



## **Republic of Mozambique**

### **Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education**

### **National Committee for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CNAQ)**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HIRING A CONSULTANCY TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE**

### **1. Background**

With a record of 62 years of existence, the higher education subsystem in Mozambique has been characterized over the last two decades by exponential quantitative growth, manifested by the emergence of several public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where there has been an increase in the total number of HEIs in operation of around 47%, from 36 (17 public and 19 private) in 2009 to 53 (22 public and 31 private) in 2020. This increase in the number of HEIs has resulted in an increase in the number of students entering HEIs, from 81,250 in 2009 to 239,602 in the same period. Currently, the Mozambican higher education system has a student population of 253,227, corresponding to a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 8.19, of which 47% are female, enrolled in 56 HEIs (22 public and 34 private) and enrolled in more than 2,469 courses taught at these HEIs (DNES, Synopsis of Statistics and Indicators of Higher Education in Mozambique, 2022).

Despite recognizing the need for expanding higher education in order to guarantee access to education for Mozambicans, the need to harmonize this rapidly growing subsystem with quality standards should not be overlooked, as well as its integration into the region, the continent and the world. In these terms, the Mozambican government approved the establishment of the National System for the Assessment, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (SINAQES), through Decree 63/2007 of December 31, now revoked by Decree 91/2023 of December 29. Also, under the Decree 91/2023 of December 29, Article 34, paragraph 1, the National Committee for Quality Assessment in Higher

Education (CNAQ as the body that guarantees the implementation and supervises SINAQES) was established, and its organic statute was defined by Decree 71/2023 of December 18.

Likewise, the Mozambican government has approved a number of working instruments aimed at helping to guarantee the quality of education in this sub-sector, most notably the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (approved by Decree no. 30/2010, of August 13) and the National System for the Accumulation and Transfer of Academic Credits (approved by Decree no. 72/2023, of December 18) and in particular Decree 43/2023, of August 2, the Regulation on the Licensing and Operation of Higher Education Institutions in Mozambique.

The expansion of higher education, resulting among other things from the liberalization of education (brought about by the First Higher Education Law, Law no. 1/1993, of June 24), and the need to offer relevant education, brings with it a series of challenges for the subsystem. These challenges are associated with the diversification of the profile of the student population, the emergence of new ways of offering education and the need for HEIs to equip themselves in terms of human resources, infrastructure and adopting contextualized training, research and extension policies geared towards concrete application in the productive sector in order to stimulate the country's social, economic and technological development.

It is in this context that the Government of the Republic of Mozambique is interested in assessing the state of the quality of higher education offered in the country, both in terms of compliance with the requirements established by the dimensions, standards and quality indicators used in the national, regional and global context, and in terms of the quality perceived by employers and society in general, by contracting consultancy services to be carried out by a national or international consultancy company or firm or research center, based in Mozambique, or in partnership with a national entity (hereinafter referred to as "the Consultant").

The purpose of this study is to assess the degree to which SINAQES' mission is being fulfilled, the functionality of the internal quality assurance systems at HEIs, the adequacy of SINAQES' procedures, processes and quality indicators, the impact of accreditation results

(of courses, programs and institutions), the perception of HEIs, society and employers about the system, the challenges and possible areas for improvement.

Since some elements relating to the quality of higher education and its impact may escape the metrics used by SINAQES, the study is also intended to provide elements relating to the performance of the higher education subsystem itself. In this sense, the first aim is to gauge the impact of the subsystem manifested through the expansion/access binomial, which is manifested, among other things, through the number of graduates, degree areas, regional and gender equity, the adequacy of courses and graduates to labor market demand, scientific production expressed in terms of its relevance and contribution to technological development, as well as the degree to which the subsystem responds to social, technological and innovation needs.

In addition, the aim is to assess the subsystem's level of efficiency, investment and quality of infrastructure, with the aim of understanding the framework of graduation rates compared to admissions, funding for institutions, and gauging pressing investment needs and the state of infrastructure.

Given its relevance to the subsystem quality, it is essential to assess the governance and management of the subsystem. In this regard, the aim is to understand how the governance of the sector, both at central level (Ministry, CNAQ, legislation, regulation and supervision, etc.) and at the level of the HEIs themselves (management and democratic nature), positively or negatively influences the quality of higher education. This point can address issues such as the differentiation of HE (polytechnics vs universities), the promotion of internationalization, mobility and the integration of the subsystem at regional, continental and global levels.

## **1. Consulting objectives**

### **1.1. General objective**

- ✓ To analyze the situation of higher education in Mozambique in terms of training opportunities (number of students, courses, faculties and distribution of HEIs by region), quality of processes, results, level of compliance of HEIs with the SINAQES indicators, as well as society's perception of the quality of higher education in the country.

