

2nd revised edition  
Approved  
in the meeting of the Governing Board of ANACEC  
Decision no.10 of December 18, 2018

**METHODOLOGY**  
**for training the expert evaluators of the**  
**National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research**

**I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Methodology for training the expert evaluators of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (hereinafter – Methodology) is elaborated in accordance with the provisions of the normative framework in force, including:
  - Education Code of the Republic of Moldova no. 152 of July 17, 2014;
  - Regulation on the organization and operation of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, approved by Government Decision no. 201 of February 28, 2018;
  - Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions, approved by Government Decision no. 616 of May 18, 2016, as subsequently amended and supplemented;
  - Regulation on the continuous training of adults, approved by Government Decision no. 193 of 03.24.2017;
  - Methodology for the evaluation of the general education institutions, approved by the MECR Order no. 581 of 23.06.2020;
  - Methodology for the evaluation of the management staff in general education, approved by the MECR Order no. 581 of 23.06.2020.

2. For the purposes of this Methodology, the notions defined in art. 2 of the Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions, as well as the following notions are used:

- *Expert evaluator* – teaching staff in general education, vocational education and training, higher education, in research or continuous training, with scientific-didactic degree/ title, managerial or didactic degree with experience in quality assurance in education; employer representative, student representative, registered in the Register of expert evaluators of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (hereinafter - Agency), which participates in the external quality evaluation missions organized by the Agency.
- *Training methodology* – document embodying and detailing the legal provisions in force with reference to the training of the expert evaluators and establishing the main methodical aspects of the training process.
- *Training session* – training activity with distinct educational content, objectives and purposes, structured over time, organized by the Agency in order to train experts to participate in the process of external quality evaluation.
- *Training programme* – all the activities of design, organization and conduct of teaching, learning and assessment, which ensure the training of expert evaluators in accordance with the normative framework in force and lead to the formation of competencies, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, necessary to perform external quality evaluation.

3. The methodology is focused on the following objectives:

- a) to identify all the normative, organizational and methodical aspects of the training process of the expert evaluators;
- b) to establish the forms / levels / types / stages of training of the expert evaluators and their objectives;
- c) to establish the minimum content units and the outcomes of the training / education sessions of the expert evaluators.

4. The methodology is applicable to the following categories of beneficiaries:
  - expert evaluators, registered in the Register of expert evaluators of the Agency;
  - members of the Governing Board of the Agency;
  - Agency's staff;
  - trainers.

## **II. ORGANIZATION OF THE TRAINING OF EXPERT EVALUATORS**

5. The training of expert evaluators is a mandatory part of the process of external quality evaluation at all levels of education, regardless of the purpose of the process (periodic evaluation, evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation or accreditation of study programmes and educational institutions).
6. The training of expert evaluators shall aim at developing and ensuring the competencies necessary for external experts to promote the objectivity and consistency of the Agency's decisions in the field of external quality assurance in general education, vocational education and training, higher education and continuous training.
7. The training of the expert evaluators shall be carried out through training sessions, which are organized periodically by the Agency. The calendar of training sessions for expert evaluators shall be established according to the needs of the Agency.
8. Staff of the Agency, expert evaluators of the Agency, expert evaluators of other Quality Assurance Agencies, registered in EQAR may be trainers in the training sessions.
9. The contents of the training sessions shall be determined by:
  - a) the provisions of the national and international legislation regarding the quality assurance and evaluation in education;
  - b) the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the expert evaluators, established by the legislation in force;
  - c) the methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions;
  - d) external quality evaluation methodologies at general education level;

