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**Project No:** 101129398- ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CBHE-  
STRAND-1

# **Improving University Quality Assurance Resilient Strategies Toward Excellence QA-SURE**

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### **The External quality expert of the QA-SURE project will:**

The quality expert will provide two independent evaluation reports developed following the project requirements for an external and independent review. Prepare and submit an Interim evaluation report before December 2024 and a quality report regarding Assessment of activities and evaluations of the performance of process, before November 2025. The pivotal elements of the report should include results about the efficiency (summative purposes); effectiveness (operational purposes); quality (excellence purposes) and sustainability (after the project end).

### **Requirements for the call.**

The External quality expert of the QA-SURE project will:

- *Monitor and evaluate the quality of implementation of activities and objectives and inform the Coordinator and the Consortium on warning signs, deviations and provide recommendations for improving the implementation;*
- *Monitor and evaluate the quality of the deliverables according to the indicators specified on the Logical Framework of the project;*
- *During the visit, participate in meetings with the Project Management Board (PMB) and Project Quality Assurance Board (PQAB) members. Any additional communications or meetings can be conducted via online platforms.*
- *provide guidelines and recommendations for the improvement of the quality of the deliverables, applicable during and beyond project end date;*
- *Plan and apply the necessary corrective actions if any deviation on project outcomes has been identified*
- *Prepare and submit to the coordinator of the project Interim evaluation report and recommendations before December 2024*
- *Prepare and submit the Final Evaluation Report before November 2025*

### **Proposed plan**

- Introduction - a few paragraphs with generic statements about each institute
- Description of the evaluation - This will explain the processes of the evaluation and its intended aims and objectives
- Purpose of the evaluation - A few paragraphs explaining the purpose of the evaluation, which includes how the project fulfills the requirements outlined in the Erasmus + project application
- Evaluation methodology - This will explain the methodology used.
- Challenges encountered during the evaluation - These will be a summary of challenges that have been met.

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- Findings - Findings will be drawn from evidence obtained from the various sources.
- Discussion - the findings will form the basis for the discussion, which will cover all aspects of the project as outlined in the work-packages. The discussion will bring together related themes from the findings.
- Conclusions - Conclusions will be based on a summary of the findings in conjunction with any relevant wider issues that impact on the projects successful completion.
- Recommendations - These will be based on the finding and summarized as a separate section.
- Lessons Learnt - These will be based on the finding and summarized as a separate section.
- Annexes - These will comprise any documents that assists in the reading of the report.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Project:** Improving University Quality Assurance Resilient Strategies Toward Excellence  
QA-SURE

**Position:** External Quality Expert

**Timing and Duration:** to be completed by November 2025

**Opening date to apply:** 10 May 2024;

**All applicants are invited to address potential questions until:** 16 May, 2024;

**Deadline for application:** 24, May 2024, Until 16:00h;

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

QA-SURE is a project that will focus on adapting modern and European quality assurance practices, instruments, methodologies, and thus aid the alignment of quality assurance standards of the project partners with those set out via the ESGs 2015 and European best practices. This will be achieved by: (1) Realignment of QA structures and mechanisms based on policy and regulations, QA cycles, and other institutional indicators, and widening of input into the systems by higher participation rates of students and external stakeholders, (2) Training of QA, administrative and academic staff (>150) , as well as, students (>50), to ensure better preparation and inclusiveness of administrative and academic products within the partner HEIs, especially when it comes to service and study product design, and (3) utilizing internationalization and digitalization as mechanisms for enhancing quality culture, while at the same time improving institutional transparency and accountability. The

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project foresees the participation of a larger variety of participants into the QA systems as current Western Balkans HEIs struggle with this. More emphasis will be laid out for the input and participation of (1) students since often students find themselves placed only at the end of the quality assurance cycles as means to close it rather than considering them as productive sources of primary feedback and data, and, (2) external stakeholders (businesses, public institutions, civil society etc), due to the high relevance of input that can be received for updating of study programmes aiming to be based on the fit-for-purpose concept and employment. All of these processes, apart from the increase in quality culture practices and mechanisms, will also enable the HEIs to prepare for international accreditation procedures as a tool to further improve themselves within the European perspective.

The consortium consists of 7 partners, which are located in different countries, specifically:

<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
WESTERN BALKANS UNIVERSITY	Albania
UNIVERSITETI POLIS SHPK	Albania
LUARASI UNIVERSITY	Albania
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COLLEGE	Kosovo
UNIVERSITETI ISA BOLETINI MITROVICE	Kosovo
MEDNARODNA FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE IN POSLOVNE	Slovenia
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY	North Macedonia

## **WHY THIS PROJECT?**

The concept of quality assurance in higher education formulated by the Bologna Declaration as a premise for the achievement of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is one of the basic priorities of the reforms in the education system being based on rigorous international standards. It is one of the pillars of education and lifelong learning in higher education in Albania and in Europe, as well as a requirement of the Bologna Process and the Albanian legislation for higher education. Moreover, it is about providing quality education for professional stability and efficient employment planning for the new generation in the framework of globalization. In particular, high quality educational provision is the mission

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and vision of the Western Balkans University (WBU) and partner higher education institutions (HEI) standards.