## **1.2. Specific objectives**

- ✓ Using a representative sample, to assess the functionality of internal quality assurance systems in HEIs, exploring the link between institutional accreditation and improvements in the functioning of the HEI's internal quality assurance system.
- ✓ Characterize the overall performance of the subsystem in terms of the implementation of SINAQES (its dimensions, standards and indicators) by comparing:
  - HEIs of different types (public or private);
  - HEIs according to class (A, B, C and D);
  - similar courses in the same areas (STEM, Economics and Law) in the same class of HEI; and
  - similar courses from HEIs of the same class offered in different teaching modalities (face-to-face and distance learning);
- ✓ Characterize the strategic development of the subsystem in terms of access, expansion, impact, efficiency, investment and governance;
- ✓ To identify a model of rationality between the historical evolution of the process of evaluation and accreditation of courses, weighted against the exponential growth of courses at HEIs;
- ✓ Estimate the effort (financial and human) needed to implement SINAQES in all courses and HEIs, in view of the moratorium established by the subsystem's legal instruments;
- ✓ Describe the assessment of the subsystem's stakeholders regarding the entry level of candidates to higher education;
- ✓ To identify the main challenges and constraints faced by HEIs in their actions to promote and guarantee quality in the light of SINAQES;
- ✓ Propose concrete and sustainable measures to be adopted to boost the quality of training on offer in the country.

## **2. Working methodology and expected results**

The consultancy service will be carried out by a company or consultancy firm (or research center) as indicated below, in close consultation with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, represented by the National Council for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CNAQ) and relevant *stakeholders* through the Technical Team appointed for this purpose. A participatory approach combining quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods is suggested for this study. In addition, a SWOT analysis preceded by a qualitative assessment using interviews, focus groups, among other techniques, the resulting information from which could help to build a solid database that makes it possible to sustain and advance in subsequent phases and achieve the objectives and expected results.

## **2.1 Methodology**

In order to better monitor and follow up the study during the main phases, it is proposed that the Consultant follow the following path in the development of the study:

- ✓ After signing the contract, the consultancy team should meet with the National Committee for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CNAQ), the National Directorate for Higher Education (DNES), the General Inspectorate of MCTES, the National Directorate for Planning, Statistics and Cooperation (DNPEC), the Legal Office of MCTES, the National Institute for Information and Communication Technologies (INTIC), the National Directorate for Science, Technology and Information (DNCTI), the Directorate for Information Systems, Studies and Projects (DISIEP); Instituto de Bolsas de Estudo, IP (IBE), Instituto do Governo Electrónico de Moçambique, IP (INAGE) in order to gather subsidies and relevant information on similar work in progress or additional guidelines for this consultancy.
  
- ✓ This meeting will be an opportunity for the consultant to explain his understanding of the ToR, present the proposed work methodology to be followed and hear MCTES' expectations regarding the subject of the contract. The meeting will also serve to provide clarifications and outline the forms and methods of communication between all the interested parties and involved in the process.
  
- ✓ The Consultant must submit for discussion and approval an *inception* report and a proposal for a detailed work plan ("*inception report*"), containing the

schedule of activities, including the submission of the results/deliverables of the consultancy on the basis of a first diagnosis based on the existing reports of the CNAQ and the Inspectorate.

- ✓ Also within the scope of the inception report, the consultancy firm should submit for discussion and approval the sample proposal and respective selection criteria, indicating the representative cross-section of HEIs of different types (public and private) and classes (A, B, C and D) to be included, taking into account regional asymmetries in terms of location (North, Center and South) in order to guarantee the achievement of expected results.
- ✓ Through *workshops*, the consultancy team should establish contacts with *stakeholders* (students, teachers, higher education managers, technical administrative staff), representatives of socio-professional organizations, employers, civil society, among others, with the aim of presenting and discussing the preliminary results and gathering relevant input.

## ***2.2 Expected results***

This study is expected to achieve the following results, among others:

- ✓ Described the system in the various policy dimensions 1. Vision for Higher Education 2. Regulatory framework 3. Governance of the system and institutions 4. Public funding 5. Quality Assurance 6. Relevance to social and economic needs;
- ✓ Described the conditions in which the HEIs analyzed operate in terms of internal quality assurance mechanisms;
- ✓ Characterization of the subsystem's overall performance in implementing SINAQES (its dimensions, standards and indicators);
- ✓ Identify a model that shows the rationality between the historical evolution of the course evaluation and accreditation process, weighed against the exponential growth of courses at HEIs;
- ✓ Assessment of the relevance of the training opportunities to the context, particularly in terms of the employability of graduates in the selected areas;

- ✓ Estimated effort (financial and human) needed to implement SINAQES in all courses and HEIs in view of the moratorium established by the subsystem's legal instruments;
- ✓ Described the assessment of the subsystem's stakeholders regarding the entry level of applicants to higher education;
- ✓ The level of perception of society (employers, academics, etc.) about the quality of higher education in Mozambique;
- ✓ Identified the main challenges and constraints for HEIs in promoting and guaranteeing quality;
- ✓ Proposed concrete and sustainable measures to be adopted to boost the quality of the country's training opportunities.