- d) aspects specific to each level of general and professional education;
  - e) national and international trends in quality assurance in general and professional education;
  - g) the educational outcomes established for each level of education.
10. The training of expert evaluators shall aim, as educational outcomes, at the acquisition / development of key competencies, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, necessary for conducting external evaluation based on national standards and performance indicators established by the regulatory framework in force ( Annex no. 1).
11. Depending on the proposed purpose, the training sessions shall be divided into the following categories:
- a) Initial / benchmark sessions;
  - b) Special / thematic training sessions;
  - c) Continuous training sessions on evaluation areas.
12. The initial / benchmark session aims to inform trainees about the field of quality assurance in general / professional education or research, based on the normative acts in force at national level and the recommendations formulated at European level in the context of establishing the Common European Education and Research Area. The initial / benchmark session is a mandatory step for involving the person in the external evaluation processes organized by the Agency.
13. The special / thematic training session aims at developing / consolidating the evaluation competencies, based on the external quality evaluation methodologies in force. The special training session is mandatory at the initiation stage of each external evaluation mission.
14. Continuous training sessions on evaluation areas aim to develop specific competencies in an evaluation area, based on examples of good practice identified at national and international level and trends in the development of concepts of quality assurance in education, or research. They can be organized with the involvement of international experts.
15. The programme of training sessions for expert evaluators shall be developed according to the needs of the Agency by the trainers, with the support of the staff of the Agency.

16. A full cycle of preparation and implementation of the training session includes the following steps: (1) setting the objectives of the session; (2) the formulation of the subject(s) of the session; (3) identification of the detailed content on each topic of the session; (4) structuring the session; (5) defining educational objectives / outcomes; (6) structuring the session into a programme; (7) identification of the methods used; (8) preparation of necessary support materials; (9) preparation for the session; (10) organization of the session; (11) evaluation of the session (Annex no. 2).
17. In order to ensure the quality of the process of preparation and realization of the training session, the organizer / trainer shall perform a preventive evaluation of the stages of the process based on the control list, according to Annex no. 3.
18. The didactic concept of the training sessions shall be correlated with the category of the training session, the expected educational outcomes and the established / selected contents (Annex no. 4).
19. Training sessions can be organized through information seminar, workshop, combination of training with the meeting of the members of the external evaluation panel before the documentation visit to the evaluated institution, online session (using platforms like Cisco, Zoom, G Suite, Google Meet, BigBluButton) etc.
20. Presentations can be used to organize training sessions, including in PPT format, task demonstrations (e.g. organizing an interview with a certain category of beneficiaries), case studies / discussions on examples of real-life application of external quality assurance procedures (opportunities for active involvement of experts), group activities, individual tasks / activities for the development of material sequences, etc. Interactive communication between trainers and experts during training sessions is recommended.
21. The training shall be designed as interdependent processes, which ensure the permanent adjustment of the training strategies of the expert evaluators to the dynamics of the evaluation processes in education.
22. The duration of the training session, the number of participants, the ration between the theoretical and practical aspects approached shall be established at the design stage, taking into account the profile of the target groups, identified for participation in the session.

23. In order to establish the level of efficiency and usefulness of the training sessions, in particular the information provided by the Agency's trainers for achieving the pre-established educational outcomes and training the competencies needed to implement the external evaluation, the evaluation of the satisfaction of the experts participating in the training with regard to the training activity shall be performed (Annex no. 5).
24. Based on the analysis of the data collected on the level of satisfaction of trainees:
- a) modifications / completions / improvements of the programme and / or curriculum of the training sessions, of the information provided by the Agency in the training process, of the methods and tools used shall be made;
  - b) feedback shall be provided to the evaluated experts.
25. Upon completion of the 90-hour training programme (3 ECTS credits), the Agency shall issue training certificates, indicating the topic and the number of hours completed / the number of ECTS study credits accumulated.

### **III. FINAL PROVISIONS**

26. The Methodology for training the expert evaluators shall enter into force on the date of approval by the Governing Board of the Agency.
27. The calendar of training sessions for expert evaluators, training programmes, curricula, methodological guides and other methodological documents, developed along the way within the Agency, shall be part of this Methodology.

