



**ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM FOR  
ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
(ECA)**

**Annual Report 2019**

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## 1. Balance sheet at 31 December 2019

	<u>31 December 2018</u>	<u>1 September 2019</u>	<u>31 December 2019</u>
<i>Current assets</i>			
Accounts receivable	-	22.000 €	2.000 €
Other current assets	2.971 €	-	-
Cash at bank	186.415 €	191.206 €	157.347 €
	<u>189.386 €</u>	<u>213.206 €</u>	<u>159.347 €</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b><u>189.386 €</u></b>	<b><u>213.206 €</u></b>	<b><u>159.347 €</u></b>
<i>Equity</i>			
	168.462 €		168.080 €
<i>Current liabilities</i>			
Accounts Payable		-	
Current accounts	6.607 €	4.408 €	18.500 €
Prepaid income	12.000 €	-	8.000 €
	<u>18.607 €</u>	<u>4.408 €</u>	<u>26.500 €</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b><u>189.386 €</u></b>	<b><u>213.206 €</u></b>	<b><u>159.347 €</u></b>

## 2. Statement of income and expenditure 2019

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Income</b>				
Contribution members	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €
Contribution observers	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €
<b>Total income</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>
<b>Services &amp; Project Income</b>				
CeQuInt fees	4.400 €	3.600 €	6.000 €	4.400 €
Training fees	5.600 €	-	9.000 €	2.980 €
IMPACT project income	-	-	-	1.305 €
ImpEA project income	-	-	10.000 €	575 €
eQuatic project income	-	-	20.000 €	20.198 €
AR-NET project income	1.112 €	1.112 €	1.000 €	-
e-VALUATE project income	-	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project income	-	-	-	20.000 €
<b>Total Services and Projects Income</b>	<b>11.112 €</b>	<b>4.712 €</b>	<b>47.000 €</b>	<b>49.458 €</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>83.112 €</b>	<b>76.712 €</b>	<b>119.000 €</b>	<b>121.458 €</b>

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>Revised budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
	2019	1/09/2019	2019	2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>				
Coordination costs	37.000 €	18.500 €	37.000 €	35.845 €
Information and communication	3.369 €	1.941 €	8.000 €	3.911 €
Contributions to ECAEvents	12.751 €	8.489 €	11.000 €	10.400 €
Travel expenses	6.626 €	3.210 €	5.000 €	2.697 €
Other expenses	10.618 €	2.419 €	3.000 €	2.503 €
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	<b>70.364 €</b>	<b>34.559 €</b>	<b>64.000 €</b>	<b>55.356 €</b>

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Partial</b>	<b>Revised budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
	2019	1/09/2019	2019	2018
	€		€	€
<b>Services &amp; Project Expenses</b>				
CeQuint costs	5.721 €	-	4.000 €	5.571 €
Training costs	4.831 €	-	9.000 €	2.106 €
CALOHEE project costs	-	-	-	368 €
ImpEA project costs	-	-	10.000 €	767 €
eQuatic project costs	2.577 €	1.817 €	20.000 €	2.187 €
AR-NET project costs	-	-	1.000 €	218 €
e-VALUATE project costs	-	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project costs	-	-	-	13.398 €
Internal strategic projects costs	-	-	12.000 €	-
<b>Total Services and Projects Expenses</b>	<b>13.130 €</b>	<b>1.817 €</b>	<b>57.000 €</b>	<b>24.615 €</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>83.494 €</b>	<b>36.376 €</b>	<b>121.000 €</b>	<b>79.971 €</b>
<b>Net result</b>	<b>-382 €</b>	<b>40.336 €</b>	<b>-2.000 €</b>	<b>41.487 €</b>

### 3. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

#### a. About ECA

The Annual Report 2019 is the sixth one of the association ECA. The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) was incorporated as an association in The Hague, The Netherlands on 15 April 2014. The Annual Report 2019 covers the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. Prior to the incorporation ECA was not a legal entity but a project consortium set up by accreditation agencies in 2003 in Córdoba. The existence of this project consortium ended with the incorporation of ECA as an association.

The membership of the association ECA consists of accreditation and QA agencies.

