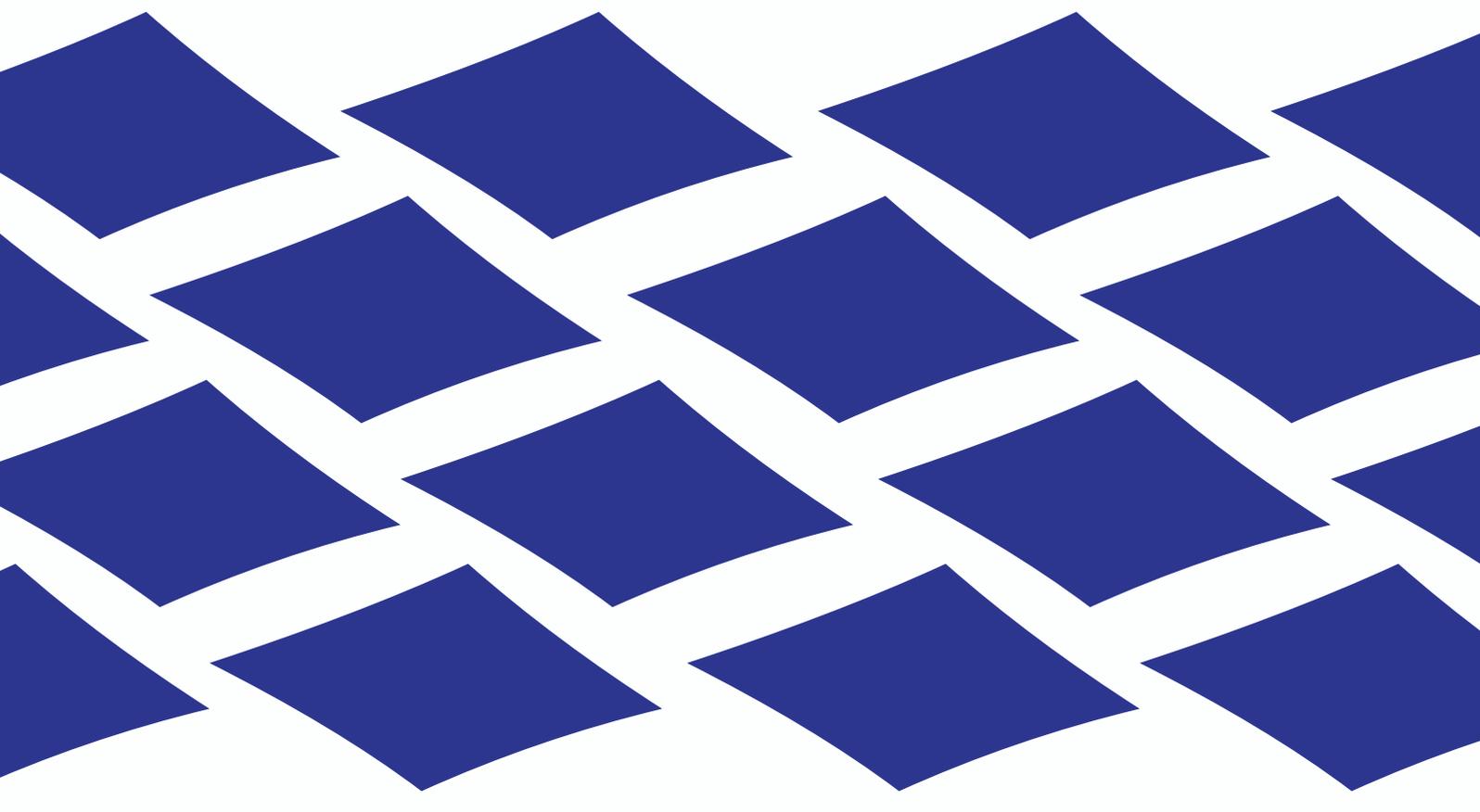




Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
Kosovska Agencija za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

# **Kosovo Accreditation Agency Strategic Plan 2026-2030**



# Contents

<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	2
Context.....	3
Methodology for Strategy development .....	4
<b>II. Situation analysis</b> .....	5
<b>III. Values, Vision and mission statement</b> .....	7
Vision Statement.....	8
Mission Statement.....	8
<b>IV. Development objectives and measures</b> .....	8
Mission Statement.....	9
Mission Statement.....	12
Mission Statement.....	14
Mission Statement.....	15
<b>V. Implementation modalities</b> .....	16

# I. Introduction

External Quality assurance is a cornerstone of achieving the broader goal of universally higher-quality education provision. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA), on one hand, and the Bologna Process, on the other hand, provide the overarching framework for quality assurance reforms in Europe over the past three decades. As a result of the ongoing reforms during this period and due to other dimensions such as globalization trends, inter-country mobility, as well as the changing nature of the employment sector in Europe, European higher education has been faced with ongoing pressure for transparency, comparability, and recognition of degrees across borders.