## **Educational / learning outcomes**

Upon completion of the training sessions the expert will be able:

### **At the level of knowledge and understanding:**

- To know and understand the European dimension of quality assurance in general / professional education;
- To know and understand the national dimension of quality assurance in general / professional education;
- To know and understand the provisions of the Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions, Guidelines for external evaluation of institutions / study programmes;
- To know and understand the provisions of the evaluation methodologies in general education.

### **At the application level:**

- To operate with / to apply in the external evaluation process the external evaluation tools established by the normative framework;
- To effectively use external evaluation techniques;
- To ask relevant questions in interviews with various target groups that would require consistent answers to ascertain the situation and draw conclusions;
- To (re)act in various possible situations during the external evaluation mission to an appropriate and adequate extent;
- To elaborate in team the site visit record sheet and the external evaluation report per institution / study programme, which would include / reflect the agreed opinion of all.
- To establish, by mutual agreement and argumentation, the score awarded per indicator.

**At the level of value judgments and attitudes:**

- To manifest correct and objective attitudes and perceptions regarding quality assurance, external quality evaluation;
- To demonstrate the ability to act in intercultural situations / environments;
- To demonstrate competencies of analysis and synthesis of the institutional experience in the field of quality assurance, based on the provisions of the normative framework in force;
- To formulate justified conclusions per standard, based on reasoned findings;
- To formulate mandatory areas for improvement, in accordance with the normative regulations in force;
- To identify good practices at the level of institution / study programme;
- To propose examples of good practices for the institution / study programme.

**At the level of communication:**

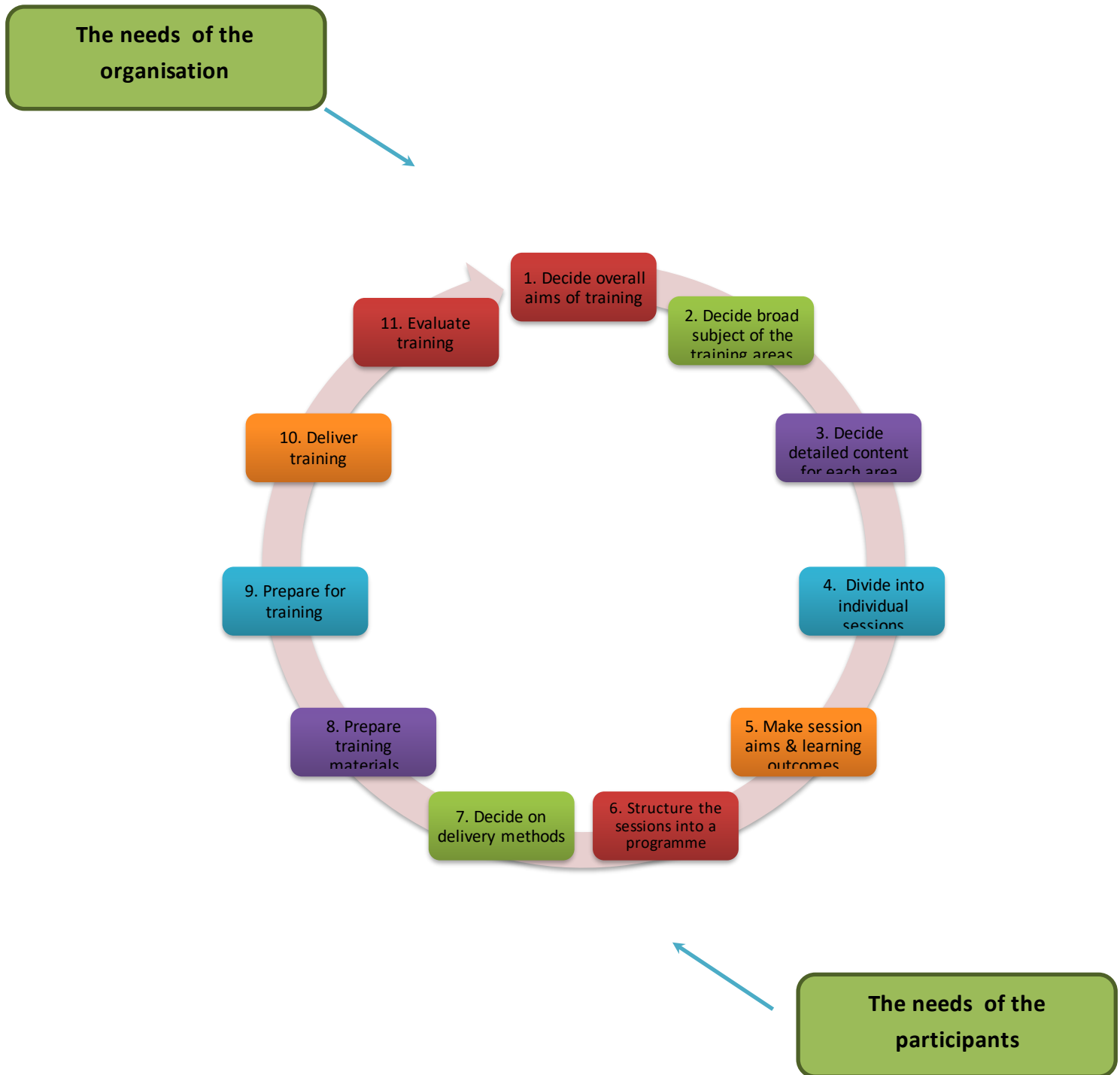
- To collaborate with the members of the external evaluation panel and the Agency coordinator during the evaluation mission;
- To work effectively in a team within the external evaluation panel;
- To demonstrate openness and communicate amicably, collegially and correctly in interviews with various target groups throughout the evaluation mission;
- To promote the concept of quality assurance in the external evaluation process.

