



«АККРЕДИТТЕУ ЖӘНЕ РЕЙТИНГТИҢ
ТӘУЕЛСІЗ АГЕНТТІГІ» КЕМ

НУ «НЕЗАВИСИМОЕ АГЕНТСТВО
АККРЕДИТАЦИИ И РЕЙТИНГА»

INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR
ACCREDITATION AND RATING

TO SUPERVISORY BOARD

REPORT

on the activities of NPI "Independent Agency of
Accreditation and Rating"
for 2021

TO SUPERVISORY BOARD

REPORT
on the activities of NPI "Independent Agency of Accreditation and Rating"
for 2021



Nur-Sultan, 2021

CONTENT

List of designations and abbreviations	3
INTRODUCTION	5
1. IAAR in the development of the quality assurance system of education in the national and international educational space	7
1.1 Strengthening the position of IAAR in the national and international market of accreditation services	7
1.2 Expansion and improvement of the qualitative potential of national and foreign experts ..	15
1.3 Improvement of the Agency's personnel management system	20
2. Monitoring the quality of education and bringing the best world experience to the development of national education systems and organizations	23
2.1 Improving the quality of post-accreditation monitoring procedures and rules	23
2.2 Increasing the analytical potential of the IAAR in improving national education quality assurance systems	24
3. Conducting rating research in the field of higher, technical and vocational education	27
3.1 Expanding the boundaries of rating research in the field of higher and postgraduate education	27
3.2 Improving the methodology of rating research and informing the public about the results of the rating	30
4. Timely informing the society and developing feedback	31
4.1 Increasing the level of public awareness about the results of quality assessment	31
4.2 Improving the efficiency of IAAR activities and developing feedback	34
5. IAAR is a recognized international accreditation agency	37
5.1 Strengthening and expanding the international recognition and authority of IAAR	37
5.2 Improving the quality of international activities and achievements of IAAR	42
SWOT analysis of activities	45
Conclusion	47

List of designations and abbreviations

- ABET** - Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ACQUIN - Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute
APQN - Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network
ASIIN - Accreditation Agency for Degree Programs in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics
CEENQA - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CIQG - Council for Higher Education Accreditation US International Quality Group
ENQA - The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register
ESG - Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
IAAR - Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating
INQAAHE - International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IREG - International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence
PhD - Doctor of Philosophy Training Program
MA – Master’s degree program
QA - Quality assurance
SAR - the Self-Assessment Report
AC - Accreditation Council
BA – Bachelor’s degree program
IQAS - Internal Quality Assurance System
HEI - Higher Education Institution
WFME - World Federation of Medical Education
EEP - External Expert Panel
SPED - State program for education development
EHEA - European Higher Education Area
IA - Institutional Accreditation
KR - Kyrgyz Republic
MES RK - Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan
MOES KR - Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic
RI - Research Institute
NCE - National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Atameken"
NEQAS - National Education Quality Assessment System
EO - Organization of education
EP - Educational program
MEP - The main educational program
TS - Teaching Staff
PSA- Primary specialized accreditation

RK - Republic of Kazakhstan
SA - specialized accreditation
MM - Mass Media
TVE - Technical and Vocational Education
FSBI - Federal State Budgetary Institution
EC - Expert Council



INTRODUCTION

The non-profit institution "Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating" (hereinafter - IAAR) is a leading international accreditation agency for quality assurance of education, a full member of European, Asian and American networks and agencies for quality assurance of education and accreditation. IAAR is the first accreditation body in Kazakhstan to receive the status of a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ENQA. Due to full membership in international European networks, IAAR accredited educational organizations and educational programs receive the status of international accreditation. IAAR operates in accordance with ESG and WFME standards.

The activities of IAAR in 2021 were based on the goals and objectives defined by the program documents and legislation in the field of education of the countries of Central Asia and the European Higher Education Area, international documents in the field of quality assurance, as well as the developed IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023.

In 2021, IAAR celebrated 10 years of active activity in the field of quality assurance of education at the national and international levels. Over a decade of creative activity, IAAR has played and continues to play an important role in the functioning of the independent accreditation sector based on international standards and ESG requirements.

The most important achievement of 2021 is the re-acquisition of full membership in ENQA. On December 7, 2021, by the decision of the Council of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, IAAR received international European recognition for 5 years. IAAR has confirmed the progress of its activities on all criteria of Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Obtaining the status of a recognized European agency is a confirmation of the compliance of IAAR's activities with international standards and evidence of high trust.

IAAR, demonstrating high competitiveness, consistently conducts an independent, objective, professional assessment of educational activities in the European and Central Asian region (in the Republic of Kazakhstan and 11 foreign countries (including the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, etc.) on the basis of concluded Agreements and recognition of the IAAR by the relevant

authorities of these states both in the off-line and on-line format, as well as in a hybrid form. In 2021, IAAR signed agreements on accreditation of universities in Armenia and Uzbekistan. IAAR, applying the best international quality assurance practices, contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of educational and scientific activities of educational organizations in Eastern Europe and Asia in accordance with the most important national and international trends in the development of education systems.



1. IAAR in the development of the quality assurance system of education in the national and international educational space

The main activity of IAAR is related to the external evaluation aimed at promoting the improvement of the quality of education and the competitiveness of educational services through independent accreditation, promotion of a culture of quality at the national and international levels.

1.1 Strengthening the position of IAAR in the national and international market of accreditation services

In 2021, the activities of IAAR were based on the goals and objectives defined by international and national priorities in the development of education systems of the Republic of Kazakhstan and foreign countries, international experience and the implementation of key indicators of the IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023. The purpose of the external evaluation is consistent with the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals defined by the "IAAR Development Strategy for 2019-2023", developed with the participation of external stakeholders and coordinated with the IAAR collegial bodies.

The Agency implements a Quality Assurance Policy focused on continuous development and provision of quality services in the field of education quality assessment for consumers of all levels: the state, society, educational organizations, employers, students, public organizations.

IAAR conducts an external assessment on the following types of accreditation: institutional accreditation of secondary education organizations, technical and vocational education (TVE), higher and postgraduate education (HPE), medical education and additional education (MEAE), primary accreditation of EO HPE, medical education; specialized (program) accreditation of TVE, HPE and medical education; primary specialized (primary program) accreditation of EP HPE, medical education; joint accreditation of HPE, accreditation of joint educational programs. Internal IAAR documents regulating external quality assurance procedures are published on the IAAR website <https://iaar.agency>

Development and improvement of IAAR standards and documents. In order to conduct a qualitative external assessment, IAAR develops standards and criteria for various types of accreditation. The IAAR standards take into account the principles of the Bologna Process and are used as a model for self-assessment of HEI,

harmonization of the national education quality system being formed with the international requirements of the EHEA. IAAR standards fully comply with ESG and WFME standards and are developed with the involvement of stakeholders. IAAR, guided by the recommendations of ENQA, systematized the procedures for reviewing and improving accreditation standards in accordance with the "Instructions for the Development and improvement of IAAR Standards".

In order to improve the quality and efficiency of IAAR activities in 2021, work was carried out to improve the agency's regulatory and methodological documentation, make changes and additions to the Standards of institutional and specialized accreditation of universities, taking into account the tasks and requirements of the SPED for 2020 - 2025, new legal acts of the RK on the regulation of educational activities of HVE organizations, as well as changes in "IAAR Development Strategies for 2019 - 2023".

In accordance with the Work Plan for 2021, the project "Standards and Guidelines for international specialized (program) accreditation of joint educational programs of higher and (or) postgraduate education (based on ESG, the European approach to quality assurance of joint programs, 2015)" was developed and approved in 2021.

In 2021, the procedures and standards of international accreditation of medical educational organizations/educational programs of the RK for basic medical education in accordance with the standards of WFME 2020 were updated by making changes and additions. IAAR standards have been improved in the direction of strengthening student-centered learning, expanding the academic freedom of universities and students, applying more flexible approaches to assessing the quality of education, evaluating the effectiveness of the quality assurance system within the university, and widely introducing best practices, including distance learning technologies in the educational process.

In accordance with the IAAR Activity Plan, it was planned in September-October 2021 to introduce amendments and additions to the Standards and Guidelines of IA and PA for the KR on the basis of the Education Development Program, regulations of the MOES KR. However, the absence of an approved Plan for the implementation of the Development Program of the KR, including education for 2021-2040, did not allow this work to be completed. In 2022, it is planned to continue this work and discuss its results with the academic community of

Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the international seminar "International accreditation – a tool for improving the quality of education".

According to the IAAR Plan for 2021 and Contracts with EO, work was systematically carried out on the organization and holding of seminars on the methodology of international accreditation of IAAR. During the reporting period, IAAR held 13 seminars for educational organizations in Kazakhstan, Russia and Moldova.

Thus, IAAR, taking into account the principles of the Bologna Process, international standards, national requirements and the requirements of the EHEA, has done a lot of work to develop/improve its own standards and criteria for various types of accreditation in accordance with international standards.

International accreditation. In 2021, institutional and specialized (program) accreditation of HEI of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Belarus was carried out. In 2021, the boundaries of IAAR activities expanded: universities of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Uzbekistan were accredited for the first time. In 2021, **12** EO of the Republic of Kazakhstan, **11** foreign EO, **464** EO of different levels of education in Kazakhstan and **52** EP of foreign EO passed international IA.

International accreditation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The quality assessment of educational organizations in Kazakhstan was carried out on the basis of standards and guidelines for institutional and specialized accreditation of higher, vocational, higher and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, continuing professional education organizations, schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education with the active participation of stakeholders. You can learn more about the procedure and methodology of accreditation in Kazakhstan on the IAAR website: www.iaar.agency in the section "Accreditation".

Institutional accreditation. The quality assessment of educational organizations was carried out on the basis of standards and guidelines for institutional accreditation of higher, vocational, higher and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, continuing professional education organizations, schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education. In 2021, *12 educational organizations, including 6 HEI, 3 TVE*

organizations, 1 organization of continuing professional education, 1 research institute, 1 international school, passed institutional accreditation in IAAR. The vast majority of EO have fully demonstrated compliance with the IAAR institutional accreditation standards and have been accredited for 5 years.

In 2021, an application from 7 HEI was submitted for an external assessment of compliance with the standards of institutional accreditation, but 6 HEI passed the institutional accreditation procedures, including 4 – reaccreditation, 1 – accreditation and 1 – primary accreditation.