Thus, the increased emphasis on employability, lifelong learning, internationalization, digital delivery, and other nontraditional modes of higher education has pushed quality assurance systems to continuously adapt in order to respond effectively to this societal and labor-market environment. In parallel several of the major developments that could be observed as European trends in the last decade consist of (i) transitioning focus from programlevel to institutional evaluation and accreditation, (ii) a shift from quality compliance towards quality enhancement approach to managing a quality assurance system, as well as (iii) broadening quality assessment criteria beyond core academic features to cover more substantially the dimensions of student support services, teaching quality, staff development, inclusion, widening access, social outcomes, graduate tracking/employability, and international cooperation etc.

The development path, however, has not been linear, uniform, and unobstructed. Some of the main challenges in accreditation processes in the last decade have been related to the (i) ensure that quality assurance does not become overly bureaucratic or formalistic, and that attention to processes does not overshadow substantive outcomes, (ii) the increasing demand for joint and double degree programs, and (iii) the growing need for data, accountability, and transparency. The road ahead for the development of quality assurance in Europe, and Kosovo too, is influenced by the need to (i) ensure it doesn't become overly bureaucratic or formalistic and avoid the risk that focus on processes overtakes substance, (ii) balance institutional autonomy (and more importantly responsibility and commitment) of institutions with appropriate external oversight by the quality assurance agencies, as well as (iii) handling quality assurance for new and innovative formats of education and training (e.g. microcredentials, digital and hybrid programs joint and double degrees). At a macro policy level, there are other important themes that directly or indirectly intersect with the quality assurance system in Kosovo. For example, inclusion and issues of gender equality represent a fundamental democratic value enshrined in Kosovo's Constitution and legal framework (Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality (LGE), Law No. 05/L-021 on Protection from Discrimination), requiring quality assurance mechanisms to address the dimensions of equal opportunities for women and men and tackle gender imbalances across disciplines and leadership levels.

As Kosovo continues to align its institutions and policies with European standards and practices, trust and credibility in Kosovo's quality assurance system have never been greater. This creates significant momentum and potential for broader Kosovo integration in mainstream European education policy discussion. Furthermore, this momentum is also linked to the prospects of training a skilled workforce and educating citizens of a new and developing country, such as Kosovo. In this context, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) plays a vital role in safeguarding and enhancing the quality of higher education, fostering institutional accountability, and further strengthening public trust in academic qualifications. In return, the credibility and trust of Kosovo's higher education institutions will be reinforced.

The planning of this development strategy for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) has occurred at a critical development stage for Kosovo as a state, as a society, and as the higher education sector. The political context in Kosovo evolved, creating more opportunities for young people to move freely into European Union countries through visa liberalization, globalization, and cross-border service provision. At a different level, the Kosovo higher education sector has matured over the last years. That can also be observed in developments such as improved student-staff ratios, increased international cooperation, and more stable and sustainable accreditation processes. It has been evident that over the past two decades, Kosovo has made notable progress in developing its higher education sector. However,

the rapid expansion of the number of public higher education institutions, changing labor market demands, increasing international mobility, and the digital transformation of education have introduced new challenges to quality assurance. In parallel, the ever-evolving social and political context in which Kosovo operates represents an additional challenge to the complexity of the context in which the higher education sector is operating. These dynamics require a robust, forward-looking strategic approach to external quality assurance that not only reflects current needs but also anticipates future developments.

In parallel, KAA has documented a clear path of its development and impact in the higher education sector in Kosovo over the last decade. It strategized its development focusing both inwardly and outwardly, and a balance of such a focus is reflected in the increasing credibility of KAA and the external quality assurance system among the higher education sector and general public in Kosovo, as well as among the international actors in the quality assurance field. The KAA's capacity has increased over the last 5 years, both professionally and in terms of human resources. While experience of reviewing standards and implementing them led to the next stage of professionalizing the accreditation processes and the enhancement of the overall quality assurance system. The progress was reflected in a more active role of KAA both in terms of the proactive approach in consultation meetings with higher education institutions, the revised standards and processes, as well as an increase in the quality of the evaluations that occur within the accreditation process. The last decade of its experience has also been used as a learning process, while at the same time the interaction with relevant international benchmarks – such as the efforts to implement ENQA European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance as well as activities towards registration in EQAR – has been decisive in shaping the growth of the KAA and quality enhancement of its work.

The development of this strategic plan is a response to these imperatives and background. It sets forth a comprehensive framework to guide the development and strengthening of accreditation processes and increase commitment and responsibility of the higher education institutions in Kosovo towards quality over the next five years. Rooted in principles of integrity, transparency, inclusiveness, and excellence, this strategy seeks to reinforce KAA's position as a trusted and independent body committed to upholding academic standards and fostering a culture of quality in higher education. A solid ground has already been established in the past five years, and the next period is critical for Kosovo's convergence towards best European practices.

