have sufficient financial resources for the accreditation of study programs and that the costs of the program accreditation cannot be met by the higher education institutions. It also makes reference to the lack of human and technical resources as one of the agency's weaknesses (SAR p.57).

### **Analysis**

The panel identified concerns about the agency's reliance on project funding to enable it to deliver key development activities and the expectation in the SWOT analysis that additional income could be

generated from higher education institutions - themselves operating on limited budgets - by the development of new types of procedures and services (SAR p.56). It also considered whether the demands of multi-tasking had an impact on the ability of staff to focus on professional specialization and development.

The fees charged to HEIs for accreditation are varied depending on the size of the institution, the number of study programs, the number of working days for the review and the number of experts in the panel. Cost is a factor in the planning of reviews with the expense of international experts being a particular concern. This may determine that experts are recruited primarily from neighbouring countries.

The panel was informed that a proposed new law on higher education would make the accreditation of study programs a requirement and would identify additional resources for the agency to cover the costs of utilities and equipment. However, from discussions with the representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture it became apparent that the proposed law had been withdrawn for the RS National Assembly because of the need to address concerns about the perceived increase in government regulation. It is not clear when the re-drafted law will be re-introduced to the Assembly. RS HEAA has appropriate premises and equipment for its current activities, provided by the government free of charge. However, it will be relocated shortly as the area where the office is located is due for redevelopment. New premises are yet to be identified, although the agency has had assurances that its requirements will be adequately accommodated.

In its various meetings the panel was made aware of the Agency's concerns about the limitations imposed by the lack of financial and human resources and the challenge of meeting the expectations for comprehensive quality assurance activities, particularly the planned arrangements for the accreditation of study programs. There is a direct impact on aspects of the accreditation process, including the limited numbers of experts involved in study program accreditation and the limitations on the recruitment of international experts. It has also impacted on the Agency's ability to progress the thematic analysis of information from its quality assurance activities. The panel recognised that this issue may be addressed, at least in part, by the proposed new law on higher education. But as yet this is still to be introduced. Under current circumstances the panel concurred with the view expressed in the Agency's SWOT analysis that the limited resources are placing a constraint on the Agency's ability to carry out its required obligations.

#### **Panel recommendations**

The Agency should seek assurances from the Ministry about the provision of sufficient resources to fulfil its planned program of accreditation.

#### **Panel conclusion:**

**Partially compliant**

### **ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

#### **Evidence**

Details of the requirements for the conduct of accreditation are included in the Rulebook which is made available on the agency's website. Procedures are in place for the management of the review processes including arrangements for the briefing of panel members and a software tool that has been developed for monitoring the follow-up plans of institutions. Some evidence of the effectiveness of

the accreditation process is gathered through process evaluation questionnaires, completed by panel members and representatives of higher education institutions (SAR, p.33). The Accreditation Council has been established as an expert body to ensure that the accreditation process is applied consistently in line with RS HEAA procedures and that assessments are in accordance with the ESG (see above p.6).

### **Analysis**

From its discussions during the review visit, the panel acknowledged that the agency is committed to achieving high professional standards in the conduct of its affairs and had taken a number of steps to introduce appropriate internal quality procedures. However, the SWOT analysis makes it clear that the agency's internal quality assurance system is in its development phase (SAR p.56) and more is needed to formalise processes and ensure consistency of practice. Currently there are no formal and regular processes for internal quality assurance in operation.

During its discussions with representatives from higher education institutions the panel was informed that a member of staff from HS REAA is a member of the internal quality assurance committee of one of the institutions reviewed by the agency. Although there may be benefits in terms of the development of policies and procedures at the university, there may also be concerns about impartiality and potential conflicts of interest.

The overall view of the panel was that there is scope for further development of the Agency's internal quality assurance arrangements.

### **Panel recommendations**

In consultation with the Steering Board and the Accreditation Council, RS HEAA should consider developing a code of conduct for internal quality assurance, that assures integrity of procedures and fosters the continuous improvement of the Agency's activities. It should also address the conduct of accreditation reviews and the protocols of staff engagement with higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

### **Panel conclusion:**

**Partially compliant**

### **ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES**

Standard:  
Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

### **Evidence**

RS HEAA was established in 2011. This is the first review by ENQA to assess compliance with ESG and ENQA membership criteria. RS HEAA is applying for ENQA membership and for registration on the EQAR.

### **Analysis**

RS HEAA submitted an official request for external review by ENQA at the beginning of 2016. The terms of reference for the review were sent to RS HEAA in March 2016 (see annex 3). EQAR confirmed the eligibility of the application for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register in April 2016. RS HEAA submitted its Self Assessment Report in January 2017. All pre-requisites for the conduct of the review were fulfilled by the agency.