Table 1. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2021 (*institutional accreditation*)

Educational organizations	5 years	3 years	1 year	refused	Total
HEI					
National					-
State	1				1
Joint stock companies	1				1
Individual		3		1	4
TVE	3				3
TVE (<i>medical</i>)					-
RI, ONPO, school	3				3
Total	8	3	0	1	12

The data in Table 1 show that out of the total number of 12 IAAR accredited educational organizations, 8 organizations - for 5 years, 3 - for 3 years, 1 – refusal of accreditation. Thus, the vast majority of HEI have fully demonstrated compliance with the standards of institutional accreditation of the IAAR.

IAAR accreditation in Kazakhstan is carried out with the active participation of stakeholders: employers, students, foreign experts, as well as the coordinator - representative of the agency. Stakeholders are involved both in the self-assessment process carried out by the EO and during the visit of an external expert commission. Reports of external expert commissions are publicly available on the IAAR website.

You can learn more about the procedure and methodology of accreditation in Kazakhstan on the website www.iaar.agency in the section "Accreditation".

Specialized (program) accreditation in the RK. The quality assessment of the EP was carried out on the basis of standards and guidelines of specialized (program) accreditation of higher, vocational, basic medical and postgraduate medical education, medical colleges, schools implementing international programs of primary, basic secondary and general secondary education. As part of the specialized

(program) accreditation in 2021, a total of **464** EP were accredited, including **116** EP -reaccreditation, **128** EP -primary accreditation, **220** EP- accreditation.

The general statistics of accredited educational programs in 2021 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Quantitative indicators of accredited educational programs for 2021 (*specialized/program accreditation*)

Name	7 years with reaccreditation	5 years	3 years	1 year	Refusal in accreditation	Total accredited
HEI	18	182	107	13	6	326
BA	4	113	77	8	4	192
MA	5	38	26	4	2	61
PhD	9	31	4	1		45
Medical HEI	2	93	8	1		104
BA	2	8				
MA		16	6	1		
PhD		6	1			
Residency		63	1			
TVE		22	10	2		34
Total accredited	20	297	125	16	6	464

Out of **464** educational programs, **20** programs are accredited for 7 years, **297** educational programs - for 5 years, **125** educational programs - for 3 years, **16** educational programs - for 1 year, refusal of accreditation – **6** EP. Out of the total number of accredited educational programs, **116** were accredited. IAAR also conducted primary (ex-ante) accreditation of **128** educational programs.

Positive trends in the development of accredited EP in 2021 are: annual updating of EP taking into account the recommendations of employers, TS and students; ensuring equal opportunities for students regardless of the language of instruction; regional orientation of the development plans of EP of regional HEI. In the context of recommendations to universities within the framework of specialized (program) accreditation, the most common are: providing students with the opportunity to choose alternative learning paths; finding opportunities to prepare students for professional certification, strengthening international relations for the implementation of double-degree education in the future, etc. Of particular relevance, in connection with the spread of the COVID-2019 virus infection, were recommendations for the development of on-line courses and their regular use in the educational process as part of distance learning.

In 2021, 1 educational organization and 45 EP did not pass the procedures of institutional and specialized accreditation for various reasons (due to the deprivation of the license of the authorized body in the field of education of the RK for educational activities, failure to submit SAR according to the approved schedule; the need for additional time for preparation).

In 2021, IAAR developed and approved Standards and Guidelines for International specialized (program) accreditation of a joint educational program. These standards were tested during the external evaluation of the joint educational program 6B02110 Pedagogy of Choreographic Art (two-degree program) of the Kazakh National Academy of Choreography and the Kazan State Institute of Culture, December 7-9, 2021. The experience of conducting joint EP has shown that in order to develop, in accordance with the requirements of the Agency, the report of the EEP on the results of the external evaluation, it is necessary to extend the time from 10 calendar days to 14-20 days (given that experts need to analyze documents of two and (or) more partner educational organizations), as well as relevant additions to the Regulations on the procedure of specialized (program) accreditation of an educational organization, the Regulation on the external expert commission and the Regulation on the Regulation of the activities of an external expert.

Reports of external expert commissions are publicly available on the IAAR website. You can learn more about the procedure and methodology of accreditation in Kazakhstan on the website www.iaar.agency in the section "Accreditation".

Cross-border accreditation. In carrying out cross-border accreditation and implementing the task of strengthening the position of IAAR in the international market of accreditation services, IAAR took into account in its activities the "Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cross-border Higher Education (UNESCO and OECD)" and the provisions of the document "Cooperation in Cross-border Higher Education: Tools for Quality Assurance Agencies" (ENQA). When conducting international accreditation, IAAR ensures compliance of external assessment procedures with the requirements of European quality assurance networks, ESG standards, as well as compliance with the rules and procedures established by authorized bodies in the field of education of foreign countries. The main tool for external quality assessment is the "Standards and Guidelines for International Accreditation of Foreign Educational Organizations and educational programs (based on ESG)", approved and put into effect according to the IAAR Order No. 68/1-18-od dated 25.05.2018.

In 2021, the boundaries of IAAR accreditation activities expanded geographically: applications for accreditation from HEI in Armenia and Uzbekistan were received for the first time. As part of the international institutional accreditation of IAAR, an external quality assessment of **11** foreign educational organizations was carried out. **52** educational programs have passed the IAAR International program accreditation.

In 2021, IAAR conducted international accreditation in 5 HEI in Russia - Chechen State University (**6** EP), Kazan State Institute of Culture (**1** EP), Siberian State Medical University (IA), Kursk State Medical University (IA, **5** EP) and Grozny State Petroleum Technical University named after academician M.D. Millionshchikov (**5** EP). Of the **17** educational programs of HEI accredited by IAAR in 2021, **13** EP are accredited for a period of 5 years, **4** EP – for 3 years.

International accreditation in Eastern Europe. The quality of universities and educational programs at the bachelor's, master's and PhD levels in Eastern Europe within the framework of international accreditation is determined according to the Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Foreign educational organizations and Educational programs (based on ESG), introduced by the IAAR in 2018.

In 2021, the Agency conducted international accreditation in **Moldova and Armenia** in accordance with the IAAR standards, taking into account the principles of the Bologna Process, ESG and WFME standards and national legislation in the field of higher education.

In 2021, IAAR accredited the educational program "Business and Administration" of the International Institute of Management "IMI-NOVA" (for a period of 3 years). By the decision of the Accreditation Council, accreditation was denied within the framework of the IA of the Training Center "BELLE FEMME", it was also denied within the framework of the program accreditation of the EP "Cosmetologist".

In 2021, IAAR conducted an international program accreditation of the EP "Medical care" of the Armenian-Russian International University "Mkhitar Gosh" in Armenia. By the decision of the Accreditation Council, the accreditation of this EP was refused.

In 2021, IAAR in **Ukraine** successfully conducted the institutional and program accreditation of 4 EP of Odessa National Medical University, **the Republic of Belarus** - the institutional and program accreditation of 3 EP of Grodno State

Medical University, institutional and program accreditation of 3 EP of Gomel State Medical University.

IAAR International Accreditation in Central Asia. In 2021, IAAR conducted the international institutional and program accreditation of the 4 EP of the Tashkent State Dental Institute in **Uzbekistan**.

IAAR conducts international accreditation in **the Republic of Tajikistan**. In accordance with the international Agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated May 13, 2019, the activities of IAAR are recognized on the territory of Tajikistan.

In 2021, **3** EP of the Institute of Tourism, Entrepreneurship and Service were accredited. All EP were accredited for a period of 3 years.

In 2021, **5** HEI of the **Kyrgyz Republic** (Ala Too International University, ADAM University, Osh Technological University named after academician M.M. Adyshev, Asian Medical Institute named after S. Tentishev, Kyrgyz State Medical Academy named after I. Akhunbayev) and **14** educational programs (ADAM University, Osh Technological University named after Academician M.M. Adysheva, Osh State University, Kyrgyz State Medical Academy named after I. Akhunbayeva, International University of Kyrgyzstan, International Medical University, Eurasian International Medical University).

In 2021, for the first time, IAAR conducted joint international accreditation of a foreign EO in accordance with the signed memorandums of cooperation with two accreditation bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, with the Independent Accreditation Agency "Bilim-Standard", based on the standards of institutional and primary program accreditation of medical educational programs of IAAR, a joint international accreditation of ADAM University was carried out using a hybrid model - an on-line visit of the EEP with the off-line participation of the chairman.

In 2021, IAAR concluded an agreement with the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education "EdNet" on joint accreditation of the International University of Medicine and Science (KR), according to which seminars were organized to explain the methodology of external evaluation based on IAAR standards. The visit of the EEP is scheduled for 2022.

Reports and decisions on accredited universities and EP are published on the IAAR website in the sections "Reports of the External Expert Commission and decisions" and "Register".

Along with this, all information is published on the website of the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR). All IAAR accredited educational organizations and educational programs are automatically included in the DEQAR database. The DEQAR European Register is a Register of educational programs and Educational organizations accredited by quality assurance agencies recognized at the European level.

IAAR has developed automatic transmission of accreditation decisions and reports through the API system, within the framework of the Erasmus+ program project "Expanding coverage and Quality Assurance opportunities in the European Higher Education Area through DEQAR. IAAR has included 2380 reports of 93 educational organizations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in the DEQAR database (<https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=30&cn-reloaded=1>). The inclusion of educational programs and educational organizations in DEQAR confirms their compliance with ESG quality assurance standards and is the basis for the recognition of accredited educational programs in the European Higher Education Area.

Thus, IAAR, by conducting international institutional accreditation of educational organizations, program and primary program accreditation of educational programs of foreign HEI, contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of their educational and scientific activities, qualitative updating of educational programs, introduction of the latest learning technologies, promotes the development of a culture of quality, as well as the entry of educational organizations into the foreign market of educational services. IAAR, demonstrating high competitiveness in the international market of accreditation services, successfully conducts an external evaluation of HEI in 12 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

1.2 Expansion and improvement of the qualitative potential of national and foreign experts

IAAR, guided by its mission and strategic development goals, attaches particular importance to improving the quality of expertise to achieve the ultimate goals of procedures for external quality assurance of higher education. In order to conduct a qualitative assessment of the EP and/or EP, the IAAR management pays special

attention to the selection and training of experts. The IAAR expert database includes representatives of the university community, foreign experts, employers and students.

