

AVEPRO

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 – 2025



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The Plan is warmly commended to all the universities, faculties and institutes which fall into the jurisdiction of AVEPRO, together with the Congregation for Catholic Education; the various Bishops Conferences; Religious Orders who govern many of the institutions; Chancellors; collaborative QA agencies in state systems; and the other partners of AVEPRO.

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1. This version of the AVEPRO Strategic Plan marks the **second major phase** in the evolution of the organisation. The first phase was characterised by a gentle, low key, non-threatening and sensitive approach which has progressively assumed the gradual acceptance and embedding QA in the mind-set and operations of the Holy See, and in its affiliated universities, institutes and faculties. The achievements of the Agency are well documented in the successful submission to ENQA, which confirmed AVEPRO's full membership for a further five years. The second phase of AVEPRO's journey (2021 – 2025) can now build on these achievements with confidence, at the same time reaffirming and reinterpreting its Mission, in the light of the changing context in which AVEPRO now finds itself, elements of which are alluded to below. It is appreciated that many of these factors have a twenty year plus horizon which goes way beyond the confines of this plan. In this process it will be mindful of the comments and recommendations of ENQA, and the need to address any perceived weaknesses to date.
2. The above is thoroughly consistent with Pope Francis' initiative of rendering the Holy See's **organisation capable of responding appropriately to today's and emerging challenges**. To this must be added the response by AVEPRO to *Veritatis Gaudium* (2019), *Laudato Si* (2015), Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living (2019), *Fratelli Tutti* (2020) and various aspects of the social doctrine of the church. The implications of these for ecclesiastic institutions are profound, since they represent the Church's Magisterium, and it is appropriate that AVEPRO should promote the above in respect of their implications for the quality, style and content of education and learning pathways, research and community service and societal engagement by institutions, not forgetting their governance and management. Various priorities and actions on the above are contained within the relevant parts of the Plan. All these highlight the need to update and adapt the concept and practice of quality, and the means by which AVEPRO can activate institutional change.
3. *Veritatis Gaudium* in the Foreword with its "prophetic vision and its clarity of expression", invites Ecclesiastical Academic communities "to take into account developments in the area of academic studies and to acknowledge the changed social-cultural context worldwide". The Covid pandemic has brought to light **the question of the capacity of institutions to deal with situations that were almost unimaginable**. Various Congregation for Catholic Education circular letters have provided helpful immediate guidance, but AVEPRO will seek to address longer term quality approaches in terms of
 - ensuring the university as a community of scholars and students
 - how technology may be used as a supplement to face to face institution for a variety of student populations
 - sustaining a continuing focus of global dialogue and institutional networking and collaboration at all levels: a reconceptualization of internationalisation
 - focusing strategy on impact diverse and socially sustainable goals for education and research in terms of new themes, content and style as well as sound academic study

- fostering the advance of interdisciplinary collaboration, which appears to be ever more necessary, and it contributes to the development of complementarity among the various Faculties
 - maintaining quality in non-traditional examination settings.
4. The Covid pandemic had exacerbated issues of **long term institutional sustainability** in terms of the capacity to adapt and be flexible in the relevance of programmes and research; student recruitment; retention; progression; financial health; (accepting that institutions are not a business) and the continuing availability of high quality and productive academic and support staff. All these clearly pose challenges to the enrichment of Q. which is a legitimate area of concern for AVEPRO which will work collaboratively to provide guidance and support. The management and mitigation of risk is an important element here.
5. In *Veritatis Gaudium* Pope Francis has emphasised the **global Q. role of AVEPRO** and this poses a real challenge as to how the various world regions will be embraced: with which collaborative partners; with what balance between the unique generic framework and generic standards and their legitimate recognition of and adaptation to local situations and variables. It emerges a clear need of flexibility and capacity to adapt and integrate different models, process and procedure of evaluation
6. In the light of the above, it therefore follows that the next phase of the Strategic Plan should reflect **the growing maturity of AVEPRO, and its relationship with universities and stakeholders** by
- strengthening the robustness of evaluation processes by HEI and panels alike in the light of evolving experiences
 - reflecting a growing sophistication and precision in Quality audit
 - developing the organisation of the Agency and the activities AVEPRO is supposed to deliver, taking into account the ENQA panel recommendations
 - providing more comprehensive and systematic support to HEI, generally, pre-audit and post-audit, with a strong focus not only on Q. assurance, but also Q. enhancement and improvement at institutional level
 - providing a “whole institution” approach to institutions, as well as the conventional focus on educational programmes.

It is to be emphasised that all the above should be consistent with the presumption of AVEPRO's role as a **partner** to institutions, with a strong emphasis on the collective and cooperative evolution and design of precepts of good Q. practice in its various domains, a developmental rather than adversarial role. This is compatible with AVEPRO's traditions, the increasing awareness of the importance of Quality promotion and ENQA's commendations.

7. To conclude, we therefore have a framework of action defined by exogenous elements (the global connection, the norms of the Holy See), the necessity of updating the Agency's mission in the light of these elements and the shock induced by the pandemic (which, if



nothing else, has brought widespread awareness of the limits of the model followed to date) and the need to face up to various challenges concerning both the Agency's organisation and the way of conducting our service for the benefit of the academic institutions.