Eligible for Membership shall be an organisation:

- a. which has its registered office in a country which participates in the Bologna Process ("Bologna Countries");
- b. which has been established as a corporate body or is based on national and/or regional regulations and/or agreements;
- c. which has accreditation or accreditation-like practices as one of its principal functions;
- d. which contributes actively to the objectives of the Association; and
- e. which fulfils the ECA Code of Good Practice and/or the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The member organisations participating in ECA meet at least once year in a plenary General Meeting. The General Meeting will decide on the admission of a new Member. The Annual Meeting will take place virtually on 16 June 2020. Due to the COVID-19 the meeting will be held by virtual means.

The association has a Board appointed by the General Meeting and consisting of three to seven members, including a Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer. The members who are not Chair or Vice-Chair need to represent five different Bologna member countries.

The Board had the following composition in 2019:

- Maciej Markowski (PKA, Poland), Chair, from 28 June 2018.
- Ann Verreth (NVAO, The Netherlands and Flanders), Board member from 1 January till 28 June 2018; Vice-Chair from 28 June 2018 till 19 February 2019.
- Solange Pisarz (Hcerés), France), Board member from 28 June 2018; Interim Vice-Chair since 19 February; Vice-Chair since 6 June 2019).
- Loulou Von Ravensberg (UKÄ, Sweden), Board member from 28 June 2018 and Treasurer from 24 September 2018.

- Eva Fernandez de Labastida (Unibasq, Spain), Board member from 28 June 2018.
- Ronny Heintze (AQAS, Germany), Board member from 28 June 2018.
- Klemen Subic (SQAA, Slovenia), Board member from 28 June 2018.

The Board met four times in 2019: 19-20 February in Cologne, 3 April in Paris, 5-6 June in Riga, 2-4 October in Stockholm.

The Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Association, under the supervision of the Board. From 1 January until 30 June 2019, NVAO has hosted the Secretariat, then the Secretariat has moved to ACSUCYL.

The Secretariat is led by the Coordinator who is appointed by the General Meeting and operates under the responsibility of the Board. Mark Frederiks (NVAO, The Netherlands and Flanders) was the Coordinator until the 30 June. In the General Meeting held in Cologne was approved that ACSUCYL will assume the Secretariat and Sandra Marcos (ACSUCYL, Castilla y León, Spain) was appointed as Coordinator until 30 June 2021.

The objectives of the association ECA are:

- to achieve mutual recognition of accreditation and quality assurance decisions, to enhance the conditions for such mutual recognition, especially for joint programmes;
- to provide a platform for mutual learning and disseminating experiences with accreditation and accreditation-like practises;
- to provide transparent information on quality;
- to facilitate the internationalisation of institutions and students;
- and, furthermore, to perform any and all acts relating to the foregoing in the broadest sense.

The Association does not have the objective to make a profit. The Association cooperates with other [relevant networks](#).

To achieve the objectives of ECA the [Members](#) agree to undertake activities in [Working Groups](#). The following Groups were in place in 2019:

1. Mutual recognition and joint programmes
2. Innovation in QA and accreditation

In addition, the members have appointed two standing committees of ECA:

- The Certification Group is responsible for the methodology and due process to award ECA's Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation.

- The Appeals Committee has the task of handling appeals regarding the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation, as specified in the Appeals Procedure CeQuInt.

On the other hand, the Board has installed the Communication Committee as an ad-hoc committee.

All working groups (WG), Communication Committee and the Certification Group (CG) met in the reporting period:

- 19-20 February in Cologne, 5-6 June in Riga, 2-4 October in Stockholm.

The strategy of the association is defined in the [ECA strategic management plan](#). On 28 June 2018 the members adopted the “ECA Strategic Update 2018-2023”.

The strategic vision of ECA is to act as an internationally recognised driver of innovation in quality assurance. With its expertise, networking and services ECA contributes to the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), promotes internationalisation of higher education and assures “state of the art” activities of its members.

