



## ROMANIA

# Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Technical Assistance to Enhance Quality Assurance in Higher Education System in Romania (P157508)

## Output 6. Recommendation for the Regulation of Organization and Functioning of the Recipient

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#### **Acknowledgment**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ARACIS	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ARACIP	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance on Pre-university Education
BA	Bachelor Degree
BEX	Executive Board of ARACIS Council
ENAE	European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
IM	Internal Manual
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
MA	Master Degree
MoE	Ministry of Education
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NRE	National Registry of Evaluators
PhD	Doctorate
QA	Quality Assurance
QMS	Quality Management System
ROF	Regulation of Organization and Functioning
WB	World Bank

## Glossary

**Compartment.** An organizational unit with a maximum of four (4) execution positions.

**Directorate.** An organizational unit with a minimum of fifteen (15) execution positions (according to the Romanian Administrative Code).

**Functional domain.** Classification on government or state functions, usually associated with the government's formal organization in departments or ministries; the classification may vary from country to country but usually includes sectoral policy domains such as defense, diplomacy, health, education, tax administration, regional development, environment, as well as transversal functions (public policy, strategic planning, coordination, financial management), etc.

**Job family.** A series of jobs or occupations with a common functional content or knowledge domain and several professional grades with increasing levels of impact, complexity, responsibility, required knowledge, and competencies; definitions may vary significantly.

**Occupational family.** The domain of activity groups jobs with different characteristics and functions (e.g., defense, justice, education, administration). In the international experiences, the concept of occupational family is used with a different meaning: a set of several occupations characterized by similar requirements of ability, skills, and training (see the definition of job family).

**Office.** An organizational unit with a minimum of five (5) execution positions (according to the Romanian Administrative Code).

**Professional grade.** Classification of a position or job in terms of complexity or responsibility, sometimes associated with an educational level and/or experience; professional-grade systems vary significantly from country to country.

**Service.** An organizational unit with a minimum of seven (7) execution positions (according to the Romanian Administrative Code).

**Director and Head of Directorate/ Service/ Office.** The chief of any type of organizational unit; terms are used interchangeably.

## Introduction

The Advisory Services Agreement on Technical Assistance to Enhance Quality Assurance in Higher Education System in Romania aims to improve the capacity of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE)<sup>1</sup> and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) to govern the quality assurance of the higher education system in Romania in order to support increased attainment, quality, and efficiency of the Romanian higher education system.

This Agreement is designed to support the improvement of the administrative capacity of ARACIS by developing procedures for the internal organization of its activities and training of staff. In line with these objectives, recommendations regarding the Agency's new Regulation of Organization and Functioning (ROF) and Internal Manual (IM) are provided, aiming to improve management practices.

**Scope of the report.** This report presents recommendations to revise ARACIS's existing Regulation of Organization and Functioning to better align with the proposed new external evaluation framework and better address the needs of the Romanian higher education system while also complying with the regulations in place.

Therefore, the report aims to support the strengthening of the organizational structure of ARACIS and recommend standardized job descriptions concerning this structure. The proposed job descriptions are built on the following principles:

- a clear distinction between the functional responsibilities,
- clear hierarchical relations, and
- well-defined roles and tasks for each position so that ARACIS can develop job descriptions for each specific job based on the selected examples.

The report is structured as follows. Chapter I describes the methodological framework, including data collection and data analysis methods. Chapter II includes a brief presentation of ARACIS's current organization, describing the legal framework, responsibilities, and organizational chart, accompanied by staff perceptions as derived from interviews. Chapter III offers recommendations for improving the ROF of the technical and administrative units and provides draft job descriptions for selected positions. Annexes enclose the general interview guide, the list of interviewed representatives, and a detailed distribution of ARACIS technical and administrative staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the Ministry was changed from Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) in November 2019 and Ministry of Education (MoE) in December 2020.

# I. Methodological aspects

## 1. Methodological framework

In many organizations, functions with common essential characteristics and/or objectives are grouped in distinct organizational units and tasks; similarly, activities with common essential objectives are grouped under the appropriate job. In organizations with robust management systems, these groupings are documented in job descriptions. Their main objectives are to ensure that every job's purpose and scope are clear to all employees.

Although this activity aimed to deliver the revised ROF and job descriptions, the process also focused on analyzing the current structure and its potential to reorganize units, close skills gaps, and streamline work processes to avoid redundancies. The analysis includes a collection of information about each organizational unit's functions, purpose, and scope; an analysis of the rationale behind the organization's purpose and scope; and a complete and comprehensive job analysis. It aimed firstly to clarify and improve the understanding of the current ROF and job descriptions, and secondly, to rationalize, adjust, and, where necessary, refine them, resulting in proposals for more precise and concise ROF and job descriptions.

It is essential to distinguish between ROFs and job descriptions written to serve legal purposes and those written to serve management purposes. The current ROF and job descriptions within ARACIS are predominantly written to serve legal purposes. In this regard, they are legal documents describing the legal obligation of each organizational unit and each employee. Implicitly, whatever is not written in the documents is interpreted as unauthorized.

Therefore, the following proposed ROF and job descriptions were developed as management documents. The process required new approaches to the analysis and generated the new proposal of ROF and job descriptions. The ROF relates to entire organizational units, while the job descriptions apply to individual employees. However, both are practical management tools and focus on the what, why, and how. They are designed to do the following:

- *Provide direction for action at the operational level.*
- *Inform managers of the responsibilities and purposes of their organizational units.*
- *Inform managers and staff of their responsibilities, specifying what they are expected to do and achieve, how they are expected to operate, and for what they will be accountable.*
- *Support each manager to conduct performance assessments for individuals and units under their authority.*
- *Support each manager to determine the job skills individuals need in his organizational unit, evaluate the skills gap within each unit, and use these findings to develop a recruitment and development plan to reduce the skills gap over time.*
- *Support each manager to develop a profile of knowledge, skills, and experience for each job, recruit staff, perform needs analyses, and conduct face-to-face, virtual, or on-the-job training.*

In general, ROFs and job descriptions represent the tangible, long-term goals and responsibilities of organizational units and jobs. They do not include short-term quantitative targets typically found in annual objectives. However, job descriptions typically align with annual objectives in well-managed organizations.

## 2. Methodology

In line with the recommendations of the “Management instruments - Regulations for Organization and Functioning (ROF) and Job Descriptions within the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research” Report<sup>2</sup>, the ROF and job descriptions proposed for ARACIS are treated as management instruments and designed as guidelines for determining individual responsibilities and activities. However, they are not designed to serve as inventories of activities, listing everything performed in each organizational unit or by each employee.

The process of developing the ROF and job descriptions consisted of three steps: (1) data collection, (2) data analysis, and (3) providing recommendations for the ROF and selected job descriptions.

### *(1) Data collection*

To inform the findings and recommendations of this report, the World Bank (WB) team collected data through a variety of methods:

- (a) An in-depth and desk-review **of ARACIS policies, methodologies, operations, and procedures in place**, including the current ROF and job descriptions, was conducted.
- (b) An **online questionnaire** aimed at consolidating ARACIS employees' opinions and Executive Board (BEX) members on organizational and human resource management aspects was applied. The findings of the current report are also evidenced by the results observed from the questionnaire.
- (c) **Qualitative interviews** were carried out with the Executive Board (BEX) and administrative staff representatives to identify procedural gaps in the current organizational flow and the needs and areas for improvement. The goal was to provide recommendations on improving the ROF, job descriptions, and alignment of the departments' functions.
- (d) **Informative meetings** with Mr. Iordan Petrescu, President, and Mrs. Cristina Ghițulică, Vice-President of ARACIS, were held regularly to provide inputs, comments, and suggestions on the ARACIS's human resources and operational procedures.

### *(2) Data analysis*

The existing ROF and job descriptions were analyzed and followed by structured in-depth interviews with the heads of directorates, services, and offices. The interviews aimed to provide a good understanding of each organizational unit's rationale, objectives, and scope of activities before analyzing the job descriptions and providing the necessary context for job analysis.

In analyzing the existing ROF and job descriptions, the WB team identified four placement levels to describe the objectives of each organizational unit and employee, defined as follows<sup>3</sup>:

- **Role.** A cluster of functions that are linked together to produce a broadly defined, integrated output or result. All relevant functions must be present for a role to be played effectively and for the output or result to be produced. Roles are typically managed by one manager in one high-level organizational unit, such as a Directorate.

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank, 2014, Management instruments - Regulations for Organization and Functioning (ROF) and Job Descriptions within the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

- **Function.** A cluster of tasks that are linked together to produce an integrated, defined output or result. All relevant tasks must be present for a function to be carried out, operate, and produce a desired result or output. Functions are typically managed in a unified way by one manager in one lower-level organizational unit, such as a Service.
- **Task.** A planned cluster of interlinked activities is designed to produce a lower-level output or a result, which typically serves as an input into a function's performance. All relevant activities must be present for the task to be effectively completed. Broadly defined tasks may be carried out by staff in a lower-level organizational unit and managed by the unit manager. Narrowly defined tasks are typically carried out and managed by individual employees.
- **Activity.** A specific action or set of consciously planned actions, sequenced, and carried out by an employee to produce an output or a result.

The data analysis aimed to clarify each role, function, task, and activity and redefine them by applying the most relevant, specific action verbs to the objective.

### *(3) Providing recommendations for the ROF and job descriptions*

#### *Structure of the ROF*

The ROF defines the role of ARACIS's organizational units, specifies the functions included in the role, and establishes a comprehensive list of tasks embedded in the functions. The sub-tasks and activities embedded into the broad tasks are detailed in job descriptions and not described in the ROF.

The ROF associates the Directorates' roles with the overall vision, mission, and goals of ARACIS, as established by the Quality Assurance Law (Law no. 87/2006) and other regulations in place. Similarly, each job description details the organizational unit's functions, connecting the job with these functions, and providing the job context. The job descriptions specify in detail the tasks and activities for which the employees are responsible.

#### *Direct results (outputs)*

The ROF and job descriptions are based on the general paradigm that every organizational unit and job in ARACIS exists to produce an output. The output is not necessarily material; it can be a policy recommendation, a proposed budget, an assessment of a program or a university, etc. The output is needed as input into another process, product, or service delivered. It can be a final output when the recipient is an external stakeholder, like a university, or an intermediate output when the recipient is another organizational unit or employee within ARACIS, like a datasheet from the database extracted by IT for the international relation department.

#### *Expectations of recipients*

In this paradigm's context, "recipients" are supposed to know their needs and have clear expectations concerning the services they receive. In this sense, the ROF and job descriptions specify what are believed to be the critical expectations. Furthermore, the general principle is that organizational units and individual employees are responsible for meeting recipients' expectations.

In line with this paradigm, the ROF and job descriptions outline the performance expectations of the organizational unit and employee, respectively. They list out the required activities necessary to deliver services and meet the recipients' expectations.

A clear distinction has been made between specific functions, tasks, and activities of a given organizational unit and generic functions, tasks, and activities common to all organizational units. The ROF focuses only on the specific functions and tasks of the given organizational unit.

The WB team sequenced the development of the ROF and job descriptions to clearly tie the role of the Agency's Directorates back to each job description, perceiving them in an integrated way. First, the ROF of a given Directorate was developed; second, the job descriptions of the Directors were developed, followed by the selected job descriptions of non-management employees under the Directors. This approach shows how each job level is interlinked with the level above it and how each job derives its objectives from the ROF's rationale.

#### *Limitations of the report*

This report's proposals and recommendations refer only to the permanent technical and administrative staff's organization and functioning. The members of the Executive Board (BEX) and ARACIS Council perform their activity based on management contracts and are not subject to this report. However, some recommendations for reorganization of the President, Vice-president, and Secretary-General tasks have been included.

## II. Current organization of ARACIS

### 1. Legal framework

ARACIS functions and operates under the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 on Quality Assurance in Education, the subsequent law (Law no. 87/2006), and the Law of National Education (LEN no. 1/2011), and other regulations in the field. These regulations provide the framework for the quality assurance provision in Romanian higher education in alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

ARACIS mission is to ensure the quality of education for education providers operating in Romania, as well as for Romanian education providers operating abroad, according to the regulations in place.

ARACIS is an autonomous public institution of national interest with independent legal status and financial autonomy. Its independence is statutory. The national regulations in place guarantee its operational independence from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Romanian Government.

ARACIS exclusively defines its approaches to QA and the mechanisms and methodologies to conduct QA evaluations and independently deliberates and decides the outcomes of these processes. The MoE issues the official accreditation and re-accreditation to HEIs and programs. However, these decisions take into consideration the recommendations provided by ARACIS.

Since 2009, ARACIS has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). An external evaluation of ENQA members is conducted every five years. ARACIS renewed its membership for the second time in 2018. ARACIS has also been registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) since 2009. ARACIS received in 2012 the authorization to award the EUR-ACE certification to engineering study programs.

ARACIS is a member of several other international QA associations: The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies, the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAAE), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

#### **Box 1. Regulations and Policy Framework**

*The legal, institutional framework of ARACIS operates in accordance to the following regulations:*

- *Government Emergency Ordinance (GEO) no. 75/2005 on ensuring the quality of education, with subsequent amendments and completions.*
- *Government Decision (GD) no. 915/2017 regarding the amendment of the annex to Decision no. 1418/2006 for the approval of the External Evaluation Methodology, standards, reference standards, and list of performance indicators of ARACIS.*
- *GD no. 1731/2006 for the approval of the authorization and accreditation tariffs on study programs of HEIs and external evaluation of the educational quality perceived by ARACIS.*
- *Law of National Education (LEN) no. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments and completions (GO no. 9/2018 amending and supplementing some normative acts in the field of education, etc.).*
- *GD no. 369/2013 for the approval of the Methodology for accreditation of the MA fields based on the accredited MA study programs.*
- *Order 3063/2020 amending and supplementing order 4750/2019 on the approval of the Framework Methodology for the organization and registration of postgraduate programs by HEIs.*
- *Order 4750/2019 on the approval of the Framework Methodology for the organization and registration of postgraduate programs by HEIs.*
- *Other periodically MoE orders for the regulation of specific evaluation activities.*

## 2. Main responsibilities

The activity of ARACIS focuses on two main areas: (a) external evaluation for accrediting or authorizing of study programs and HEIs, and (b) periodic external evaluations (periodic reviews) of accredited study programs and HEIs. Additionally, ARACIS activities include general evaluations of the higher education system, external evaluations of teaching staff in training departments, and external evaluations of distance learning and part-time programs. ARACIS is also involved in research activities, programs, and projects in the higher education sector. The goal of ARACIS is to align the activities above with recent developments in quality assurance and internationalization.