### **Panel conclusion:**

**Fully compliant**



## ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

### ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

#### Evidence

The Rulebook for the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs clearly states that external quality assurance should assess the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes in line with the practices established by countries and agencies affiliated to ENQA (RB Article 4).

The Rulebook specifies in detail the areas to be covered in the accreditation process including the legal requirements for institutions, their internal quality assurance procedures, arrangements for self-evaluation and information about research, science and artwork. Institutions are also required to identify the organisational units and study programs that will be subject to accreditation (SAR p.24). The criteria are derived from the ESG and from the standards established by the HEA. The application forms for both institutional accreditation and study program accreditation include questions that are directly related to criteria and standards. RS HEAA has provided detail for each individual standard in ESG Part 1 including a commentary on how the standards should be addressed in the applications for institutional accreditation and study program accreditation.

The reports of institutional accreditation reviews are all available in Serbian on the RS HEAA website and provide confirmation of the coverage of the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes in line with the ESG. At least one report is also available in English.

#### Analysis

The panel acknowledged that the Rulebook provides a formal coverage of the expectations with regard to internal quality assurance. However, the interpretation of the criteria is a matter for consideration in the individual accreditation reviews. Institutions have presented information that may only provide a partial account of the fulfilment of expectations. For example, ESG 1.3 on the participation of students, has been considered within the context of the processes of student assessment, pass rates and the procedures for student appeals, rather than in terms of the direct involvement in the creation of the learning process (SAR p.43). Similarly the agency's guidance on ESG 1.5 regarding the competence of teachers refers to procedures for publishing books and course books as well as the arrangements for staff career advancement (SAR p.44).

The implication is that institutions may be in the early stages of developing their internal quality assurance arrangements and more work needs to be done to ensure full compliance with the Law on Higher Education and with ESG. This is borne out by the SWOT analysis which comments on the concern that internal quality assurance systems have not yet been fully implemented by all institutions and there is an insufficient level of quality assurance awareness amongst staff in higher education (SAR p.56).

The panel acknowledged the commitment of the agency to promote further development of internal quality assurance practice by conducting training for HEI's quality coordinators and other relevant staff, and by the proposal to introduce audits as a tool for assessing the effectiveness of internal quality systems (SAR p.58).

The panel noted the progress to date with the development of internal quality assurance arrangements but concluded that this was an area where there was a need for further activity to ensure that expectations had been fully implemented.

**Panel Recommendations**

RS HEAA should ensure through its accreditation activities that all institutions are fully aware of the requirements of the ESG and have in place appropriate arrangements to engage all relevant staff in the operation of their quality procedures.

**Panel conclusion:**

**Substantially compliant**

**ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE**

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

**Evidence**

The Rulebook for accreditation defines the requirements for external quality assurance and states the overall objective of accreditation as improving the quality of higher education. The Rulebook has undergone public consultation and has been adopted for implementation. The procedures developed for the conduct of reviews take into consideration the expectations of key stakeholders. Members of review panels are selected from four categories: International experts, representatives of the local academic community, employer representatives, and students.

RS HEAA has involved stakeholders in the development of its methodologies and procedures through direct contacts, liaison meetings, roundtable discussions and meetings of the Accreditation Forum. The interests of students have been represented by the Students' Union of Republika Srpska that coordinates the work of students' representative bodies in higher education institutions. The Students' Union is represented on the agency's Steering Board and Accreditation Council.

**Analysis**

The expectations for external quality assurance are clearly articulated in the Rulebook and there is evidence that the agency has engaged with stakeholders in the discussion and development of its policies and procedures. Representatives of employers that the panel met during its review visit spoke positively about their engagement with the agency and the benefits derived from cooperation between higher education and employers. However, they acknowledged that they are not represented on the Accreditation Forum, or any of the agency bodies. Student representatives were less clear about the links with the agency and the opportunities for students to contribute to the development of the Agency's activities. They were also unaware of the representation of the Students' Union on the Accreditation Council.

There is a particular concern about the lack of student input into the procedures for the accreditation of study programs. The review process adopted by the agency relies solely on input from two subject specialists who assess evidence provided by the institutions.

**Panel recommendations**

RS HEAA should give consideration to encouraging greater student involvement in its deliberations and the arrangements for the review of study programs.

**Panel conclusion:**  
**Substantially compliant**

**ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES**

**Standard:**

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up

**Evidence**

The procedures for the accreditation of institutions and study programs in the Republika Srpska involve the key stages outlined in the ESG. Institutions are required to carry out the procedures of self-evaluation and quality assessment of study programs, teaching, and educational resources on an annual basis. Self-evaluation is a pre-condition for institution's application for accreditation. External assessment is conducted in accordance with the published Rulebook for accreditation and institutional accreditation includes a site visit by a representative panel of experts. The reports of reviews cover the stated standards and criteria and are made available on the RS HEAA's website.