### **3. Products to be delivered**

The consulting firm must submit the following products for the client's consideration and approval:

**3.1. *An inception report.*** This should contain details of the methodology, including sample selection criteria to be followed to achieve the objectives of the consultancy, the *stakeholders* to be contacted through interviews, focus groups, as well as the plan and timetable of activities, from the beginning to the end of the work.

**3.2. *Intermediate report*** on the development of the work. It should identify the current state, the main achievements, highlighting the causes or factors underlying its operation and the level of satisfaction with the services provided by the HEIs in Mozambique, as well as highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities and potential of the HE subsystem as a whole and in its different subcomponents, scientific areas or domains and teaching methodologies in the light of SINAQES and Decree 43/2023, of August 2, Regulations for the Licensing and Operation of HEIs.

**3.3. *Final study report*** on the quality of higher education in Mozambique. This report should include concrete and sustainable recommendations, if possible, proposals for funding to boost the quality of processes, results, participation of HEIs in terms of quality assurance mechanisms and the supply of higher education in the country, in order to contribute to the integration of Mozambican higher education in the region and the world.

**3.4. An executive summary** that identifies and summarizes the issues analyzed, the main results, conclusions and recommendations of the consultancy. This document will be produced by the consultant after validation of the previous products by MCTES.

#### **4. Hierarchical integration**

This consultancy is part of the activities of the National Committee for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CNAQ) and is being carried out under the leadership of the President of the CNAQ.

For the purposes of accountability, monitoring and general supervision of the work carried out by the consultancy firm, a Steering Committee will be set up, led by the President of the CNAQ, and made up of representatives from the following units of the MCTES and Supervised Units: DNES, IBE, CNAQ, General Inspectorate of MCTES, DISIEP, INTIC, DNCTI and DPEC. Also, for better monitoring, at each stage of the study, the consultancy firm should present the preliminary results to the main HE *stakeholders* and the collegiate bodies of MCTES.

The consultant must be available to travel anywhere in the country to carry out the work provided for in this consultancy.

#### **5. Execution Deadline**

The consultancy should last 90 days from the date the contract is signed, according to the schedule in Annex 3.

#### **6. Consultancy Profile**

##### **6.1 Consulting Firm Profile**

The consultancy firm must be an institution specialized in the areas of education, in particular higher education, institutional development, administrative law or similar, with experience in the education sector. It must have at least 5 (five) years' proven experience of similar work in the areas of public administration, higher education development policy-making and institutional development. It must also have relevant experience in higher education assessment, accreditation and quality assurance and extensive knowledge of higher education legislation.



## 6.2 Composition and profile of the technical consultancy team

The Consultant's proposal should describe the project management structure with an indication of the team leader and the list of specialists who will assist in carrying out the study tasks, including at least:

- ***Team leader or coordinator*** with a degree (Master's or PhD) in Education, Economics, Engineering, Law or equivalent, and at least 10 years' teaching, research and/or management experience in higher education; proven experience in drafting and implementing strategies, public policies and regulations for the education sector in general and higher education in particular; knowledge of and involvement in evaluating the quality of teaching for the education sector in general and higher education in particular; ability to organize and lead multidisciplinary work teams.
- ***A specialist in Institutional Development*** with a higher education degree (Master's or PhD) in an area relevant to the planning and development of higher education; at least 5 (five) years' experience in institutional development and mastery of higher education planning and strategic management tools; good knowledge of Mozambican legislation in the area of higher education; ability to work in multidisciplinary teams and participatory processes.
- ***A specialist in the analysis of educational infrastructures*** with a higher education degree (Master's or PhD) in an area relevant to the planning, development of construction projects and analysis of educational infrastructures; at least 5 (five) years' experience of teaching and/or management and planning in higher education; knowledge of Mozambican legislation in the education sector in general and higher education in particular; experience of working in multidisciplinary teams and participatory processes.
- ***A specialist in Statistical Analysis*** with higher education (Master's or PhD) with at least 5 (five) years of relevant experience in quantitative analysis and statistical projections, including financial aspects. Mastery of Mozambican legislation in the education sector in general and higher education in particular and experience of working in multidisciplinary teams and participatory processes are an advantage.