In order to increase the level of expert potential, IAAR constantly monitors the qualitative updating of the existing database of experts. The expert potential of IAAR in 2021 includes about 4,000 representatives of the academic community from 35 countries of the world. Certain selection criteria have been established for each category of experts, which make it possible to attract the most experienced specialists to the quality assessment. The selection criteria and requirements are defined in the Regulation on the Regulation of the Expert Activity of an external expert IAAR.

IAAR actively cooperates with foreign accreditation agencies, carrying out mutual exchange of experts. Over the past 10 years, experts from ASIIN, ACQUIN, FIBAA, WFME, AIC, ANACEC, Rusaccredagency, representatives of foreign educational organizations from Great Britain, Germany, France, Greece, Turkey, Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and other countries have participated in the IAAR EEP. The experts recommended by IAAR foreign partners are characterized by professionalism, high level of competence and culture.

In 2021, IAAR continued constructive cooperation with educational organizations and associations of universities of foreign countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to attract foreign experts to participate in the procedures of institutional, specialized (program) accreditation. **Foreign experts** were involved in the accreditation procedures: Melnik V.A. d.b.s., Gomel State Medical University (Belarus), Ivannikova V.Yu. c.t.s, Associate Professor National Aviation University (Ukraine); Natalie Aleksandra Gurvitš-Suits PhD, Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia); Akhmadieva R.Sh., Honored Scientist of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rector of the Kazan State Institute of Culture and Arts (Russia); Gutkovskaya S.V. c.ph.s., Professor, Head of the Choreography Department of the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts. Among the foreign experts, 8 people took part on the recommendation of ANACEC (Moldova), including Ilia Nuka, Head of the Department of Electromechanics and Metrology, Technical University of Moldova, Gavriluța Vadim, Pro-rector of the University of European Political and Economic Studies "CONSTANTIN STERE", Elena Petrov, PhD, Associate Professor of Physical education and sports state university/tiraspol state university, ANACEC expert and others.

In 2021, considerable attention was paid to expanding the composition of foreign medical experts. For example, in 2021, **23** foreign experts from partner agencies were involved to participate in the international accreditation of medical educational organizations and medical educational programs.

An important area of the Agency's activity to expand the expert pool was to increase the number of experts from among students and employers. For example, 16 student experts and 16 employer experts were involved in the accreditation of medical educational organizations and educational programs in 2021. Among them are Mirzoyan E.R., Scientific Medical Center of Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Infections (Yerevan, Armenia), Kachagina E. A., Regional Tuberculosis Dispensary (Ulyanovsk, Russia), Ryabaya N.S., Lumi-dent Clinic (Ukraine, Kiev) and others. All accreditation procedures comply with ENQA requirements for attracting students to each evaluated cluster.

With the development of cross-border capabilities of IAAR, it becomes relevant to expand the base of national experts with knowledge of English. In order to increase the expert potential, IAAR paid special attention to the replenishment of the database by experts who speak foreign languages.

In 2021, national and international experts actively shared their expertise not only during the visit of the EEP, but also at forums, seminars, as well as on the pages of the IAAR magazine "Education. Quality Assurance». In 2021 in the magazine "Education. Quality Assurance" published 14 articles by IAAR experts on quality assurance of education. For example, experts from Tajikistan Amonzoda I.T., Toshmatov M.N. published an article on the topic: "Internationalization as a factor of competitiveness of higher education institutions", expert Efimova E.M. – "On a new methodological approach to assessing the quality of education", expert Kulagina N.A. - "Tools for ensuring the quality of higher education at a regional university" and others. In each issue of the magazine "Education. Quality Assurance" for 2021 published articles by experts of the Agency, which are sent to all international networks for ensuring the quality of education.

The cooperation of IAAR with accreditation agencies and experts demonstrates the high professionalism and relevance of IAAR experts, makes it possible to increase the effectiveness of expert activities, exchange opinions, generalize and disseminate the best experience. In 2021, the best experts were awarded and encouraged during the Forum dedicated to the 10th anniversary of IAAR.

An important area of IAAR expertise development activities is the training and preparation of experts in accordance with the "Regulations on Training, Retraining and Advanced Training of External Experts". At the training seminars, students master the theoretical part: the established requirements of the IAAR, the content of the procedures of various types of accreditation, the standards of the IAAR and ESG, the principles of ethical behavior. The preparation of candidates for experts within the framework of such a seminar is mandatory and serves as a basis for inclusion in the EEP. At the 2nd level of training, practical tasks are given in accordance with the functions of experts in the EEP. Upon successful completion of level 2 tasks, the candidate is included in the expert database and assigned a category (1, 2, 3).

In 2021, the "**IAAR Expert Professional Development Program**", which started in 2020, continued its implementation, providing for four training seminars for existing and new experts. On March 15, 2021, an on-line training seminar was held within the framework of this program on the use of external quality assessment tools for compliance with the standards of institutional and specialized accreditation, approaches to the development of recommendations for further improvement of the university. The seminar brought together more than 40 representatives of the academic community and the student community of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Belarus, Great Britain and other countries. Within the framework of the training seminar, work was organized with cases to determine the compliance of university self-assessment reports with IAAR standards, business games on mastering the principles of constructing interviews with focus groups during a visit to the HEI.

On April 18, 2021, IAAR organized a **seminar on training and advanced training of experts**, which was attended by teachers and students of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Belarus, as well as representatives of independent accreditation agencies of Kyrgyzstan.

On July 1, 2021, IAAR held a **webinar on the topic: "Internal quality assurance system and evaluation of its effectiveness"** for representatives of higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic who applied for an external evaluation within the framework of institutional and program accreditation. The webinar was devoted to the consideration of such topical issues as models of the internal quality assurance system; quality assurance mechanisms in education; tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system.

On July 2, 2021, IAAR held a **webinar on the preparation of experts for the visit of the EEP in the organization of education**. The participants of the webinar

were representatives of the academic community of Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. The webinar included 4 sessions, the main purpose of which was the formation of skills and competencies for reviewing the self-report of the EO on institutional and specialized (program) accreditation; analysis and evaluation of the EP for compliance (non-compliance) standards and criteria of the IAAR; the formation of a report on the results of the EEP visit in accordance with the requirements of the IAAR, etc.

The focus of IAAR is always on preparing students for high-quality expert activities. **On November 18, 2021**, IAAR held a **webinar to prepare student experts** for the visit of the EEP. The webinar was attended by 20 students of foreign and Kazakh universities, including those recommended by the Alliance of Students of Kazakhstan. The webinar, based on the ESG quality assurance standards and student-centered learning, examined the principles and stages of international accreditation of EO/EP, requirements for IAAR expert activity, the role of student experts in the EEP. Interactive work was carried out with 3 cases: understanding the standards and criteria of specialized IAAR accreditation; business game: conducting interviews with focus groups during the visit; working with reports on the self-assessment of the EO and developing recommendations for improvement. Working with cases allowed students to form specific skills and competencies of working as an IAAR expert.

According to the developed Regulations on Expert Councils, the Agency forms Expert Councils in the following areas from the database of certified experts. The Agency delegates individual experts to participate in the work of Kazakhstani and international events in the field of quality assessment.

In order to exchange experience, national and foreign experts actively participate in forums, congresses, conferences, round tables, workshops and trainings. IAAR experts also actively participate in the development of methodological guidelines on accreditation and rating procedures, publish articles. The professional activity of IAAR experts is regulated by a set of regulatory documents, which define the ethical behavior and competence of the expert. The "Statement of the IAAR expert on the absence of a conflict of interest" and the "Ethical Code of the expert" are published on the IAAR website in the section "Experts".

Annual surveys of certified experts are important tools for quality assurance, which contribute to the continuous improvement of the agency's activities. In 2021, an analytical report on the results of a survey of experts from Central Asian and European states in 2019-2020 was prepared. According to the analysis, the external

evaluation procedure of IAAR of the EO is organized at a high level. Most experts are attracted by the opportunity to work in a leading international accreditation agency like IAAR. Experts are interested in learning, acquiring new skills, professional competencies and exchanging experience with colleagues from various educational institutions. According to the survey results, experts prefer to organize and conduct a visit to the EEP in full-time format, since they note the increased workload during the international accreditation procedure in online format. A high percentage - **98%** of experts positively and effectively assess the work of IAAR coordinators. Experts note the well-coordinated collegial work of the EEP, a comfortable environment and constant support from the Chairmen and Coordinators of the IAAR.

Thus, in 2021, there is a qualitative growth of national and international experts, thanks to the purposeful work of the IAAR, including ongoing training seminars for experts, close cooperation with foreign partner agencies and improvement of the methodology of procedures.

1.3 Improvement of the Agency's personnel management system

IAAR's mission and strategic development goals defined the organizational structure and application of the project approach. The activities of structural divisions and employees are regulated by the legislation of the RK and internal documents of the IAAR. There is a Supervisory Board, an Accreditation Board, an Appeals Commission, a Ranking Advisory Board and Expert Councils on areas of activity. The general management of the Agency's activities is carried out by the Director General. In 2021, the following changes took place in the organizational structure: the position of Deputy General Director for International Activities was introduced, the composition of the Supervisory Board and the Expert Council on TVE changed for objective reasons. According to the recommendation of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), since December 2021, the General Director of the Agency Zhumagulova A.B. is not a member of the Accreditation Council (Protocol No. 61 of 27.08.2021).

IAAR employs 20 employees on a permanent basis. The functional responsibilities and responsibilities of IAAR employees are defined in job descriptions and Work Plans. Communications are carried out through daily interaction, weekly meetings, internal audit. IAAR coordinators fill out a

questionnaire after each visit of the EEP. All this has a positive effect on the work and allows us to improve the accreditation procedures.

IAAR strives to improve **the competence of its employees in accordance with the requirements of the "ENQA Professional Competence Framework for Quality Assurance"**, which defines the common core competencies of quality assurance and quality improvement specialists in ENQA member agencies. In accordance with the recommendations of ENQA and the Framework of Professional Competencies for Quality Assurance of ENQA, **the Human Resources Development Plan for 2020-2023** has been updated, as well as job descriptions, planning and reporting have been revised from the point of view of the formation of professional competencies of Agency employees.

In accordance with the Human Resources Development Plan for 2019-2023, IAAR employees improve their professional competencies by participating in various conferences, seminars and forums on education and quality assurance. In 2021, the Agency's employees took part in the following events: KUTEL Multimedia Training course (October 2020-February 2021); a series of webinars on quality assurance of education "Improving quality assurance processes in education using new technologies" within the framework of the KUTEL project (June 21-29, 2021); a training seminar for developers and experts of educational programs of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan "National and international experience in developing educational programs" (June 28-29, 2021); an international conference "Tel Innovations and Quality in Education" within the framework of the KUTEL project (October 11-13, 2021) and others.