The primary purpose of this strategic plan is to provide a clear roadmap for the future of quality assurance in Kosovo, in line with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The road ahead is to be pursued as an interplay between the current contextual variables of the education sector, the present realities in the accreditation processes, and the ambitions set out for the external quality assurance system for aligning itself with relevant European benchmarks.

## Context

The higher education sector in Kosovo is governed by the umbrella legislation, consisting of the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo (2011, No. 04/L-037) and the Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (08/L-110/2023). The law on KAA represented a major development in the quality assurance sector in Kosovo as the new law provided a turning point for ensuring the KAA's independence and also provided the possibility for the KAA's development as an autonomous institution. This could be observed in sections of the human resource development as well as the quick development of necessary regulations and by-laws, which led to rapid developments in the quality assurance sector that resulted in positive developments.

Related to this, KAA successfully registered in the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register), which proved that KAA has successfully worked in recent years to meet key targets in the areas of autonomous and professional operation. The KAA was registered in the EQAR register in July 2025, marking a major turn in the direction of the quality assurance system for the next stage. On one hand, it reflects and

confirms the progress Kosovo has made in meeting the international standards and benchmarks in recent years, while on the other hand, it also implies the need to perform up to the European Standards and Guidelines, as good reference points for the quality assurance system at the European level.

The higher education system in Kosovo is governed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI), which outlines its development perspective in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2022-2026. KESP 2022-2026 treated higher education as a separate objective, whereas quality assurance within it was a specific sub-objective. The KAA strategic plan 2021-2025 reflected the main development priorities and measures foreseen by KESP.

To understand future development, it is important to understand the main challenges in the higher education sector, as well as the realities of providers and students. In 2021, Kosovo had 9 public and 15 private higher education institutions (reference KESP 2022-2026). These numbers did not include the University in North Mitrovica, which continues to operate under the education system of Serbia. According to the education statistics in MESTI (See document *Statistikat e Arsimit në Kosovë 2023-2024*), the current number of higher education institutions is currently 10 public higher education institutions (IBCM in Mitrovica was transformed into a public higher education institution in 2023), while the number of private higher education institutions is 13. The number of higher education institutions still represents Kosovo as the country with the highest number of institutions per 1 million inhabitants in Europe (Ibid).

In parallel, the number of students in the higher education sector has continued to decrease. This is partly due to the demographic changes and migration; however, it represents a factor that needs to be considered in the development of the higher education sector in Kosovo. According to KESP 2022-2026, Kosovo had 95,335 students in accredited higher education providers (57.4% in the public sector). This number had reportedly decreased further as represented in MESTI statistics reports for academic year 2023/2024, which confirms that there are 39,622 students in the public sector and 31,324 students in the private higher education sector. These figures speak of a total of 70,946 students in the higher education sector. The way forward in the development of the sector needs to focus on improving the quality and relevance of qualifications rather than increasing access, which was an issue and a need in the past.

At the quality assurance level, there are several relevant dimensions for the road ahead. These dimensions include the (i) need to promote internal quality culture at institutional level, (ii) use outcomes/data more effectively (beyond reporting purposes), (iii) facilitate cross border cooperation by also harmonizing quality assurance processes, as well as (iv) developing time-relevant standards and instruments to respond to the new modes of delivery, increasing need for digital competence in the society, as well as evolving expectations for quality of education as the transition period as a state and democracy is underway.

## ◆ Methodology for Strategy Development

The development of the 5-year Strategic Plan for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency was grounded in a comprehensive process that established existing realities in the higher education quality assurance system and outlined a way forward to promote a quality culture and advance the standards and processes of higher education provision and the quality of its operations.

The process for developing the KAA Strategic Plan was steered by the Agency-established Working Group. The relevance and feasibility of implementing the proposed activities and achieving the desired outcomes were ensured by involving all stakeholders at different stages of the process and through workshops that enabled the views of different actors and stakeholders to be taken into consideration. During the consultation meetings and the composition of the working group, diverse perspectives, stakeholder views, and gender balance were considered.

The development of the Strategic Plan occurred through a comprehensive process that included a

number of stages:

**Preparation phase:** this was the initial stage of the strategic plan design and involved Working Group meetings to discuss the modalities of the work, including the nature and composition of meetings, as well as the format and template of the strategic plan document. The preparation phase also included tailored meetings to outline the variables of the data that will be collected to establish the situation analysis. The work was led by the Working Group and involved key KAA staff at various stages of developing the methodology and specifying instruments and data.

**Situation analysis stage:** this phase comprised multiple activities that led to analysing current realities in the quality assurance sector, including assessing the achievement of the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, as well as developments in the past period in the higher education sector in Kosovo and beyond. The main activities in this phase included the (i) survey of higher education institutions in Kosovo on their experience and views on quality assurance system and processes in Kosovo, (ii) stakeholder workshop on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and (iii) tailored working meetings with the KAA staff and working groups to review and edit the input collected into a more concise representation of the realities in the ground also in light of the data available at the KAA.