ARACIS performs tasks in the accreditation area, as follows:

- *Develops the temporary authorization/accreditation methodology and standards applicable to all types of study programs and all HEIs (to be endorsed by MoE and approved through Government Decision).*
- *Evaluates and proposes the authorization or accreditation of HEIs and study programs. MoE prepares the legal documents to set up/ authorize the higher education structures based on the accreditation reports.*

ARACIS also performs tasks in the field of quality assurance, as follows:

- *Develops and reviews the national reference standards and performance indicators for quality evaluation and assurance in higher education.*
- *Develops, revises, and publishes its procedures for external evaluation of quality in education.*
- *Concludes service contracts with Romanian and foreign HEIs for the external quality evaluation of programs and HEIs and evaluating joint programs.*
- *Performs the quality evaluation of programs and HEIs, at the MoE's request. The terms and conditions regarding the evaluation activity are established by contract.*
- *Publishes the results of external evaluations.*
- *Collaborates with MoE and ARACIP to prepare and promote policies and strategies for increasing the quality of education in Romania.*
- *Organizes annual consultations with HEIs to establish quality assurance priorities.*
- *Publishes handbooks, guidelines, reports, briefs of good practice in the quality assurance and evaluation area.*
- *Prepares regular analytical reports on the quality of higher education in Romania.*
- *Collaborates with European peer agencies to develop and implement effective measures for improving the quality of higher education programs.*
- *Develops the Professional Code of Ethics for ARACIS's experts.*
- *Publishes an annual report on its activity.*
- *Elaborates self-evaluation reports to prepare the external evaluation of international associations such as ENQA, EQAR.*

### 3. Organizational chart

The organizational structure of ARACIS aims at ensuring its independence and transparency and consists of:



**The ARACIS Council** ensures the strategic direction of the Agency. The Council comprises 21 members – 17 higher education professors, two student representatives, one employer representative, and one higher education union representative.

Individuals who currently hold official positions within the Presidency, Government, Parliament or a Rector position at an HEI cannot serve as members of the ARACIS Council while employed in any of the roles mentioned above. This restriction aims to ensure the independence and transparency of the Agency.

All the members of the Council are selected through a competitive process. They perform their activity based on a four (4) year management contract concluded with the Agency. The student representatives are nominated yearly by the students' unions, and their contracts are renewed annually.

**Executive Board (BEX).** Five members of the ARACIS Council form its **Executive Board** responsible for the Agency's operative management. Two of the five members of the Executive Board, the President and Vice-president of the Council, are elected by their peers via a confidential voting procedure. The President appoints the other three Executive Board members: two Department Directors, for Accreditation and External Quality Assessment Departments, and a Secretary-General.

The **External Quality Assessment Department** and the **Accreditation Department** comprise quality assurance experts, who are members of the Council.

The **Consultative and Audit Commission** has the mission to verify the evaluation procedures and support the Agency’s decisions. It harmonizes the HEIs and Agency’s interests by assessing the impact of ARACIS QA regulations. The Commission members assist the institutional evaluation teams by providing an objective and transparent view of the evaluation processes. They are also part of the Appeal Settlement Commissions.

The **Commission of Ethics** ensures the ethical and professional conduct of the QA activities performed by ARACIS. It analyzes and settles cases of violation of ethical principles and norms of conduct, as well as cases of incompatibility and conflict of interest. It functions under the *Code of Ethics and Norms of Professional Conduct*.

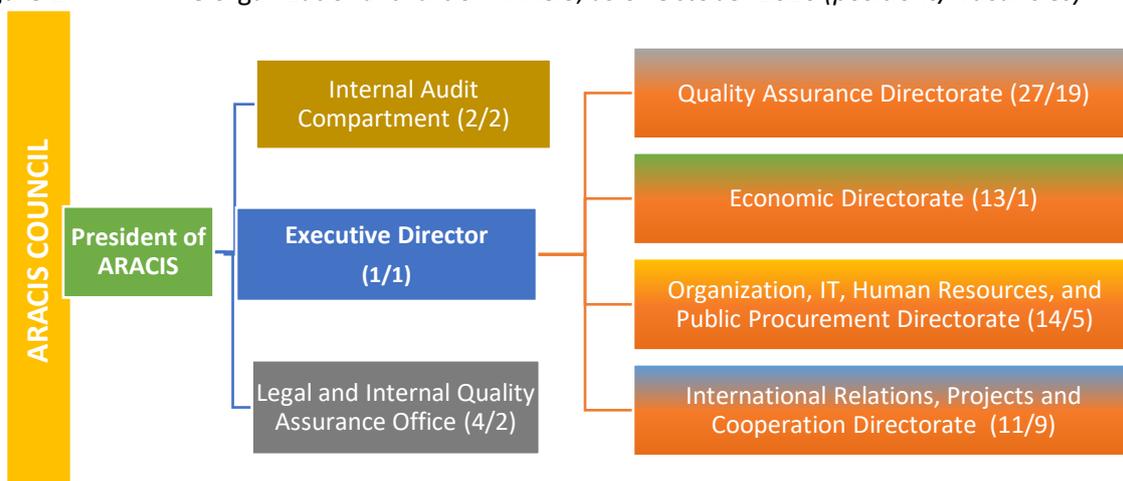
The **Disciplinary Commission of ARACIS** analyzes the actions (of staff and experts) notified as possible disciplinary violations and proposes the appropriate measures.

The **Monitoring Commission** ensures the monitoring, coordination, and methodological guidance of implementing and developing the ARACIS internal management control system. It comprises the heads of the departments in the first management level of the ARACIS organizational structure.

The **Permanent Specialty Commissions** are structures operating under the authority of the ARACIS Council. There are 14 permanent specialty commissions performing their activity based on the Regulation of the permanent specialty commissions approved by the ARACIS Council. Each Commission comprises between 7 and 13 expert evaluators and one student evaluator. A chairman leads each Permanent Specialty Commission with the support of a secretary of the commission. These commissions benefit from the ARACIS expert evaluators' support enrolled in the National Register of Evaluators (NRE).

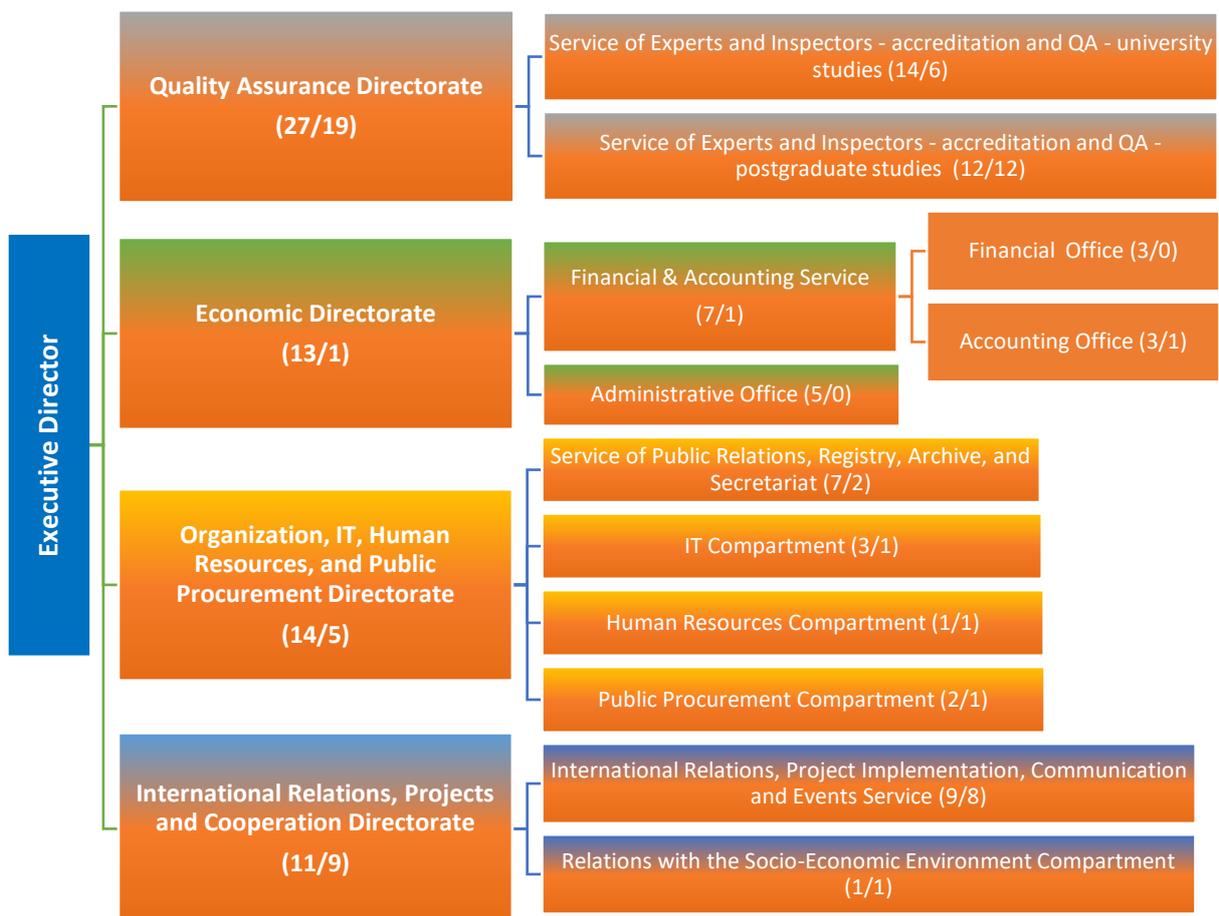
Such a complex structure of nine different bodies - committees, council, and the board - cannot function properly without a robust technical secretariat provided by the ARACIS staff. The organizational structure of ARACIS’s **technical and administrative staff** consists of 72 positions, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. At the time of this analysis, only 33 individuals were competitively selected and hired under the President of ARACIS authority.

Figure 1. The organizational chart of ARACIS, as of October 2020 (*positions/vacancies*)



The Executive Director position, the Internal Audit Compartment, and the Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office are under the President's direct authority. The technical and administrative staff work under the Executive Director's authority and are organized into four directorates: (1) Quality Assurance Directorate, (2) Economic Directorate, (3) Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate, and (4) International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate. Each directorate is managed by a Director, as detailed in Figure 2 below. At the time of this report, the Executive Director position had been vacant for a long time, placing the technical and administrative staff under the direct authority of the President of ARACIS. The Quality Assurance Director position was also vacant. A detailed table reflecting the current organization of the technical and administrative staff of ARACIS, the positions, and the vacancies is available in Annex 3 and Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Organizational chart for the structure managed by the Executive Director (*positions/vacancies*)



Several units in the current organizational structure of ARACIS are not fully aligned with public institutions' rules related to the minimum number of positions for each organizational unit. The thresholds are established through the Romanian Administrative Code and presented in the table below.

<b>Directorate</b>	<i>A minimum of fifteen (15) execution positions is required to set up a directorate.</i>
<b>Office</b>	<i>A minimum of five (5) execution positions is required to set up a bureau.</i>
<b>Service</b>	<i>A minimum of seven (7) execution positions is required to set up a service.</i>

#### 4. Perceptions of ARACIS employees on the current organization

Qualitative research based on a semi-structured interview with ARACIS representatives was carried out in July 2020 by the WB team. The objective was to thoroughly investigate employees' perceptions about the organization and management of the institutional activity. In this regard, the interviews were conducted with 13 individuals, representatives of the technical and administrative staff, and BEX members. The complete list of persons interviewed is available in Annex 2.

The sample covered the primary organizational structure, as follows: BEX members (3 representatives), Quality Assurance Directorate (4 representatives), International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate (1 representative), Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate (3 representatives), Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office (2 representatives). Economic Directorate representatives could not participate in this qualitative study.

The interview guide used in this research can be consulted in Annex 1. The questions addressed the following topics:

1. Internal organization and development of activities within ARACIS.
2. Management of internal and external communication; collaborative relationships.
3. Human Resource Management (recruitment and employment processes, promotion, performance evaluation, training needs).
4. Recommendations for improvement of ARACIS's internal organization – included in Chapter III of this report.

##### **(1) Internal organization and development of activities within ARACIS**

The team aimed to investigate and analyze the respondents' perceptions regarding the organization of activities in each department. Additionally, more general ideas on the functioning of ARACIS were collected. The current section presents the organization of the institution mirrored by the respondents' personal experiences.

##### **a. Organization of activities**

Most of the responses emphasized the complexity, diversity, and complementary nature of activities. At the Council level, the **Accreditation Department** and the **External Quality Assessment Department** are the two structures responsible for coordinating the accreditation and evaluation activities. Each Council member, except for President, Vice-President, and Secretary-General, is assigned to one of the two departments. Subordinate relationships are directed to BEX and Council.

The **Accreditation Department** coordinates the evaluation of study programs, thus reflecting the Agency's primary responsibility of carrying out external evaluations for provisional authorization,

accreditation, and periodic evaluation. Other responsibilities include contributing to the ARACIS annual report from the assessment of study programs perspective, monitoring the implementation of contracts with HEIs on evaluating study programs, and participating in the selection process of the Permanent Specialty Commissions members.

The **External Quality Assessment Department** addresses the external evaluation of HEIs. The department makes decisions regarding the HEIs' external assessment and monitors the institutional processes (i.e., the HEIs to be evaluated), collaborates with expert evaluators registered in NRE and nominated by the Council to supervise the field visits, and coordinates the distribution of expert evaluators in missions.

The **Secretary-General's** role is to organize the BEX meetings and identify the topics within the Council's responsibilities. The Secretary-General is involved in the daily distribution of tasks, ensuring the communication between ARACIS departments and stakeholders (i.e., Ministry of Education and Research, National Council of Rectors, employers', and students' organizations).