**At the level of self-training:**

- To continuously update and complete their own knowledge in the field of quality assurance and external quality evaluation in education, including in terms of changes / completions to the regulatory framework in force;
- To continuously develop the necessary competencies to promote the quality culture in the educational system.



## Stages of the training cycle<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Gillian King, Handbook for the Training of Panel Members for External Quality Assurance Procedures. 2012, European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education, pag. 73

## **The stages of the process of preparation and realization of the training session (Trainer checklist)<sup>2</sup>**

This checklist assumes that you have already:

- Decided the overall aims of training (**Stage 1**)
- Decided the broad subject of the training areas (**Stage 2**)
- Decided the detailed content for each area (**Stage 3**)
- Divided the detailed content into individual sessions (**Stage 4**)

### **Stage 5. Draw up session aims and learning outcomes**

#### **Remember:**

- a session aim is a statement of what you (the trainer) intend to accomplish;
- a learning outcome is a statement of what the participant is expected to achieve.

#### **Key points:**

- Decide an overall aim for each individual session that you will deliver;
- Make sure that what you are aiming to do in the sessions will help participants to achieve the learning outcomes;
- Decide on the learning outcomes for each individual session;
- Make sure that the Learning outcomes for each session are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

### **Stage 6. Structure the sessions into a programme**

#### **Remember:**

- you need to keep participants' needs in mind

#### **Key points:**

- Find out who the participants are. If possible use a participant needs survey to get relevant information about the participants;
- Keep participants' needs in mind as you structure the programme for the training;
- Think carefully about the best order for delivering the sessions;
- Think carefully about the best medium for delivering the training. For example, will you use online methods or face-to-face or a combination?
- Consider the resources that you need to deliver the sessions – in particular how much time do you have?

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<sup>2</sup> Gillian King, Handbook for the Training of Panel Members for External Quality Assurance Procedures. 2012, European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education, pag. 57

- Include general sessions like introductions, ground rules, reflection times, action planning;
- Be realistic about the amount of material you can include - think about how you prioritise the material so that you do not have too much to deliver;
- If possible, try out some of the material to see how long it will take to deliver ;
- Consider talking to other trainers for their advice on how much to include in the training.