**Deciding the future development phase:** this stage included a workshop with stakeholders and follow-up working meetings of the Working Group and KAA key staff on the review and editing of the vision and mission statement, on the one hand, and outlining measures, activities, and indicators used to achieve the objectives, on the other hand. The stakeholder workshop included representatives of public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo, including rectors, vice rectors, deans, and quality assurance staff. The Working Group processed the input from all meetings and stakeholder workshops, compiled it into the first version of the strategic plan for KAA, and internally reviewed and gathered feedback.

**Finalising and formalising phase:** the final workshop with a bigger group was held on review and feedback, in addition to the feedback provided internally at KAA and SCQ before the formal approval of the Strategic Plan by the SCQ.

## II. Situation analysis

The present realities of the external quality assurance system in Kosovo and the functioning of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency were established through a variety of data sources and consultations. The following data were generated to establish the current situation:

- Consultation with representatives of the higher education institutions in Kosovo. An online survey was developed and administered with relevant institutional representatives in Kosovo, focusing on the aspects in which accreditation and re-accreditation processes have helped the institution improve, and the priority areas in which development should focus in the future stage.
- Opinions and views of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency staff on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the external quality assurance system in place.
- Views of stakeholder group representatives – namely, representatives of higher education institutions in Kosovo and Kosovo Accreditation Agency staff - on the current system and future development priorities.
- Data and findings from the reports and data available at the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, including annual reports, reports on the implementation of the previous Strategic Plan, thematic analyses conducted, and other analytical reports and data on the activities of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

The current **strengths** of the KAA are largely centred on its institutional independence and autonomy.

This has been ensured by disabling political interference in the work of the State Council for Quality, exercising full autonomy in the design of accreditation standards, and increasing autonomy in budget administration. Another important achievement in the last period is the complete legal basis for the agency's functioning and the accreditation system's operation.

With the legal basis completed and operational documents in use, KAA could utilise the new law to increase the staffing in order to be able to perform up to the expectations and standards. The new staff provided a possibility of increasing the efficiency and quality of operation, while in parallel, the KAA has invested in their induction and professional development.

Another strength of the current work of the KAA can also be considered the establishment of a pool of internationally recognised experts to be involved in programme and institutional accreditation. The work of the KAA, including the minutes of the SCQ, the decisions taken, standards, and other regulatory documents used, etc., were all made public, and this work was one main focus for KAA in the last years. It increased transparency and trust in the agency's work, among other things.

To achieve all of the above, KAA successfully engaged in various donor projects, including those with the European Union, the Austrian Development Agency, the US Embassy, etc. This enabled the agency to undertake many development activities in the last period, including staff capacity building, the development of policies and regulatory documents, substantial work on digitalising processes, and the increase in the international dimension of its work.

On the other hand, the KAA also faces certain **challenges** that need to be addressed on the road ahead. One important challenge is the quality of external experts' performance, namely ensuring consistency in accreditation processes across panels that visit a single institution at different times, as well as in recommendations and follow-up details across accreditation cycles. In a slightly related area, the challenge for KAA in recent years has been to identify and provide the specific, narrow area of expertise for certain subject areas. In the context of one-day field visits to each institution, KAA has had challenges ensuring external experts are familiarised with the local context, which is often an important part of the evaluation work.

The past period for KAA has been one of stabilisation and maturity. In such a complex dynamic, the accreditation function has faced challenges in ensuring that higher education institutions reach a maturity stage when deciding on new programmes that respond to market and societal needs, or when considering the strategic development of higher education provision in Kosovo. Another challenge related to the maturity of higher education institutions was the need to develop more proactive approaches to quality that do not treat external quality systems as a decisive and controlling factor, but rather as a guide and support. This is an ambitious goal, but it's worth striving for. Thus, in a very dynamic context, KAA has not yet managed to ensure that the accreditation and re-accreditation processes are assigned specific purposes, and overall, they are coherent in a medium-term approach to reach a quality culture that is missing but desired in Kosovo's higher education sector.

in parallel with challenges, KAA will also be able to make use of elements that represent **opportunities**. One important opportunity is the KAA's flexibility, autonomy, and ability to act quickly to revise the agency's standards and regulatory framework in response to field-identified needs. A continuous opportunity for the KAA is the availability of partners and donors that support reforms and development work related to the enhancement of the external quality assurance system. In the same line of thought, KAA's registration in EQAR provides a good momentum for further developments in the sector. Beyond this, the possibility for membership in other relevant forums such as ENQA, CHEA, etc. will be an opportunity for the ongoing advancement of the KAA operations and standards and practices of quality assurance in Kosovo.

At a more substantial level, the developments in the digitalisation sector are also seen as an opportunity for KAA, more in terms of advancing its operations by extending the data availability as well as improving the effectiveness of the processes by advancing its digital capacity. To this end, involvement of internal Artificial Intelligence (AI) based tools will foster and speed up internal processes, while data generation from such tools will enable data-based decision making for both KAA and SCQ.