The interviewed Agency's representatives stressed the importance of the **Executive Director** position, which was vacant at the time of this analysis. According to the current ROF, the main tasks of the Executive Director are as follows: to facilitate the connection between the ARACIS management structures and the four specialized directorates; to support the President and Vice-President of ARACIS Council in completing their tasks; to monitor the tasks assigned to each specialized directorate, and to cooperate with the Secretary-General in organizing all activities carried out within and by ARACIS. Therefore, there is a partial overlap of tasks between the Executive Director and the Secretary-General.

The **Quality Assurance Directorate** serves the two departments at the Council level: (i) the External Quality Evaluation Department and (ii) Accreditation Department. The Directorate is currently organized in two services: Service of Experts and Inspectors – accreditation and QA – university studies, and Service of Experts and Inspectors – accreditation – postgraduate studies. The Directorate coordinates the QA evaluation activities carried out by the Agency. The vacancy of the director position has made the communication difficult: *"The communication comes rather from the leaders at the Council level to our service, but it does not flow in the opposite direction."* The Directorate is subordinate to the Executive Director and the President of ARACIS.

Each inspector within the department is responsible for one or two specialized commissions ensuring the technical secretary. Moreover, the inspectors are part of the evaluation team in the institutional evaluation visits. The interviewees perceive their physical presence during the visit as no longer necessary: *"Our physical presence in these institutional evaluations does not seem necessary. It was necessary at the beginning, but now I do not think it is the case anymore. We can do the same activity from the office."* Their contribution is essential in finalizing the evaluation processes and solving possible appeals. Additionally, inspectors are expected to respond to requests for clarification in the communication between the evaluation commissions and HEIs.

The Quality Assurance Directorate keeps track of the files evaluated by the Agency, manages the related database, and is responsible for developing the EQAR database on the DEQAR platform. It also prepares documents for the Accreditation and the External Quality Assessment Department.

Although it carries out an essential activity within ARACIS, the Quality Assurance Directorate is understaffed, operating with eight positions vacant, along with the absence of a Quality Assurance Director. The Service of Experts and Inspectors – accreditation – postgraduate studies do not work de facto, with all 12 positions vacant.

The ***International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate*** consists of two departments: the International Relations, Project Implementation, Communication, and Events Service; and the Relations with the Socio-Economic Environment Compartment. The Directorate is responsible for coordinating activities with international stakeholders and partners. It also manages the activities related to projects and events: organizing training sessions for evaluators, conferences, international trips, visits of partner agencies, and international visits of the Agency. The Directorate manages communication with stakeholders, such as ENQA, EQAR, and other peer agencies and organizations, and coordinates Agency's self-evaluation reports for external evaluation. Additionally, it coordinates the Quality Assurance Review publication and management of complaints. The Directorate is subordinate to the Executive Director and the President of ARACIS.

The Directorate is understaffed with only the Director and one operational staff, leaving 9 out of 10 positions vacant. The Relations with the Socio-Economic Environment Compartment has no staff despite the importance of communication with the socio-economic partners, who are essential stakeholders of the Agency.

The ***Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate*** consists of four departments: (1) Public Relations, Registry, Archive, and Secretariat Service; (2) IT Compartment; (3) Human Resources Compartment; and (4) Public Procurement Compartment. The Directorate is subordinate to the Executive Director and the President of ARACIS. The IT activity includes the administration of databases, such as the Registers of ARACIS evaluators, submitting files, updating information, and recording experts' data. It also includes website management and updating, administration of platforms, and IT equipment and systems' proper functioning.

Public relations are managed within this Directorate, with an emphasis on the HEIs contracting component. It includes initiating and contracting the evaluation, concluding amendments, and tracking payments. The public relations activity is mainly administrative (i.e., focused on managing relations with the public and sharing general information derived from Law no. 544/2001), and less as "Public Relations" (i.e., strategic communications).

The evaluation and accreditation procedures are initiated within the Public Relations, Registry, Archive, and Secretariat Service. The HEI's evaluation reports are registered and then sent to the specialized inspector within the QA Directorate. The evaluation process ends with the income statement transmittal to the Financial and Accounting Service.

The Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate has the same understaffing issue as other departments, with 5 out of 13 vacant positions. The Public Relations, Registry, Archive, and Secretariat Service has no Director, complicating the signing of and assuming responsibility for concluding contracts. The Human Resources Compartment has no employee, and the associated HR activities are undertaken by the head of the Directorate.

The ***Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office*** operates directly under the President of ARACIS authority. This office was created by merging the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Compartment with the Legal Office; however, each office's members undertake specific activities and cannot replace each other. The IQA activity involves elaborating and managing quality management documents, the Quality Manual, and the department's internal procedures. The aim is to implement an internal managerial control system systematically. The office's legal component provides legal advice to all departments within the Agency, drafts service contracts with universities, verifies public procurement, employment, and service contracts, and provides legal advice and representation in court. It also elaborates decisions and transmits them to the specialized departments with

attributions in their resolution after the Council and BEX meetings. The Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office operates with only two employees. The other two positions are vacant.

Although the current organizational structure includes the Internal Public Audit Compartment, no public auditor was employed within the Agency at the time of this report. Moreover, the shortage of public auditors is problematic nationwide. According to the "Report on Competencies and Jobs in the Romanian Public Administration,"<sup>4</sup> the public sector faces a lack of employment in execution level positions. Public auditors have the highest vacancy rate, at 49 percent in 2019.

#### **b. Staff autonomy in carrying out activities**

The majority of the interviewees perceived that they have relative autonomy in carrying out their job tasks. The representatives of the two departments at the Council level conclude that they have autonomy "*in proposing decisions*" after "*consulting with colleagues.*" Autonomy is limited by compliance with the legal provisions or the internal managerial control system under certain conditions. Autonomy is limited by the reliance between activities and the obligation to receive approval from BEX and ARACIS Council in the decision-making process.

The technical staff had similar views on the level of autonomy they held. Their answers indicated they had little independent decision-making. While they can formulate proposals, the final decision depends on the BEX and Council: "*We can represent ARACIS externally only within the limits of the authority that the Council and BEX conferred us.*"

In the relationships between departments and within them, there is a satisfactory level of autonomy in the individual professional activity: "*I organize most of my activities myself. (...) I work independently.*"

However, during the interviews, concerns were raised about the lack of two-way communication between the Council and the technical staff. Several representatives of the technical staff considered it necessary to be consulted in certain decisions. The lack of consultation is perceived as a loss of opportunity to contribute more to important decisions and ultimately affects the trust in working relationships: "*There is a lack of consultation and transparency in the process of decision making; we are faced with finalized decisions that were made without asking for our inputs.*"

#### **c. The extent to which the staff is sufficiently or well-sized related to workload**

Many of the respondents appreciated that the Agency's organizational structure is well-dimensioned. However, the employment issue persists; filling the vacant positions is still problematic – 39 positions out of 72 are vacant, representing 54 percent of the organizational chart positions. In these conditions, ensuring a balance in the distribution of activities and tasks becomes difficult: "*I would make a much clearer distinction between the type of activity carried out by members of the Council (...) and what the full-time staff of the Agency should do. (...) A person with managerial skills should coordinate the effective functioning of the Agency and ensure efficient institutional management.*"

The organizational structure of the **International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate**, is considered well-dimensioned: "*We have an appropriate organizational chart, I would say, but it is incomplete.*" In this case, a recommendation would be to recruit a person who speaks excellent English to facilitate international communication.

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank, 2019, Report on Competencies and Jobs in the Romanian Public Administration.

The vacancy of five positions within the **Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate** has negatively affected the department's activity. The IT Compartment is particularly vulnerable, with only two employees and complex activities. Thus, blockages can occur quickly, and having a skilled employee is necessary to continually monitor issues and resolve technical tasks. Similarly, certain positions within Public Relations, Registry, Archive, and Secretariat Service have no replacement – registrar, secretary, and archivist. This requires colleagues to take on additional tasks that go beyond their job description. The IT specialists are paid a much higher salary in the private sector compared with the public sector. This is a chronic issue that must be addressed across Romanian public institutions; the Agency could subcontract a company for IT services outside the organization.

The **Quality Assurance Directorate** has one of the most problematic situations: "*We are currently in a staff shortage. People have left. We are without a Head of Directorate, without a Head of Service.*" The current team is overloaded, especially given the increased number of evaluation files. More specifically, the employees who would be responsible for evaluating doctoral fields/ IOSUD anticipate difficult times. Additionally, the permanent specialty commissions are not dimensioned well, and work is not distributed in a balanced way: "*The permanent specialty commissions were not dimensioned to complete the workload and the number of evaluation files assigned.*"

Even if the employees are carefully planning the evaluation visits, overloading might occur. Moreover, if the current team can cope with routine tasks, it is understaffed for more complex activities (e.g., system analysis, documents analysis). A possible solution for streamlining the activities of the department would require implementing an integrated database platform.

Considering the amount of work and the sensitive nature of the activities of the **Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office**, respondents signaled the necessity to hire a second legal officer: "*another lawyer is needed, at least entry-level (...) to do certain tasks related to the internal activity of the office.*"

## **(2) Management of internal and external communication**

The interviews explored the respondents' perceptions regarding intra- and inter-departmental collaboration relationships, vertical, horizontal, and external communication.

### **a. Collaborative relationships**

Respondents generally provided positive feedback on the mutual relationships between departments and within departments. However, they mentioned occasional animosities or disagreements resulting from the demanding workload and ambiguity of ownership: "*We are very few, and many of us do several things in addition to the job description (...)*"

Therefore, organizational and staffing shortcomings affect the work environment and prevent good inter-departmental collaboration. The intradepartmental collaboration was positively appreciated; exceptions are the departments that lack management to harmonize the divergent perspectives and complete tasks.

### **b. Internal communication management**

Based on responses, interdepartmental communication needs to improve. Communication is perceived as flowing in one direction, from the BEX and Council members to the technical and administrative staff. Similarly, respondents repeatedly used the dichotomous expression "*bottom/top*" to indicate the existence of "*blockages*", both in a physical sense ( distribution of offices in the

Agency), and in terms of positions within the organization (management level vs. technical level). Staff representatives feel management should be more transparent when decisions are made at the Council level. One-on-one consultations with the President of ARACIS were perceived as a positive problem-solving practice.

To address these aspects, ARACIS employees proposed the following concrete measures: organize consultations with the relevant technical departments in the decision-making process, organize stimulating debates, and develop a two-way communication flow. At the time of this report, the communication has been flowing one-way, the BEX and Council distributing their decisions by email. Moreover, the Legal Officer responsible for drafting decisions is not attending the meetings in person. The information is further disseminated via email. However, the respondents expressed the need for more explanations on "*how they want the decision to be implemented or which is the right direction.*" This communication leads to unwanted delays.

Consequently, the ARACIS technical staff feels the need for greater involvement in supporting the Council and BEX activities by providing opinions and feedback in management meetings. At the staff level, horizontal communication practices do not include regular discussion meetings. However, the respondents consider them useful: "*I think we should organize more discussion in small groups ... and with all staff, by compartments.*", "*Communication between departments does not exist because we do not have meetings to discuss all together.*", "*We should have monthly meetings with all technical staff of ARACIS, including accounting, archive, legal.*"

### **c. External communication management**

In external communication, the Agency regularly communicates with a variety of stakeholders, from HEIs and students to national authorities (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection through Labor Inspection, National Institute of Statistics, National Agency of Public Procurement) and international institutions (ENQA, EQAR, peer agencies from other countries).

Generally, external communication, depending on the topic, is directed to the responsible departments and not the exclusive prerogative of the Council. For example, HEIs send specific requests to specialized inspectors. The inspectors formulate opinions, and the Legal Officer drafts official responses. Another example is the transmission of the validated evaluation reports to the MoE and HEIs.

As a conclusion, the public relations activity within ARACIS serves mainly as an administrative tool, as management of relations with the public and general information as derived from Law no. 544/2001, and less in the common understanding of "Public Relations".

## **(3) Human Resource Management**

As previously mentioned, there are significant staff shortages in several departments within ARACIS. Accurately understanding the causes may alleviate negative consequences such as overload, animosities, communication, and collaboration difficulties.

### **a. Recruitment and employment**

There are circumstances independent of institutional decisions on one hand. As a public institution, ARACIS had to comply with the regulations due to the COVID-19 crisis and suspend the ongoing recruitment processes. The regulations require a standardized salary, which respondents consider "demotivating", particularly for entry-level positions.

Other limitations derive from considering a small candidate pool due to the specific educational background and work experience requirements of the ideal candidates, especially for the Quality Assurance Directorate: *"they probably should have been part of the quality department of a university."* Moreover, because geographical relocation is considered unattractive, the selection pool is further limited to Bucharest universities' employees who are assumed to have more interest in a position within ARACIS. Moreover, the internal recruitment process for management positions, such as the head of the directorate, is also complicated: *"We do not have a structure that allows employees to advance hierarchically"*, while outsiders qualified for the positions are difficult to identify and attract. Taking a rather administrative or managerial job in such an Agency for the Academia members would be consuming much of the time allocated to potential research and lectures. It is less attractive, financially motivating than working in a university or as an individual evaluator that allows other part-time jobs. The Agency requires full-time jobs, commitment, and dedicated time as the activities are growing complex. Full-time personnel cannot have a university position in parallel with a job within the Agency (art. 9 from Government Decision no. 1257/2005).

Respondents mentioned several possible improvements to the selection process, such as increasing the visibility of job announcements and improving content to accurately present job tasks and correspond with the job candidates to ensure they fully understand expectations required by the position.

#### **b. Evaluation, promotion, motivation**

During the interviews, perceptions of motivation, evaluation, and promotion were also discussed. At the Council level, the interviewees pointed out two main issues. Firstly, ARACIS, as a public institution, is subject to the performance evaluation criteria specific to public employees. Thus, performance does not always lead to a higher hierarchical position, negatively affecting management structures. Secondly, in the interviewees' opinion, regular staff evaluations do not evaluate based on performance criteria. They are perceived as a formality, without considering performance. The heads of directorates underlined that there are no objective reasons for significant differentiation between employees' performance. The interviewees recommended correlating the employee's tasks and skills to identify the reasons for low-performance and improve the evaluation process.

The execution staff also addressed the issues with promotions within the Agency. They expressed dissatisfaction, considering the system demotivating. For example, the evaluations were described as *"superficial"* and insufficiently focused on performance indicators: *"A Human Resource Management system with objective and verifiable indicators is missing."*

The interviewees circled back several times to the absence of motivational factors, citing various factors: standardized salary scales, absence of merit salaries and other motivation mechanisms, lack of encouragement of high performance, and success recognition.