From an operational viewpoint, this is translated into a new analysis which will contribute to the redefinition of the Agency's mission, which will influence the definition of future budgets and strategic objectives, which are translated into a coherent plan. All this is done bearing in mind the Agency's resources, to avoid the error of compiling a "wish list" rather than a programme that can effectively be implemented.

II. MISSION AND VISION OF THE AGENCY

The mission of the Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties is to promote and develop a culture of quality within all the academic institutions that depend directly on the Holy See and ensure they possess internationally valid and accepted quality criteria and standards.

AVEPRO's vision is to support the ecclesiastical academic communities in the world in serving the Church and societies following the Magisterium of the Church. The evaluation and promotion of quality have to be considered means aimed at fostering continuous improvement of responsible and mature Academic Institutions which operate in the light of the joy of truth (*Veritatis Gaudium*)

In order to achieve these goals, the Agency collaborates globally with all actors in Church life and civil society who are interested in, and committed to the life and progress of ecclesiastical universities and faculties, by inspiring mutual trust and cooperation through the fostering of networking and partnerships at different levels.

In paying a particular attention to student needs, AVEPRO intends to facilitate processes through which the evaluation of Institutional and "educational practices will be measured [...] by the ability to affect the heart of society and to help to give birth to a new culture [...]. This calls for a pluralistic and multifaceted process in which diversity and methods are harmonized in the pursuit of the common good". (Pope Francis, Video Message on the occasion of the "Global Compact on Education", 15th October 2020).

III. MAIN STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPAL HEADINGS: RATIONALE

1. AVEPRO ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

AVEPRO recognises the need to evolve and update its organisation to ensure its continuing effectiveness, responsiveness and collaborativeness to meet the changing environmental stimuli, respond to increasing demands and secure the sustainability of its future.

2. QUALITY PROMOTION: BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR HIGH QUALITY IN ITS INSTITUTIONS AND WITH STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABILITY

Given that the promotion of Quality is one of the key elements in its mission, AVEPRO will strive to, through various means, to extend and strengthen the culture of quality in particular within the Ecclesiastical HEI. The Agency will try to achieve this goal by fostering a responsible and shared approach to quality through the stakeholders' involvement. Continuous improvement will be achieved by building the capacity of Institutions to be robust, responsive and sustainable.

3. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING THE HEI CAPACITY, STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The sustainability of effective Q processes within HEI is at the core of AVEPRO's responsibilities, and thus, AVEPRO will provide continuous support to institutions in terms of comprehensive training and additional and updated guidance in critical areas of institutional academic and related activity, in ways appropriate to specific settings within a common overarching quality framework.

4. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES

Since well-respected and objective external reviews are essential to the maintenance of institutional credibility and sound perceived status in the eyes of students, the Church in its various manifestations, and other external stakeholders and agencies, AVEPRO will progressively strengthen the robustness and systematisation of its external review processes by a variety of means, in the light of relevant international good practice.

5. ESTABLISH EVALUATION CYCLES OVER THE 2021-25 PERIOD, IN SPECIFIC REGIONAL SETTINGS

Given the need to sustain QA across institutions as a continuing process in a turbulent environment; given AVEPRO's assumption of a global role; and recognising its limited resource base, AVEPRO will develop a new phased cycle of external reviews in specific regional settings.

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIVE YEAR STRATEGY TO FULFIL THE GIVEN GLOBAL ROLE OF AVEPRO

In order to contribute to *Veritatis gaudium* vision of AVEPRO as an Agency with a global influence, the Agency will develop clear action priorities in concert with various partners, to evaluate and enhance HE quality in various world regions, consistent with the need to be sensitive to local variables and cultures, and mindful of AVEPRO's limited resource base.

7. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS TO THE MAGISTERIUM AND TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

AVEPRO will develop Quality related guidance for HEIs not only with the indication offered by *Veritatis Gaudium* but integrated with other documents whose contents build the teaching of the Church.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING STRATEGY DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

Given the vastness and complexity of the landscape of AVEPRO's stakeholders, the Agency will develop and refine a comprehensive and differentiated communications strategy with its range of collaborating institutions and stakeholders, as a dynamic 2-way process, contributing both to Quality promotion and AVEPRO's policy development activities.

IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS IN RELATION TO PRINCIPAL HEADINGS

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 1

AVEPRO organization and governance

1.1 *Ensure the structure and organization of AVEPRO are sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives*

Action items:

- ✓ Define and revise the number, skills and profiles of the **AVEPRO** workforce
- ✓ Present a new organizational chart of AVEPRO Bureau to the Secretariat of State and the Secretariat for the Economy
- ✓ Submit the Budget by 30 September (or when indicated by the Secretariat for the Economy) each year
- ✓ Deliver Financial reports as requested by the competent authorities
- ✓ Decide the participation in International networks (e.g. ENQA, INQAAHE)
- ✓ Deliver a Self-evaluation as foreseen in the Statutes of the Agency

1.2 *Ensure coherent training and learning opportunities to AVEPRO's staff*

Action items:

- ✓ Identify staff training needs consistent with the findings of the evaluation of the Agency
- ✓ Define a training path for the staff
- ✓ Monitor the implementation and impact of the training programme

1.3 *Establish a deeper utilisation of Councils members' expertise, skills and knowledge*

Action items:

- ✓ Organise a full utilisation of range of expertise on Board of Directors through the definition of specific tasks related e.g. to networking, support in establishing

relationship with different actors (Ministers, International Organizations, HE Associations, HE Institutions)

- ✓ Organise a full utilisation of range of expertise on Scientific Council through the creation of work groups to develop practice in key areas of the Strategic Plan, defining responsibilities and deadlines under the coordination of the Bureau
- ✓ Start the activity of WGs on a planned sequence

1.4 *Establish appropriate organisation and capacity for AVEPRO to operate globally in given world regions*

Action items:

- ✓ Monitor the implementation of the action presented in section 6 of this Strategic Plan

1.5 *Establish the respective positioning and operative relations between AVEPRO and regional/national QA agencies*

Action items:

- ✓ Establish the framework for relations between AVEPRO and regional/national QA agencies
- ✓ Collect data on regional/national accreditation agencies and quality agencies and on requirements in the various countries
- ✓ Develop a protocol for possible collaboration (*ad hoc* evaluation or regional/national level evaluation)
- ✓ Utilization of ENQA full membership for negotiating agreement
- ✓ Acquire INQAAHE membership as a facilitating tool especially in extra European contexts
- ✓ Attend national and international meetings of the EUA, ENQA, IUA, INQAAHE etc., to establish relations with other agencies

1.6 *Examine the possibilities of additional income to sustain planned prioritised activities*

Action items:

- ✓ Critically evaluate the possibility of adopting a fee mechanism for the evaluations
- ✓ Examine the possibilities of *pro bono* collaborations
- ✓ Define the opportunity of fund raising strategies
- ✓ Implement the Holy See policies in terms of financial transparency

1.7 *Update/revise of the Statute and draft of terms of reference*

Action items:

- ✓ Develop a proposal for the revision of the Statute
- ✓ Define the Procedure to be followed with the Secretariat of State

- ✓ Discuss the proposal with relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Submit the proposal to the Secretariat of State
- ✓ Draft the ToR and submit them to the Secretariat of State

1.8 Prepare of a new SER for the CCE and/or for ENQA full membership purposes

Action items:

- ✓ Define a precise improvement plan for the Agency to respond to the recommendations of the second ENQA review report
- ✓ Assess the benefits/impact of ENQA membership and the merits of the follow up visit
- ✓ Define the priorities and actions to be taken with the CCE and AVEPRO's governing bodies
- ✓ Critically evaluate how to benefit of full membership of ENQA in view of a third application
- ✓ Evaluate possible application for membership in other international QA networks

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 2

QUALITY PROMOTION

2.1 Symposia and briefings on Q. and strategic cultures and associated behaviours/internal organisation for QA

Action items:

- ✓ Define a plan aimed at raising awareness of the importance of Quality promotion and Leadership of Academic Institutions
- ✓ Organise informative Seminars on Quality enhancement, Strategic thinking and Scenario building (definition, organisation, implementation)
- ✓ Produce papers to be delivered to relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Reinforce the positive loop between evaluation, awareness driven choices, strategy, decision making and improvement of an Institution

2.2 Facilitate networking among stakeholders (see also Strategic Priority 8)

Action items:

- ✓ Define a “map of the relevant stakeholders”
- ✓ Establish, where possible and appropriate, local contact persons or groups that will facilitate and support AVEPRO's activities
- ✓ Specify the relationship mechanisms with the relevant stakeholders and their impact on AVEPRO's activities
- ✓ Review and reinforce contacts with Institutions located in Europe

- ✓ Participate and contribute to events organised by the most relevant organisations in the field of quality and Higher Education

2.3 Refinement of strategic planning guidelines

Action items:

- ✓ Redesign SP guidelines to be sensitive to HE Institutions in different settings with regards to factors such as “maturity” of the Institution, size, local conditions and provide different models of SP appropriate to each
- ✓ Develop a “suggested” process for the formulation of the SP for the Institutions following the contribution of the Scientific Council WGs
- ✓ Elaborate different formats to be use by various Institutions
- ✓ Develop a procedure aimed at monitoring the implementation of the guidelines

2.4 Addition of new guidelines, papers or publications on key aspects of sustainability and QA for future scenarios and critical areas (e.g. relating to Q. internationalisation, research, PhD, HR, alliances, non-traditional learning / exams post COVID): “whole institute approach”. Follow-up and monitoring of effectiveness

Action items:

- ✓ Define relevant topics for the guidelines to be developed by the Agency
- ✓ Identify priorities
- ✓ Produce papers on a collaborative basis with HEI (e.g. one a year) to be delivered to the Ecclesiastical Academic community
- ✓ Generate positive feedback on guidelines including organising meetings in order to disseminate and monitor good practice