The work of KAA is also subject to external **risks** that it cannot directly control. Those threats are related

largely to the behaviour of higher education institutions. One example is the increasing tendency to use international accreditation and thus running the risk of accreditation processes ignoring the local context specifics in which the institution operates or in which graduates are supposed to work. Another dimension that represents a risk for challenging the KAA work is related to the approach of higher education institutions in increasing the number of new programs in an unpredictable manner and without any solid analysis of the needs for those programs. Not only does this overburden the KAA capacities, but it also jeopardises its part of the mission to lead the sector policy orientation.

Related to the private higher education sector in Kosovo, the fact that all institutions operate as for-profit institutions represents a major challenge, as it brings doubt to the commitment of those institutions in investing in quality and in ensuring the best investments are oriented to quality of teaching and graduates. This challenge will remain valid for the foreseeable future under the current legislative context. As such, it makes it more difficult for KAA to transition from compliance mode towards a more quality enhancement orientation of the external quality assurance system in Kosovo.

### III. Values, Vision and mission statement

The work of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and the external quality assurance mechanisms it manages is grounded in a set of values that reflect its work and commitment to fulfilling its mission. The following are the core values that underpin the work of the KAA:

**Integrity:** reflects the commitment of KAA and its related structures to employ - in evaluation and decision-making processes - honestly, objectively, and consistently ensuring that judgments are based on verified data and evidence and are rigidly free from conflicts of interest, bias, or other influence. This points to the need for high professionalism bar in the work of the KAA and consistent improvement based on experience and practice to increase trust and outcomes quality.

**Transparency:** refers to the open and accessible communication of processes, criteria, decisions, and outcomes related to the evaluation and accreditation of institutions or programs. More specifically, this implies the need to have standards that are not only transparent but are also free from rival explanations and multiple interpretations.

**Independence:** refers to the principle that KAA makes decisions, evaluations, and judgments autonomously and free from political, financial, or institutional pressure. This is a way to ensure credibility, fairness, and trust in the quality assurance process applicable in Kosovo. This principle also connects to the organizational autonomy and governance of the KAA, and is free from political interference and interference of other interest groups.

**Professionalism:** refers to the competent, ethical, and responsible conduct of all individuals and institutions involved in the quality assurance process be it from KAA side or higher education institutions. It ensures that evaluations are carried out with expertise, respect, and commitment to high standards of practice or to the best meaning of standards and criteria. On the other hand, the KAA remains committed to the further capacity and competence development of all individuals working within and with the KAA.

**Inclusiveness and diversity:** Inclusiveness and diversity refer to the active recognition, respect, and involvement of different perspectives, backgrounds, and stakeholder groups in the design, implementation, and evaluation processes. This includes the respect for and addressing gender equality of all services and activities, inclusion of minority groups, and other disadvantaged groups on one hand, as well as inclusion of perspectives from all stakeholders in policy making and practice design on the other hand.

**Social responsibility:** Social responsibility refers to the commitment of KAA processes to contribute positively to society by ensuring that higher education promotes the public good, ethical behavior, and societal development.

## ◆ Vision statement

The vision statement in this strategy is developed more with a view of targeting institutional development rather than a higher education system-oriented approach, which seems more as a result of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency's enhancement.

The vision statement for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is as follows:

*An internationally recognized Kosovo Accreditation Agency that consistently contributes to quality enhancement and an inclusive higher education system in Kosovo to create individuals who build locally and internationally rewarding careers and reflect personal development in line with societal values and aspirations.*

## ◆ Mission statement

The mission statement for the Kosovo Accreditation Agency reflects its duties and roles that derive from the operational tasks and activities.

The mission of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is as follows:

*To support quality development in the higher education sector through external quality assurance, aligning it with the best international practices.*

## IV. Development objectives and measures

The strategic plan is structured around four main development objectives, which directly link to the implementation of the vision for this strategy and the development of the external quality assurance system in Kosovo.

The four development objectives are:

1. Developing KAA as an institution that reflects high professionalism and ethical standards in quality assurance processes in Kosovo.
2. Advancement of quality assurance practices for continuous enhancement of quality in the higher education sector in Kosovo.
3. Internationalization of the quality assurance system and using it to enhance institutional and system-level practices.
4. Promoting quality culture in Kosovo higher education through individual and institutional awareness, capacity development, and institutionalized practices.

Throughout the objectives and across the strategy, several themes are treated with specific importance and attention during the activity stage. The main cross-cutting themes are: digital transformation and artificial intelligence, and the sustainable development agenda.

The above themes will be addressed through different activities that are planned within this strategy, including the annual conference, workshop for KAA staff, participation in international activities, revision of standards and development of respective protocols, organizing sessions and working meetings with the higher education institutions in Kosovo, investing in digital transformation and sustainable development, etc. Whereas the development objectives were elaborated in more detail, including the rationale for the choice and its detailed meaning.

## ◆ Measures activities and indicators

Development objectives are further elaborated into broad-level measures, followed by specific activities to implement them.