Agency employees regularly take part in various international forums and conferences in order to get acquainted with the best practices in the field of quality assurance of education, exchange of experience. General Director of IAAR Zhumagulova A.B. made a report: "International accreditation: the experience of IAAR in on-line format" at the scientific and practical conference "Opportunities and prospects of continuing education in the post-pandemic period" at the XIX Pastukhov Readings (Yaroslavl, Russia, May 26, 2021); with the report "International accreditation – the paradigm of global quality assurance of education" - at the round table "Tools for quality assurance of education: vertical context and institutional interests" (Nur-Sultan, May 19, 2021), etc.

General Director A.B. Zhumagulova and Adviser Yanovskaya O.A. took part in the international regional seminar "Quality Assurance of Higher Education: national-

level mechanisms and institutional implementation", organized by the MES RK jointly with the National Office of the Erasmus+ program (Astana IT University, September 16-18, 2021, Nur-Sultan). The seminar reviewed the experience of the system of improving the quality of higher education in the European Union countries, analyzed the current quality assurance system in Kazakhstan and the ways of forming quality assurance tools at the national level.

On November 22, 2021, Strategic Development Advisor Iskakova G.K. spoke at the national seminar "Improving the quality of teacher training in universities and supporting novice teachers" with the participation of OECD experts in order to develop a long-term strategy to ensure the quality of teacher training in universities. The participants of the seminar, based on the results of the preparation of the Country Review "Education Quality Assessment Policy in Kazakhstan", discussed the strengths and weaknesses of national approaches to assessing the quality of education and presented recommendations for further improvement.

The project manager Bekenova D. took part and made a presentation at the interregional scientific and practical conference "Modern learning technologies in the conditions of digital transformation of secondary vocational education" in Omsk (Russia, May 14, 2021).

IAAR employees improve their skills by participating in various forums organized by national and international partners. For example, on December 10, 2021, Adviser Yanovskaya O.A., Deputy General Director for International Cooperation Kanapyanov T. and Head of the information and analytical project Kydyrmina N. took part in the international forum "Prospects of postgraduate education in agricultural universities of Russia and Kazakhstan on the way to integration into the international scientific community" within the framework of the Erasmus+ SAGRIS project.

The process of professional development of employees is planned and controlled by the management of the IAAR, is considered at internal meetings, as well as within the framework of the IQAS. In accordance with the Human Resources Development Plan for 2019-2023, IAAR employees develop personal and professional competencies necessary for the Agency's implementation of strategic goals and objectives.

2. Monitoring the quality of education and bringing the best world experience to the development of national education systems and organizations

2.1 Improving the quality of post-accreditation monitoring procedures and rules

Post-accreditation monitoring is carried out in order to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of an external expert commission of an accredited educational organization and/or educational programs in accordance with the criteria of the appropriate type of accreditation. In order to improve the quality of post-accreditation monitoring, accredited EO send an interim report to the IAAR, which contains information about their activities to implement the recommendations of the EEP for the entire period from the date of receipt of the accreditation certificate and includes information about all changes in the EP in accordance with accreditation standards.

In 2021, **57** EO, including **20** HEI (*including 5 foreign ones*), **35** colleges, **1** organization of continuing professional education and **1** school within the framework of institutional accreditation passed the post-accreditation monitoring procedure. In the framework of specialized (program) accreditation in 2021, **808** EP, including **612** EP HEI and **196** EP TVE, underwent post-accreditation monitoring.

All educational organizations have successfully passed post-accreditation monitoring, except for the EP "Veterinary" of the Agricultural College of the village of Katarkol. The Accreditation Council decided to suspend the validity of the certificate of accreditation of the above-mentioned EP, due to the failure to provide a post-monitoring report.

Reports of Expert groups on the results of the post-accreditation monitoring of the EO and/or EP, information on the decisions taken by the Accreditation Council on post-accreditation monitoring are posted on the agency's website.

In 2021, within the framework of the internal quality assurance system and in order to improve the quality of post-accreditation monitoring reports, workshops were held on post-accreditation monitoring, methodological materials were developed to ensure this process. So, on June 28, 2021, in order to ensure effective management of IAAR processes and their continuous improvement, General Director Zhumagulova A. held a meeting with the Agency's staff on topical issues of post-accreditation monitoring of educational organizations and mechanisms for ensuring the quality of implementation of the recommendations of the EEP by accredited

educational organizations. In 2021, a form (template) and requirements for writing the report of the expert group on post-accreditation monitoring were developed, which includes the section "Recommendations for the Accreditation Council".

2.2 Increasing the analytical potential of the IAAR in improving national education quality assurance systems

As part of the implementation of the Development Strategy for 2019 – 2023, improving the quality of accreditation procedures and receiving feedback from key stakeholders, IAAR carries out analytical activities and presents the developed documents and materials to the general public. In 2021, a survey of the main stakeholders was conducted: accredited EO and experts from Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and based on its results, an analytical report was prepared on the results of feedback after the visit of the EEP for 2019-2020.

In order to improve the feedback mechanisms, the "Analytical report on the results of the survey of IAAR experts for 2020" and "Analytical report: survey of IAAR accredited educational organizations for 2020" have been prepared.

The analytical report on the results of the survey of IAAR accredited EO is compiled annually and is used in the revision and improvement of the IAAR internal quality assurance system. The purpose of the survey is to determine the degree of satisfaction of the EO with the accreditation procedure, to study the degree of influence of these procedures on further improving the competitiveness of educational services. In 2020, 53 EO took part in the survey, which passed institutional and/or specialized (program) accreditation in IAAR. Among them are the EO of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, the Russian Federation, Romania and Ukraine.

During the reporting period, **521** EP were accredited, of which **465** EP of higher and postgraduate education and **56** – technical and vocational education. **45** educational programs have been accredited in foreign HEI.

According to the results of the survey, after passing the accreditation procedure in EO, there is a dynamic increase in the culture of the quality of education and the level of training of students. EO notes the high level of transparency and objectivity of the IAAR assessment, compliance of standards with international requirements, professionalism and competence of experts, which indicates reliability and trust in the institute of accreditation. Separately, the high level of availability of information on

the IAAR website, a wide presentation of material on accreditation and ratings is noted.

IAAR accreditation has had a significant impact on the development of educational organizations, improving strategic planning, implementing an internal quality assurance system, expanding the involvement of students and employers in the development of educational programs, introducing student-centered learning, innovative methods, improving the skills of TS, strengthening the technical base and commercialization of scientific activities. The number of publications of TS in international indexed publications has increased. The role of students in self-government has increased, the practical orientation of student training, the mechanisms of social support for students and the employment of graduates have expanded.

As part of the monitoring of HEI that have passed the IAAR cross-border international accreditation, the "Analytics on International Accreditation of Russian HEI for 2019-2021" has also been prepared.

Analytical reference based on the results of the expert survey. The annual survey of IAAR experts is aimed at identifying the degree of satisfaction with the conditions of organizing visits to the EEP, evaluating the work of IAAR employees. In 2021, analytical reports were prepared based on the results of the expert survey for 2020. According to the analysis, the external evaluation procedure of IAAR educational organizations is organized at a high level. Most experts are attracted by the opportunity to work in a leading international accreditation agency like IAAR. Experts are interested in learning, acquiring new skills, professional competencies and sharing experience with colleagues. A high percentage - **98%** of experts assess the work of the IAAR coordinators as effective, there is a well-coordinated collegial work of the EEP, a comfortable environment and constant support from the IAAR Chairmen and coordinators.

Based on the results of the assessment and analysis of the expert survey for 2020, the following recommendations were made:

1. Review certain criteria in certain standards of specialized accreditation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in order to exclude some duplication.
2. To carry out, if possible, the procedure of international accreditation in an offline format.

3. Increase the duration of the visit of the EEP in the online format to 4 days in order to take into account the difference in time zones and conduct a more thorough analysis and evaluation of the results of the organization of education.

4. Conduct separate training seminars for student experts and employer experts separately for a more detailed discussion of the requirements for the EEP report.

5. Increase the time for reviewing self-assessment reports and the time for preparing the reports of the EEP.

An important tool of the internal quality assurance system (hereinafter IQAS) is **the annual analysis** of the EEP reports in order to comprehensively study and analyze the EEP reports and expert recommendations, identify current problems and prospects for the development of universities, identify new approaches to quality assurance. In 2021, the analysis of the EEP reports (for 2020) on **467** EP was carried out. The recommendations presented in the reports of the EEP of 24 Kazakhstani universities made it possible to summarize the assessment of their activities for each standard and to submit proposals for further development. According to the analysis of the EEP reports for 2020, the largest number of recommendations -19% were given according to the standard "Educational Program Management". According to the standard "Development and approval of an educational program", **17%** of recommendations are presented. Approximately the same number of recommendations were received for the standards "Teaching staff and teaching effectiveness" (14%), "Students" (13%) and "Educational resources and student support systems" (12%). Recommendations on the standards "Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of educational programs" and "Informing the public" made up 10% of the total. The share of expert recommendations on the standards "Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment of academic performance" and "Information Management and Reporting" is 8% and 6%, respectively.

During the reporting period, in order to improve feedback mechanisms with IAAR experts, accredited HEI and TVE organizations, the feedback questionnaire questions were revised after the visit of the EEP, the survey of accredited educational organizations and IAAR experts.

The results of the analysis of all types of surveys are submitted for consideration by Expert Councils and in the form of recommendations are submitted to the Director General for decision-making.

The annual report on the activities of IAAR contains information on all areas of activity of IAAR and is submitted to the Supervisory Board. In accordance with

the Implementation Plan of the IAAR Strategy for 2021, a report on the activities of the IAAR has also been prepared for the authorized body in the field of education and science. An annual report on the activities of IAAR in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic is developed and published annually. This report was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic on December 25, 2021.

In 2021, the monitoring of IAAR accreditation activities and the assessment of the state of HEI activities in the process of international specialized accreditation make it possible to identify promising areas of university activities, implemented educational programs, and the implementation of the proposed recommendations will positively affect both the quality of the activities of individual universities and the higher education system as a whole. The results of summarizing best practices and determining development trends in the field of quality assurance of education through IAAR analytical activities are used by interested stakeholders at the national and international levels.