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 3

QUALITY: SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

3.1 Review, systematise and update guidelines to reflect a “whole institutional” approach

Action items:

- ✓ Redefine the edition of QA Guidelines, updated and systematised in the light of ENQA and other recommendations to reflect a “whole institutional” approach
- ✓ Update the formats for self-evaluation reports
- ✓ Renewed edition of Strategic Planning Guidelines (to synchronise with general QA Guidelines – see point 2.3)
- ✓ Addition of Guidelines in new areas (see 2.5.): agree plan for their phased production over the duration of the SP

3.2 Provision of country/international training

Action items:

- ✓ Adopt, where possible and useful, the so called “National/Regional based approach” gathering local relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Produce a grid of local training needs
- ✓ Programme of country/regional training offer
- ✓ Organise training seminars to deliver materials and disseminate good practices

3.3 Provision of internal training at HEI level

Action items:

- ✓ Define a “grid of training needs” relevant for the Self-evaluation process
- ✓ Design of in house programmes of training for HEI on request
- ✓ Organise training seminars to deliver materials and disseminate good practices

3.4 Monitoring of follow up implementation

Action items:

- ✓ Design of new AVEPRO process for monitoring follow up and implementation of panel recommendations

3.5 Mentoring of Vice Rectors and Directors for QA through dissemination of good practices

Action items:

- ✓ Arrangement of mentoring facility for Vice Rectors (QA) and Directors of QA, and accompanying codes of conduct
- ✓ Identification of good practices related to the self- evaluation process
- ✓ Dissemination of the identified good practices

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 4

QUALITY: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES

4.1 Selection, training and evaluation of external panellists

Action items:

- ✓ Designate an initial pool of external panellists for the 5 years period
- ✓ Update and broaden the database of potential external evaluation experts
- ✓ Carry out the project founded by Porticus Foundation
- ✓ Review and simplify procedures for the appointment of experts
- ✓ Review of the main findings of the “Porticus” Project



- ✓ Adapt the procedures following the findings emerging from the project
- ✓ Design of training programme for external panellists which incorporates revised and emerging Guidelines

4.2 Templates and guidance for SER analysis and panel report writing

Action items:

- ✓ Update the documentation created to explain the external review process following the contribution of the Scientific Council WG
- ✓ Design of templates for external panels on the analysis of SER and the writing of panel reports
- ✓ Redefine a model and a format for external review reports

4.3 Consideration for the establishment of trained pools of panel administrators and chairs

Action items:

- ✓ Prepare a position paper for the SC
- ✓ Assuming approval, create of these pools

4.4 Technical committee of the Scientific council to assess quality of the reports

Action items:

- ✓ Setting up of Technical Committee of the Scientific Council to assess the quality of SER, pre visit, and the quality of external evaluation reports
- ✓ Start the activity of WGs on a planned sequence

4.5 New mechanism for monitoring, action loop follow-up and implementation

Action items:

- ✓ Redefine of a model and a format for Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)
- ✓ Activate of new mechanisms for monitoring follow up and implementation of external evaluation reports

4.6 Complaints and appeal processes

Action items:

- ✓ Identify and select practices among QA Agencies related to complaints and appeal procedures
- ✓ Adapt the procedures to AVEPRO's context and rules
- ✓ Design of new complaints and appeals procedures

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 5

ESTABLISH EVALUATION CYCLES OVER THE 2021-25 PERIOD, INCLUDING FIRST AND SECOND CYCLES

5.1 *Define, in agreement with the CCE, in which countries it may be of interest to carry out evaluations in the coming years (see also SPP 6.1)*

Action items:

- ✓ Identify specific needs or areas in which an evaluation process could support the Academic Institutions and the CCE in delivering their respective services
- ✓ Define a “map” of needs
- ✓ Define an appropriate mechanism of evaluation and promotion of Quality sensitive to local needs and specificity involving relevant stakeholders

5.2 *Plans for evaluation in the European area*

Action items:

- ✓ Develop of a detailed activity plan;
- ✓ Communicate of the plan to local stakeholders (Episcopal Conferences, Institutions, regional/National QA Agencies)
- ✓ Define a specific plan of action for informative seminars (when necessary) in specific countries
- ✓ Provide a briefing to all Institutions present in the countries selected, providing the information necessary to prepare for evaluations
- ✓ Set up the evaluation cycle in a specific country to be determined
- ✓ Undertake the Self-Evaluation procedure in specific HEI
- ✓ Undertake the external evaluations in specific HEI
- ✓ Implement and Support the Follow up, Quality Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan

5.3 *Plans for starting the process of evaluation in non-European areas of the world (see also Strategic Plan Priority 6)*

Action items:

- ✓ Develop a detailed activity plan;
- ✓ Communicate of the plan to local stakeholders (Episcopal Conferences, Institutions, regional/National QA Agencies)
- ✓ Define a specific plan of action for informative seminars (when necessary) in specific countries
- ✓ Send a notice to all Institutions present in the countries selected, providing the information necessary to prepare for evaluations

5.4 *Plans for pilot Project outside Europe*

Action items:

- ✓ Define the process oriented to the implementation of a pilot project with Ecclesiastical Faculties located outside Europe
- ✓ Set up the evaluation cycle in a specific country/area
- ✓ Implement the Self-Evaluation procedure
- ✓ Implement the external evaluations
- ✓ Support the Follow up and Quality Improvement Plans and Strategic Plan

5.5 Fostering Stakeholders engagements in Quality processes (Chancellors, Bishop Conferences etc.)

Action items:

- ✓ See SPP 6 and SPP 8

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 6

ESTABLISH A FIVE REAR STRATEGY **TO ENHANCE THE GIVEN GLOBAL ROLE OF AVEPRO**

6.1 Define the world regions in which AVEPRO will develop a QA presence (See also SPP 5.1)

Action items:

- ✓ Agree a classification of world regions with CCE consistent with activities of the Holy See
- ✓ Assemble data and a profile of the number of relevant HEI per country in regions to understand the scale and complexity of the challenge
- ✓ Attempt a prioritising of regions /countries per region to be progressed over the period of the SP

6.2. Determine a prospectus of the partner organisations in each region/country whose support and commitment needs to be enlisted to progress the global agenda (notably e.g. Bishops' Conferences; QA Agencies)

Action items:

- ✓ Produce a prospectus of partner organisation as above and in selected areas...
- ✓ Conduct symposia to promote AVEPRO's intentions and the nature of what is involved, leading to ...
- ✓ Conduct negotiation sessions with emerging partner organisations to establish ground rules and relationships for future progress

6.3. Determine appropriate local strategic alliances to provide a robust and sustainable organisational base through which AVEPROs QA purposes and activities may be achieved in specific local settings.

Action items:

- ✓ In selected areas...
- ✓ Determine a notional framework of the character and nature of the operational base needed, in terms of status and legitimacy; constitution and legal standing; governance and management; resource base needed; development of its capacity as a credible organisation; training; relationship with AVEPRO
- ✓ Select and design of specific QA bases with the partner organisations in 6. 2
- ✓ Setting up bases on a phased sequence, consistent with 5.4. above
- ✓ Initiate pools of likely evaluators in specific regions

6.4. Adaptation of Guidelines to be flexible and sensitive to local conditions and settings

Action items:

- ✓ as in SPP 3.1. above

6.5. Conduct of systematic events to sensitise colleagues in selected regions and countries as to what is involved.

Action items:

- ✓ Conduct symposia for chancellors and Bishops conferences
- ✓ Training workshops for rectors and likely responsible especially for pilot projects

6.6. Conduct of pilot projects in selected regions / countries

Action items:

- ✓ as in SPP 5.4 above

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 7

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH, ACADEMIC LIFE AND QUALITY

7.1 Identify specific encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, documents of the Magisterium which should form the basis of the framework

Action items:

- ✓ Seminars (e.g.) between CCE and AVEPRO Board and Scientific Council to establish the terrain to be covered.

7.2. Formulate what the QA implications of these teachings are, and in particular what they mean for the operations of AVEPRO itself, HEI and the review panels.

Action items:

- ✓ Seminars with CCE and guest contributors.

7.3. Dissemination of findings

Action items:

- ✓ Setting up AVEPRO work group to produce documentation, with external advice as appropriate
- ✓ Conduct seminars to launch the documentation; spread good practice and receive feedback for possible improvement in terms of acceptability and implementation

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 8

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING STRATEGY

DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

8.1 *Refine and implement communication strategies with respect to specific target groups and consistent with SPP actions*

Action items:

- ✓ Develop a detailed activity plan
- ✓ Define priorities related to stakeholders
- ✓ Organise a Communication plan appropriate to the identified needs and strategy
- ✓ Organise a specific plan of action for informative seminars (when necessary)

8.2 *Redefine the web site of the Agency*

Action items:

- ✓ Reconsider the Agency needs in terms of communication strategy
- ✓ Define the useful characteristics of the website (e.g. repository, interaction)
- ✓ Define the storyboard of the website
- ✓ Identify the necessary software support
- ✓ Realise a second version of the website
- ✓ Put the web site on line

8.3 *Deliver papers oriented to specific target groups*

Action items:

- ✓ Develop a detailed activity plan
- ✓ Conduct a study aimed at monitoring the effectiveness of the AVEPRO guidelines and tools for evaluation procedures
- ✓ Produce appropriate national/regional reports on the “state of the art of QA in Ecclesiastical Institutions”, reinforcing the area of “thematic analysis of the Agency”

8.4 *Participate in international events, training and conferences*

Action items:

- ✓ Attend national and international meetings of the EUA, IUA, ENQA, INQAAHE and other national/international bodies

V. GENERIC SEQUENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS

Introduction

The following charts present the time sequence with which the activities foreseen in the SP are supposed to be carried out. As mentioned on several occasions, the horizon to which the plan refers goes beyond five years.

Furthermore, the Agency is aware that organizational limits (i.e. the available resources) or exogenous (such as the pandemic still underway), could have a very significant impact on the implementation of the activities.

Therefore, this section should be considered as an “indicative reference” that will be gradually amended and reconsidered within the operational plans that will be delivered every year.