They include recommendations for quality improvement. There is a defined follow-up procedure and regular monitoring of progress by the agency. If reviews identify issues which require immediate attention the institution is sent a 'letter of expectation' which defines the requirements for improvement within a one-year time frame. Progress on implementation is considered by the panel chair and staff from RS HEAA, who may also visit the institution in a follow-up audit visit (SAR p.48-9).

**Analysis**

The panel recognised that the agency has developed an appropriate methodology for institutional accreditation. RS HEAA's external quality assurance processes have been designed to address the ESG requirements and there are procedures in place to ensure that reviews are conducted with due attention to professional standards and expectations of stakeholders. The agency provides two rounds of briefing for review panel members, once after the consideration of initial documentation and a second briefing immediately before the site visit. Panel members are made aware of RS HEAA procedures and of the expectations of the review process. Reports are drafted following the review and cover each of the stated criteria. The panel comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the areas considered, including a sample of study programs, together with recommendations for improvement. Institutions are given the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the report before it is published on the RS HEAA website. Follow-up procedures are in place to ensure that the recommendations for the reviews are implemented and any outstanding matters of concern are addressed.

The proposed arrangements for study program accreditation involve a process of subject review that is less clearly documented. The procedure follows similar stages of self-evaluation, assessment by an independent professional reviewer (or reviewers) and the production of a report giving the opinion of the reviewers on the stated criteria with recommendations for improvement. The review report does not include a decision on accreditation, but is part of the input documentation for the panel of experts appointed for the subsequent institutional accreditation or re-accreditation. Study programs that have been successfully evaluated and addressed recommendations for improvement will be recorded as accredited in the decision on institutional accreditation (SAR p.29).

The expert reviewers are appointed by the agency and may not necessarily be selected from the list maintained by the HEA. RS HEAA may select reviewers from other Quality Assurance Agencies. One or two subject specialist are selected for each review without the requirement for representation from students or other key stakeholders. It is not clear whether or not a site visit is a requirement for the conduct of these reviews, or whether the reviewer conducts a desk-based exercise. Final decisions about subject accreditation are made by institutional accreditation panels that may not have appropriate subject expertise. There is also a concern for some reviews about the possible reliance on the opinion of a single professional reviewer to inform whether or not the expectations for study program accreditation have been fulfilled. It is not clear from the SAR how many reviewers are involved in the process. The description of the accreditation of study programs (p.29) refers to a review by an independent professional reviewer. However, the account of RS HEAA's compliance with ESG 2.4 (p.50) states that there are two reviewers for each study program.

#### **Panel recommendations**

The agency should review its arrangements for study program accreditation to clarify whether a site visit will be required and to confirm the number of reviewers involved in each review.

#### **Panel conclusion:**

**Substantially compliant**

#### **ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS**

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

#### **Evidence**

External experts for reviews in Republika Srpska are selected from a list that is maintained by the HEA. The HEA is responsible for initiating the public call for applications to the list and for the selection of experts. Students are eligible to apply for inclusion on the list.

RS HEAA is responsible for the composition of review panels and selects experts from the HEA list in four specified categories: international experts, representatives of the local academic community, employer representatives, and students. The allocation of experts will take into consideration their area of academic expertise as well as, if possible, their experience of quality assurance in higher education or industry (SAR, p.49). Panels should include at least one student and one international expert (RB article 15).

The panel membership is approved by the Director of RS HEAA and forwarded to the HEA for appointment. If the HEA does not respond within 15 days the membership is deemed to have been confirmed (RB article 16). Once appointed each panel member signs a conflict of interest statement. The HEA provides training for experts once they have been accepted on to the list. RS HEAA now provides additional training and briefing for panel members when they have been selected for a review and experts are encouraged to attend conferences or seminars organised by the agency.

RS HEAA has little direct influence over the identification of reviewers for inclusion on the approved list. In the recent past the call for applications has not been conducted every year (the last call was in 2015). The process of gaining approval for list membership is included within the law on higher education and involves agreement from all the devolved administrations in BiH. This is a time consuming process that may last over a year to complete. As a consequence the list is not up to date.

## **Analysis**

The panel noted that there is a particular problem for potential student experts who may finish their studies and hence become ineligible for inclusion on the list, before the process of approval is completed (SAR p.36). The panel also learnt from its discussions during the review visit that students were not always advised about the timing and procedure in good time to allow them to submit an application. It also learnt that procedures at HEA are currently under review and that there is now a commitment to conduct a selection process on a more regular basis.