ECA contributes to the EHEA implementation and to international QA developments through innovative project work. Projects in which ECA participates are discussed in the working groups and/or the Board. In 2019 ECA was involved as project partner or expert in:

- Facilitating implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (ImpEA; October 2017-August 2020)
- Assessing quality of partnerships amongst Higher Education Institutions (eQuatic; November 2017-October 2019)
- Automatic Recognition in the Networks in 2020 (AR-Net; 2018-2020)
- Evaluating e-learning for academic recognition (E-Valuate; March 2018-February 2020).
- Quality Assurance Student Experts (September 2019- 31 August 2021)

## b. Summary of Significant Accounting Principles

### **Basis of Preparation**

These financial statements, express the information for year 2019. It has been identified financial information from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 1st September 2019, the period in which NVAO was in charge of the ECA bank account. Although, the Secretariat was moved on the 1 July, the bank account was transferred from NVAO on the 1 Sept. due to management issues. ACSUCYL had the access to the bank account in November.



These financial statements, which are expressed in Euros, are prepared in accordance with accounting principles mentioned below.

The net result is added to the reserves.

Assets

Assets are stated at nominal value net of a provision for doubtful debts.

Cash at bank

Cash at bank are at the disposal of the consortium and are interest bearing at prevailing market rates.

Current liabilities

Current liabilities are stated at nominal value.

Income and expenses recognition

Income and expenses are accounted for in the period to which they relate.

## 4. Notes to the balance sheet at 31 December 2019

### a. Current Assets

The current assets comprise other current assets and cash at bank. These items are amounts still to be received and a prepaid invoice.

### b. Equity (reserves)

Statement of movements

	<u>31 December 2019</u>	<u>31 December 2018</u>
	€	€
As at January 1	168.462 €	126.975 €
Net result reporting year	-382 €	41.487 €
	-	
<b>As at December 31</b>	<u><b>168.080 €</b></u>	<u><b>168.462 €</b></u>

The net result was much lower than in 2018, but it was higher than predicted in the approved budget. This is because part of the income from various projects did not occur. Income that has not been produced by these projects in 2019 is expected to occur in 2020.

### c. Current Liabilities

There is only one invoice pending for 2020 from an observer and there is a credit with ACSUCYL for the first half of 2020, as the payment for the Secretariat was done from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

## 5. Notes to the statement of income and expenditure 2019

### a. Income

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Income</b>				
Contribution members	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €	68.000 €
Contribution observers	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €	4.000 €
<b>Total income</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>	<b>72.000 €</b>
<b>Services &amp; Project Income</b>				
CeQuInt fees	4.400 €	3.600 €	6.000 €	4.400 €
Training fees	5.600 €	-	9.000 €	2.980 €
IMPACT project income	-	-	-	1.305 €
FAIR project income	-	-	-	-
CALOHEE project income	-	-	-	-
ImpEA project income	-	-	10.000 €	575 €
eQuatic project income	-	-	20.000 €	20.198 €
AR-NET project income	1.112 €	1.112 €	1.000 €	-
e-VALUATE project income	-	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project income	-	-	-	20.000 €
<b>Total Services and projects Income</b>	<b>11.112 €</b>	<b>4.712 €</b>	<b>47.000 €</b>	<b>49.458 €</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>83.112 €</b>	<b>76.712 €</b>	<b>119.000 €</b>	<b>121.458 €</b>

In 2019 a membership contribution of 4.000 € was invoiced to:

1. Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Croatia
2. Commission des Titres d'Ingénieurs (CTI), France
3. Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales (AHPGS), Germany
4. Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), Germany
5. Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur (ZEVA), Germany
6. Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), the Netherlands and Flanders
7. Bureau of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA), Poland
8. Agenda Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA), Spain

9. Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategie Foresight in Higher Education (ACPUA), Spain
10. Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA), Slovenia
11. The Danish Accreditation Institution (AI), Denmark
12. Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University (ACSUG), Spain
13. Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKA), Sweden
14. Higher Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcerés), France
15. Agency for the Quality of the Basque University System (Unibasq), Spain
16. Agencia para la Calidad del Systema Universitario de Castilla y León (ACSUCYL), Spain
17. Academie Information Centre / Latvian Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA), Latvia.

An observer fee of 2.000 € was invoiced to:

1. Council for Higher Education (CHE), Israel
2. International Centre of Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality Education (THE-ICE), Australia.

CeQuint fees were received for Universiteit Maastricht, Amsterdamse Hogeschool, Stg Breda University A.S and Hotelschool The Hague.