1. AVEPRO ORGANIZATION, GOVERNANCE and RESOURCES												
	YEAR		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	SEMESTER		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
1.1 Ensure the structure and organization of AVEPRO are sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives												
1.2 Ensure coherent training and learning opportunities to AVEPRO’s staff												
1.3 Establish a deeper utilisation Councils members’ expertise, skills and knowledge												
1.4 Establish appropriate organisation and capacity for AVEPRO to operate globally in given world regions (see Strategic Priority 6)												
1.5 Establish respective positioning and operative relations between AVEPRO and regional/national QA agencies												
1.6 Examine possibilities of additional income to sustain planned prioritised activities												
1.7 Update/Revision of the Statutes. Draft of the terms of reference												
1.8 Prepare a new SER for the CCE and/or for ENQA full membership purposes												

2. QUALITY PROMOTION: BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR HIGH QUALITY AMONG STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABILITY

	YEAR SEMESTER	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
2.1 Symposia and briefings on Q. and strategic cultures and associated behaviours/ internal organisation for QA											
2.2 Facilitate networking among stakeholders											
2.3 Refine strategic planning guidelines											
2.4 Add new guidelines, papers or publications on key aspects of sustainability and QA for future scenarios and critical areas. Follow-up and monitoring of effectiveness											

3. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING HEI CAPACITY, STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR INTERNAL SELF EVALUATION

	YEAR SEMESTER	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
3.1 Review systematise and update of QA guidelines to reflect a “whole institutional” approach											
3.2 Provide country/international training											
3.3 Provide internal training at HEI level											
3.4 Monitor of follow-up implementation											
3.5 Mentoring of Vice Rectors (Q) and Directors for QA through dissemination of good practices											

4. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION

	YEAR SEMESTER	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
4.1 Selection, training and evaluation of external panellists											
4.2 Templates and guidance for SER analysis and panel report writing											
4.3 Consideration for the establishment of trained pools of panel administrators and chairs											
4.4 Technical committee of Scientific Council to assess Quality of reports											

4.5 New mechanisms for monitoring action loop, follow-up implementation																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		</
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6. ESTABLISH FIVE YEAR STRATEGY TO ENHANCE THE GIVEN GLOBAL ROLE OF AVEPRO											
	YEAR SEMESTER	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
6.1 Define the world regions in which AVEPRO will develop a QA presence (See SPP 5.1)											
6.2 Determine a prospectus of the partner organisations in each region/country whose support and commitment needs to be enlisted to progress the global agenda											
6.3 Determine appropriate local strategic alliances to provide a robust and sustainable organisational base through which AVEPROs QA purposes and activities may be achieved in specific local settings											
6.4 Adapt Guidelines to be flexible and sensitive to local conditions and settings											
6.5 Conduct of systematic events to sensitise colleagues in selected regions and countries as to what is involved											
6.6 Conduct of pilot project(s)in selected regions/countries											

7. TEACHING OF THE CHURCH, GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION, ACADEMIC LIFE AND QUALITY

	YEAR		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	SEMESTER		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
7.1 Identify specific encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, documents of the Magisterium which should form the basis of the framework												
7.2 Formulate what the QA implications of these teachings are, and in particular what they mean for the operations of AVEPRO itself, HEI and the review panels.												
7.3 Dissemination of findings												

8. COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING STRATEGY DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

	YEAR		2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	SEMESTER		1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
8.1 Refine and implement communication strategies with respect to specific target groups												
8.2 Redefine the web site of the Agency												
8.3 Deliver papers oriented to specific target groups												
8.4 Participate in international events, training and conferences												

VI. ANNUAL OPERATING PLANS

This Strategic Plan is designed to indicate the principal priority areas to be addressed by the Agency for 2021-2025, and the accompanying objectives and detailed actions which give effect to them. It is apparent that not all the actions proposed can, or should be completed at an early stage in the planning period. This would be impossible given the size of the task; the limited capacity of the AVEPRO Bureau, notwithstanding the assistance which the Board and Scientific Council can provide; and the inescapable fact that some actions have greater priority than others, in the senses of political necessity, timeliness or logical sequence.

Consequently, whilst the SP is for a 5 year planning period, actions will need to be distributed sensibly and systematically across the period. One of the important factors here is the fact that there is a dependency factor in that some activities need to be started or completed before others can be commenced. Thus, earlier activities assume the role of building blocks which will make possible other activities.

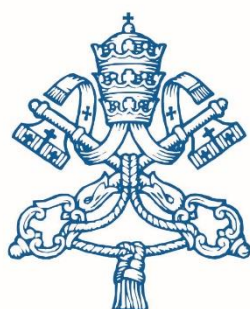


Accordingly, the 5 years' programme needs to be differentiated into more manageable annual portions, so called Annual Operating Plans. These are composed of actions derived from the overall strategic plan, but we are sensitive to the need for flexibility, with the result that the process will be a cyclical rolling process rather than a linear one. It is recognised that new unforeseen challenges may arise which may require different or additional actions; that some envisaged actions may not be needed; or that there may be some slippage year on year which may lead to some actions being deferred or extended beyond the given year. The imperative is to be realistic in terms of what can, or needs to be done.