#### **c. Training needs**

Respondents were asked about training courses previously offered by the institution and their training needs. The perception is that the focus on training opportunities is limited. Training can significantly improve staff morale in the absence of financial motivations (bonuses, merit salary, salary differentiation according to performance). The technical staff complained about the lack of training courses or replacement of training courses with quick on-the-job training practices. The training needs assessment is part of a previous report within this project.

Some specific contracts with computer service providers include the organization of training for the use of the respective platforms, *"but they were quite minimal."*

The respondents' training needs vary, aiming to improve the professional activity and develop transversal skills, such as ICT or foreign languages. In professional activities, there is a need for training on the following topics: guidelines on evaluating doctoral fields of study/IOSUD, internal quality assurance, understanding of regulations, and correlation of legislative and procedural changes.

Regarding the development of transversal skills, one of the most common requests were language courses, specifically English: *"We are an Agency that collaborates with other external agencies, we are evaluated by ENQA every five years, and when they come, we must know at least how to present ourselves in English."*

The other common request was digital skills. Training on Excel, Access, and other Office programs, and courses on using the newly developed platforms were requested.

### III. Recommendations for improvement of ARACIS's internal organization

#### 1. Rationale

The WB team devoted a large section of the report to provide recommendations on improving **ARACIS's internal organization by collecting suggestions on** the reorganization of departments. The detailed responses received through the interviews and the online questionnaire indicate the areas that elicited staff's interest. The proposals were written based on the staff's concern in four areas: changes in the organizational structure, solving vacancies issues, improving communication, and optimizing activities.

Proposals for **developing new structures** aim at:

- i. **Creating a public relations structure:** *"Let us have a communication person. It is our external interface. Currently, communication is under the International Relations Directorate, although it is not their job."* Communication activities are currently divided: public interest information is covered by the Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate, while public communication is managed by the International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate.
- ii. **Creating a Compartment specialized in the research, data analysis, and forecasting** to operate with research and statistical analysis: *"We are asked for statistical analysis, which is not in our job descriptions. There is no specialized department to do statistical analyses".*
- iii. **Creating a President's Cabinet** to support the activity of the President of ARACIS and strengthen the communication with all departments.

Proposals for **restructuring the existing Directorates** targets:

- i. **Organizing two structures to manage the evaluation of programs/ fields of study programs and higher education institutions.**
- ii. **Reorganizing the IT Office**, considering the number and complexity of IT activities, including platforms maintenance needs: *"We need a stronger IT Compartment."*

**Solving vacancies issues.** At the time of the analysis, 39 of the 72 positions in the technical and administrative units were still vacant, accounting for 54 percent of the organizational chart positions. The vacant positions include the Executive Director, the Quality Assurance Director, execution level positions within the International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate, the Internal Audit Compartment, and the Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Compartment.

Several representatives stressed the need to have in place an Executive Director to take over the operational functioning of the institution: *"Someone else should take over several operational issues, which would allow the ARACIS Council, to think more in the strategic and the development areas..."*. The Executive Director could efficiently manage the optimization of activities at the staff level and contribute to the proper distribution of tasks, accountability, and solving day-to-day problems: *"Employees are probably waiting for the Executive Director to organize everything that happens within the Agency."*

The Quality Assurance Department is experiencing difficulties in the absence of a head of Directorate. The respondents reported that the head of department is critical in the collaboration and communication between departments. They also noted the difficulty of filling the position. The vacant positions need to be advertised as linked to a career in public administration rather than in higher education, as there are too many competitive advantages to work in universities.

Other understaffing issues mentioned include the need for an archivist, replacements in the secretariat and the registry, and additional staff in the IT Compartment. Moreover, the Internal Audit Compartment's situation is critical, with both positions in the department vacant.

**Improving communication.** External and internal communication can be improved. There is a lack of communication between management and the rest of the staff. This "top-down" differentiation is understood as a fracture in the communication between BEX members and the technical and administrative staff. According to some interviewees, this could be overcome by filling in the Executive Director's position, who acts as a liaison between the two institutional components: "*From my perspective, the Executive Director should hold some operative meetings with us, the administrative staff. He should also be physically in the office in the Bex and Council meetings. There is no representative of the administrative staff participating in the BEX and Council meetings...*" In the same vein, some respondents mentioned there should be a come back to the good of encouraging technical staff's participation in management meetings.

Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current communicating system between staff and the Council and BEX, considering that the staff representatives are not invited to attend the decision meetings. Therefore, it was proposed to implement a proper communication system, other than sending email notifications, to increase the transparency of the Council and the BEX decision-making process.

Finally, respondents considered that internal communication could be improved by organizing monthly meetings with the technical staff to discuss problems and identify solutions. "*This is not done, and for this reason, the communication is not very good; there are obstacles in solving certain problems.*"

In terms of external communication, the Agency regularly exchanges information with various stakeholders. Currently, two directorates share this responsibility, which leads to communication "*in several different voices.*" Furthermore, the absence of a department responsible for "public" communication is visible. Communication is understood as a deliberate, planned, and constant effort to communicate with the Agency's stakeholders.

**Recommendations for optimization of activities** address general and specific issues:

- *Optimizing database operation* has two-fold implications: integrating the databases of different departments and then shifting the responsibility of monitoring their own database operation to each relevant department. Currently, requests are received and registered by the Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate, and then submitted to the Quality Assurance Directorate. For optimizing this process, it is recommended to consolidate the individual databases and implement an alert system to signal the completion of stages, milestones, and deadlines. Additionally, the database operation should be formalized and straightforward. Database administration should remain under the IT Compartment's responsibility, while the database operation falls under each department.

- *Implementing the digital signature and electronic archive.* With the purpose of digitalizing ARACIS activities, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital signature is critical. In this respect, intermediate stages must be implemented: "*We have not implemented the digital signature... We can (implement) the signature, but we need a digital database – to have all the documents in digital format, in a digital library, with a digital signature.*" Implementation of archiving all electronic documents and Agency decisions is recommended.
- *Developing an integrated platform* to manage the flow of documents and allow the traceability of documents within the Agency. This platform would also allow the implementation of a permanent data transmission activity towards EQAR.

Program and project management, as well as all activities related to policy making, planning, monitoring, and evaluation, are influenced by many factors, including suboptimal organizational structures, incoherent regulation of organization and functioning, and job descriptions. Addressing these issues would contribute to enhancing performance within the Agency.

Simplified processes are more desirable than complex processes, which are difficult for stakeholders to understand. Currently, ARACIS reduces the complexity of its procedures, both internal and external, while simultaneously redefining its procedures clearly, including the Agency's roles and responsibilities in higher education.

## 2. Regulations of Organization and Functioning of technical and administrative units within ARACIS and selected job descriptions

### A. General considerations

The following recommendations emerged from the analysis of ARACIS policies, methodologies, operations, and procedures, as well as from the findings of interviews and an online questionnaire. As a result of the analysis, several changes were proposed in the organizational structure of the Agency.

(a) **Reorganizing the Quality Assurance Directorate into two services** – (i) *Programs Accreditation & Evaluation Service*, and (ii) *Institutional Accreditation & Evaluation Service* to correlate to the new proposed external evaluation framework more easily and more efficiently address the needs of the Romanian higher education system. This approach would allow a clear separation between study programs and institutional evaluations and facilitate understanding of the new methodologies for doctoral fields of study, IOSUD, and audit evaluation procedures.

(b) **Strengthening the IT Office** under the Operations Directorate in order to manage and implement IT applications, platforms, and databases and provide support and technical assistance for their users.

(c) **Creating a Research and Data Analysis Compartment** under the Cooperation Directorate with the main objective of providing research papers and statistical analysis and reports on the Romanian higher education system, quality assurance in higher education, and HEIs functioning.

(d) **Creating a Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office** would enhance the Agency's communication with external stakeholders. Having a direct relationship with external stakeholders - students, graduates, and the socio-economic environment - is crucial. It would allow a better understanding of the skills required by employers in a rapidly changing environment and help facilitate their input into programs developed by HEIs. ARACIS should engage with employers and employer representatives on public consultation activities and facilitate employers' participation in QA evaluations. The Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office would liaise with the media and society at large, as well as build relationships with the stakeholders. Allocating resources to external communication would allow ARACIS to increase the Romanian society's knowledge about higher education quality.

(e) **Enhancing the role of the Human Resources Compartment** to effectively and efficiently manage human resources. The main recommendations are to coordinate professional development within the Agency and develop annual training plans and programs for staff by having face-to-face, virtual, or on-the-job training, mentoring, and shadowing activities. Another way would be to organize training sessions and internal workshops.

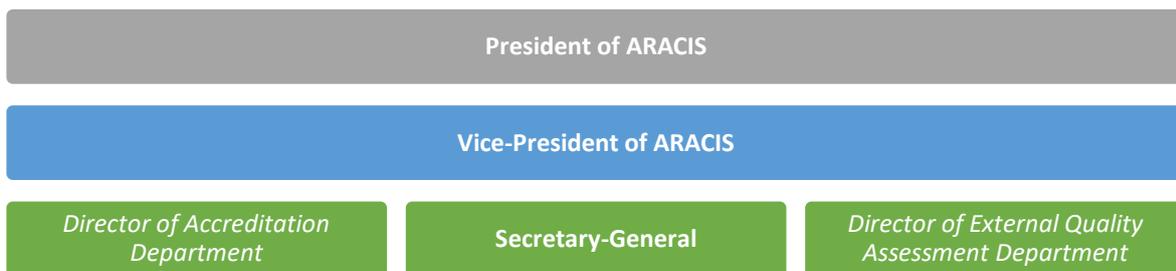
(f) **Creating a President's Cabinet** to support the activity of the President of ARACIS. The Cabinet's primary objectives are to provide advice and opinions to the President on topics related to quality assurance in higher education. Another objective is to strengthen internal communication with all departments and external communication with key stakeholders, public authorities, institutions, and organizations. Similar independent public institutions in Romania with cabinets/ chancelleries that serve the president/ governor are the Financial Supervisory Authority (<https://asfromania.ro/files/rof/organigrama ASF site03122020.pdf>), the Constitutional Court of Romania (<https://www.ccr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/organigrama-2020-1-scaled.jpg>), and the National Bank of Romania (<https://www.bnr.ro/Organigrama-BNR-3746.aspx>).

### *(1) President, Vice-President, Secretary-General of ARACIS, and the President's Cabinet*

As already mentioned, the strategic direction of the Agency is ensured by the **ARACIS Council**. Five members of the Council form the **Executive Board** (BEX) responsible for the operative management of ARACIS: (i) President, (ii) Vice-President, (iii) Secretary-General, (iv) Director of Accreditation Department, and (v) Director of External Quality Assessment Department (see Figure 3 below). The President and the Vice-President are elected via a confidential voting procedure, and the President appoints the Secretary-General and the other two members of the Executive Board.

President, Vice-President, and Secretary-General have specific tasks that entail a permanent collaboration with the technical and administrative staff. Some recommendations for the critical tasks of the President, Vice-president, Secretary-General, and President's Cabinet have been included in the following section.

Figure 3. Component of the BEX of ARACIS



#### ➤ President of ARACIS

##### **A. General Information**

The President of ARACIS shall ensure the executive management of the Agency and its proper functioning. In addition, he or she shall issue decisions and sign the resolutions of the ARACIS Council. The President represents the Agency in communication with key stakeholders, including public authorities, institutions, and individuals from Romania and abroad.

The President may delegate specific tasks to the Vice-President and the Secretary-General. He or she may also perform other tasks arising from the legal provisions.

##### **B. Key tasks for which the President is responsible**

- To exercise the responsibilities of ARACIS as a legal entity.
- To act as an authorizing officer according to the law.
- To approve the ARACIS list of functions.
- To appoint and dismiss employees from the technical and administrative staff, under the legal provisions.
- To coordinate and submit the draft institutional strategy and strategic plan of ARACIS for approval of the ARACIS Council.
- To develop a vision and mission statement by giving staff a clear direction of action.
- To make sure that staff clearly understand the vision and mission of the Agency.
- To demonstrate the commitment to the Agency's vision and mission through proper resource allocation.

- To coordinate the development of methodological principles for accreditation standards, national reference standards, and performance indicators for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education.
- To validate the ARACIS annual activity report and present it for the approval of the ARACIS Council.
- To conclude service contracts for institutional and study program evaluations with national and international institutions, the Ministry of Education, and other higher education providers.
- To validate and approve ARACIS publications on evaluation and internal and external quality assurance in higher education.
- To ensure communication with national and international institutions and organizations.
- To propose the professional assessments for the technical staff under his or her direct subordination.

➤ *Vice-President of ARACIS*

**A. General Information**

The Vice-President of ARACIS collaborates with the President in performing his or her tasks. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall exercise all his or her duties. The Vice-President may perform other tasks assigned by the President, the BEX, or ARACIS Council.

**B. Key tasks for which the Vice-President is responsible**

- To coordinate the development of studies, research papers, and periodic system analysis on the quality of higher education in Romania and make them public after the ARACIS Council's approval.
- To coordinate the consultations with HEIs to analyze priorities in the quality assurance area.
- To organize consultations with the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education (ARACIP).

➤ *Secretary-General of ARACIS*

**A. General Information**

The Secretary-General of ARACIS collaborates with the President and the Vice-President in performing tasks. He or she may perform other tasks assigned by the President, the BEX, or ARACIS Council.

**B. Key tasks for which the Secretary-General is responsible**

- To organize and prepare the ARACIS Council and BEX meetings with the support of the Executive Director.
- To monitor the implementation of the BEX and ARACIS Council resolutions as the drafting of decisions by the Legal Officer.
- To monitor the publication of the Council's Decisions and external evaluation results on the ARACIS website in collaboration with the heads of Directorates and the Executive Director.
- To coordinate the update of ARACIS's procedures following the legislative developments, together with the Executive Director and the Heads of Directorates and submit them to the ARACIS Council for approval.

## ➤ President's Cabinet

### **A. General Information**

The overall objective of the President's Cabinet is twofold: (i) to organize the activities of the President of ARACIS; and (ii) to ensure the secretarial activities of the Agency. The Cabinet operates under the President's direct authority.