As a prerequisite for Quality Assurance development throughout the consortium, impacting the relevant stakeholders, and the building of capacities of university staff engaged with QA processes via training is crucial to any university which fosters competitive behaviour and standardized internal and external academic processes. Therefore, establishing bridges of fruitful cooperation in the region and in Europe, while taking from trends/examples of best models of Higher Education in Europe, becomes a necessary, intermediary step to implement the right methodology and work processes and promote directly the intra-university relationships in order to ready ourselves for the mandatory obligation for Accreditation of the university and their programs. It is therefore important to create a qualitative environment with the right people, structures, and methodologies/tools to achieve this final goal of simultaneous acknowledgment of

Quality Assurance mechanisms in most of the consortium representatives. Common characteristics also include building and enhancing the institutional capacities on internal quality assurance structures of HEIs within the consortium and towards implementation of QA; promotion and strengthening of QA trends already promoted in the region and in Europe; development of improved quality guidelines based on EU trends and specific challenges; improvement of the methodology for internal QA for institutional accreditation; enhancement of QA management of HEIs through preparation on external national and international institutional accreditation or re-accreditation processes for all involved universities and overall generating real-time impact on how this transitioning process can be challenged by other related stakeholders or external parties in the field of higher education.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

QA-SURE is a project that will focus on adapting modern and European quality assurance practices, instruments, methodologies, and thus aid the alignment of quality assurance standards of the project partners with those set out via the ESGs 2015 and European best practices.

**General Objective: Establish/enhance and support quality assurance structures and mechanisms**

- for effective management and operation through teaching and learning processes in the WB region, including deeper integration into European Higher Education Areas (EHEA).

**Specific objectives**

- SO1: Establish/enhance Quality Assurance Units/Offices of HEIs in AL and KO and provide capacity building on quality assurance processes within networks of HEIs.
- SO2: Training processes for designing study programs of HEIs based on labor market needs, including the Action Plans for supporting the processes of QA in teaching, learning, and administration.
- SO3: Improve coordination through a long-term policy and associated methodologies for strategies on internal quality assurance at WBU and its partners, for international institutional accreditation of WBU and relevant partners.

WP 6 – Quality Assurance of the project is focused on Quality management and assurance. This will implement a holistic quality management approach to ensure high-quality project procedure and implementation. At the kick off meeting, Quality Assurance Board (QAB) with a representative from each university will be established and it will be the main body dealing with high-quality project implementation. Other planned activities include the development of a project Quality Assurance Plan/Strategy and ensuring it is implemented as planned by QAB, conducting process and product evaluation, and reporting the quality assurance results.

The quality assurance will be measured in qualitative and quantitative indicators to evaluate achievements compared to the project objectives and expected impact.

External monitoring - To ensure the quality of project implementation, an external entity will be contracted to pass an independent judgement on the quality, efficiency and sustainability of the project by using formative and summative assessment instruments. The external evaluator will be selected based on the experience and the capacities of the organization for implementing, evaluating and monitoring projects, and the familiarity with EACEA and Erasmus+ procedures.

**The scope of work for the external evaluator relates to the following questions:**

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- Are all the deliverables produced according to the planned description and timeline, and according to the correct flow/sequence?
- To what extent has been considered the sustainability of the new offices/entities established within the HEIs (if applicable)?
- Do the new programs and policies developed provide the intended impact on the beneficiary HEI?
- Do the delivered training/professional development have the expected quality? How many academic staff, administrators and students benefited from the project implementation that were not directly involved or were part of the trainings and workshops?

**The External Evaluator of the QA-SURE project will:**

- *Monitor and evaluate the quality of implementation of activities and objectives and inform the Coordinator and the Consortium on warning signs, deviations and provide recommendations for improving the implementation;*
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**Required criteria:**

- Holds a university degree (a PhD title will constitute an advantage);
- A minimum of 3 years of experience in coordination/ management of EU funded projects. (Knowledge of Erasmus + CBHE projects guidelines and experience with this program is preferable);
- Possess advanced writing, research and analytical skills;
- Fluency in oral and written English;
- Able to work both independently and in close collaboration with the Coordinator and partners of the project;
- Excellent organizational, analytical, interpersonal, and proactive problem-solving skills;



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- Preference will be given to candidates with international experience, ideally from diverse geographical contexts.

### **Application Rules:**

Please submit your Expression of Interest and CV (all in English) by 24 May 2024 **by 16:00** Central European Time via e-mail to [merita.shala@umib.net](mailto:merita.shala@umib.net) and [albana.halili@wbu.edu.al](mailto:albana.halili@wbu.edu.al)

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