As noted above, the agency has not included student reviewers in the subject review process that forms part of the procedures for the accreditation of study programs.

The additional briefing and training of experts prior to on-site visits provides an opportunity for experts to be familiarised with the accreditation procedure. However, the Agency has recognised that the training of experts remains one of the most important challenges for the future (SAR p.41). To date some experts have shown a tendency to draw on their previous experiences rather than addressing the requirements in the accreditation procedure.

The panel acknowledged the Agency's commitment to engaging with students but concluded that more could be done to ensure that they are fully involved in all of its quality activities.

## **Panel recommendations**

That the agency gives further consideration to the engagement of students in its quality procedures, including the proposed arrangements for the accreditation of study programs.

## **Panel conclusion:**

### **Substantially compliant**

## **ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES**

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

## **Evidence**

The criteria for decisions are included within the Rulebook on accreditation, available on the RSHEAA website. Panels are expected to make a judgment for each of the requirements specified in the Rulebook. Judgments record both the stage of development of each requirement (from planned to fully implemented) and the level of fulfilment (from does not fulfil the requirement to completely fulfils the requirement). These outcomes are represented in the form of numerical scores that accompany each section of the review report. The methodology applies to both Institutional accreditation and to the accreditation of study programs (SAR p.51).

## **Analysis**

Examples of reports seen by the panel indicate that reviews are conducted systematically and that judgments are supported by the evidence made available to the panel through self-evaluation and through discussions during the site visit. In addition to the judgments the reports also contain recommendations for improvement for each of the requirements. Reports conclude with an overall judgment on the institution based on the collected outcomes for all the requirements. This may include one of three decisions : a proposal to RS HEAA to grant accreditation to the institution for a period of five years; a recommendation that the institution does not currently meet the requirements for accreditation and that actions are required to address matters of concern: these actions are communicated in the form of a letter of expectation and must be completed within a period of 12

months; alternatively the review panel may conclude that no recommendation of accreditation can be granted, in which case the panel indicates the reasons why it believes that the concerns that have been identified cannot be rectified within a 12 month period.

**Panel conclusion:**  
**Fully compliant**

#### **ESG 2.6 REPORTING**

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

#### **Evidence**

Reports are drafted by members of the panel of experts to a template provided by the Agency. All reports of accreditation reviews are published on the RS HEAA website in Serbian, with at least one available in English. They are intended for all stakeholders and are written to a standard format that follows the HEA criteria on accreditation. Reports include information about the accreditation process, details of the visit to the institution and the opinions of the panel on the outcomes of the external evaluation. The reports also include a detailed assessment of the quality of each of the individual criteria, listing features of good practice, issues for consideration and recommendations for improvement. They conclude with an overall assessment of the institution and a recommendation for accreditation. The Academic Council ensures that the reports are consistent with the standards and criteria prior to publication and may require additional clarification or amendment by the expert panel (SAR, p.44). The formal decisions by the agency, based on the reports, are also published on the website.

#### **Analysis**

The panel had access to the reports available on the RS HEAA website and confirmed that they are comprehensive and informative and are intended to both address the interests of stakeholders and provide constructive feedback to institutions about areas for improvement. The reports include a brief description of the institution and details of the study programs that are submitted as part of the review.

The factual accuracy of reports is enhanced by giving the institutions the opportunity to identify any factual errors or points of misunderstanding before the reports are finalised.

**Panel conclusion:**  
**Fully compliant**

#### **ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

#### **Evidence**

RS HEAA has indicated the various options available to institutions that wish to appeal against the outcomes of external review, including the provision to correct material irregularities or omissions in the conduct of the review that may have a bearing on the judgments of individual criteria and the opinion on accreditation. These representations need to be made to RS HEAA within 15 days of the receipt of the draft report. The review panel is asked to consider these representations in compiling

the final draft of the report. In addition various stakeholders also have 15 days to raise any objections to the published reports. Institutions are requested to give consent to the publication of the final report and proposed improvement measures, and have the opportunity to raise any final objections which will be considered by the Agency before publication (RB article 24).

The Republika Srpska Law on higher education states that the decision on accreditation is final and no appeal is allowed. However, cases may be brought to court if there is compelling evidence to question judgments (RB article 33).

### **Analysis**

Institutions are expected to fulfil a number of pre-conditions to apply for accreditation and to provide consent in writing for the conduct of external reviews and consequently limiting the opportunity for legal appeals against the process.

Although there is provision to allow institutions to raise objections to the draft report, RS HEAA does not currently have a published complaints and appeals process that allows concerns to be independently assessed by competent individuals not involved in the external review process. It is not possible for institutions to appeal any formal decisions made by the Agency.