### **B. Key tasks for which the President's Cabinet is responsible**

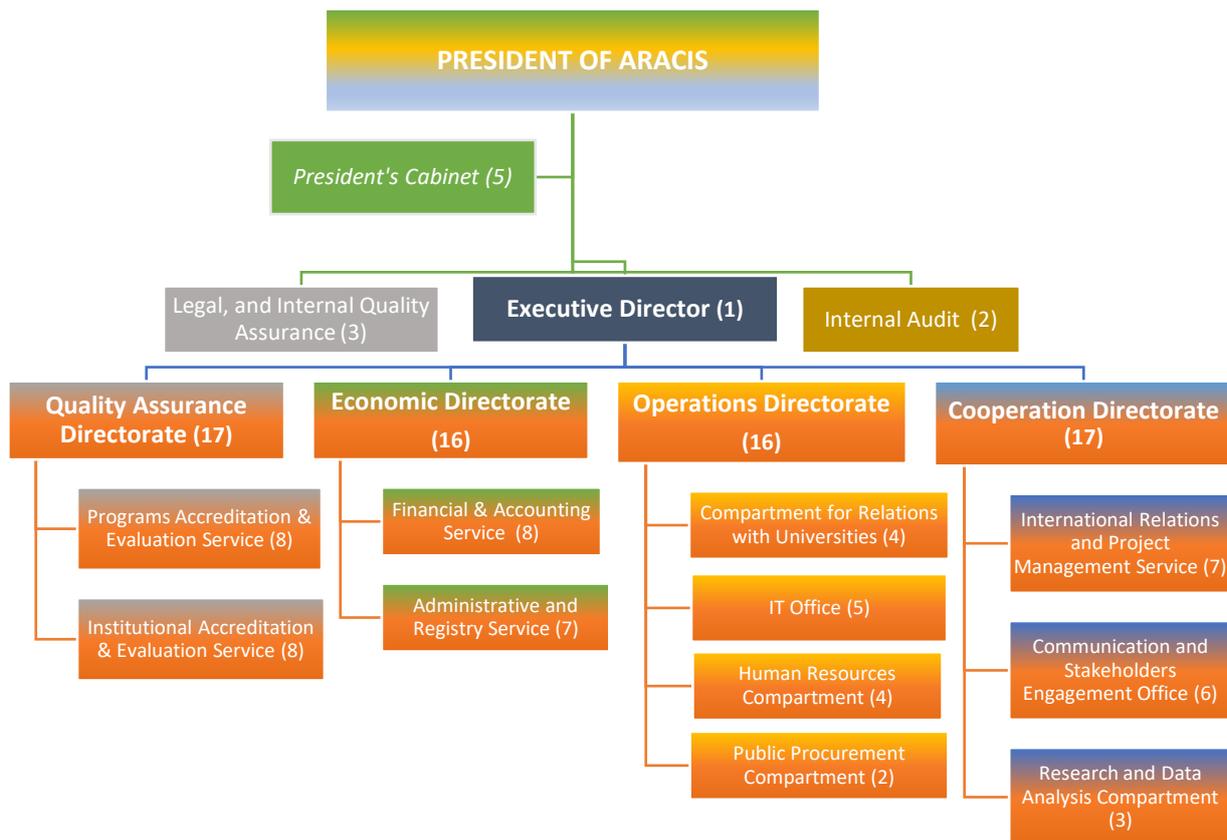
- To ensure the flow of communication between the President and all departments.
- To provide advice to the President on relevant issues.
- To participate in elaborating the draft institutional strategy of ARACIS and work plans, developing methodologies, guidelines, or procedures, preparing studies and reports on relevant topics, and drafting normative acts.
- To collaborate with external stakeholders, such as public institutions, organizations, etc.
- To register and manage the decisions signed by the President.
- To support the organization of BEX and ARACIS Council meetings.
- To participate in relevant national and international projects, conferences, workshops, training sessions, with the BEX and Council approval.
- To contribute to the development and implementation of expert training programs.
- To act as "public relations officer": (a) receiving, registering, and distributing petitions (other than QA related petitions) to the corresponding ARACIS department; (b) monitoring their resolution and submitting responses to the petitioners; and (c) sending a copy of the submitted response to the archive.
- To manage the secretarial activities within the Agency: (a) ensuring documents and information management at the level of each department following the operational procedures of the Agency; (b) managing incoming and outgoing documents (receiving, sorting, downloading, and processing); (c) managing internal and external communication (correspondence, telephone, email); and (d) ensuring the daily public relation program.

### *(2) Technical and administrative staff of ARACIS*

According to the Romanian Administrative Code, there are constraints regarding the minimum number of execution level positions of an organizational unit - office, service, and direction. The current organizational structure of ARACIS does not fully comply with this provision.

The primary recommendations of this report have emerged from the analysis of ARACIS policies, methodologies, operations, and procedures and the findings of the interviews and online questionnaire. They were subsequently translated into several changes proposed in the organizational structure of the Agency. The current organizational structure of ARACIS is relatively well-dimensioned. Therefore, the proposed recommendations refer to the reassessment of the functionalities of the organizational units. This approach also determined the adjusting of the Agency's structures. An additional number of five positions, grouped under the President's Cabinet, is increasing the total number of positions to 77. Figure 4 (below) graphically reflects the implementation of proposed changes.

Figure 4. The proposed organizational chart of ARACIS



The proposed functionalities of the organizational units (directorates, services, offices, compartments) and job descriptions for selected positions are detailed in the following section:

- Executive Director
- Director of Economic Directorate
- Director of Cooperation Directorate
- Head of Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office.
- Director of Operations Directorate
- Director of Quality Assurance Directorate
- Data Analyst

The ROF defines the role of the Agency’s organizational units, the functions included in the role, and tasks embedded in the functions. At the managerial level, there is a set of generic tasks applicable to all heads’ units. Each director should apply these generic tasks to each of the specific activities delivered by his or her unit, as follows:

- Planning the unit’s activity and coordinating with other units.
- Setting objectives for each team member.
- Motivating staff, enhancing team leadership, and accountability.
- Following up on instructions given to staff, monitoring, and appraising their performance.
- Providing constructive feedback and taking corrective actions (such as mentoring staff members, providing training opportunities).

These tasks apply to all activities, and the head of the unit is responsible for completing them. Considering that these tasks apply to all management positions, they are not repeatedly described

in each Directors' job description. The following section details each of the proposed functionalities and job descriptions.

## B. Executive Director

### ➤ [Job Description for Executive Director](#)

#### A. General Information

1. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the President of ARACIS, BEX, Council of ARACIS
2. **Number Directorates/Services/Offices/Compartments under the employee, and number of persons reporting to the employee:** four directorates, and a complement staff of 66

#### B. Key objectives of the Executive Director position

The role of the Executive Director is to ensure efficient and effective design, development, and implementation of the Agency's strategic plan. The Executive Director is responsible for the Agency's daily operations.

More specific objectives:

1. To manage the communication between the Agency's technical and administrative staff and the management structures
2. To coordinate the activity of the Agency's directorates

#### C. Key tasks for which the Executive Director is responsible

The tasks involved in achieving these objectives are divided between the President of the Agency and the Executive Director: the President is responsible predominantly for providing leadership, while the Executive Director is responsible for operational management. In other words, the President formulates visions, strategies, and missions for each objective, while the Executive Director ensures that the mission and objectives are carried out and implemented and guides the directorates in the right direction.

As such, the Executive Director has a crucial role in the Agency's effort to achieve the objectives. The Executive Director is responsible for performing the organizational functions. The direct primary recipient is the Agency, represented by the President, the BEX, and the Council.

C1. In ***managing the communication between the Agency's staff and the management structures***, the responsibilities of the Executive Director are as follows:

- To ensure a continuous flow of communication between the Agency's management structures and the four directorates.
- To participate as a regular observer in the meetings of the BEX and ARACIS Council.
- To monitor the accomplishment of tasks established by the BEX and ARACIS Council, which cover the technical aspects of the quality assurance activity.

C2. In ***coordinating the activity of the Agency's directorates***, the responsibilities of the Executive Director are as follows:

- To organize weekly working meetings with the heads of directorates.

- To monitor the activity of the directorates, ensuring the achievement of their objectives.
- To perform professional assessments of the subordinate staff.
- To coordinate the drafting of the Agency's annual activity report and present it to the President of ARACIS.
- To propose the list of functions for the technical and administrative staff of ARACIS and present it to the President for approval.

#### **D. Qualifications required**

##### **1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna in economics.
- Post-graduate studies.
- Post-graduate certificate or diploma training in management or public administration.

##### **2. Work experience:**

- At least ten (10) years in public administration.
- At least five (5) years in a management position in a public entity or university.

##### **3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong knowledge of the higher education system in Romania.
- Knowledge of the Romanian public administration system (i.e., laws, regulations).
- Strong knowledge of an international language, preferably English, in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Strong computer literacy: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet search applications).

#### **C. Quality Assurance Directorate**

The overall objective of the Quality Assurance Directorate is to coordinate and manage efficiently quality assurance processes at the institutional level and at the level of study programs, to support the achievement of the Agency's mission.

The Quality Assurance Directorate consists of Programs Accreditation & Evaluation Service and the Institutional Accreditation & Evaluation Service.

##### **Functions**

1. Coordinating the quality assurance processes

##### **Tasks**

1. Coordinating the quality assurance processes
  - Participating in the development and periodical review of the accreditation standards, national reference standards, and performance indicators for quality assessment and higher education quality assurance.
  - Elaborating research papers and studies on quality assurance in higher education.
  - Developing a selection criteria-list for expert evaluators and appointment of members in the specialized standing commissions.

- Coordinating and managing the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes at the institutional level and the level of study programs.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment, other stakeholders

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment

### ➤ *Programs Accreditation & Evaluation Service*

The **Programs Accreditation & Evaluation Service** operates under the Quality Assurance Directorate and aims to manage the accreditation and quality external evaluation processes of the study programs at all levels – bachelor (BA), master (MA), doctorate (PhD), and postgraduate.

#### **Functions**

1. Managing quality assurance processes at the level of study programs

#### **Tasks**

1. Managing quality assurance processes at the program level
  - Verifying compliance of the external evaluation of study programs procedures at all levels – BA, MA, PhD, and postgraduate, following the methodologies and guidelines in place.
  - Providing support for the correct completion of the stages of the external evaluation procedure for study programs.
  - Supporting the activity of the Permanent Specialty Commissions and expert evaluators from the NRE regarding study programs evaluations.
  - Verifying and approving the evaluation requests and performing the reception of self-evaluation files.
  - Drafting the reports on quality assurance evaluations at the level of study programs.
  - Responding to external quality assessment requests for study programs – BA and MA programs, MA, doctoral fields of study, and postgraduate study programs.
  - Participating in the Appeal Settlement Commissions.
  - Transmitting data to other departments and being involved in the preparation of analyses and reports.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment, other stakeholders

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment

### ➤ *Institutional Accreditation & Evaluation Service*

The **Institutional Accreditation & Evaluation Service** operates under the Quality Assurance Directorate and aims to manage external quality accreditation and evaluation processes at the institutional level.

## **Functions**

1. Managing quality assurance processes at the institutional level

## **Tasks**

1. **Managing quality assurance processes at the institutional level**
  - Verifying compliance of the external evaluation procedure at the institutional level, including IOSUD, following the methodologies and guidelines in place.
  - Verifying compliance of the audit assessment procedure following the methodologies and guidelines in place.
  - Providing support for the proper completion of the external evaluation throughout the procedural stages at the institutional level, including IOSUD and the audit evaluation procedure.
  - Participating in external evaluations at the institutional level, including IOSUD, by providing the technical secretariat.
  - Supporting the activities of the expert within Permanent Specialty Commissions and expert evaluators from NRE regarding institutional evaluations.
  - Verifying and approving the evaluation requests and performing the reception of self-evaluation files.
  - Drafting the reports on quality assurance evaluations at the institutional level.
  - Responding to external quality assessment requests at the institutional level.
  - Participating in the Appeal Settlement Commissions.
  - Transmitting data to other departments and being involved in the preparation of analyses and reports.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment, other stakeholders

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates, expert evaluators, students, representatives of the socio-economic environment

### ➤ [\*Job Description for Director of Quality Assurance Directorate\*](#)

#### **A. General Information**

1. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Executive Director
2. **Number Services/ Offices/ Compartments under the employee, and number of persons reporting to the employee:** two services and a complement staff of 16

#### **B. Key objectives of the Directorate**

The general objective of the Quality Assurance Directorate is to coordinate and effectively manage the quality assurance processes at the institutional and study program levels to support the achievement of the Agency's mission.

More specific objectives:

1. To overall coordinate the quality assurance processes
2. To manage the quality assurance processes at the level of study programs
3. To manage the quality assurance processes at the institutional level

The Quality Assurance Directorate consists of the Programs Accreditation and Evaluation Service and the Institutional Accreditation and Evaluation Service.

### **C. Key tasks for which the Director is responsible**

The tasks involved in completing these objectives are divided between the President of the Agency and the Quality Assurance Director: the President is responsible predominantly for providing leadership, while the Quality Assurance Director is responsible for operational management. In other words, the President formulates visions, strategies, and missions for each objective, while the Quality Assurance Director manages the implementation of the mission above and objectives and guides the department in the right direction.

As such, the Quality Assurance Director has a crucial role in the Directorate's effort to achieve the objectives mentioned above. The Director is responsible for delivering the Directorate's three objectives to its recipients while meeting their expectations. The Directorate's primary recipient is the Agency, represented by the President and the Executive Director.

C1. In ***coordinating the quality assurance processes***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To participate in the development and periodic revision of accreditation standards, national reference standards, and performance indicators for quality assessment and assurance in higher education.
- To coordinate the development of research papers, studies, analyses, and reports on quality assurance in higher education.
- To coordinate the development of the selection criteria for expert evaluators and the appointment of permanent specialty commission's members.
- To oversee the activity of the ARACIS experts.
- To represent the Directorate in the ARACIS Council meetings.
- To coordinate and effectively manage the quality assurance processes at the institutional and study program levels.

C2. In ***managing the quality assurance processes at the level of study programs***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the compliance of the external evaluation procedure of study programs at all levels – BA, MA, PhD, and postgraduate – with the methodologies and guidelines in place.
- To present the study programs evaluation reports to the ARACIS Council.
- To coordinate the responses to requests regarding the external quality assurance of BA programs, MA programs, MA and doctoral fields of study, and postgraduate study programs.