The training fees were received for the training “Assesing Joint Programmes” which was held in Cologne on the 10 -11 October 2019. 14 people attended to the training, 7 ECA members and 7 Non ECA members. The fee for members was 350€ and for non-members 450€.

For the Ar-NET project contribution was received to staff costs of an ECA member participating in this project.

## b. Expenses

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost of coordination</b>				
Coordination: NVAO - ACSUCYL	37.000 €	37.000 €	37.000 €	35.845 €
				-
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.000 €</b>	<b>37.000 €</b>	<b>37.000 €</b>	<b>35.845 €</b>

The cost of coordination is the contribution from ECA that member agency receives to carry out the tasks of Coordinator and Secretariat for the Association. In 2019 the cost of the coordination has been distributed to NVAO, that was in charge of the Secretariat until 30 June 2019, and to ACSUCYL that assume the 1 of July the Secretariat.

These costs include staff costs for the Coordinator and secretarial support. Travel expenses of the Coordinator for attending ECA related meetings are excluded from the contribution (these

costs are included in the budget under Travel Expenses Secretariat). From 2017 onwards the contribution has been annually increased with the inflation of last year.

	Actual 2019	Actual partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€			€
<b>Services &amp; Project Expenses</b>				
CeQuint costs	5.721 €	-	4.000 €	5.571 €
Training costs	4.831 €	-	9.000 €	2.106 €
CALOHEE project costs	-	-	-	368 €
ImpEA project costs	-	-	10.000 €	767 €
eQuatic project costs	2.577 €	1.817 €	20.000 €	2.187 €
AR-NET project costs	-	-	1.000 €	218 €
e-VALUATE project costs	-	-	1.000 €	-
EQ-Arts project costs	-	-	-	13.398 €
Internal strategic projects costs	-	-	12.000 €	-
<b>Total Services Income</b>	<b>13.130 €</b>	<b>1.817 €</b>	<b>57.000 €</b>	<b>24.615 €</b>

The CeQuint costs consisted of the second payment for the new CeQuInt website.

The training costs are related to Assessing Joint Programmes training. It covers the accommodation and subsistence expenses for the facilitators, the fees of the facilitators (500€ per day) and the dinner on 10 October, and lunches on 10 and 11 October for 14 participants.

The eQuatic project costs are related to the travel and subsistence expenses of the Chair and the Secretariat, to attend several meetings regarding the project.

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Information and communication</b>				
Website ECA/Qrossroads/EEEP	3.369 €	1.941 €	8.000 €	3.304 €
Logo, letters, envelopes, etc.				607 €
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.369 €</b>	<b>1.941 €</b>	<b>8.000 €</b>	<b>3.911 €</b>

The information and communication costs include the hosting, support and annual registration of the website domains, as well as maintenance and solving bugs for EEEP and Qrossroads. Since November 2019, the Qrossroads and EEEP was removed from the contract with the service provider as these services were not functioning.

In this item is also include a photo session of the Board.

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Contributions to ECA events</b>				
ECA Events	12.721 €	8.489 €	11.000 €	10.400 €
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.721 €</b>	<b>8.489 €</b>	<b>11.000 €</b>	<b>10.400 €</b>

ECA has contributed to the ECA events that were organised by AQAS in Cologne on 19-20 February, by AIKA in Riga on 5-6 June, and by ÜKA in Stockholm on 2-4 October. During these events the Board, working groups and committees of ECA met as well. In addition, the Board met in Paris on 3 April.

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Travel expenses</b>				
Travel Expenses Board	4.017 €	1.048 €	500 €	364 €
Travel Expenses Secretariat	1.225 €	778 €	4.000 €	2.333 €
Travel Expenses Others	1.384 €	1.384 €	500 €	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.626 €</b>	<b>3.210 €</b>	<b>5.000 €</b>	<b>2.697 €</b>

Travel Expenses Board consists of the travel and subsistence expenses of the Chair to attend events representing ECA:

- Meeting with Slik (website provider). October 2018.
- Meeting Higher Education Authority, QQA and Rector's conference to organize a conference about European Universities in Ireland. November 2018.
- CTI meeting in Paris. February 2019.
- ECA Board meeting in Paris. April 2019.
- EAI conference in Helsinki. June 2019.
- ENQA GA. Yerevan. October 2019.