## ◆ Development objective 1

Developing KAA as an institution that reflects high professionalism and ethical standards in quality assurance processes in Kosovo

The professional and administrative capacity of the KAA is crucial to enhancing the quality assurance system in Kosovo. The increasing standards and practices of the external quality assurance system imply the need for continuous staff capacity building on one hand, as well as advancement of the managerial and administrative capacities of the KAA on the other hand. Professional staff capacities are closely associated with the need for an upgraded administrative process, such as the development of managerial protocols and advancement of data availability, including and related to the further development of the existing electronic system at KAA. Above all, access to continuous needs-driven, relevant professional development for staff is a key issue that needs to be addressed as part of the implementation of the development plan in a more targeted and comprehensive approach

<b>Measure 1: Professionalizing the Agency staff for managing quality assurance systems and processes</b>	
<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
1.1 Needs assessment for professional development of KAA staff conducted	1. A professional development plan for agency staff is developed and approved for 1-3 years
1.2 Agency staff participating in relevant workshops and conferences on quality assurance	1. A list of workshops and activities identified and approved on annual basis for KAA staff to participate 2. KAA staff participating in workshops and conferences provide experience sharing events for the KAA staff
1.3 Internal meetings on selected professional themes organized	1. A list of internal meetings detailed per month 2. Each KAA professional staff facilitating a workshop per year
1.4. Review of task distribution among and across staff to reflect the need for more advanced functions of the agency	1. KAA staff task distribution reviewed and revised as needed to reflect the development needs and work realities to lead to effectiveness and efficiency
1.5 Capacity building of staff on code of ethics and professional integrity	1. A training on respecting code of ethics and professional integrity implemented

<p>1.6 Induction of new SCQ members and new-coming KAA staff as well as Appeals Committee.</p>	<p>1. Induction program designed and approved by KAA</p> <p>2. Induction program organized for all new SCQ members, KAA staff joining and appeals committee</p>
<p>1.7 Advancing KAA capacity on management, leadership and change management.</p>	<p>1. Management, leadership and change management program designed and approved at KAA</p> <p>2. Senior and middle management of KAA, SCQ members are trained on management, leadership and change management.</p>

<b>Measure 2: Advancing internal quality development system in the Agency</b>	
<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
<p>1.1 Conducting periodic self-evaluation of KAA work</p>	<p>1. A policy on internal quality assurance in KAA approved (based on existing regulations, processes and instruments). The policy reflects the standards and processes for data collection and use.</p> <p>2. Self-evaluation report conducted every three years for the KAA (linking data and input from annual performance reports and feedback and data collected in other measures of this strategic plan)</p>
<p>1.2 Collect regular stakeholder satisfaction qualitative and quantitative data</p>	<p>1. Annual satisfaction surveys conducted with HEIs and reports produced</p> <p>2. Regular update and editing of the surveys on annual basis to reflect the needs</p>
<p>1.3 Developing improvement plans based on self-evaluation and linked to the development strategy/Annual work plans</p>	<p>1. Improvement plans and work plans reflect the development needs</p>
<p>1.4 Publishing the targeted summaries of the internal quality review data and findings</p>	<p>1. The format, level and depth of data to be made available for public agreed within KAA</p> <p>2. Tailored summaries of internal quality reviews published and easily available for the public</p>

### Measure 3: Enhancing the managerial and administrative practices in the agency

Activities:	Indicators:
1.2. Developing annual reports of performance for tailored audience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual report to the Parliament made available</li> <li>2. Annual report, reflecting also the implementation of this strategy, published on the web page</li> </ol>
1.3 Developing standard operating procedures for selected processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Situation analysis conducted to decide what procedures will be detailed in the form of standards operating procedures to increase effectiveness and efficiency</li> <li>2. At least 3 standard operating procedures developed for various functions, roles and processes of the KAA</li> </ol>
1.4 Developing an enhancement oriented staff appraisal system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual self-assessment and prioritizing staff PD conducted</li> <li>2. Annual performance review meetings between supervisor and staff to review objectives and achievements organized</li> </ol>
1.5. Increase transparency and communication with the public and users	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All protocols, standards, guidelines and regulations published in a user friendly mode on the web page</li> <li>2. A detailed communication plan developed and approved</li> <li>3. Tailored communication strategies implemented on web page and social media.</li> </ol>

### Measure 4: Digital transformation of data and processes in QA

Activities:	Indicators:
1.1 Extending the data availability and use beyond "e-akreditimi"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least two new data sets reflected in the e-akreditimi platform</li> </ol>
1.2 Producing reports on various accreditation processes based on data in the software	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The definition of variables and constructs to be used in the reports including baseline reports and trend reports</li> <li>2. Facts and figure reports published on annual basis</li> </ol>
1.3 Digital transformation of the accreditation processes entirely following the upgraded software	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process of accreditation is fully managed in the electronic platform.</li> <li>2. Piloting 2 selected processes by use of artificial intelligence</li> </ol>
1.4 Providing training to KAA staff and HEIs on working with the digitalized processes in accreditation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three training sessions are provided on the use of upgraded digital systems in quality assurance processes</li> </ol>