C3. In ***managing the quality assurance processes at the institutional level***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the compliance of the external evaluation procedure at the institutional level, including IOSUD, with the methodologies and guidelines in place.
- To supervise the compliance with the audit evaluation procedure.
- To present the institutional evaluation reports to the ARACIS Council.
- To coordinate the responses to requests regarding external quality assurance at the institutional level.

## **D. Qualifications required**

### **1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna.

### **2. Work experience:**

- Fifteen (15) or more years of general experience, out of which at least ten (10) years in quality assurance within a public institution or a university.

### **3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong knowledge of the Romanian higher education system.
- Strong analytical and planning skills.
- Strong knowledge of an international language, preferably English, in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Strong computer literacy: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet search applications).

## **D. Economic Directorate**

The overall objective of the Economic Directorate is to allocate and efficiently and effectively manage the financial resources to support the achievement of the Agency's objectives and to carry out regular financial reporting.

The Economic Directorate consists of the Financial & Accounting Service and the Administrative and Registry Service.

### **Functions**

1. Applying the legal framework governing the field of reference and implementing it at the level of the Agency
2. Substantiating and projecting the annual and multiannual budget, the budget on programs, and implementing the Agency's budget
3. Monitoring the budget execution and preparing recommendations for corrective and improvement actions based on the accomplished reports
4. Managing the ARACIS financial resources
5. Managing the accounting and preventive financial control activities within the Agency [*tasks are detailed in the description of the Financial & Accounting Service*]
6. Ensuring the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure - equipment in the Agency's administration and safety of space operation [*tasks are detailed in the description of the Administrative and Registry Service*]
7. Organizing the Occupational Safety and Health activity [*tasks are detailed in the description of the Administrative and Registry Service*]
8. Organizing registry and archiving activities [*tasks are detailed in the description of the Administrative and Registry Service*]

### **Tasks**

1. Applying the legal framework governing the field of reference and implementing it at the level of the Agency
  - Formulating proposals for organizing and functioning of the financial activities and submitting them for approval.
2. Substantiating and projecting the annual and multiannual budget, the budget on programs, and implementing the Agency's budget
  - Consulting with stakeholders and collecting data to prepare annual, multiannual, and program budgets.
  - Estimating, together with stakeholders, the co-financing costs in grant financed projects.
  - Monitoring and ensuring establishment and collection of accreditations/periodic evaluation fees.
  - Substantiating the draft budget.
  - Executing the directorate's dedicated budget.
3. Monitoring the budget execution and preparing recommendations for corrective/improvement actions based on the accomplished reports
  - Establishing, together with the ARACIS directorates, the performance indicators for effective and efficient financial execution.
  - Tracking credit and debt recovery.
  - Organizing and performing preventive financial control.
  - Establishing and operating employment, liquidation, ordering, and payment of expenses.
4. Management of ARACIS financial resources

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates

### ➤ Financial & Accounting Service

The **Financial & Accounting Service** operates under the Economic Directorate's authority and aims to organize and manage its accounting, i.e., financial accounting and management accounting, and preventive financial control activity.

#### **Functions**

1. Managing the accounting and preventive financial control activities within the Agency

#### **Tasks**

1. Managing the accounting and preventive financial control activities within the Agency
  - Ensuring, performing, and reporting preventive financial control activities within the Agency.
  - Organizing and managing the accounting activities following the legal regulations in place.
  - Organizing and managing accrual-based accounting and record-keeping and reporting budgetary commitments.
  - Ensuring legal compliance in preparation and use of supporting and accounting documents for all assets and their registration in the Agency's accounting.
  - Ensuring the correct preservation of accounting records within the Agency.

- Verifying received supporting documents and preparing the accounting notes for all economic and financial operations.
- Ensuring the accuracy of accounting records of inventory materials and items, suppliers, staff rights, and assimilated rights.
- Preparing mandatory accounting records.
- Elaborating financial-accounting reports and financial statements.
- Organizing synthetic and analytical records and preparing monthly verification balance for the Agency's activity.
- Preparing statements on the implementation of the budgetary expenditure incurred.
- Organizing the activity of the Agency's pay desk accordingly to the legal provisions.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates

➤ *Administrative and Registry Service*

The **Administrative and Registry Service** operates under the Economic Directorate's authority and aims to ensure the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure and the organization of registry and archive activities.

**Functions**

1. Ensuring the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure - equipment in the Agency's administration and safety of space operation
2. Organizing the Occupational Safety and Health activity
3. Organizing registry and archive activities

**Tasks**

1. Ensuring the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure - equipment in the Agency's administration and safety of space operation
  - Ensuring the proper functioning of the space by implementing service contracts, repairs, and maintenance of the facilities and equipment.
  - Organizing and management of Agency's assets (consumables, inventory items, fixed assets, ICT equipment).
  - Organizing and ensuring cleaning and maintenance of the Agency's premises.
  - Organizing and verifying the driver's activity to perform transport tasks in quality and safety conditions.
2. Organizing the Occupational Safety and Health activity
  - Identifying, assessing, and controlling risks for each component of the work system.
  - Developing internal procedures for applying occupational health and safety regulations.
  - Ensuring periodic medical control.
  - Ensuring proper conditions for work, protection of life, bodily integrity, and health of employees, according to the rules of labor protection.
3. Organizing registry and archive activities
  - Receiving, registering, and distributing the correspondence toward ARACIS directorates.
  - Ensuring the courier activity.

- Coordinating the archive activities within the Agency.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates

➤ *Job Description for Director of Economic Directorate*

**A. General Information**

- 1. To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Executive Director
- 2. Number Services/Offices/Compartments under the employee, and number of persons reporting to the employee:** two services and a complement staff of 15
- 3. Occupational background of persons reporting to the employee:** specialists in accounting, finance, administration
- 4. Functional area of the job:** the broad functional area is economics; the more specific areas are accounting, financial management, and administration.

**B. Key objectives of the Directorate**

The general objective of the Economic Directorate is to ensure the efficient and effective distribution and management of financial resources to support the achievement of the Agency's objectives and prepare regular financial reporting.

More specific objectives:

1. To apply the legal framework governing the field of reference and implement it at the level of the Agency
2. To substantiate, project, and implement the annual budget, multiannual budget, as well as the budget on programs
3. To monitor the budget execution and provide recommendations for corrective/improvement actions
4. To manage the financial resources of the Agency
5. To manage the accounting and preventive financial control activities within the Agency
6. To ensure the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure - equipment in the Agency's administration and safety of space operation
7. To organize the Occupational Safety and Health activity
8. To organize the registry and archive activities

The Economic Directorate consists of the Financial and Accounting Service and the Administrative and Registry Service.

**C. Key tasks for which the Director is responsible**

The tasks involved in completing these objectives are divided between the President of the Agency and the Economic Director: the President is responsible predominantly for providing leadership, while the Economic Director is responsible for operational management. In other words, the President formulates visions, strategies, and missions for each objective, while the Economic Director ensures that the mission and objectives are carried out and implemented operationally and guides the department in the right direction.

As such, the Economic Director has a crucial role in the Directorate's effort to attain the objectives mentioned above. The Director is responsible for delivering the Directorate's eight objectives to its recipients while meeting their expectations. The Directorate's primary recipient is the Agency, represented by the President and the Executive Director.

C1. In ***applying the legal framework and implementing it at the level of the Agency***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To coordinate the organization and functioning of the economic-financial activity.

C2. In ***substantiating, projecting, and implementing the annual budget, multiannual budget, as well as the budget on programs***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To coordinate the data collection for the preparation of the annual, multiannual, and program budgets.
- To supervise the estimation of co-financing costs in projects financed from grants.
- To monitor, set, and collect the accreditation/periodic evaluation fees.
- To coordinate the substantiation of the proposed budget and monitor the budget execution.

C3. In ***monitoring the budget execution and providing recommendations for corrective/improvement actions***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To set performance indicators for effective and efficient financial execution in collaboration with other ARACIS directorates.
- To monitor preventive financial control.
- To monitor order and payment operations.

C4. In ***managing the financial resources of the Agency***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise and monitor the management of the Agency's financial resources.

C5. In ***managing the accounting and preventive financial control activities within the Agency***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the ensuring, performing, and reporting preventive financial control activities within the Agency.
- To oversee the organization and management of the accounting records according to the legal regulations in place.
- To monitor the compliance with legal norms in the preparation and use of the supporting and accounting documents and their accounting registration.
- To advise on the preparation of financial-accounting reports and financial statements.
- To verify the activity of the pay-desk.

C6. In ***ensuring the proper functioning of the Agency's infrastructure***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To oversee the proper functioning of the ARACIS infrastructure - equipment in the Agency's administration and safety of space operation, such as maintenance, repairs, arrangements.

C7. In ***organizing the Occupational Safety and Health activity***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To monitor the Occupational Safety and Health activity.

C8. In **organizing the registry and archive activities**, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To monitor the distribution of correspondence.
- To coordinate the archival activity within the Agency.

#### **D. Qualifications required**

##### **1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna in economics.
- Post-graduate certificate or diploma training in financial management for public entities in an accredited institution.

##### **2. Work experience:**

- At least ten (10) years in financial management and accounting.
- At least five (5) years in a management position in the financial department of a public entity.

##### **3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong knowledge of the Romanian fiscal and accounting system (i.e., laws, regulations).
- Strong knowledge of financial planning and reporting (i.e., financial statements, balance sheets, financial indicators, cash-flows).
- Strong skills in working with financial indicators (i.e., calculating net present value and rate of return).
- Strong knowledge of the Romanian language in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Strong computer literacy: PC operation, and MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, Internet search applications).

#### **E. Operations Directorate**

The overall objective of the Operations Directorate is the efficient and effective allocation and management of human resources to support the accomplishment of ARACIS objectives.

The Operations Directorate consists of the Compartment for Relations with Universities, the IT Office, the Human Resources Compartment, and the Public Procurement Compartment.

#### **Functions**

1. Managing the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Compartment for Relations with Universities*]
2. Coordinating IT activities [*attributions are detailed in the description of the IT Office*]
3. Human resource management and professional development within the Agency [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Human Compartment*]
4. Managing Agency's staff salaries [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Human Resources Compartment*]
5. Ensuring application and conduct of public procurement procedures [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Public Procurement Compartment*]

➤ [Compartment for Relations with Universities](#)

The **Compartment for Relations with Universities** operates under the Operations Directorate and aims to manage the Agency's effective communication with universities.

**Functions**

1. Managing the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency
2. Efficient and effective management of the appeals

**Tasks**

1. Managing the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency
  - Initiating evaluation processes: collecting registration applications that trigger evaluations and contracts.
  - Maintaining records of self-assessment reports by type of evaluation (authorization, accreditation, evaluation).
  - Monitoring the contracts concluded with HEIs.
  - Application the regulations of Law no. 544/2000 on access to information of public interest.
2. Efficient and effective management of the appeals

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates

➤ [IT Office](#)

The **IT Office** operates under the Operations Directorate's authority and aims to ensure the functioning and development of the Agency's IT infrastructure.

**Functions**

1. Coordinating IT activities
2. Providing support and technical assistance for users of the IT applications and platforms
3. Contributing to the procurement procedures for IT products and/or services

**Tasks**

1. Coordinating IT activities
  - Coordinating the implementation and management of IT applications, platforms, and databases used within the Agency.
  - Coordinating the website maintenance process.
  - Monitoring the administration of equipment provided by the Agency.
  - Carrying out the IT tools needs analysis within the Agency.
  - Ensuring the implementation of a confidentiality policy in line with the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR (Directive 95/ 46/ EC).
2. Providing support and technical assistance for users of the IT applications and platforms
  - Managing the inventory of IT equipment and IT licenses at the Agency and providing needs analyses.

- Developing the Agency's Intranet and contributing to the deployment of automated workflows.
  - Maintaining, administering, and monitoring the proper functioning of IT equipment, assessing IT requirements, elaborating necessity reports, and budget substantiation.
  - Providing IT technical support for the Agency's staff.
3. Contributing to the procurement procedures for IT products and/or services
- Developing the specific technical requirements for IT products/ services to be purchased within the competences' limits.
  - Analyzing, validating, and reception of the IT products and services purchased within the Agency.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates

### ➤ Human Resources Compartment

The **Human Resources Compartment** operates under the Operations Directorate and aims to efficiently and effectively manage human resources to support the Agency's objectives.

#### **Functions**

1. Applying the legal framework governing the field of reference and implement it at the Agency level
2. Managing human resources and professional development within the Agency
3. Payroll management for the staff and expert evaluators

#### **Tasks**

1. Applying the legal framework governing the field of reference and implement it at the Agency level
  - Developing, updating, implementing, and monitoring HR strategies in collaboration with Agency's management.
  - Formulating proposals for the organization and functioning of employment and payroll activities and submitting them for approval.
2. Managing human resources and professional development within the Agency
  - Verifying, submitting for approval, updating the list of functions, elaborating the monthly list of functions, and substantiating the staff expenses.
  - Recruiting and selecting staff (documentation, participation files, organization of the recruiting competitions).
  - Assisting in developing job descriptions, collaborating in this regard with the Agency's directorates, and monitoring the updating.
  - Preparing the decisions for employment, promotion, appointment, dismissal, minutes, notes, reports, that are the HR compartment's responsibility.
  - Preparing the employment contracts.
  - Maintaining staff records.
  - Elaborating documentation required by employees for retirement.

- Issuing the documents certifying training or specialization of the staff, based on existing documents and certificates.
  - Verifying the promotion proposals, in compliance with the legal framework.
  - Coordinating and monitoring the staff evaluation process.
  - Assisting in establishing performance indicators at the directorates, services, offices, and compartments level.
  - Identifying professional training needs and planning employees' participation in specific training programs.
  - Managing employees' job descriptions.
  - Ensuring the management of declarations of assets and interests of the Agency's staff.
3. Payroll management for staff and expert evaluators
- Preparing documents for granting the salary rights of the staff and expert evaluators, according to the legal norms (payroll, payment order, centralized situations).
  - Monitoring the employment, authorizing, and payment of staff and expert evaluators.
  - Preparing the reports of rest leave days and medical leave days.
  - Issuing certificates of the medical leave days or income earned.
  - Ensuring the archiving of finalized documents and handing them over to the archive.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates

➤ *Public Procurement Compartment*

The ***Public Procurement Compartment*** operates under the Operations Directorate and aims to ensure public procurement activities.