Consequently, the panel considered that the agency has not yet addressed the expectations of this standard.

### **Panel recommendations**

The agency should develop and publish details about its complaints and appeals process and communicate them to the institutions.

### **Panel conclusion:**

**Non-compliant**

## ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the assessment of the Agency's compliance with the ESG the panel would also like to add some more general comments and recommendations to assist the Agency in its future development.

1. Whilst recognising the progress that has been achieved since 2011 there is more to be done to ensure that all aspects of the ESG are fully covered in the agency's activities. To date, the initial program of institutional accreditations is yet to be completed and the arrangements for study program accreditation are due to be introduced in the near future.
2. In particular the agency should address the engagement of students and other key stakeholders in its deliberations and its planned program for study programme accreditation.
3. There is a need to ensure that all higher education institutions are committed to implementing comprehensive arrangements for internal quality assurance and that staff are fully engaged in quality activities.
4. There is a concern about the sufficiency of resources to support the agency's current commitments and the sustainability of its forward program. It is recognised that the proposed new law on higher education may help to resolve this situation, but at the time of the review there was uncertainty about when the law would be considered by the National Assembly.

# CONCLUSION

## OVERALL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **ESG 3.1 Substantially compliant**

Recommendation:

RS HEAA should re-assess its planned procedures for the accreditation of study programs to address the expectations that review procedures are applied consistently and all programs are considered for accreditation.

### **ESG 3.2 Fully compliant**

### **ESG 3.3 Partially compliant**

Recommendations:

The agency should discuss with the government enhanced arrangements for securing the operational independence of the RS agency and for promoting improved cooperation with the HEA.

RS HEAA Steering Board should review the role of the Accreditation Council to clarify its remit and responsibilities.

### **ESG 3.4 Non compliant**

Recommendation:

As part of its strategic planning the agency should consider how it could review the outcomes from its quality assurance activities and make the analysis available to all relevant stakeholders.

### **ESG 3.5 Partially compliant**

Recommendation:

The Agency should seek assurances from the Ministry about the provision of sufficient resources to fulfil its planned program of accreditation.

### **ESG 3.6 Partially compliant**

Recommendation:

In consultation with the Steering Board and the Academic Council, RS HEAA should consider developing a code of conduct for internal quality assurance, that assures integrity of procedures and fosters the continuous improvement of the Agency's activities. It should also address the conduct of accreditation reviews and the protocols of staff engagement with higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

### **ESG 3.7 Fully compliant**

### **ESG 2.1 Substantially compliant**

Recommendation:

RS HEAA should ensure through its accreditation activities that all institutions are fully aware of the requirements of the ESG and have in place appropriate arrangements to engage all relevant staff in the operation of their quality procedures.

### **ESG 2.2 Substantially compliant**

Recommendation:

RS HEAA should give consideration to encouraging greater student involvement in its deliberations and the arrangements for the review of study programs.

### **ESG 2.3 Substantially compliant**

Recommendation:



The agency should review its arrangements for study program accreditation to clarify whether a site visit will be required and to confirm the number of reviewers involved in each review.

#### **ESG 2.4 Substantially compliant**

Recommendation:

That the agency gives further consideration to the engagement of students in its quality procedures, including the proposed arrangements for the accreditation of study programs.

#### **ESG 2.5 Fully compliant**

#### **ESG 2.6 Fully compliant**

#### **ESG 2.7 Non compliant**

Recommendation:

The agency should develop and publish details about its complaints and appeals process and communicate them to the institutions.

In light of the documentary and oral evidence presented herein, the review panel does not consider that, in the performance of its functions, RS HEAA complies with the ESG. The Agency is recommended to take appropriate action to achieve at least substantial compliance in all standards at the earliest opportunity

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

The panel would like to make some general and more detailed suggestions, extending beyond strictly interpreted ESG and/or linking several ESG, which RS HEAA may wish to consider when reflecting on its further development. Some of them have already been signalled in the previous sections.

1. The agency should explore ways in which it could enhance its working arrangements with the HEA, particularly with regard to the selection and appointment of reviewers and the coordination of accreditation activities. The panel was sensitive to the difficulties experienced in the past but recognised that the shared responsibilities for quality assurance could only be made to work effectively if there is an appreciation of a common purpose and regular contact between the two organisations.
2. The agency should also discuss with the Ministry of Education and Culture ways in which the operational independence of the agency could be strengthened to avoid undue external influences on its procedures and practices and to dispel perceived conflicts of interest of its staff and of reviewers engaged in the conduct of its accreditation activities.
3. Further consideration could also be given to using the evidence collected through accreditation activities, and information about European best practice, to promote strategic developments in quality enhancement across the higher education sector.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME

<b>19.02.2017</b>				
As necessary	Review panel's kick-off meeting and preparation for day 1 A pre-visit meeting with the agency contact person to clarify elements related to the overall system and context (if requested)			
<b>20.02.2017 Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska, Vuka Karadzica 1, Banja Luka</b>				
<b>TIMING</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW</b>	<b>ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED</b>	<b>LEAD PANEL MEMBER</b>
8.30 – 9.00	Review panel's private meeting			
9.00-9.45	Meeting with CEO and the chair of the Board (or equivalent)	Prof. dr Miroslav Bobrek, CEO Prof. dr Mile Dmicic, (SB Chair)	Translation required for one person	
9.45-10.30	Meeting with the team responsible for preparation of the self-assessment report	Duska Radmanovic (RSHEAA), Tatjana Radakovic (RSHEAA), Prof. dr Petar Maric (Accred. Forum), Prof. dr Ranko Bozickovic (Accred. Council), Olivera Radic (Chamb. Of Commerce)	Translation required for one person	
10.30-10.40	Review panel's private discussion			
10.40 – 11.30	Meeting with representatives from the Senior Management Team and key staff of the Agency	Prof. dr Miroslav Bobrek, (CEO), dr Jugoslav Vuk Tepic (Head of Depar.),	Translation required for one person	

		Duska Radmanovic (Head of Depart.), Tatjana Radakovic, (Sen. Ass. For Accredit.)		
11.30 - 11.45	Review panel's private discussion			
11.45 – 12.45	Lunch (panel only)			
12.45 – 13.30	Meeting with department/key body of the Agency 1	Jugoslav Tepic (Head of Dep), Tatjana Radakovic (Accr. Assoc.), Predrag Nagraisalovic (Assoc. for QA)	Translation required for two persons	
13.30 – 13.45	Review panel's private discussion			
13.45 – 14.30	Meeting with department/key body of the Agency	Duska Radmanovic (Head of dept), Branka Plavsic (Legal Assoc.) Oksana Bacinski (Assoc. for IT), Vladimir Susic (Assoc. for finan.)	Translation required for three persons	
As necessary	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparation for day II			
	Dinner (panel only)			
<b>21.02.2017 Hotel "Bosna", business salon, 1<sup>st</sup> floor (left room), Kralja Petra I Karadjordjevic 97, Banja Luka</b>				
<b>TIMING</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW</b>	<b>ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED</b>	<b>LEAD PANEL MEMBER</b>
8.30 – 9.00	Review panel's private meeting			

9.00 – 9.45	Meeting with ministry representatives	dr Dane Malesevic, (Minister), dr Radmila Pejić (Assistant Minister), Sanela Dojcinovic (Head of Dep. For Higher Education)	Translation required for one person	
9.45 – 10.00	Review panel's private discussion			
10.00 – 10.45	Meeting with heads of some reviewed HEIs/HEI representatives	Prof. dr Aleksandar Bogdanic (Head of Kapa Fi college), Prof. dr Dejan Bokonjic (vice rector of East Sarajevo University), Prof. dr Strain Posavljak (vice rector of Banja Luka University), Marijana Ziravac (PIM University, Chair of Board)		
10.45 – 11.00	Review panel's private discussion			
11.00 – 11.45	Meeting with QA officers of HEIs	Jelena Curguz (Kapa Fi), Nenad Markovic (Uni. E. Sarajevo), Ozren Trisic (Uni. Banja Luka)		
11.45 – 12.00	Review panel's private discussion			
12.00 – 12.45	Meeting with the representatives from the reviewers' pool	Zdravko Todorovic (academ. com.), Dejan Bokonjic (academ. com.), Gordana Visekruna (student), Bosko Borojevic (economy field)		
12.45 – 14.00	Lunch (panel only)			
14.00 – 14.45	Meeting with stakeholders, such as employer	Prof. dr Enver Halilovic (HEA BiH), Olivera Radic (Chamber of Comm.), Miroslav Savija		

	representatives, students, local community	(MAHLE Letrika, Laktasi) Milenko Malinovic (City Banja Luka)		
14.45 – 15.00	Review panel's private discussion			
15.00 – 15.45	Meeting with stakeholders, such as employer representatives, students, local community	Predrag Govedarica (student), Goran Vucic (Student) Borislav Mandic (Student)		
As necessary	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparation for day III and provisional conclusion			
<b>22.02.2017 Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska, Vuka Karadzica 1, Banja Luka</b>				
<b>TIMING</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW</b>	<b>ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED</b>	<b>LEAD PANEL MEMBER</b>
8.00 – 8.30	Meeting among panel members to agree on final issues to clarify			
8.30 – 9.15	Meeting with CEO to clarify any pending issues	Prof. dr Miroslav Bobrek, CEO		
9.15 – 10.00	Meeting among panel members to agree on the main findings			
10.00 – 11.00	Final de-briefing meeting with staff and Council/Board members of the Agency to inform about preliminary findings	Prof. dr Miroslav Bobrek, Prof. dr Mile Dmicic, Duska Radmanovic, Jugoslav Tepic, Tatjana Radakovic		

## ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW

External review of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska (RSHEAA) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

### **Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

March 2016

#### **1. Background and Context**

Agency has a status of public authority and legal person. It is independent and non-profit organization. Government of Republika Srpska adopted the decision on establishing the Agency on 24th February, 2011 and the Agency officially started working on May 11th, 2011.