All the above and other analytical materials and reports are posted on the IAAR website (<http://iaar.kz/en/about/iaar-reports/analytical-reports>) in order to ensure open access of information to the general public.

3. Conducting rating research in the field of higher, technical and vocational education

One of the leading activities of IAAR is the organization and conduct of rating research. According to the IAAR Charter, rating studies are conducted independently of the accreditation process and do not affect its results, they are implemented in accordance with the Methodology of the ranking of EO and EP (<https://iaar.agency/rating/1/0/2020>).

3.1 Expanding the boundaries of rating research in the field of higher and postgraduate education

In 2021, IAAR conducted rating studies of higher educational institutions: "Independent Rating of HEI of the Republic of Kazakhstan", "Independent Rating of HEI of the Kyrgyz Republic", International Rating "IAAR Eurasian HEI Ranking (IAAR EUR)". In 2021, according to the IAAR Activity Plan, information and consulting work was carried out with HEI in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkey.

More than 85 universities of multidisciplinary, technical, humanitarian–economic, medical and pedagogical directions, as well as art took part in the **Independent Ranking of the demand for HEI of the Republic of Kazakhstan - 2021**. More than **2000** educational programs were ranked, which is **20%** more than the previous period. According to the methodology of the IAAR Rating, universities independently enter information about their achievements and are responsible for the objective completion of indicators.

The leaders among the universities of Kazakhstan are: Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi (384,478 points), Eurasian National University named after L.Gumilyov (218,343 points), Kazakh Agrotechnical University named after S.Seifullin (113,937 points). The top five included: Karaganda University named after E. Buketov (87,606 points), Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai (63,761 points), Aktobe Regional University named after K. Zhubanov (60,768 points), Almaty Technological University (55,569 points), International Kazakh-Turkish University named after H.A.Yassawi (54,230 points), Karaganda Technical University (52,806 points) and Kazakh National Medical University named after S.Asfendiyarov (50,323 points). Analyzing the results of the Rating of HEI of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it can be noted that employers' satisfaction with the relevance of the EP increased by 10% in 2021. Evaluation of the results of the EP rating indicates that the success of the university largely depends on the involvement of employers and students in the development of the EP.

The annual Independent Rating of the demand for HEI of the Republic of Kazakhstan encourages higher education institutions to improve the effectiveness of their activities (by 20%), improve the quality of management (10%), allows to expand effective communications (7%), in accordance with the requirements of the labor market, which ultimately increases their competitiveness and contributes to the growth of prestige and recognition higher educational institutions.

In order to inform the general public in a timely manner, the results of ranking the leading universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan and educational programs are presented:

1. General Rating of "TOP-20" universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan - 2021.
2. Institutional Rating of universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the areas of bachelor's degree programs – 2021.
3. Institutional Rating of universities in the areas of master's degree programs – 2021.

4. Institutional Rating of universities in the areas of doctoral degree programs – 2021.

5. University rating Of the Republic of Kazakhstan by groups of bachelor's degree programs.

6. Rating of universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan by groups of Master's degree programs.

7. Rating of universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan by groups of educational programs of doctoral studies.

In the **Independent Ranking of Universities of the Kyrgyz Republic – 2021**, 259 EP were ranked, which is 17% more compared to last year. The top five in terms of the number of ranked educational programs included Osh State University, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K.Scriabin, Kyrgyz State Technical University named after I.Razzakov, Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transport and Architecture named after N. Isanov, Bishkek State University named after K. Karasayev.

In the IAAR Rating, higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic are represented in **44** areas of bachelor's (specialty) and master's degree, which is **20%** higher than last year. The leading universities in terms of the number of points scored were Osh State University, the Kyrgyz State Medical Academy named after I. Akhunbayev, the International University "Ala-Too", the Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transport and Architecture named after N. Isanova, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K.Scriabin, Jalal-Abad State University, Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev and Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev.

Monitoring of the Independent Rating of Universities of the Kyrgyz Republic -2021 showed that the influx of talented students has increased, the publication activity of HEI TS has significantly increased. In a number of universities, the indicators of competitiveness of scientific publications and indexability of scientific papers, internationalization and academic mobility, etc. have significantly increased.

Universities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova actively participated in the International Ranking "**IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR)**" - 2021. In 2021, the number of countries participating in the rating expanded, which indicates the growing authority and popularity of the **International Rating "IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR -EUR)"** in the academic community.

The first place in the International Ranking "**IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR) - 2021**" was taken by Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi. The three leaders included the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation and the St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering.

Participation in the International Rating "**IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR)**" allows higher education institutions to assess their competitiveness in accordance with the leading trends in the global educational space, attract more foreign applicants, increase the level of internationalization of education, the image and authority of universities and the country as a whole.

Employers, government agencies, applicants, students and everyone interested have the opportunity to get the necessary information about the best universities of the countries participating in the rating. The results of the International Rating "IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR) – 2021" are published on the websites www.ireg-observatory.org and www.iaar.agency.kz.

3.2 Improving the methodology of rating research and informing the public about the results of the rating

The methodology of the International Rating "IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR)" is based on compliance with the Berlin Principles, is carried out on the basis of a specially developed methodology with Webometrics elements, which allows for an independent and transparent assessment of ranking, and to give an objective assessment of higher education institutions. The following key trends of modern education serve as indicators of the IAAR Rating: the presence of accreditation as a recognized indicator of the quality of education (**10%**); the level of human resources development (**20%**); internationalization of higher education (**15%**), integration of the university into the international educational space (**15%**); the level of development of scientific research (**20%**); employment and demand for graduates in the labor market (**20%**). These indicators reflect the educational policy in the field of higher education and form the basis of the IAAR Rating methodology, which has been tested for a number of years.

The unique digital technology, which has received European recognition, makes it possible to form not only the EP Rating, but also to present the General Rating of

universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This approach inspires confidence among the academic community and universities in the results of the IAAR Rating.

In 2021, IAAR employees improved their professional competencies in the field of rating research by participating in various conferences (IREG conference in Jeddah in online format; international conference "University Rankings – Reflections from Social Sciences and Humanities", organized by Etves Lorand University ELTE (Budapest, Hungary) in cooperation with the IREG Observatory, etc.).

Thus, in order to inform the general public and interested persons about the quality of educational services provided by universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the member states of the rating "IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR)", IAAR conducts university ratings aimed both at assessing the quality of educational programs implemented and their development in accordance with with international trends and requirements in the field of higher and postgraduate education.

4. Timely informing the society and developing feedback

4.1 Increasing the level of public awareness about the results of quality assessment

Informing the public about the results of the external evaluation of the EO/EP is conducted in the following areas: publication of reports of the EEP and decisions of the AC on the IAAR website; holding seminars, training seminars, online conferences, round tables and the annual Central Asian Forum on Quality Assurance; participation in dialogue platforms of the MES RK and HEI; participation in conferences and forums held by international networks and foreign partners; publication of materials on the effectiveness of external evaluation of IAAR in the scientific and information journal "Education. Quality Assurance"; speeches, interviews and publications in the MM, scientific publications; publication of information and news feed on the IAAR website.

In the interests of public information, IAAR publishes information on the website about all the main activities of the Agency, changes in regulatory documents, IQAS, etc. On an ongoing basis, work is being carried out to replenish the register of accredited EO/EP, posting information on the events held on the website, as well as updating information on the accreditation procedure in the field of technical and

vocational education. The results of IAAR activities are also reflected in annual analytical reports, which include all accreditation processes and procedures. Information about the activities of IAAR for international accreditation and ratings is reflected in social networks, national and foreign MM, on the official resources of state bodies, universities of the RK and foreign countries, international organizations, which indicates their trust in the Agency's activities, its high reputation and recognition both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

Scientific and informational journal "Education. Quality Assurance". In order to highlight the best domestic and world practice in the field of quality assurance of education, IAAR publishes the scientific and information magazine "Education. Quality Assurance". The journal is included in the RSCI database in 2021.

The periodicity of the journal is 4 times a year, the materials are published in 3 languages (Kazakh, English and Russian). The magazine is distributed not only in Kazakhstan, but also abroad. There is a website of the magazine - <http://iaar-education.kz>, where journals in electronic format are freely available, which allows IAAR to expand the information field. For 2021 in 4 issues of the magazine "Education. Quality Assurance", published 50 articles and 8 interviews on the issues of quality assurance of education and international accreditation of the EO. The second issue of the journal for 2021 published the results of the "National Ranking of demand for universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan – 2021", and in the third issue - the results of the International Rating "IAAR Eurasian University Ranking (IAAR-EUR) - 2021".

Of the **50** articles in the journal, **32** were published by Kazakhstani authors and **18** by foreign ones: from Ukraine - **6**, Russia – **4**, Belarus – **2**, the Kyrgyz Republic – **2**, the Republic of Tajikistan – **1**, the Republic of Uzbekistan – **1**, India and Greece - **1** article each. The magazine also contains interviews with the heads of educational organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic - **5**, the Republic of Moldova – **1**, the Republic of Uzbekistan – **1**, the Republic of Kazakhstan – **1**.

In 2021, an agreement was signed with the Scientific Electronic Library (SEL) on the placement of the journal "Education. Quality Assurance" in the specialized information system "Russian Science Citation Index" (RSCI). For this purpose, the Regulations on the scientific and analytical journal "Education. Quality Assurance", Publication policy, Rules for Authors, etc. The section of the Journal on the IAAR website and the content of the journal's website have been updated and updated

<http://iaar-education.kz/>. After the inclusion of the journal in the SEL, all issues of the journal since 2013 have been prepared for publication on the RSCI website, which have been transferred to the system operators for markup and publication on the RSCI website.

Informational interaction with the MM. As part of the expansion of information interaction, IAAR actively works with the MM and assigns an important role to information cooperation. IAAR employees regularly publish materials in foreign magazines, newspapers and publications of republican significance, as well as give interviews both in Kazakhstan and abroad, perform on national TV channels.

In 2021, work was actively carried out to widely attract public attention to the results and significance of the agency's activities to ensure the quality of education by organizing and participating in webinars, seminars, workshops, conferences and forums, information about which is published on the IAAR website in the news feed.

On October 1-2, 2021, the V Central Asian International Forum was held: "Quality Assurance of Higher Education: Global trends and regional aspects" (October 1-2), dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency based on Astana IT University (Nur-Sultan). The forum gathered more than 600 participants in an off-line and on-line format. The International Forum was attended by deputies of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, representatives of the Ministries of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, heads of international European networks for quality assurance of higher education, foreign accreditation bodies, international organizations in the field of education (Belgium, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, India, Latvia, Moldova and others), rectors of Kazakh and foreign HEI, students and employers.