The annual operating plans which AVEPRO will produce, after serious consultation with its partners will function therefore both as:

- ✓ a statement of what actions are intended to be completed in a given year, and...
- ✓ a means of monitoring and evaluating what has been achieved, or not, as the case may be, with a view to revising expectations for the following year, or remedying any shortcomings identified.

It is expected that the drafting of these annual operating plans will commence in early autumn in any given year for the following January start.



AVEPRO

OPERATING PLAN

2021



CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

II. ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN

The Plan is warmly commended to all the universities, faculties and institutes which fall into the jurisdiction of AVEPRO, together with the Congregation for Catholic Education; the various Bishops Conferences; Religious Orders who govern many of the institutions; Chancellors; collaborative QA agencies in state systems; and the other partners of AVEPRO.



I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Consistent with the principles and rationale presented in the AVEPRO Strategic Plan, this document indicates those actions which are deemed necessary to advance the evolution of AVEPRO and its service to the Church and the ecclesiastical universities, faculties and institutes in the calendar year 2021. The actions are derived from an analysis of the main Plan and its eight Strategic Priorities, selecting those which need to be activated and worked on immediately to provide a sound foundation for what follows in subsequent years.

Consideration will be given to notional targets dates for the activities within the year and the identity of individuals and/ or groups charged with making the actions happen. The whole is clearly subject to the coordination of the AVEPRO Bureau.

The operating plan is designed to make things happen in fulfilment of the Agency's priorities, and will be accompanied by a continuing process of monitoring progress, which will facilitate any needed adjustments.

There is a balance to be struck between the natural and eager desire to make progress, and the realities of the agency's capacity and the context in which AVEPRO operates which will determine the speed which can be expected. Therefore, in some cases and for some specific activities, the processes will be started in 2021 but the activity will be fulfilled during the following years.

As suggested by Pope Francis in the Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* of 24 November 2013 at number 223: "This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans. It invites us to accept the tension between fullness and limitation [...]. What we need, then, to give priority to actions which generate new societies. Without anxiety, but with clear convictions and tenacity".

II. ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2021

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS IN RELATION TO PRINCIPAL HEADINGS

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 1

AVEPRO organization and governance

1.1 *Ensure the structure and organization of AVEPRO are sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives*

Action items:

- ✓ Submit the Budget by 30 September (or when indicated by the Secretariat for the Economy) each year
- ✓ Deliver Financial reports as requested by the competent authorities

1.2 *Ensure coherent training and learning opportunities to AVEPRO's staff*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

1.3 *Establish a deeper utilisation of Councils members' expertise, skills and knowledge*

Action items:

- ✓ Organise a full utilisation of range of expertise on Scientific Council through the creation of work groups to develop practice in key areas of the Strategic Plan, defining responsibilities and deadlines under the coordination of the Bureau
- ✓ Start the activity of WGs following a planned sequence

1.4 *Establish appropriate organisation and capacity for AVEPRO to operate globally in given world regions*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

1.5 *Establish the respective positioning and operative relations between AVEPRO and regional/national QA agencies*

Action items:

- ✓ Establish the framework for relations between AVEPRO and regional/national QA agencies
- ✓ Attend national and international meetings of the EUA, ENQA, IUA, INQAAHE etc., to establish relations with other agencies

1.7 *Update/revision of the Statute and draft of terms of reference*

Action items:

- ✓ Define the Procedure to be followed with the Secretariat of State

1.8 *Preparation of a new SER for the CCE and/or for ENQA full membership purposes*

Action items:

- ✓ Define a precise improvement plan for the Agency to respond to the recommendations of the second ENQA review report

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 2

QUALITY PROMOTION

2.1 *Symposia and briefings on Q. and strategic cultures and associated behaviours/internal organisation for QA*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

2.2 *Facilitate networking among stakeholders*

Action items:

- ✓ Define a “map of the relevant stakeholders”

2.3 *Refinement of strategic planning guidelines*

Action items:

- ✓ Redesign SP guidelines to be sensitive to HE Institutions in different settings with regards to factors such as “maturity” of the Institution, size, local conditions and provide different models of SP appropriate to each, including a suggested process by which SP can be formulated

2.4 *Addition of new guidelines, papers or publications on key aspects of sustainability and QA for future scenarios and critical areas (e.g. relating to Q. internationalisation, research, PhD, HR, alliances, non-traditional learning/ exams post COVID): “whole institution approach”. Follow-up and monitoring of effectiveness*

Action items:

- ✓ Define relevant topics for the guidelines to be developed by the Agency
- ✓ Identify priorities
- ✓ Produce papers on a collaborative basis with HEI (e.g. one a year) to be delivered to the Ecclesiastical Academic community

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 3

QUALITY: SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

3.1 *Review, systematise and update guidelines to reflect a “whole institutional approach”*

Action items:

- ✓ Redefine the edition of QA Guidelines, updated and systematised in the light of ENQA and other recommendations to reflect a “whole institutional” approach