1.5 Introducing Artificial Intelligence use in KAA processes and products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feasibility study on using artificial intelligence in drafting reports within KAA conducted and formalized</li> <li>2. At least workshop reports at produced assisted through the artificial intelligence</li> </ol>
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## ◆ Development objective 2

Advancement of quality assurance practices for continuous enhancement of quality in higher education sector in Kosovo

Quality assurance systems are driven by standards and revisions to standards, which introduce new processes and criteria. Hence, the development of quality assurance practices in Kosovo is closely linked to the need to revise the existing accreditation standards and enforce them, address the composition of external expert teams and their performance, and work on post-accreditation processes. The work around these three elements represents a coordinated effort to improve the quality of accreditation practices in Kosovo, while, at a broader level, it implies the need for the full implementation of ESG standards in Kosovo and for continuous improvement of the system and higher education institutions' performance. Hence, this objective will also contribute to the further shift towards a quality-enhancement approach to accreditation processes in Kosovo, and measures such as liaising with stakeholders, revising standards, and conducting thematic reviews will align with this overall approach and collectively contribute to achieving this objective.

<b>Measure 1: Increase the quality and processes related to external expert involvement</b>	
<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
1.1 Expand the pool of the international experts to increase professionalism bar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Publish annual calls on identifying new international experts for the accreditation process</li> <li>2. Diversify expert teams for evaluation to take account of closer narrow fields and needs for the developments targeted</li> </ol>
1.2 Provide regular training for the external experts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Induction program developed and offered to new experts</li> <li>2. Briefing and orientation sessions organized on annual basis</li> <li>3. Training of existing experts on annual basis on processes, standards and advancement of quality of reviews</li> <li>4. Field visits preparation meetings for external experts formalized and organized for each accreditation visit</li> </ol>

<p>1.3 Ensure consistency in evaluation processes including post accreditation procedures</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual meeting with experts on trends and issues in past accreditations</li> <li>2. Individual meetings with expert teams on specific issues and specific themes</li> <li>3. Expert team composition reflects elements of continuation and diversification across institutions and cycles when applicable.</li> <li>4. One post accreditation procedure during accreditation cycle</li> </ol>
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<b>Measure 2: Quality improvement oriented monitoring and post-accreditation procedures system</b>	
<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
<p>1.1 Develop protocols for the post accreditation procedures</p>	<p>1. Protocols and forms for post accreditation procedures developed and approved</p>
<p>1.2 Organize monitoring visit to each HEI</p>	<p>1. At least one monitoring visit to each higher education institution organized</p>
<p>1.3 Organizing regular post accreditation procedures visits according to applicable regulations</p>	<p>1. Post accreditation procedures reports are published and disseminated to respective institution</p>
<p>1.4. Revise the post accreditation procedures and monitoring regulations based on existing practices and evolving needs</p>	<p>1. Based on the implementation to date and the evolving situation towards quality enhancement approach, regulations and procedures for post - accreditation procedures and monitoring revised.</p>

<b>Measure 3: Periodical review of accreditation standards and improvement of practices</b>	
<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
<p>1.1 Review of standards to ensure shift towards quality enhancement rather than compliance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Standards reviewed to provide room for sustainable shift towards quality enhancement driven by HEIs</li> <li>2. Standards rewritten to reflect changes of ESG (European Standards and Guidelines) as well as other international benchmarks in quality assurance</li> <li>2. Standards revised to reflect digital transformation and AI trends, sustainability and green strategies</li> </ol>
<p>1.2 Development of standards and procedures for the accreditation of double and joint program arrangements</p>	<p>1. Accreditation mechanism for double and joint degrees enforced.</p>

1.3 Developing standards and procedures on the accreditation of micro-credential qualifications	1. Accreditation mechanism for micro-credentials enforced.
1.4. Developing standards and procedures on the accreditation of online programs	1. Accreditation mechanism for online programs enforced
1.5 Produce regular thematic analysis reflecting the following-up mode and comprehensiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thematic analysis topics determined on annual basis;</li> <li>2. Methodological principles for thematic analysis developed and formalized</li> <li>3. At least 1 thematic analysis per year is produced</li> <li>4. At least 1 thematic analysis produced utilized AI generated data</li> </ol>
1.6 Organizing consultation and briefings with the higher education institutions and experts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least one meeting with the higher education institution representatives organized on new standards</li> <li>2. At least one meeting with higher education institution representatives organized on thematic analysis produced</li> </ol>

### ◆ Development objective 3

Internationalization of and through quality assurance system to enhance institutional and system level practices

Internationalization in today's educational environments is a cornerstone in defining the development path and future orientations. So is the case for the external quality assurance system in Kosovo: it will need to build on existing internationalization work to upgrade existing practices as a means to both validate its own initiatives and learn from other, more advanced contexts or membership in international forums or associations. In addition, participation in KAA international events is a tool for promoting the KAA's work and engaging in peer learning.