Within the framework of the anniversary International Forum, a Plenary session, a Round table meeting and four Panel sessions were held: "International approaches to ensuring the quality of education", "Higher education: a strategy for the development of learning technology and models of the future", "International accreditation - the mechanism of improving the quality of medical education", "Quality management of education in student-centered learning". The international Forum made it possible to discuss issues of effective interaction between universities, employers and other stakeholders based on the principles of balancing the interests of all interested parties, exchange experience, and most importantly, identify ways to improve the quality of education in Central Asian countries.

4.2 Improving the efficiency of IAAR activities and developing feedback

IAAR creates an internal environment for the full involvement of both employees and stakeholders in achieving strategic goals and determining the degree of satisfaction of consumers of services. In the Development Strategy for 2019 - 2023, IAAR has defined a mission, vision, and strategic goals that serve as the basis for the preparation of annual work plans. Working with stakeholders and consumers of services in accordance with the Quality Policy is aimed at meeting their requirements and is based on the principles of feedback and mutually beneficial partnership.

The IQAS is developed, documented, implemented and maintained in working order, as well as continuously improved in accordance with the Quality Policy and Development Strategy. The IQAS is formalized in the IQAS Manual and published on the website. The policy and Guidance on the internal quality assurance system, taking into account changes in the internal and external environment, are updated with a focus on the formation of a quality culture, meeting the needs of key stakeholders.

Monitoring of the agency's activities within the framework of the IQAS, including the organization of the work of working groups on the continuous improvement of the IQAS; internal audit, preparation of a report on its results; development and implementation of a corrective action plan and other actions, contributes to improving the effectiveness of the IAAR.

IAAR is constantly working to improve the IQAS with the participation of collegial bodies and experts. Mechanisms of external and internal feedback aimed at improving activities have been developed and implemented. In order to involve the staff in the process of continuously ensuring the effectiveness of the IQAS, the management supports the activities of working groups of initiative employees and experts. IAAR employees, members of collegial management bodies take part in the discussion of IAAR regulatory documents, including the Development Strategy, complaints and appeals procedures, standards and accreditation criteria, make suggestions and recommendations for improving IAAR activities.

Within the framework of the IQAS, all EEP reports are subject to **internal examination**. In total, **207** EEP reports were examined in 2021. The examination of the EEP reports in 2021 showed that the quality of the EEP reports is improving. For

the 2nd quarter of 2021, out of 35 reports submitted for internal examination, 24 reports (68%) were evaluated by 5-7 points and 11 reports (32%) – by 8-9 points and 0 reports (0%) – by 10 points, that is, the share of reports evaluated by 8-10 points increased from 32% up to 69%, and the share of reports rated 5-7 points decreased from 68% to 30%. Experts who showed a high level of analyticity and validity of the submitted reports in 2021 – Tabishev T.A. (Russia), Yusupov A.Sh. (Kyrgyzstan), Zhumazhanov S.K. (Kazakhstan), Kolomiets N.E. (Russia), Tatarinova L. (Kazakhstan), etc.

In accordance with the IQAS Guidelines, IAAR conducts internal audits of the quality assurance system in order to determine its effectiveness, evaluate its effectiveness and compliance with the requirements of the IAAR, as well as the requirements of consumers and external regulatory documents. Internal audit is carried out once a year on the main processes - accreditation and post-accreditation monitoring of the EO and (or) EP and other areas. In 2021, the internal audit was conducted from January 18 to February 5 by a Working Group approved by the order of General Director Zhumagulova A. The results of the audit showed that the Agency's employees carried out the main business processes in accordance with the Standards and requirements of the IAAR; project managers and IAAR employees have done a lot of work to improve the IQAS. At the same time, the working group identified a number of shortcomings during the audit and drew the attention of the coordinators to the following points:

- it is necessary to present the substantiation of strengths in the evidentiary part; the members of the EEP should explain that the criteria marked as "strong" are an example of best practice and unique experience that can be transferred to other universities, therefore it should be justified in the report;

- to describe the analytical part in more detail, to argue why and on the basis of what the EEP offers its recommendations in one or another edition;

- discrepancies in the experts' understanding of the meaning of the ratings "satisfactory", "strong" and "suggests improvement" require appropriate explanatory work on the part of the coordinators and the holding of a training seminar for experts.

The internal audit conducted by the working group also made it possible to identify opportunities for improvement and propose measures aimed at improving the quality of IAAR activities in the form of a Corrective Action Plan. The latter included 10 events that were completed in full during 2021. In particular, according to the corrective action plan, the control of the coordinators and the legal department over

strict compliance with all deadlines for the accreditation procedure was strengthened; methodological seminars were held for coordinators to determine the compliance of EO self-assessment reports with the requirements of the IAAR, and for experts to explain the requirements for writing a EEP report; accounting for EO and/or EP self-assessment reports that do not meet the requirements of the IAAR (organizations that are denied further accreditation procedures and the contract is terminated) is carried out. For post-accreditation monitoring, the quality control of the Action Plans for improvement and improvement of quality provided by the EO has been strengthened by the coordinators within the framework of the recommendations of the EEP; the form (template) and requirements for writing the report of the expert group on post-accreditation monitoring have been developed, including in it as an independent section "Main conclusions and recommendations for the AC", etc.

The results of internal audit, surveys of key stakeholders, analytical reports, etc. are taken into account in the Agency's activities, when developing annual IAAR development plans, individual employee plans, etc. Practice shows the positive impact of the IQAS on maintaining confidence in the unconditional fulfillment of the established requirements for the main business processes.

IAAR carries out constructive cooperation with state, non-state and public organizations, international partners. IAAR interacts with the authorized bodies in the field of education of the countries in which it operates, in accordance with legislative requirements, informs about the results of activities and external evaluation, assists in the development of the national quality assurance system. IAAR annually sends a report on its activities, and also regularly informs the MES RK, the MEOS KR, the National Accreditation Council of the KR and the MES RT about accredited EO and/or EP (according to their requirements).

The more active involvement of external stakeholders in quality assessment is evidenced by the cooperation of IAAR with professional associations, as well as the representation of employers' and students' communities, foreign universities as part of IAAR collegial bodies. In 2021, IAAR actively cooperated with youth and student organizations in Kazakhstan, including the largest student public organization - the Alliance of Students of Kazakhstan.

In order to improve the efficiency of the IAAR continued cooperation with JSC "Republican Scientific and Methodological Center for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Qualification" (RSMC), the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the RK "Atameken" (NCE), the National Medical Association of the

RK, the Association of Higher Educational Institutions of the RK, the National Engineering Academy of the RK, the International Academy of Informatization and others .

As an effective tool for measuring, analyzing and improving its activities, IAAR considers periodic **external evaluation of the quality of activities by recognition and external evaluation bodies**. In order to analyze its quality assurance policy and activities for compliance with ESG in 2020, it applied for re-evaluation by ENQA and inclusion in EQAR. The self-assessment report prepared in preparation for the audit made it possible to analyze and critically evaluate the activities of the IAAR, identify strengths and weaknesses, existing opportunities and threats, qualitatively improve the processes of the IARC, clearly identify the prospects for the development of the IAAR. In March 2021, IAAR was successfully evaluated by leading foreign experts of ENQA. On December 7, 2021, by the decision of the Council of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, IAAR received international recognition.

Thus, the IAAR policy in the field of quality of education is aimed at continuous improvement of its activities, including through the improvement of the IARC and the passage of an external assessment of the quality of IAAR activities by recognition and external evaluation bodies. External evaluation of IAAR's activities allows us to guarantee the main stakeholders high-quality provision of services.

5. IAAR is a recognized international accreditation agency

One of the key objectives of the implementation of the mission and vision of IAAR, outlined in the Development Strategy for 2019-2023, is the recognition of IAAR at the national, European and international levels as a reliable quality assurance partner. This strategic task is realized through the active position of IAAR on the international platform, commitment to European quality standards, study and implementation of the best foreign practices.

5.1 Strengthening and expanding the international recognition and authority of IAAR

In accordance with the International Cooperation Work Plan, IAAR strives to become a reliable quality assurance body and gain the trust of key stakeholders.

During 2021, partner Newsletters were monitored; materials were published in the Newsletter- Bulletin YOKAK; INQAAHE Bulletin, CEENQA, APQN Newsletter, as well as constant monitoring of announcements of international networks and partners; mailing of partner letters to universities from different countries, etc.

Particular attention was paid to maintaining membership in the following international quality assurance networks: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE); International Quality Group of the Council for Accreditation of Higher Education in the USA (CIQG); Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe (CEENQA); Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN); International Observatory for Academic Ranking and Excellence (IREG), etc.

The Agency carried out purposeful work on the development of mutually beneficial cooperation with recognized world quality assurance agencies in the field of higher education in accordance with signed agreements (memoranda) on bilateral cooperation with *23 partner organizations*. Particular attention was paid to the participation of IAAR employees in international events organized by the quality assurance networks CIQG, APQN, INQAHEE, WFME, IREG, ENQA, CEENQA.

The most important stage in further strengthening the Agency's international position in 2021 was the external assessment of the ENQA activities of the IAAR: the re-audit of the ENQA, the analysis of the results of the external evaluation, and the development of an Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the ENQA. The Working Group has prepared a self-assessment report, which will be sent to ENQA in November 2020. On March 1 to 5, 2021, an on-line visit of the expert commission took place as part of the second audit of ENQA. On December 7, 2021, by the decision of the Council of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), IAAR received international European recognition for 5 years. IAAR has confirmed the progress of its activities on all criteria of Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

As a result of the audit, recommendations were received to improve some processes in the activities of IAAR, which were reflected in the Action Plan approved by the Director General to implement the recommendations of ENQA experts in the framework of subsequent procedures. Obtaining the status of a recognized European agency is a confirmation of the compliance of IAAR activities with international

standards and evidence of the high trust of such an authoritative organization - ENQA.

On April 22 and October 21, 2021, meetings of the **ENQA General Assembly** were held in an online format. The IAAR was represented at the Assembly by General Director Zhumagulova A.B. and Deputy Director General for International Cooperation Kanapyanov, T.E.. the agenda of the General Assembly included a discussion of the report on the work done, some changes in the ENQA procedures for auditing agencies, approval of new members, discussion of the prospects for the development of ENQA, planning activities for 2022. Detailed information about the General Assembly is available on the ENQA website.