**Write down:** a programme for the training which shows the times of each session, together with any breaks.

### **Stage 7. Decide on delivery methods**

#### **Remember:**

- the most important criterion for effective delivery of the training material is that it should enable participants to achieve the learning outcomes

#### **Key points:**

- Choose delivery methods that will best enable participants to achieve the learning outcomes;
- Match your own particular strengths to delivery methods where you can, so that delivery is effective;
- Include a variety of delivery methods, so that participants stay engaged and different learning styles of participants are considered.

### **Stage 8. Prepare training materials**

#### **Key points:**

- Decide on the training materials that participants really need to help them learn;
- Decide how materials will be produced - hard copy, electronic, or both?
- Keep in mind the resources you have available for providing training materials;
- Keep the training materials as brief as you can; use accessible language; try to make the appearance of the materials attractive;

**Write down:** a list of any training materials that you need to prepare for participants and a schedule for when you will produce them. Keep to the schedule!

### **Stage 9. Prepare for the training**

**Remember:** preparation is key to successful delivery – prepare, prepare, prepare!

**Key points:**

- Prepare all the materials that you and the participants will need in advance;
- Make sure that the training venue is booked and suitable;
- Organise IT support in advance if necessary;
- Ensure that all information that participants need so that they can get to the training ('Joining instructions') are sent out in a timely way.

**Write down:** a checklist of the essential actions to have done before the training starts.

**Stage 10. Deliver the training****Remember:**

- working carefully through the previous stages is the best way to guarantee that your training will enable participants to achieve the learning outcomes that you need them to achieve;
- flexibility is also important: you need to be confident enough to depart from your programme if participants' needs dictate it.

**Key points:**

- Make sure that you are completely familiar with all the training materials and the programme;
- Establish a welcoming and relaxed environment;
- Pay attention to the reactions and needs of the participants / trainees;
- Organize the session in such a way as to allow the participants to learn what you set out to do;
- Nuance the topics that the participants find / consider difficult;
- Be flexible, adjust the program according to the needs of the participants / trainees.

**Stage 11. Evaluate the training****Key points:**

- Make sure that you know the purpose of carrying out evaluation of your training event;
- Decide the kind of training evaluation instrument (survey, focus group, informal chat, etc.) that will best help you to find out what you need to know about the training;
- Clarify the resources that you will have available to carry out the evaluation;
- Decide how will you use the results of the evaluation (for personal development, to justify running the programme, for improving the programme, etc.).

### Content elements / number of hours

#### Education dimension

| No. | Content units*  | No. hours |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.  | General education / vocational education and training / higher education / continuous training system. Statistical data. Development perspectives.  | 1         |
| 2.  | The concept of quality in education: European dimension (by levels and types of education) / Ensuring the quality of education in general education / vocational education and training / higher education / continuous training: the international perspective.  | 1         |
| 3.  | Recommendations and guidelines on quality assurance at European level (Standards and guidelines for quality assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) / Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18.06.2009 on establishing a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in education and training (2009 / C 155/01) / European framework for quality assurance in education and training (EQAVET Framework) / Recommendation of the European Commission on the European Researcher's Charter and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005/251 /WHAT THE) | 1         |
| 4.  | Quality assurance in general / professional education: national dimension (by levels and types of education).   | 1         |
| 5.  | ANACEC: mission, purpose, objectives and tasks.   | 1         |
| 6.  | External quality evaluation: the regulatory framework in force.   | 1         |
| 7.  | Purpose and objectives of the external evaluation process. External evaluation procedure. External evaluation methods.  | 1         |
| 8.  | Development of the self-evaluation report: content and requirements.  | 2         |
| 9.  | Interpretation of accreditation standards and criteria, performance indicators and evaluation standards (by levels and types of professional education) / Identification, finding and recording of aspects related to various standards (teaching staff, pupils / students / trainees, etc.).   | 2         |

