



ENIC Capacity Building Part II

Final Report

Project information

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Project Summary

Project Objectives (envisaged objectives, target groups, needs addressed)

The principal aims of this project were :

- To identify the current requirements of emerging ENICs
- To assist in the development of a more coherent and consistent approach to recognition.

Following initial desk-based research, face-to-face discussions focussing on current recognition criteria/processes in the participating ENICs at a meeting in Tbilisi, and information provided via email, phone calls and at the annual meeting in Sèvres, UK NARIC drew up a list of needs that could be addressed in the workshops. The issues that were identified are as follows:

- Recognition procedures are currently time-consuming and very bureaucratic, including verification and nostrification of international qualification. The associated appeals procedure compounds this situation.
- All students entering HE are registered in a central databank to which all universities have access to. This database is fully operational in Georgia, in Azerbaijan they are currently in the process of establishing such a database.
- Recognition procedures are very administration-heavy, at both the faculty and ENIC levels. Interviews are part of the procedures in Azerbaijan. Only original documents are accepted.
- A database that includes data similar to that stored in UK NARIC's 'International Comparisons' would assist in the evaluation process, provide greater consistency and avoid duplication of work.
- Evaluation processes are currently heavily input focused. Currently 65% of the curricula has to match a national programme for the qualification to be recognised. Learning outcomes are not considered in the evaluation process.
- Both ENICs have recently received more applications from third countries they are unfamiliar with. Verification processes and an understanding of these qualifications are problematic.

Following the identification of current needs, UK NARIC re-worked existing materials and developed new content in order to create bespoke sessions for the participating ENICs and associated stakeholders. The content of this training course was based on the findings of the analysis phase and covered the following main areas:

- Credential evaluation
- Developing criteria and processes for recognition
- Identifying fraudulent documents
- Using qualification frameworks
- Managing and accessing data relevant for credential evaluation
- Country specific information about the education systems in India, Sri Lanka and the Ivory Coast.

The main target group of this project was the participating ENICs in Azerbaijan and Georgia, with a view to encompassing where appropriate HEIs and stakeholders within the participating countries and other neighbouring states or further afield as required.

Project Outcomes and Undertaken Activities (including information on the involvement of partners, if applicable and the dissemination and exploitation strategy)

The main outcome of this project was an adaptable training course and accompanying materials that were delivered to emerging ENIC/NARIC centres in Azerbaijan and Georgia. These materials could potentially be adapted to the needs of centres in a similar position (both developmentally and geographically) to provide a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding on which to base future recognition processes.

The bespoke sessions that were designed for this project were delivered at a two-day session in Baku, Azerbaijan to an audience of around 10 people, which included two ENICs, as well as representatives from the Azerbaijani Ministry of Higher Education. The content of these sessions can be found in the previous section.

Following the workshops, UK NARIC distributed a survey, to gain feedback on the content and delivery of the sessions, as well as requesting ideas for improvements to the current format in terms of additions, changes in mode of delivery, etc. This feedback proved to be positive, but also included constructive feedback for developing the sessions in a positive way such as providing more information on education systems and qualifications from particular countries, adding a section on fraudulent documents. Examples of general feedback can be found below:

“We found the information (printed version) with the examples very useful in our work and often use it at our office.”

“It was very useful to get acquainted with the methodology of comparing the qualifications of UK NARIC and Azerbaijan”

The results of this survey, as well as copies of presentations and other training materials can be obtained by contacting Katja Durkin on katja.durkin@naric.org.uk.

The project was particularly relevant to the participating ENICs, as they are currently facing a number of key issues in the field of recognition but are not eligible for funding directly under the NARIC Network in order to address them. Furthermore the results of the project may be shared with neighbouring ENICs, thus contributing towards a more joined-up approach to training as well as recognition. Armenia has already expressed a keen interest.

Azerbaijan and Georgia have both expressed interest in extending the project to focus on developing a suitable data handling and storage system, such as UK NARIC’s database, and accommodating a greater focus on learning outcomes. Such a continued co-operation would be very interesting for UK NARIC as well.

Finally, the participating individuals will be able to disseminate the knowledge and understanding gained in the training sessions to other colleagues within their own ENIC office and to external stakeholders.

Contribution to EU Policies and Impact

This project has contributed towards the improvement (i.e. bringing more in to line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention) of recognition criteria and procedures in emerging ENIC centres. In addition, up-to-date information relating to the education systems and procedures of the participating countries can now be disseminated across the network, leading to improved recognition of their qualifications and a clearer understanding of the

latest HE developments.

This project has addressed the first objective of the NARIC Invitation 2008, by contributing towards greater coherence in recognition practices and offering opportunities for sharing information and best practices. By including centres that have not previously been eligible to participate, this project could lead the way in promoting more inclusive practices and encourage other NARICs to look beyond their usual project partners.

The project addressed objectives 2 to 6 of the NARIC Network Mandate Objectives, namely:

- Assisting in the development of recognition criteria and processes, with a view to creating a more coherent approach
- Disseminating information and outcomes through the wider network
- Discussing and analysing current recognition practices, through meetings and other correspondence
- Ensuring a regional approach is adopted, which in turn could be fed into other networks and steering groups.

Furthermore, the project also addressed the following priorities, by improving recognition processes with centres that thus far have not had such an opportunity for development:

- To further develop the use of learning outcomes in credential evaluation with a view to improving the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning and in line with the existing and emerging qualification frameworks
- To support networking among NARIC centres also in view of improving recognition of third country qualifications

In addition, the London Communiqué of May 2007 states that:

“There has been progress in the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), ECTS and diploma supplements, but the range of national and institutional approaches to recognition needs to be more coherent. To improve recognition practices, we therefore ask the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to arrange for the ENIC/NARIC networks to analyse our national action plans and spread good practice.”

As this project has sought to improve the coherence and understanding of recognition practices in a specific region of Europe, it has directly addressed the recommendations put forward in the abovementioned Communiqué. By focussing on a recognition methodology based closely on the LRC, it has also contributed to the spreading of good practice.

In the short-term, this project has improved the knowledge based in the target audience and has given a lot of food for thought vis-à-vis current criteria and procedures. It has also helped to spread good practice amongst centres and their key stakeholders. In the longer term, it is hoped that recognition policy will be developed to be more in line with the LRC, thus contributing to the intended transparency and coherency across the wider network.