On December 9, 2021, an online seminar of ENQA experts on the new Targeted Reviews procedure for trained experts from the ENQA expert database was held. The seminar was attended by the Deputy Director General of IAAR for International Cooperation - Timur Kanapyanov. The workshop allowed all trained ENQA experts to gain valuable information and participate in discussions of ENQA target audits.

In order to widely inform the world community about accreditation agencies recognized at the European level, as well as about universities that have successfully passed international accreditation, the DEQAR project has been created and is being developed. IAAR has been a member of the DEQAR CONNECT project since 2020. All IAAR accredited educational organizations and educational programs are included in the DEQAR database of the European Register for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR).

On December 6-7, 2021, the DEQAR CONNECT conference on "From Data to Policy - Linking Quality Assurance and Recognition" was held, organized by the European Register of Education Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR) in an online format. The conference was attended by Kanapyanov T.E, Deputy Director General for International Cooperation of IAAR, I.e. The conference was devoted to the use of the results of the Erasmus+ DEQAR CONNECT project in policy development for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

IAAR, as the first organization from the CIS countries to be recognized by the **World Federation of Medical Education (WFME)**, actively implemented in 2021 the right to conduct international accreditation of medical organizations and EP in accordance with international standards. In accordance with the requirements of the WFME, the IAAR sent in March 2021 the annual report of the IAAR on the implementation of the recommendations of the WFME experts for 2020, as well as

information for the President of the WFME on the results of accreditation for 2021 of medical EO. In 2021, information was also prepared for PMC (Pakistan) on the results of accreditation of medical EO for 2021.

In 2021, IAAR, as a member of INQAAHE (International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), took an active part in its most important events, including on November 22, 2021 at the meeting of the INQAAHE Focus Group for Eastern Europe (EEFG).

The participants discussed the regional needs for quality assurance in education and the features necessary to increase the relevance, credibility and adoption of quality assurance provisions.

In 2021, IAAR prepared an application for full membership in the international European Association ENAEE for quality Assurance of engineering education, correspondence and coordination of this process were carried out. However, due to the restrictive rules of admission of agencies from one country to the ENAEE Council, the application was rejected. The management of ENAEE in its letter noted that in 2021 it plans to change some restrictive procedures and there will be an opportunity to apply again. This work will be continued in 2022.

Representatives of IAAR, the project manager for the formation of an external expert commission, Nazyrova G.R., and a specialist in international projects and public relations, Baurzhankyzy A., took part in the IREG 2021 virtual conference in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) on November 15-16, 2021, where issues of the impact of global ratings on the quality of university education, society and the economy were discussed.

IAAR Deputy General Director for International Cooperation took part in the meeting of the CEENQA General Assembly (in online format on October 13, 2021), at which the Annual Report on the activities of the President and the Council, the status of membership applications were reviewed. Representatives of agencies from Slovenia, Ukraine, Latvia and Romania shared valuable experience in conducting online and mixed procedures for assessing the quality of educational organizations.

In order to **expand cooperation with foreign organizations to ensure the quality of education**, signing memoranda/agreements with foreign quality assurance agencies, preparatory work was carried out to compile the Agency's partner profile, inform foreign universities; create a list of medical universities in South Asia, the Middle East and Europe from the WFME Directory database and develop partnerships with them.

In 2021, IAAR signed 5 memorandums of cooperation:

1. Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education "EdNet" of the Kyrgyz Republic;
2. Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (TKTA) Azerbaijan;
3. Memorandum of Understanding with the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (YOKAK);
4. Memorandum of Understanding with the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (EPDAD, Turkey);
5. Memorandum of Understanding with the NAAC National Assessment and Accreditation Council (India).

In 2021, negotiations were held on signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the RMS agencies (Pakistan), MNCEA-MONGOLIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION ACCREDITATION (Mongolia), BAN-PT (Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi or National Agency for Higher Education Accreditation) (Indonesia).

Partnership with foreign government agencies. On a systematic basis, IAAR provides support in the implementation of measures to ensure the quality of higher education to the Authorized bodies of *Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Romania, Moldova, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, etc.*, conducts consultations on the construction of a national system for ensuring the quality of higher education in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Process and ESG.

IAAR is an active participant in various levels of education quality assurance activities conducted by Ministries of Education, public associations and universities of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. On March 17, 2021, IAAR General Director Zhumagulova A.B. presented a report on the results of institutional and program accreditation of universities of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2020 at a meeting of the National Accreditation Council under the authorized state body in the field of education. By participating in the meetings of the National Accreditation Council, IAAR demonstrates compliance of its activities with ESG and WFME standards, presents the results of systematic compliance with the approaches of external evaluation of universities specified in Government Resolutions and regulations of the MEOS of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On June 17-18, 2021, the Conference of Ministers of Education of Central Asian Countries "Central Asian Higher Education Space: Regional Cooperation, national

reforms" (Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan) was held, at which Zhumagulova A.B. made a report: "Improving the quality of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries: the experience of IAAR". On June 18, 2021, the Ministers of Education of the Central Asian countries discussed on-line the need to develop national higher education systems in the region and create a Central Asian Higher Education Space.

On January 27, 2021, IAAR General Director Zhumagulova A.B., Adviser Yanovskaya O.A. and Project Manager Niyazova G. participated in an interview with the working group of the project "Strengthening the system of education quality assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic: Basic analysis and national consultations", implemented by UNESCO with the support of Funds in Trust of the Republic of Korea, under the auspices of the MEOS of the Kyrgyz Republic and INQAAHE technical support. The issues of methodology of international institutional and program accreditation of Kyrgyz universities, specifics of accreditation Standards, effectiveness of external evaluation and its impact on the improvement of the educational organization's IQAS were discussed.

Thus, the international activities of IAAR in 2021 were carried out at the European and international levels as a reliable partner in quality assurance, including through the expansion of cooperation and partnerships with international networks and foreign agencies, active participation in international events on quality assurance in education, exchange of experience and best practices, etc., which contributed to the strengthening of and the expansion of the international authority of IAAR.

5.2 Improving the quality of international activities and achievements of IAAR

In 2021, the Agency focused on improving the quality of international activities. In 2021, in order to inform the Agency's management and employees about foreign events for 2021-2022, a schedule of international events was developed. All correspondence on the Agency's international activities was monitored on an ongoing basis.

In order to consolidate international positions and develop international cooperation, the Agency's employees took part in 30 events of international networks and partners, including ENQA Agency Reviews: 4th Reviewers' Seminar, 8 February 2021-9 February 2021; ENQA Agency Reviews: 13th Training of Reviewers, 9 February 2021-10 February; ENQA Webinar: Micro-credentials and

the role of external quality assurance, 25 February 2021; **ENQA** Webinar «Outcomes of the EUniQ Pilots and Implications for the Framework for QA of European Universities», 9 March 2021; **ENQA** online Members' Forum: Online quality assurance – experiences from ENQA members, 21 April 2021; **ENQA** online Members' Forum: Stakeholder involvement in external quality assurance, 23 April 2021; **ENQA** online General Assembly Seminar: QA fit for the post-Covid era, October 22, 2021; The 2021 European Quality Assurance Forum (**EQAF**), 8 and 19 November 2021; **ENQA** online General Assembly Seminar: Trends and innovations: what's new in the ENQA family? October 22, 2021; **CEENQA** (bi-monthly CEENQA meeting), January 19, March 17, May 19, July 21, September 15 and November 17, 2021; **DEQAR CONNECT** project Conference "From Data to Policy - Linking QA and Recognition", December 6-7, 2021; **INQAAHE** 2021 CONFERENCE GLASGOW, June 7-10, 2021; **CHEA** 2021 Summer Roundtable Virtual Conference, June 17, 2021; **APQN** Academic Conference (AAC) November 17, 2021; **IREG** 2021 Jeddah Conference Effects of Rankings on Community and Society, November 15-16, 2021; Participation in the INQAAHE Focus Group meeting for Eastern Europe (EEFG), November 22, 2021; Participation in the V International Congress on Teacher Education and Accreditation - **ITEAC**, organized in an online format by the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (EPDAD) and Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey, June 4-6, 2021; Participation in a series of Webinars of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council **NAAC** (India), August 5, 2021; Participation in an online seminar of **ENQA** experts on the new procedure of targeted Audit (Targeted Reviews) for trained experts from the database of ENQA experts, December 9, 2021; Participation in the "International Conference of Academic Institutions" on the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (**VGGS**) – 2022 in Vigyan Bhavan, Ahmedabad, Gujarat (India), January 5 to 6, 2022.

Participation in international research projects. IAAR takes an active part in projects, including Erasmus+, with the aim of expanding accessibility and developing internationalization of higher education. In 2021, IAAR participated and continues to actively participate in the implementation of 4 international projects under the **Erasmus+ EDUQAS, KUTEL, SAGRIS, DEQAR CONNECT** program.

Within the framework of the **EDUQAS** project - "Introduction of education quality assurance systems through university-state-business cooperation in universities", representatives of IAAR took part in a round table on March 19, 2021:

"Involving students in the University quality assurance system", where the head of the information and analytical project, Kydyrmina N.A., made a report "The role of students in ensuring the quality of higher education".

Since 2018, IAAR has been participating in the Erasmus+ project *"Kazakh Universities to Foster Quality Assurance Processes in Technology Enhanced Learning"* as a full partner. The project is being implemented in the period from November 15, 2018 to November 14, 2021. The KUTEL project is aimed at modernizing management and management in the field of education. On June 21, 2021, IAAR opened a series of webinars "External Quality Control – Standards and Recommendations". The purpose of the webinars is to disseminate the results of the KUTEL project to improve the quality of education using advanced TEL technologies and increase the competitiveness of educational services of Kazakhstani universities. Within the framework of the KUTEL project, IAAR employees have developed documents: Guidelines and Best Practices for Implementing KUTEL Quality Assurance Framework in E-learning; Accreditation Statement of KUTEL QA Framework.

С 2019 года IAAR принимает участие в проекте Erasmus+ *«Enhancement of Postgraduate Studies on Sustainable Agriculture and Future Farming Systems»*. ***This is a project SAGRIS***. The project has been implemented since January 15, 2020 and is designed for 3 years. The project is aimed at solving problems in the field of training scientific and pedagogical personnel in accordance with international quality standards and aims to increase the level of knowledge in the field of sustainable agriculture and agricultural systems of the future. Within the framework of the Erasmus+ SAGRIS project, 4 Steering Committee Meetings were held in 2021: in February, April, September and October. The meetings were attended by representatives of all partner organizations and discussed the progress of the project and the plan for the implementation of the tasks.