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 10. | Interpretation of quality standards / professional performance standards, indicators and evaluation criteria for evaluation in general education / Identification, finding and recording of issues related to various standards (in the evaluation of institutions, management, teaching staff). | 2 |
| 11. | Documents developed in the external evaluation process. Working with the institution's dossier. Completing the Site Visit Record Sheet.  | 2 |
| 12. | Development of the external evaluation report: content and requirements.   | 2 |
| 13. | The role, the rights, the obligations and the tasks of the expert in the external evaluation process. Teamwork.  | 1 |
| 14. | The role and responsibilities of the coordinator in the external evaluation process. Communication between the institution subject to external evaluation and the evaluation panel.  | 1 |
| 15. | Organizing / conducting the documentation visit to the institution in the external evaluation process.   | 1 |
| 16. | Interview questions - working tool for evaluators. Communication / dispute / consensus techniques in the external evaluation process.  | 1 |
| 17. | Analysis of the institution's comments on the External Evaluation Report. Elaboration of the Minutes of the external evaluation panel regarding the comments of the institution.   | 1 |
| 18. | Analysis and validation of the results of the external evaluation in the Profile Committee meeting.  | 1 |
| 19. | Presentation of the results of the external evaluation in the meeting of the Governing Board. General requirements for the preparation of the presentation.  | 1 |
| 20. | Deontology in the process of external quality evaluation. Ethics and conduct during documentation / evaluation visits in institutions.   | 1 |

\*Note:

*The content units will be selected by the organizers of the training session according to the objectives of the session and the category of participants.*

## Content elements / number of hours

### Research dimension

| No. | Content units*   | No. hours |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1.  | Research and innovation system in the Republic of Moldova. Statistical data. Development perspectives.   | 1         |
| 2.  | The concept of quality in research: European dimension / Ensuring the quality of research in higher education institutions / in research and innovation institutions: international perspective. | 1         |
| 3.  | Quality assurance in research: national dimension. The normative framework in force (by types of institutions).  | 1         |
| 4.  | ANACEC: mission, purpose, objectives and tasks in the field of research and innovation   | 1         |
| 5.  | Attestation experience in the European / international area  | 1         |
| 6.  | The process of modernization and revaluation of the paradigm of attestation of scientific / scientific-didactic staff  | 1         |
| 7.  | The culture of scientific research and the values recorded by the development of the attestation process   | 1         |
| 8.  | The quality of the attestation of the scientific staff as a phenomenology of the product quality   | 1         |
| 9.  | Strategic vision of quality evaluation in the process of attestation of scientific / scientific-didactic staff   | 1         |
| 10. | Interpretation of performance indicators of doctoral theses and teaching and scientific activities   | 1         |
| 11. | Academic integrity. Plagiarism and copyright   | 1         |

**Questionnaire****to assess the trainee's level of satisfaction with the training session****1. To what extent have the training objectives been achieved?**

Totally 6  5  4  3  2  Not at all 1

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**2. To what extent have your personal expectations / objectives been met during the session?**

Totally 6  5  4  3  2  Not at all 1

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**3. To what extent was the topic understood, possibly improved or enhanced, as a result of the session?**

Totally 6  5  4  3  2  Not at all 1

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**4. To what extent have your skills related to the field / subject of the training been improved or increased as a result of the session?**



Totally  
6      5      4      3      2      Not at all  
1  
○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**5. Have the activities helped to increase your appreciation and understanding of your role as a member of the External Evaluation Panel as a whole?**

Totally  
6      5      4      3      2      Not at all  
1  
○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**6. How do you appreciate the overall training?**

Totally  
6      5      4      3      2      Not at all  
1  
○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○

If you have given grade 3, 2 or 1, please comment on why you gave this grade.

**7. Make further comments in the context of this evaluation which, in your opinion, would help the designers of the training session to ensure a higher level of usefulness and quality of the training activities.**