Measure 1: Increase visibility and participation in activities abroad	
Activities:	Indicators:
1.1 Active engagement in QA international registers, networks and agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participation in EQAR</li> <li>2. Participation in ENQA activities</li> <li>3. Participation of KAA in other international forums such as CEENQA, INQAAHE.</li> <li>3. Facilitating the process of HEIs populating data in DEQAR on regular annual basis</li> <li>2. KAA included in EQAR review committee(s)</li> </ol>
1.2 Membership in various international organizations and networks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Membership in CHEA ensured</li> <li>2. Full membership in ENQA achieved</li> </ol>
1.3 Participation in relevant international activities to promote the QA work in Kosovo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KAA participating in at least 1 international event to present and promote quality assurance work in Kosovo.</li> </ol>

## Measure 2: Increasing the quality of international activities in Kosovo

Activities:	Indicators:
1.1 Organizing annual conference in Kosovo on external quality assurance in Kosovo (continuing the organization of existing annual conference, 3 <sup>rd</sup> annual in 2025)	1. Annual conference organized on various themes to reflect the vision and development needs for the higher education sector in Kosovo.
1.2 Key experts from abroad running workshops for the KAA on enhancing the quality of HE in Kosovo	1. At least one workshop per year organized on specific themes of quality assurance

## Development objective 4

Promoting quality culture in Kosovo higher education through individual and institutional awareness, capacity development and institutionalized practices

The shift from quality control to a quality enhancement culture is not an easy transition, and it requires not only a well-developed and well-functioning KAA but also an awareness among the main actors, particularly higher education institutions, of their own responsibilities for quality assurance. Mobilizing all actors to make quality a normal practice rather than an eternally imposed duty is key to reaching the desired stage where quality is embedded in the routine practices of all higher education institutions. This objective requires both leadership and awareness-raising activities, while it is also dependent on how the quality review processes are nurturing the spirit and promoting practices of leadership within the higher education institutions. Hence, the time to diversify accreditation processes has come to ensure that good-performing institutions are encouraged and positively challenged to continue their commitment to quality. The diversification can occur both in terms of the varying standards, processes, and focus for more mature programs and institutions (e.g., a program that has had a consistent positive evaluation), so that focus is placed on a more advanced level of quality enhancement, such as internal quality mechanisms and scientific programming. On the other hand, diversification can also be planned in the dimension of the mission of the institutions.

## Measure 1: Increasing the awareness and responsibility of HE institutions on QA

Activities:	Indicators:
1.1 Organize regular working meetings with HEIs on the need to increase responsibility and commitment to internal quality assurance	1. SCQ conducts annual meetings with HEI representatives; 2. KAA conducts workshops with HEIs on using accreditation processes to increase internal quality assurance systems
1.2 HEIs good practices of QA to be shared and disseminated in annual conference	1. Annual conference themes determined to address the challenges of higher education sector in Kosovo and opportunities for transformation 2. Participation of HEIs in annual conference with input on selected themes

1.3 Provide opportunities for peer learning for HEIs in Kosovo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Within annual conference a parallel workshop is organized on sharing good practices</li> <li>2. Experts provided to facilitated peer learning</li> </ol>
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**Measure 2: Shift the expert reviews on HEI-s responsibility and commitment to QA**

<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
1.1 Increasing the awareness of external experts to focus reviews on internal quality assurance mechanisms	1. Meetings with experts organized on regular basis before each of the accreditation
1.2 Increase the focus of expert review on the follow up to recommendations provided in previous processes	2. The KAA coordinator for accreditation process maintains consistency through accreditation cycles by developing processes and data management systems.
1.3 Ensure more specific and diverse expert teams to cover also institutional development profile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A table of specifications on expert team composition for each profile and subject area developed to facilitate the process.</li> <li>2. Institutional development expertise reflect in institutional accreditation processes.</li> <li>3. Diversify the program (re)accreditation teams to reflect institutional development needs/purposes.</li> </ol>
1.4 Diversify accreditation process to increase and promote institutions' commitment and proactiveness to quality development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KAA determines the benefits and processes of a diversification process in accreditation to ensure the well-performing institutions use accreditation process for enhancement rather compliance</li> <li>1. Implementing diversified accreditation processes for institutions reflecting the principle that institutions with track record of positive reports are encouraged</li> <li>2. Well-performance institutions in accreditation processes are encouraged to focus on research and internal quality assurance systems.</li> </ol>

## V. Implementation modalities

This Strategic Plan serves as a basis for the design of the annual work plan and for annual reporting by the KAA. The KAA will develop detailed annual work plans based on the Strategic Plan measures and activities. The work plans include details on organizing and implementing specific activities, including the timing, people involved, responsibilities, and resources needed. The work plans can also run for more than 1 year to ensure coherence and the spread of specific activities, and in those cases, the activities for years to follow are outlined at a more general level, with the view of detailed planning in the specific year.