One of the basic goals of the Agency and its sole purpose is organizing and conducting the external evaluation process of HEIs' quality and accreditation of HEIs and study programmes. This process is conducted in accordance with European standards and procedures published in ESG document what requires necessary resources, competent personnel and expert knowledge. International recognition of Republika Srpska higher education within the European higher education area depends on available resources, validity of conducted audits and accreditations, as well as presented quality of accredited institutions. It is clear that the achievement of international recognition of RS higher education presents especially significant and responsible social task for HEIs as well as for all other stakeholders of RS higher education system.

Basic activity of the Agency is accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes. Agency has developed internal documents for detailed regulation of accreditation process according to ESG. This set of documents is available at the Agency web portal ([www.heears.com](http://www.heears.com)). Members of expert panels work in accordance with Rule book on work and forming of the expert panel. For each HEI applying for accreditation there is an agreement in place between the Agency and the HEI listing terms and conditions for conducting the process. The Agency forms the panel of experts from the joint lists of experts at BiH level, and panel is always composed of an expert from the local academic community, foreign academic community expert, expert representing labour market and students' representative.

In accordance with all mentioned documentation accreditation is carried out through the following main processes:

1. Eligibility criteria check,
2. Providing guidance for HEI with a purpose of application preparation,
3. Legitimacy check,
4. Forming of panel of experts,
5. Evaluation and assessment process according to ESG and accreditation criteria,
6. Accreditation decision based on recommendation of panel of experts,
7. Follow-up activities (includes Plan on follow-up activities made by HEI based on recommendation of panel of experts; Agency has software for monitoring the implementation of the above mentioned Plan; audit before re-accreditation).

Other recently developed process is audit performed before re-accreditation process or after issuing the letter of expectation in order to review the level of fulfilment of panel's recommendations on the lowest assessed criteria.

RSHEAA is applying for ENQA membership.

RSHEAA is applying for registration on EQAR.

## **2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation**

This review, will evaluate the way in which and to what extent RSHEAA fulfils the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether membership of RSHEAA should be granted and to EQAR to support RSHEAA application to the register.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting membership.

### **2.1 Activities of RSHEAA within the scope of the ESG**

In order for RSHEAA to apply for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR, this review will analyse all activities of RSHEAA that are within the scope of the ESG, i.e. reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditation of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). This is regardless of whether these activities are carried out within or outside the EHEA, and whether they are obligatory or voluntary.

The following activities of RSHEAA have to be addressed in the external review:

1. Institutional accreditation of higher education institutions
2. Accreditation of study programmes

Trainings offered by the agency are not activities within the scope of the ESG, but the external review report should, however, address the separation between trainings and RS HEAA's reviews, including the measures in place to avoid conflicts of interest.

Furthermore, the external review report should also address how RS HEAA will verify ESG compliance in its recognition of external quality assurance activities carried out by non EQAR-registered agencies.

## **3. The Review Process**

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in line with the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by RSHEAA including the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to RSHEAA;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review Committee;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency, including a voluntary follow-up visit.

### **3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members**

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts, an academic employed by a higher education institution, student member, and eventually a labour market representative (if requested). One of the members will serve as the chair of the review panel, and another member as a review secretary. Two of the reviewers are nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the member national agencies. The third external reviewer is drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). The nomination of the student member comes from the European Students' Union (ESU).

In addition to the four members, the panel will be supported by the ENQA Secretariat review coordinator who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA expectations are met throughout the process. The ENQA staff member will not be the Secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide RSHEAA with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards RSHEAA review.

### **3.2 Self-assessment by RSHEAA, including the preparation of a self-assessment report**

RSHEAA is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and shall take into account the following guidance:

Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;

The self-assessment report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a brief description of the national HE and QA system; background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis; each criterion (ESG part II and III) addressed individually. All agency's QA activities (whether within their national jurisdiction or outside of it, and whether obligatory or voluntary) will be described and their compliance with the ESG analysed.

The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which RSHEAA fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG and thus the requirements of ENQA membership.