Since 2019, IAAR has been participating in the Erasmus+ project *«Enhancing the Coverage and Connectivity of QA in the EHEA through DEQAR (DEQAR CONNECT)»*. The project coordinator is the European Register of Education Quality Assurance Agencies EQAR. The project is being implemented in the period from February 1, 2020 to January 31, 2022. In 2021, IAAR, within the framework of the Erasmus + project, IAAR representatives participated in the evaluation of a number of EP, online training, preparation of training materials and work packages, exchange of experience in the development of modules, and a financial report was prepared.

IAAR participation in international projects allows us to closely interact with the international academic community, actively work with national and foreign universities, which has a positive impact on ensuring the quality of educational services and expanding the horizons of international cooperation.

In order to expand the participation of IAAR in international projects of the Erasmus + Program, new projects are constantly monitored and the Agency's information and profile for participation in the Erasmus + Program (EU Login cabinet - the authentication service of the European Commission) is sent; PIF (Partner Identification Form) has been compiled, which is sent to all potential partners.

Thus, in 2021, IAAR successfully implemented 4 international Erasmus+ projects in the field of internationalization of higher education, ensuring its quality and actively expanded opportunities for new projects.

SWOT analysis of activities

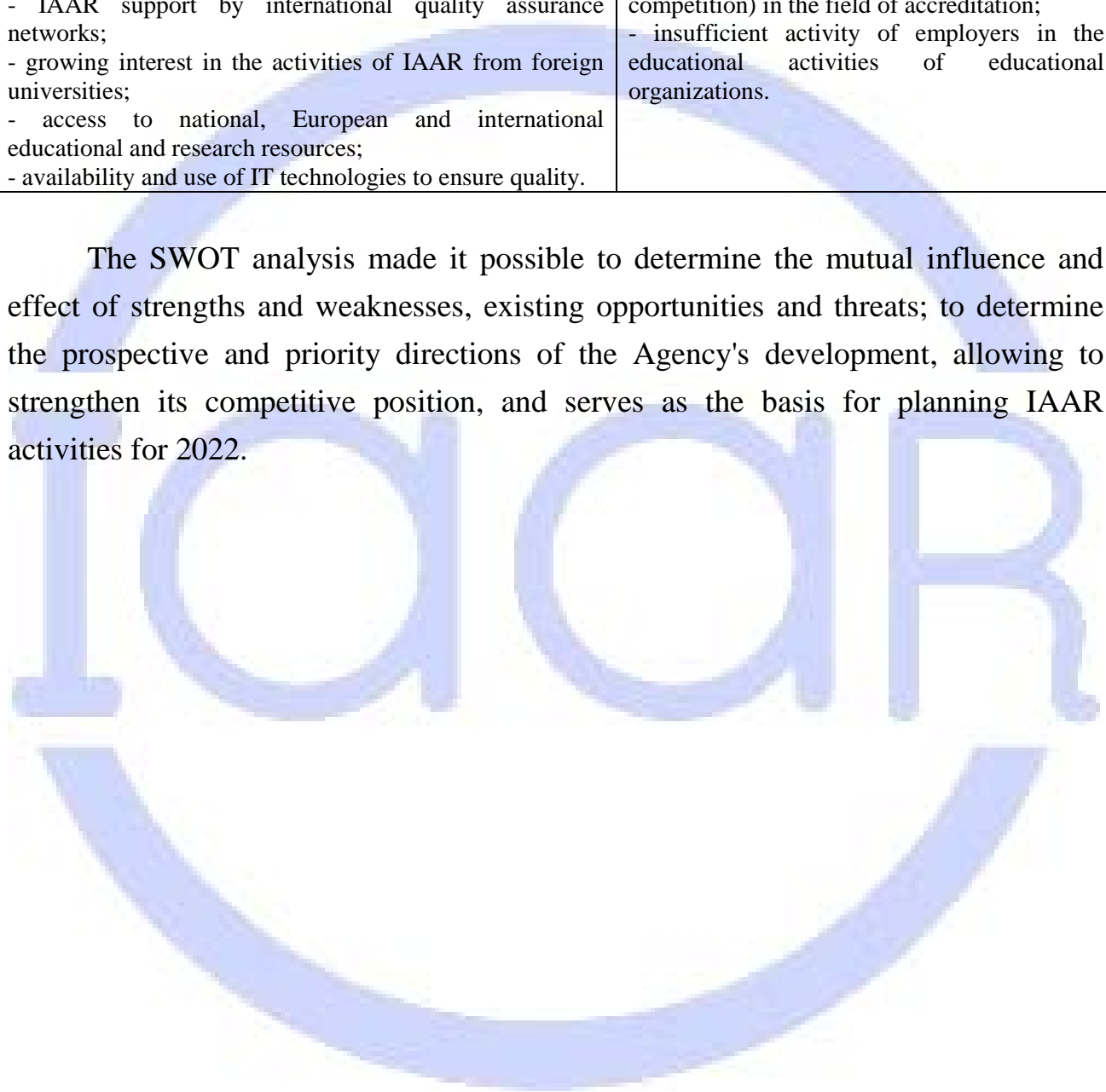
SWOT analysis reflects the implementation of strategic goals and serves as the basis for the annual planning of IAAR activities (Table 1).

Table 1. SWOT analysis

S (Strength)	W (Weakness)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IAAR recognition in Kazakhstan and abroad; - full membership of IAAR in international quality assurance networks and associations; - conducting international accreditation abroad; - cooperation with foreign partners; - harmonization of IAAR standards with the revised ESG and WFME standards; - participation of IAAR in international projects for the development of education and quality assurance; - cooperation with stakeholders, state and non-governmental organizations within the framework of the Bologna Process; - monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the EEP of accredited public organizations and/or accredited EP; - functioning of the IQAS (Internal Quality Assurance System); - support of the WFMO in the development of the national accreditation system of medical and pharmaceutical education; - annual holding of the IAAR International Forum on Quality Assurance of Education; - IAAR professional team; - availability of a broad base of professional and competent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient level of knowledge of English by agency employees; - lack of an electronic document management system; - poor coverage of feedback from the professional community of employers due to their low interest; - insufficient development of partnerships with foreign TVE agencies. - insufficient use of opportunities for the exchange of professional personnel with other partner agencies.

experts; - successful completion of the re-audit of ENQA and confirmation of the status; - conducting national and international rating studies; - constant and timely informing of the public	
O (Opportunity)	T (Threat)
- changes and additions to the legislation in the field of education, which opened up new opportunities in assessing the quality of universities in Kazakhstan; - IAAR support by international quality assurance networks; - growing interest in the activities of IAAR from foreign universities; - access to national, European and international educational and research resources; - availability and use of IT technologies to ensure quality.	- instability of the epidemiological situation in the country and the world; - growing competition (including unfair competition) in the field of accreditation; - insufficient activity of employers in the educational activities of educational organizations.

The SWOT analysis made it possible to determine the mutual influence and effect of strengths and weaknesses, existing opportunities and threats; to determine the prospective and priority directions of the Agency's development, allowing to strengthen its competitive position, and serves as the basis for planning IAAR activities for 2022.



Conclusion

The Independent Agency of Accreditation and Rating as a recognized international agency for quality assurance of education in 2021 has achieved notable results in external quality assurance of higher and postgraduate, vocational and technical, secondary education (international schools) in the Republic of Kazakhstan and 11 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In **2011-2021**, 231 educational organizations and 4,104 educational programs from **12 Central Asian and Eastern European countries** were internationally accredited by IAAR. Having entered a new decade of its development, summing up the results of ten years of activity, taking into account the interests and needs of internal and external stakeholders, IAAR identified the need to rethink the Development Strategy of IAAR for 2019-2023 and update its strategic objectives.

Confirmation in 2021 of the status of IAAR as a full member of the recognized European agency ENQA, expansion of the boundaries of accreditation activities (accreditation of universities of Armenia and Uzbekistan was carried out for the first time), strengthening of the qualitative potential of experts and agency staff contribute to the growth of the authority and influence of IAAR in the international market of accreditation services.

According to the Agency's plan for 2021, in general, the planned indicators were fulfilled. Some of them are noticeably ahead, including according to the indicators "The number of EP of the Republic of Kazakhstan that have passed international specialized accreditation", "The number of foreign educational organizations, including medical education, that have passed international IAAR accreditation", "The number of educational programs of foreign universities that have passed international program accreditation", "The number of foreign experts involved according to the medical profile in the expert activity of IAAR", etc. For the first time, international accreditation of a joint educational program was carried out.

At the same time, a number of indicators were not fully implemented for objective and subjective reasons. Thus, the planned volume of objects of accreditation of the EO of the Republic of Kazakhstan in connection with the introduction of amendments and additions to the legislation on education for certain indicators has not been fulfilled. In the field of TVE, the procedure of state certification has been introduced as mandatory and the norm fixing the distribution of grants depending on the results of accreditation has been abolished. As a result, in

2021, the number of applications for accreditation from TVE organizations decreased.

For higher and postgraduate education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the indicator "The number of organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan that have passed the procedure of international institutional accreditation" is not fulfilled (12 have passed, according to the plan 31). This is to some extent explained by the fact that in Kazakhstan, the current Register of Accreditation Agencies, reflecting the formed competitive environment, includes 11 agencies, including 6 national ones. Universities conclude contracts for accreditation based on the results of public procurement and/or the corresponding pricing policy.

The planned entry of IAAR into the international network of EQAVET (for technical and vocational education) and the international European association ENAEE for quality assurance of engineering education did not take place due to the presence of restrictive membership standards and in 2022 activities in this direction will continue.

The analysis of the Agency's activities in the reporting year also demonstrates the opportunities that have opened up to improve the efficiency of its own activities, including the creation of conditions and opportunities for the exchange of experience of Agency employees and professionals of other promising foreign partner agencies; the involvement of Agency experts in the implementation of national and international projects; the conclusion in 2022 with the Association of HEI of the Kyrgyz Republic of a memorandum of cooperation and conducting joint events, etc.

Prospects for the development of international activities of IAAR in 2022 are associated with the solution of such important tasks as re-entry into the European EQAR register; support of the recognized status of WFME; further expansion of the geography of international accreditation and participation of IAAR in various international projects on quality assurance of education.