It also includes a travel to The Hague to make the arrangements with the bank for the transition of the Secretariat.

Travel Expenses Secretariat include travel and accommodation costs of the Coordinator for the ECA events and Board meetings.

Travel expenses others, include the travel and subsistence expenses for the meeting held in The Hague for the transition of the Secretariat.

	Actual 2019	Partial 1/09/2019	Revised budget 2019	Actual 2018
	€	€	€	€
<b>Other expenses</b>				
Affiliated memberships	2.317 €	2.317 €	2.400 €	2.317 €
Bank Charges	142 €	102 €	200 €	186 €
Consultancy	8.060 €	-	-	-
Other general expenses	100 €	-	400 €	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.618 €</b>	<b>2.419 €</b>	<b>3.000 €</b>	<b>2.503 €</b>

Other expenses include, the affiliate membership fee of ENQA, bank charges and the consultancy which includes, the legal and accounting advice for the transition of the Secretariat on the tax and legal consequences analysis of the agreement and the insurance of the Board.

Other general expenses refer to the fine for improper use of images on the ECA website.

## 6. Report of the Financial Committee

To: The Annual Meeting of Members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)

Each year, the General Meeting will appoint a Financial Committee consisting of at least two members, who may not be Members of the Board. The Financial Committee will audit the Annual Report and will report to the General Meeting on its findings.

We have audited the financial statements 2019 of the association European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2019, the statement of income and expenditure 2019, ECA financial ledgers to September 2019 and between 1st September and 31 December 2019, and the notes, comprising a summary of the accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### **Responsibility of the Board**

The Board is required to provide the Financial Committee with all of the information requested by it for the benefit of its audit, to show it the cash and assets if it so wishes, and to make the books, records and other data carriers of the Association available to it for its inspection.

### **Responsibility of the Financial Committee**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. This requires that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Our audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Our audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the accounting policies selected and disclosed by the entity, as set out in the notes to the financial statements.

To begin the FC wishes to make some general observations regarding the financial performance of ECA in 2019:

- Total assets fell by nearly 16% (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2019)
- Total revenues fell by more than 31% (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2019)
- Fixed expenses increased by 27% (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2019)



· Moreover, notwithstanding the ECAs status as a not for profit organisation, the FC wishes to note that the ECA made a net loss of €382 in 2019, compared with a profit of €41 487 in 2018, which is the first year in its history that the organisation has made a financial loss.

In addition to these generic issues, the FC wishes to express concern regarding two items of expenses;

· Travel expenses increased 145% (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2019) and were nearly 33% above (revised) budget.

· Other expenses increased by 324% (31 December 2018 to 31 December 2019) and were nearly 254% above (revised) budget.

On the other hand, the FC notes that the fixed incomes were covered by fixed expenses in 2019 (even with the increase noted above), which it is positive for the financial stability of the association.

In summary, the FC considers it important to note the concern raised in the 2018 report regarding the continuous surpluses: “the FC is worried about the persistence of high financial surpluses in the subsequent years, as well as its significant increase in 2018”. Given this we consider the net loss in 2019 should not be regarded as a tragedy for the ECA. However, ECA should focus more on development of projects, and other events (training seminars, dissemination activities, etc), in order to add value to its agency members.

Finally, the FC recognises that 2019 has been an unprecedented year for ECA and that the changes made, and challenges encountered would account for much of the performance detailed above. However, it is also noted that impact of these events on financial performance could have been explained in a more detail manner.

Given the above the FC recommends the following actions to the ECA Board;

1. Insist on the development of projects and other events (training seminars, dissemination activities, etc), in order to add value to the ECA members.
2. Explore and instigate measures to reduce the travel expenses, not only for the association itself, but also for its agency members, for example by reducing face to face meetings and making use of the virtual and on-line activities.
3. Instigate measures to ensure budget for projects and other events. The Board and the Secretariat should have updated information of these activities and inform all the ECA members of the benefits and usefulness of the activities.
4. Endeavour to explain financial performance in a more transparent and detailed manner in 2020.