The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat who has 4 weeks to pre-scrutinise it before forwarding the report to the panel of experts. The purpose of the pre-scrutiny is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but whether the necessary information, as stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, is present. For the second and subsequent reviews, the agency is expected to enlist the recommendations provided in the previous review and to outline actions taken to meet these recommendations. In case the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to reject the report and ask for a revised version within 4 weeks. In such cases, an additional fee of 1000 € will be charged to the agency.

The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of six weeks prior to the site visit.



### **3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel**

RSHEAA will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2,5 days. The approved schedule shall be given to RSHEAA at least one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by RSHEAA in arriving in Banja Luka (Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and RSHEAA.

### **3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report**

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under articles 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ESG. A draft will be first submitted to the ENQA review coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity and language and it will be then submitted to RSHEAA within 11 weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If RSHEAA chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by RSHEAA, finalise the document and submit it to RSHEAA and ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind the *EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG*, so as to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register Committee for application to EQAR.

RSHEAA is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation applying for membership and the ways in which RSHEAA expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be discussed along with the final evaluation report.

## **4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report**

RSHEAA will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. RSHEAA commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting a follow-up report to the ENQA Board. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board's decision.

The follow-up report will be complemented by a small-scale visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). This visit will be used to discuss issues, based on the ESG, considered as of particular importance or challenge by RSHEAA. Its purpose is entirely developmental and has no impact on the judgement of membership and/or compliance of the agency with the ESG. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review Coordinator about this.

## 5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether RSHEAA has met the ESG and can be thus admitted as a member of ENQA. The report will also be used for registration on EQAR, and is designed so as to serve these two purposes. However, the review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to RSHEAA and ENQA and until it is approved by the Board the report may not be used or relied upon by RSHEAA, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. RSHEAA may use the report at its discretion only after the Board has approved of the report. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on membership.

The Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

## 6. Budget

RSHEAA shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,500 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,500 EUR
Fee of the 2 other panel members	4,000 EUR (2,000 EUR each)
Fee of 2 panel members for follow-up visit	1,000 EUR (500 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	7,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,400 EUR
Approximate travel and subsistence expenses	6,000 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses follow-up visit	1,600 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR VAT excl. for a review team of 4 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, RSHEAA will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the difference to RSHEAA if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget. The review fee will be paid by RSHEAA in three instalments – first one at the signature of the contract and the next two before the site visit.

The fee of the follow-up visit is included in the overall cost of the review and will not be reimbursed in case the agency does not wish to benefit from it.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

## 7. Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference	By August 2016
Appointment of review panel members	October/November 2016
Self-assessment completed	September/October 2016
Pre-screening of SER by ENQA coordinator	October 2016
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	November/December 2016
Briefing of review panel members	January 2017
Review panel site visit	February 2017
Draft of evaluation report and submitting it to ENQA coordinator for pre-screening	April 2017
Draft of evaluation report to RSHEAA	May 2017
Statement of RSHEAA to review panel if necessary	May/June 2017
Submission of final report to ENQA	June 2017
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board and response of RSHEAA	September 2017
Publication of the report	September 2017

## ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY

<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>ENQA</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>ESG</b>	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015</i>
<b>ESU</b>	European Students' Union
<b>HE</b>	higher education
<b>HEA</b>	Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance for Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>HEI</b>	higher education institution
<b>QA</b>	quality assurance
<b>RS HEAA</b>	Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska
<b>SAR</b>	self-assessment report
<b>TEMPUS</b>	Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies

## ANNEX 4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW

### DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY RS HEAA

Minutes from three Accreditation Council sessions

Minutes of RS HEAA Steering Board

RS HEAA presentations and materials for the Accreditation Forum and other fora

M. Bobrek and M. Ivanovic (forthcoming) Knowledge management in the quality system

RS HEAA, 2011 Eligibility criteria for accreditation

RS HEAA, 2012 Instructions for Conducting External Evaluation Processes

RS HEAA, 2014 and 2012 Annual Report

RS HEAA 2016 Analysis of the evaluation questionnaire for higher education institutions

RS HEAA 2016 Strategy 2016-2020

RS HEAA, 2016 Rulebook on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs (on RS HEAA website)

RS HEAA, 2016 Proposal to the Council for the Development of Higher Education for the licensing of institutions

RS HEAA, 2017 Self-assessment report

TEMPUS, 2014 Benchmarking Handbook for the Universities of BIH, Gent/Mostar

RS HEAA, various forms used for accreditation (in Serbian)



**THIS REPORT** presents findings of the ENQA Agency Review of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska (RS HEAA), undertaken in 2017.



**2017 ENQA AGENCY REVIEW**