- ✓ Update the formats for self-evaluation reports

3.2 *Provide country/international training*

Action items:

- ✓ Programme of country/regional training offer

3.3 *Provide internal training at HEI level*

Action items:

- ✓ Define a “grid of training needs” relevant for the Self-evaluation process

3.4 *Monitoring of follow up implementation*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

3.5 *Mentoring of Vice Rectors and Directors for QA through dissemination of good practices*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 4

QUALITY: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES

4.1 *Selection, training and evaluation of external panellists*

Action items:

- ✓ Update and broaden the database of potential external evaluation experts
- ✓ Carry out the project founded by Porticus Foundation

4.2 *Templates and guidance for SER analysis and panel report writing*

Action items:

- ✓ Update the documentation created to explain the external review process following the contribution of the Scientific Council WG
- ✓ Design of templates for external panels on the analysis of SER reports and the writing of panel reports
- ✓ Redefine a model and a format for external review reports

4.3 Consideration for the establishment of trained pools of panel administrators and chairs

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

4.4 Technical committee of the Scientific council to assess quality of the reports

Action items:

- ✓ Setting up of Technical Committee of the Scientific Council to assess the quality of SER reports, pre visit, and the quality of panel reports

4.5 New mechanism for monitoring, action loop follow-up and implementation

Action items:

- ✓ Redefinition of a model and a format for Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)

4.6 Complaints and appeal processes

Action items:

- ✓ Identify and select practices among QA Agencies related to complaints and appeal procedures

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 5

ESTABLISH EVALUATION CYCLES OVER THE 2021-2025 PERIOD, IN SPECIFIC REGIONAL SETTINGS

5.1 Define, in agreement with the CCE, in which countries it may be of interest to carry out evaluations in the coming years (see also SPP 6.1)

Action items:

- ✓ Identify specific needs or areas in which an evaluation process could support the Academic Institutions and the CCE in delivering their respective services
- ✓ Define a “map” of needs
- ✓ Define an appropriate mechanism of evaluation and promotion of Quality sensitive to local needs and specificity involving relevant stakeholders

5.2 Plans for evaluation in the European area

Action items:

- ✓ Development of a detailed activity plan



- ✓ Communication of the plan to local stakeholders (Episcopal Conferences, Institutions, regional/National QA Agencies)
- ✓ Define a specific plan of action for informative seminars (when necessary) in specific countries
- ✓ Set up the evaluation cycle in a specific country to be determined

5.3 *Plans for starting the process of evaluation in non-European areas of the world (see also Strategic Plan Priority 6)*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen in 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 6

ESTABLISH A FIVE REAR STRATEGY TO ENHANCE THE GIVEN GLOBAL ROLE OF AVEPRO

6.1 *Define the world regions in which AVEPRO will develop a QA presence (see also SPP 5.1)*

Action items:

- ✓ Agree a classification of world regions with CCE consistent with activities of the Holy See
- ✓ Assemble data and a profile of the number of relevant HEI per country in regions to understand the scale and complexity of the challenge
- ✓ Attempt a prioritising of regions /countries per region to be progressed over the period of the SP

6.2. *Determine a prospectus of the partner organisations in each region/country whose support and commitment needs to be enlisted to progress the global agenda*

Action items:

- ✓ Produce a prospectus of partner organisation as above and in selected areas...

6.3 *Determine appropriate local strategic alliances to provide a robust and sustainable organisational base through which AVEPRO's QA purposes and activities may be achieved in specific local settings.*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

6.4. *Adapt Guidelines to be flexible and sensitive to local conditions and settings*

Action items:

- ✓ as in SPP 3.1. above

6.5. *Conduct of systematic events to sensitise colleagues in selected regions and countries as to what is involved.*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

6.6. *Conduct of pilot projects in selected regions/ countries*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 7

TEACHING OF THE CHURCH, GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION, ACADEMIC LIFE AND QUALITY

7.1 *Identify specific encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, documents of the Magisterium which should form the basis of the framework*

Action items:

- ✓ Discussion between CCE and AVEPRO Board and Scientific Council to establish the terrain to be covered

7.2. *Formulate what the QA implications of these teachings are, and in particular what they mean for the operations of AVEPRO itself, HEI and the review panels*

Action items:

- ✓ Seminars with CCE and guest contributors

7.3. *Dissemination of findings*

Action items:

- ✓ Setting up of AVEPRO work group to produce the desired documentation, with external advice as appropriate

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 8

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING STRATEGY DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

8.1 *Refine and implement communication strategies with respect to specific target groups*

Action items:

- ✓ Define priorities related to stakeholders

8.2 *Redefine the web site of the Agency*

Action items:

- ✓ Reconsider the Agency needs in terms of communication strategy
- ✓ Define the useful characteristics of the website (e.g. repository, interaction)

8.3 *Deliver papers oriented to specific target groups*

Action items:

- ✓ No action foreseen for 2021

8.4 *Participate in international events, training and conferences*

Action items:

- ✓ Attend national and international meetings of the EUA, ENQA, IUA, INQAAHE and other national/international bodies