**Functions**

1. Ensuring the application and conduct of public procurement procedures

**Tasks**

1. Ensuring the application and conduct of public procurement procedures
  - Requesting procurement needs from each directorate, service, and office to purchase goods and services for the following year.
  - Preparing the annual public procurement program based on proposals made by the departments of the Agency.
  - Updating the annual public procurement program.
  - Preparing public contracts and additional documents based on requests from the Agency's departments.
  - Tracking and monitoring of purchased goods and services.
  - Organizing and carrying out activities for direct purchase operations and public procurement procedures.
  - Monitoring contracts concluded by recording in a register.
  - Preserving public procurement files.
  - Elaborating the contracting strategy, establishing the evaluation commissions, participating, and providing secretarial support for the commission.

- Writing and transmitting notices of intent or contract notices; preparation and transmitting tender requests to economic operators.
- Providing advice for the evaluation commissions to prepare responses and official opinions for the economic operators' clarifications or appeals.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates

➤ *Job Description for Director of Operations Directorate*

**A. General Information**

1. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Executive Director
2. **Number Services/Offices/Compartments under the employee, and number of persons reporting to the employee:** one office, three compartments, and a complement staff of 15
3. **Occupational background of persons reporting to the employee:** specialists in information and communications technology, and business administration
4. **Functional areas of the job:** the broad functional areas are information and communications technology and economics; the more specific areas are statistics, data analysis, administration, public relations, human resources.

**B. Key objectives of the Directorate**

The general objective of the Operations Directorate is to ensure the efficient and effective distribution and management of human resources to support the achievement of the Agency's objectives.

More specific objectives:

1. To manage the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency
2. To coordinate the IT activities
3. To manage human resources and professional development within the Agency
4. To manage the remuneration of the Agency's employees
5. To ensure the application and conduct of public procurement procedures

The Operations Directorate consists of the Compartment for Relations with Universities, the IT Office, the Human Resources Compartment, and the Public Procurement Compartment.

**C. Key tasks for which the Director is responsible**

The tasks involved in completing these objectives are divided between the President of the Agency and the Operations Director: the President is responsible predominantly for providing leadership, while the Operations Director is responsible for operational management. In other words, the President formulates visions, strategies, and missions for each objective, while the Operations Director ensures that the mission and objectives are carried out and implemented operationally and guides the department in the right direction.

As such, the Operations Director has a crucial role in the Directorate's effort to attain the objectives mentioned above. The Director is responsible for delivering the Directorate's five objectives to its

recipients while meeting their expectations. The Directorate's primary recipient is the Agency, represented by the President and the Executive Director.

C1. In ***managing the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the contractual relationship between universities and the Agency.
- To supervise the resolution of appeals submitted by universities.

C2. In ***coordinating the IT activity***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To oversee the IT activities.
- To ensure the Agency operates a confidentiality policy according to the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR (Directive 95/ 46/ EC).

C3. In ***managing human resources and professional development within the Agency***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise and monitor the management of the Agency's human resources.
- To supervise and monitor the elaboration of the list of functions and substantiation of staff expenses.
- To supervise the recruitment and selection of staff, as well as the promotion proposals.
- To coordinate and monitor the evaluation process.

C4. In ***managing the remuneration of the Agency's employees***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the remuneration of the Agency's staff and expert evaluators.

C5. In ***ensuring the application and conduct of public procurement procedures***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To supervise the preparation of the annual public procurement program.
- To coordinate the conduct of public procurement contracts.

#### **D. Qualifications required**

##### **4. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna in economics.
- Post-graduate studies in management or public administration.
- Post-graduate certificate or diploma training in human resources and public procurement.

##### **5. Work experience:**

- At least ten (10) years in public administration.
- At least five (5) years in a management position in the human resources or administrative department of a public entity or university.

##### **6. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong knowledge of the Romanian public administration system (i.e., laws, regulations).
- Strong knowledge of an international language, preferably English, in reading, writing, and speaking.

- Strong computer literacy: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet search applications).
- Knowledge of the Romanian higher education system is an advantage.

## F. Cooperation Directorate

The overall objective of the Cooperation Directorate is to ensure communication with international quality assurance organizations, to engage in national and international projects, to promote a positive public image of the Agency, and to ensure transparency.

The Cooperation Directorate consists of the International Relations and Project Management Service, the Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office, and the Research and Data Analysis Compartment.

### **Functions**

1. Conducting international cooperation activities [*attributions are detailed in the description of the International Relations and Project Management Service*]
2. Implementing national and international projects [*attributions are detailed in the description of the International Relations and Project Management Service*]
3. Promoting the Agency's activities [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office*]
4. Managing relations with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Service*]
5. Providing research, data analysis, and statistical services [*attributions are detailed in the description of the Research and Data Analysis Compartment*]

### ➤ [International Relations and Project Management Service](#)

The **International Relations and Project Management Service** operates under the Directorate of Cooperation and aims to ensure communication with international QA organizations and implement national and international projects.

### **Functions**

1. Carrying out international cooperation activities
2. Implementing national and international projects

### **Tasks**

1. Carrying out international cooperation activities
  - Communicating with international organizations of which the Agency is a member, such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the INQAAHE, the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENOE), as well as similar international agencies.
  - Coordinating the preparation of reports and documents necessary for external evaluations of the Agency by ENQA, EQAR, ENAEE, etc.

- Identifying international good practices on quality assurance in higher education, adapting, and implementing at the Agency level.
  - Representing the Agency at national and international events, conferences, meetings, workshops, etc.
2. Implementing national and international projects
- Participating in the implementation of national and international projects when the Agency is a beneficiary or partner.
  - Contributing to the development of national and international projects when the Agency is a beneficiary or partner.
  - Monitoring the activities related to national and international projects.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, international organizations

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates, international organizations

➤ *Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office*

***Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office*** operates under the Cooperation Directorate and aims to ensure communication with the stakeholders and promote a positive public image of the Agency while ensuring transparency.

**Functions**

1. Promoting Agency's activities
2. Organizing events
3. Managing relations with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment

**Tasks**

1. Promoting Agency's activities
  - Developing the communication policy of the Agency and submit it for approval to the President of ARACIS.
  - Elaborating the visual identity manual of ARACIS.
  - Communicating with all departments for the proper dissemination of the Agency's activities.
  - Ensuring relevant information for public dissemination through communication-specific tools (press releases, information materials, summaries, etc.).
  - Preparing informational and promotional materials based on the Agency's activities.
  - Ensuring the Agency's publication activities (articles, brochures, etc.).
  - Updating the website with information based on the Agency's activities and initiatives and making suggestions to improve structure and content.
  - Publishing Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education (QAR).
  - Monitoring media, identifying topics of interest related to higher education and quality assurance in higher education, and communicating the information to the Agency's management, the ARACIS Council, and the technical staff.
  - Ensuring the application of Law no. 544/2000 on access to information of public interest.
2. Organizing events

- Organizing events to disseminate relevant information to the public, such as conferences, workshops, etc.
- Organizing training sessions for expert evaluators, including students.
- 3. Managing relations with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment
  - Developing partnership relations with the socio-economic environment for external quality assurance activities.
  - Ensuring communication and collaboration between ARACIS and partners from the socio-economic environment.
  - Conducting questionnaires and analyses on student satisfaction and employability of graduates.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities, expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment, other stakeholders (public opinion, media)

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates, expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment

### ➤ Research and Data Analysis Compartment

The **Research and Data Analysis Compartment** operates under the Cooperation Directorate's authority and aims to ensure research, data analysis, and statistical services.

#### **Functions**

1. Providing research, data analysis, and statistical services

#### **Tasks**

1. Providing research, data analysis, and statistical services
  - Providing statistical reports on the functioning of higher education institutions (HEIs).
  - Elaborating research papers, reports, and statistics on the Romanian higher education system.
  - Providing contributions to scientific publications.
  - Providing thematic analysis and forecasts proposed by other departments of the Agency's departments.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates, universities

**Service providers:** universities, ARACIS directorates

### ➤ Job Description for Director of Cooperation Directorate

#### **A. General Information**

1. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Executive Director

2. **Number Services/ Offices/ Compartments under the employee, and number of persons reporting to the employee:** one service, one office, one compartment and a complement staff of 16
3. **Occupational background of persons reporting to the employee:** specialists in international relations, communication, social sciences
4. **Functional area of the job:** the broad functional area is public relations; the more specific areas are international relations.

#### **B. Key objectives of the Directorate**

The general objective of the Cooperation Directorate is to ensure communication with international quality assurance organizations and involvement in national and international projects, as well as to promote a positive public image of the Agency while ensuring transparency.

More specific objectives:

1. To carry out international cooperation activities
2. To implement national and international projects
3. To promote the Agency's activities
4. To manage the relationships with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment
5. To coordinate the research, data analysis, and statistical services

The Cooperation Directorate consists of the International Relations and Project Management Service, the Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office, and the Research and Data Analysis Compartment.

#### **C. Key tasks for which the Director is responsible**

The tasks involved in completing these objectives are divided between the President of the Agency and the Cooperation Director: the President is responsible predominantly for providing leadership, while the Cooperation Director is responsible for operational management. In other words, the President formulates vision, strategies, and mission for each objective, while the Cooperation Director ensures that the mission and objectives are carried out and implemented operationally and guides the department in the right direction.

As such, the Cooperation Director has a crucial role in the Directorate's effort to attain the objectives mentioned above. The Director is responsible for delivering the Directorate's five objectives to its recipients while meeting their expectations. The Directorate's primary recipient is the Agency, represented by the President and the Executive Director.

C1. In **carrying out the international cooperation activities**, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To coordinate the communication with international organizations of which the Agency is a member, such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), INQAAHE, ENAEE, as well as with international peer agencies.
- To coordinate the preparation of reports and documents necessary for the Agency's external evaluations by ENQA, EQAR, ENAEE, etc.
- To represent the Agency at national and international events, conferences, meetings, workshops, etc.

C2. In ***implementing national and international projects***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To coordinate the implementation of national and international projects in which the Agency is principal or partner.
- To participate in the elaboration of national and international projects in which the Agency is principal or partner.

C3. In ***promoting the Agency's activities***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To oversee the communication with all departments.
- To oversee the development of the communication policy and the visual identity manual of the Agency.
- To provide advice on developing informative materials, the publication of the journal Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education (QAR), and the update of website information.
- To oversee the organization of events to disseminate relevant information to the public, such as conferences, workshops, etc.

C4. In ***managing the relationships with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To oversee the development of partnerships with the socio-economic environment for external quality assurance activities.
- To provide advice on the development of questionnaires and analyses on student satisfaction and graduate employability.

C5. In ***coordinating the research, data analysis, and statistical services***, the responsibilities of the Director are as follows:

- To coordinate the activity of the Research and Data Analysis Compartment.
- To ensure the Agency operates a confidentiality policy according to the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR (Directive 95/ 46/ EC).

## **D. Qualifications required**

### **1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna.
- Post-graduate studies in international relations, European affairs, communication, public relations, social or political science.

### **2. Work experience:**

- Fifteen (15) or more years of general experience, out of which at least ten (10) years in international relations within a public institution or a university.
- At least five (5) years of quality assurance experience in higher education at national and international levels.
- At least three (3) years of management experience in a relevant field (i.e., international relations, public relations, communication, European affairs) in higher education.

### **3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong knowledge of the European higher education area and quality assurance agencies and organizations.
- In-depth familiarity with critical aspects of the national higher education system and quality assurance in higher education, including structure, issues, challenges, and national regulations and policies.
- Strong knowledge of two international languages, out of which one should be English, the employee is expected to be proficient in reading, writing, and speaking in English
- Strong public presentation and lecturing skills
- Strong analytical skills, i.e., proven through papers or reports prepared within national or international projects in higher education and quality assurance in higher education.
- Strong skills in public relations, diplomacy, and public affairs.
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and virtual teams.
- Strong computer literacy: MS Word, Excel, Outlook, Internet search applications.

➤ *Job Description for Head of Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Office*

**A. General Information**

1. **Organizational unit in which the job is located:** Cooperation Directorate
2. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Cooperation Director
3. **Number of persons reporting to the employee:** 5
4. **Occupational designation:** Head of Office
5. **Occupational background of persons reporting to the employee:** specialists in communication, public relations, social sciences
6. **Functional area of the job:** the broad functional area is communication; the more specific area is public relations.

**B. Key objectives of the Service**

The general objective of the **Communication and Stakeholders Engagement Service** is to ensure communication with the stakeholders and promote a positive public image of the Agency while ensuring transparency.

More specific objectives:

1. To promote the Agency's activities
2. To organize events
3. To manage relations with partners and stakeholders: expert evaluators, students, graduates, representatives of the socio-economic environment

**C. Key tasks for which the Head of Office is responsible**

The Head of Office is responsible for delivering the three objectives to its recipients while meeting their expectations.

C1. In **promoting the Agency's activities**, the responsibilities of the Head of Service are as follows:

- To coordinate the development of the Agency's communication policy and visual identity manual and submit them for approval to the President of ARACIS.

- To coordinate communication with all the departments for the proper dissemination of the Agency's activities.
- To supervise the development of relevant information for public dissemination through communication-specific tools (such as press releases, information materials, summaries).
- To coordinate the development of informational and promotional materials, the publication of the journal Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education (QAR), and other publication activities, such as articles and brochures.
- To supervise permanent updates to the website based on the Agency's activities and initiatives, making suggestions to improve structure and content.
- To coordinate media monitoring, identifying topics of interest related to higher education, quality assurance in higher education, and ensuring the transmittal of information to the Agency's management, the ARACIS Council, and the technical staff.
- To facilitate the application of Law no. 544/2000 on access to information of public interest.

C2. In ***organizing the Agency's events***, the responsibilities of the Head of Service are as follows:

- To coordinate public events, such as conferences and workshops, to disseminate relevant information to the public.
- To coordinate training sessions for expert evaluators, including students.

C3. In ***managing the relationships with partners and stakeholders***, the responsibilities of the Head of Service are as follows:

- To coordinate the development of partnerships with the socio-economic environment for external quality assurance activities.
- To ensure the communication and collaboration between ARACIS and partners in the socio-economic environment.
- To coordinate the development of questionnaires and analyze student satisfaction and graduate employability.

#### **D. Qualifications required**

##### **1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna in communication, public relations, social or political science.

##### **2. Work experience:**

- Five (5) or more years of general experience, out of which at least three (3) years in communication or public relations (i.e., communication manager, journalist, public relations specialist).
- Previous experience in the higher education system is an advantage.

##### **3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong skills in communication and public relations.
- Good knowledge of at least one international language, preferably English, in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Good knowledge of the Romanian higher education system.
- Strong writing, public presentation, and lecturing skills.
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and virtual teams.
- Strong computer literacy: MS Word, Excel, Outlook, Internet search applications.

➤ *Job Description for Data Analyst*

**A. General Information**

1. **Organizational unit in which the job is located:** Research and Data Analysis Compartment/ Cooperation Directorate
2. **To whom the employee is directly reporting:** the Cooperation Director
3. **Occupational designation:** Expert
4. **Occupational specialization:** specialist in data analysis
5. **Functional area of the job:** the broad functional area is information and communications technology, focusing on data analysis and statistics.

**B. Key objectives of the Compartment**

The **Research and Data Analysis Compartment** operates under the Cooperation Directorate's authority and aims to ensure research, data analysis, and statistical services.

More specific objective:

1. ***Providing research, data analysis, and statistical services***

**C. Key tasks for which the Data Analyst is responsible**

The Data Analyst has a critical role to play in ***providing data analysis and statistical services***. The responsibilities of the Data Analyst are as follows:

**Statistical analysis and modeling**

- To collect and interpret relevant data on higher education to inform planning, development, and positioning of the Agency.
- To use data analysis techniques and generate descriptive statistics and correlations for data.
- To provide reports on the functioning of higher education institutions (HEIs).
- To provide inputs to research papers.
- To elaborate reports and statistics that effectively communicate trends, patterns, and forecasts using relevant data on the Romanian higher education system.

**D. Qualifications required**

**1. Education and training:**

- BA or BSc diploma if pre-Bologna, and MA or MSc degree if post-Bologna in mathematics, computer science, statistics, economics, or social science.

**2. Work experience:**

- At least five (5) years as a data analyst or statistician.

**3. Specific knowledge and skills:**

- Strong analytical skills, including information and data collection, organization, analysis, and dissemination.
- Strong knowledge of statistics, including statistical packages for datasets analysis and modeling (e.g., Excel, SPSS, SAS, R).

- Strong knowledge of databases (e.g., SQL).
- Knowledge of programming (e.g., XML, Javascript) is an advantage.
- Knowledge of an international language, preferably English, in reading, writing, and speaking.

## G. Internal Audit Compartment

The general objective of the Internal Audit Compartment is to improve the Agency's management by performing assurance activities carried out to provide an independent assessment of risk management, control, and governance processes, as well as advisory activities, aimed at adding value and improve governance processes.

The Internal Audit Compartment operates under the direct subordination of the President of the Agency.

### Functions

1. Applying the legal framework governing internal public audit and implementing it at the level of the Agency
2. Planning internal public audit activities
3. Conducting internal public audit missions
4. Reporting the results of internal public audit activities
5. Monitoring the application of measures provided by the Court of Accounts reports

### Tasks

1. Applying the legal framework governing internal public audit and implementing it at the level of the Agency
  - Elaborating the methodological norms specific to the Agency, with the approval of the Central Harmonization Unit for Internal Public Audit (UCAAPI).
2. Planning internal public audit activities
  - Elaborating the multiannual draft plan, usually for a three-year timeframe and, based on that, the annual internal public audit draft plan.
3. Conducting internal public audit missions
  - Conducting the internal public audit activities to assess whether the Agency's financial management and control systems are transparent and comply with the rules of legality, regularity, economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
4. Reporting the results of internal public audit activities
  - Informing UCAPI of the recommendations not appropriated by the President of the Agency and their consequences.
  - Periodical reporting of findings, conclusions, and recommendations from its audit activities.
  - Elaborating the annual report for the internal public audit activity.
  - Immediate reporting to the President of the Agency in case of irregularities.
5. Monitoring the application of measures provided by the Court of Accounts reports
  - Monitoring the application of the recommended measures and informing the Court of Accounts about these measures.

- Submitting to the Court of Accounts, by the end of the first quarter, the approved report on the internal public audit for the activity carried out in the previous year.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, management of ARACIS Directorates

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates

## H. Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Compartment

The general objective of the **Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Compartment** is to ensure legal and internal quality assurance activities.

The Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Compartment operates under the President of the Agency's direct supervision.

### **Functions**

1. Ensuring that the Agency is represented in the courts for defending its rights and interests
2. Validating the legality of individual and normative administrative acts elaborated by the Agency
3. Providing legal assistance to the Agency's departments in elaborating individual and regulatory administrative acts or other documents
4. Drawing up contracts and legal documents
5. Managing internal quality assurance activities within the Agency
6. Managing activities for the development of the internal managerial control system

### **Tasks**

1. Ensuring that the Agency is represented in the courts for defending its rights and interests
  - Formulating legal acts and points of view addressed to the courts to defend the Agency's rights and interests.
  - Representing and supporting the Agency's interests before the courts.
  - Drafting requests for summonses, objections, hearing notes, written conclusions, reasons for appeals in files involving the Agency.
  - Preparing any other procedural documents related to the representation of the Agency in courts.
  - Formulating proposals, whenever it deems necessary, regarding the amicable execution of the obligations established by court decisions.
  - Developing proposals for amicable settlements of pending disputes and remedies against resolutions unfavorable to the Agency and presenting them to management.
  - Preserving the files that are pending in court and subsequently transmitting to archiving.
2. Validating the legality of individual and normative administrative acts elaborated by the Agency
  - Approving the normative administrative acts on the internal approval cycles.
3. Providing legal assistance to the Agency's departments in elaborating individual and regulatory administrative acts or other documents
  - Formulating responses to complaints, notifications, and petitions addressed to the Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Compartment and providing advice on the notifications and petitions addressed to other departments.

4. Drawing up contracts and legal documents
  - Preparing contracts and legal documents when the Agency is an involved party.
  - Providing legal notice for employment and public procurement contracts.
  - Participating in BEX and Council meetings and drafting of BEX and ARACIS Council resolutions and decisions.
5. Managing internal quality assurance activities within the Agency
  - Participating in the development of internal quality assurance policies.
  - Elaborating and managing the quality management system (QMS) documents (Internal Manual) and ensuring the implementation and compliance with the QMS.
  - Producing a three-year report on the Agency's internal quality assurance.
6. Managing activities for the development of the internal managerial control system
  - Conducting meetings on the internal management control system.
  - Elaborating the documentation for implementation and development of the internal managerial control system.
  - Preparing the documentation for the internal managerial control system reporting.

**Beneficiaries:** ARACIS management, ARACIS directorates

**Service providers:** ARACIS directorates

## Annex 1 – General Interview Guide

<p><b><u>Heads of directorates/ offices</u></b></p>	<p><b>General information</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>What is your position in the Agency’s organizational chart?</i></li> <li>2. <i>For how long have you been managing this department/office?</i></li> <li>3. <i>What are the main activities in your responsibility, and how are your activities organized?</i></li> <li>4. <i>How autonomous are you in performing your activity?</i></li> <li>5. <i>Who do you directly report?</i></li> <li>6. <i>How many employees currently work in your department/office?</i></li> <li>7. <i>Is the organizational structure of your department appropriate for the tasks that the department office is responsible?</i></li> <li>8. <i>How many positions are available in the department?</i></li> <li>9. <i>In your opinion, what are the reasons for the vacancies?</i></li> </ol> <p><b>Collaboration within the department</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>What is the position of the department/office in the organizational chart? What about its role in the activity of ARACIS?</i></li> <li>2. <i>How important is the activity of the department/office for the proper activity/functionality of ARACIS?</i></li> <li>3. <i>How would you describe the working relationships in the department, formal or informal?</i></li> <li>4. <i>How are your working relationships with your colleagues?</i></li> <li>5. <i>Were you involved in the recruitment processes?</i></li> <li>6. <i>If yes, did you play a critical role in the recruitment process?</i></li> <li>7. <i>If not, would you like to be involved more in the recruitment/employment process?</i></li> <li>8. <i>How many women and men work in your department?</i></li> <li>9. <i>Is your department/office involved in the evaluation processes of HEIs or study programs? If yes, how exactly?</i></li> <li>10. <i>Do you (or the department) directly collaborate with the MoE or other public institutions?</i></li> </ol> <p><b>Working relationships between departments</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>How would you describe the working relationships with other departments (formal or informal)?</i></li> <li>2. <i>Which are the departments you directly work with, and how exactly?</i></li> <li>3. <i>How would you describe the communication with other departments?</i></li> <li>4. <i>How do you collaborate with other heads of departments?</i></li> <li>5. <i>How do you collaborate with the staff from other departments?</i></li> <li>6. <i>How do you collaborate/communicate with BEX and the President/ Vice-president of ARACIS?</i></li> </ol> <p><b>IT Equipment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Which technical equipment provided by the Agency do you use at work (computer, laptop, phone, printer)?</i></li> <li>2. <i>Do you think the equipment is adequate? Would you request other equipment?</i></li> <li>3. <i>How was your work-from-home activity organized?</i></li> </ol>
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	<p>4. Do you have the resources, if necessary, to continue working in the telework system?</p> <p>5. Do you use ARACIS information systems/platforms to work/ease your work?</p> <p>6. Would you need IT support to perform your activities better?</p> <p><b>Efficiency proposals</b></p> <p>1. What would you change in the current organization of the department?</p> <p>2. Do you have any suggestions for improving the department or Agency's activity?</p> <p>3. Do you have any suggestions for improving the flow of information/ documents?</p>
Directorate of International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation	<p>1. Do you collaborate with similar quality assurance agencies from other countries? How exactly?</p> <p>2. How is your collaboration with ENQA and EQAR?</p> <p>3. Is currently the department involved in national/European/international projects? How many projects?</p> <p>4. Are you involved in the "writing process" of the project applications?</p> <p>5. Do you participate in the decision-making process of quality assurance policies?</p> <p>6. Do you participate in the international evaluations carried out by the Agency?</p>
External Quality Evaluation Department/ Accreditation Department	Are you involved in the elaboration process of the procedures and standards for accreditation/external quality evaluation?
Quality Assurance Directorate	Do you participate in the development process of the reference standards and performance indicators for accreditation and QA Evaluations?
IT Administrator	<p>1. Are there sufficient IT resources for the Agency to operate in proper conditions?</p> <p>2. Have the employees received technical support during the work from home time?</p> <p>3. If the situation will require working from home again, are there enough resources to ensure continuity?</p> <p>4. Given that the evaluation of HEIs and study programs will be performed mainly through an IT module, is the IT system ready to take over the volume of data and capitalize it?</p> <p>5. What do you think about the IT department's current position in the organizational chart?</p>

Other general questions:

- How would you characterize the work environment (friendly, conflictual, hostile, competitive)?
- What are the organizational values (such as originality, innovation, solidarity, participation, the achievement of a set of objectives)?
- Do all colleagues in the department share them? What about the other employees of the Agency?
- Are the successes appreciated within the department? But within ARACIS?
- Do you have any other additional comments/suggestions/information to share?

## Annex 2 – List of interviewed representatives of ARACIS

1. Prof. Simona Lache	Director of Accreditation Department /BEX
2. Prof. Dorian Cojocaru	BEX Secretary-General
3. Prof. Mădălin Bunoiu	Director of External Quality Assessment Department /BEX
4. Prof. Radu Mircea Damian	International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate
5. Emilia Georgiana Mircea (Legal Officer)	Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Office
6. Geanina Buiuc (Internal Quality Assurance Expert)	
7. Marilena Lolea – Director	Organization, IT, Human Resources, and Public Procurement Directorate
8. Cristian Eni – IT Expert (IT Compartment)	
9. Aureliu Perdeleanu - Public Relations, Registry, Archive, and Secretariat Service	
10. Carmen Mirian	Quality Assurance Directorate - Service of Experts and Inspectors - accreditation and QA - university studies
11. Marilena Dobre	
12. Mihaela Băjenaru	
13. Mihai Marcu	

*Annex 3 – Current organization of the technical and administrative staff of ARACIS*

Unit / position	Available positions/ vacancies (number)	Comments
<b>Executive Director</b>	1 / 1	
<b>Internal Audit Compartment</b>	2 / 2	
<b>Legal and Internal Quality Assurance Bureau</b>	4 / 2	
<b>Quality Assurance Directorate</b>	27 / 19	Head of Directorate (positions 1/1 vacant) Office of Experts and Inspectors - accreditation and QA - university studies (positions 14/6 vacancies) Office Experts and Inspectors - accreditation and QA - postgraduate studies (positions 12/12 vacancies)
<b>Economic Directorate</b>	13 / 1	Head of Directorate (positions 1/0 vacancies) Financial & Accounting Office (positions 7/1 vacant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial &amp; Accounting Director (positions 1/0 vacancies)</li> <li>▪ Financial Bureau (positions 3/0 vacancies) – out of which 1 Head of Bureau</li> <li>▪ Accounting Bureau (positions 3/1 vacancies) – out of which 1 Head of Bureau</li> </ul> Administrative Bureau (positions 5/0 vacancies) - out of which 1 Head of Bureau
<b>Organization, IT, Human Resource, and Public Procurement Directorate</b>	14 / 5	Head of Directorate (positions 1/0 vacancies) Office for Public Relations Service, Registry, Archive, Secretariat (positions 7/2 vacancies) IT Compartment (positions 3/1 vacant) Human Resources Compartment (positions 1/1 vacant) Public Procurement Compartment (positions 2/1 vacant)
<b>International Relations, Projects, and Cooperation Directorate</b>	11 / 9	Head of Directorate (positions 1/0 vacancies) International Relations, Project Implementation, Communication and Events Office (positions 9/8 vacancies) Relations with the socio-economic environment Compartment (positions 1/1 vacant)
<b>Total</b>	72 / 39	

**Competence makes a difference!**  
Project selected under the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, co-financed by the  
European Union from the European Social Fund