



AVEPRO

OPERATING PLAN

2025

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Consistent with the principles and rationale presented in the AVEPRO Strategic Plan 2021-2025, 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 and faculties in the calendar year 2025. The proposed actions are derived from an analysis of the main Plan and its seven Strategic Priorities which are:

1. AVEPRO ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES
2. QUALITY PROMOTION: BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR HIGH QUALITY IN ITS INSTITUTIONS AND WITH STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABILITY
3. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING THE HEI CAPACITY, STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT
4. QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES
5. ESTABLISH EVALUATION CYCLES AND A STRATEGY TO FOSTER THE ROLE OF AVEPRO AT GLOBAL LEVEL RESPECTING DIVERSITIES AND SPECIFIC REGIONAL SETTINGS
6. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS TO THE MAGISTERIUM AND TEACHING OF THE CHURCH
7. COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING STRATEGY DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

Reflexion on the Operating Plan 2024

The year 2024 marks the transition of AVEPRO's activities from a European to a global context. The Agency's activities has been oriented towards responding to Strategic Priorities 2 and 6, which included actions to promote quality and build the Agency's 'global' role. During the course of the year, three continental seminars were planned and organised: in Washington DC in May involving academic Institutions from the United States and Canada, in September in Bogotá for Latin America, and in November in Kinshasa involving over 20 academic institutions from the African continent. In line with this process, other activities will be implemented in 2025 and will mainly involve Asia.

Several priorities were addressed during the year, in brief:

1. AVEPRO's resources: the possibility of increasing full-time staff by one unit was obtained and the relationship with ENQA and organisations active in the field of Quality was discussed closing the year with a request for full membership to INQAAHE (The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education)
2. The regional seminars were first and foremost an opportunity to promote quality in unexplored contexts and environments
3. The actions proposed in priority 3 (Quality evaluation: strengthening the HEI capacity, structures and processes for internal institutional self-evaluation and improvement) have

not led to satisfactory results: the mechanism and methodology that places the academic institution at the centre of the process leaves them free to initiate evaluation even without following precise cycles. Probably this is an area where the Agency needs to review its strategy. Moreover, Working Group 2 drew up a proposal to revise the guidelines for self-assessment, and the preparatory work highlighted that this is an area where there is ample room for improvement for both the HE Institutions and the Agency (including through accompanying mechanisms and training)

4. As mentioned above, initiating processes to determine the global role of AVEPRO was one of the features of the activities carried out in 2024
5. WG 1 produced 3 positions Statements: the first was on Research strategy, the second on Third mission and the last on Promotion of Quality culture in Institutions.
6. WG 3 produced an interesting study whose conclusions were sent to the Dicastery for Culture and Education. Among the themes highlighted, the one that in Agency's view has the greatest relevance is the reflection on the tension between the "vision" presented in the Proem of *Veritatis gaudium* and what is envisaged in the application norms namely the tensions between the desire to make Institutions more innovative, adaptive and flexible and the prevailing norms which emphasise the compliance and standardization.
7. Communication has been taken care of by redefining the content and also updating the Agency's website. As for the network dimension, the Agency has forged contacts not only with faculties and ecclesiastical universities, but also with affiliated and aggregated institutes and Catholic universities, especially outside Europe. The part of the relations system involving participation in events and cooperation with various international institutions (e.g. ENQA, IFCU, Council of Europe) was also covered by the Agency staff.

Over the planning period, the philosophy of AVEPRO has evolved emphasizing a collaborative relationship with Institutions based on the idea of a holistic approach to quality and Institutional development. The attention was devoted not so much to reviewing the past but more to the future of the Institutions together with encouraging to be outward looking and adoptive to external influences and opportunities. This implies AVEPRO helping institutions become much more systematic in their approach to quality and Institutional development.

This approach will be enriched in the new planning period.

In a nutshell, the year was very intense and opened up new challenges. In concrete terms, it can be argued that the Strategic Plan has provided very useful guidance during the five-year period that is now drawing to a close, and the AOPs that have followed since 2021 have enabled the Agency to organise its activities in a manner consistent with the guidance received from the Board of Directors and the Scientific Council.

The framework for the construction of the 2025 Operating Plan

Having in mind these considerations and experiences, in coherence with the general strategic plan the pillars on which the Agency proposes the AOP for the year 2025 are the following:

- To continue with the strategy of opening up and listening to Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions around the world. The next continent to be approached will be Asia, but at the same time actions will be done to support evaluations in the other contexts (the Americas and Africa) and to organise meetings (in 2026) with HE Institutions located in Europe
- To submit the self-assessment report to ENQA and host the evaluation / site visit by the panel that will be appointed. In addition, and consistent with the previous point regarding the global vocation that the Agency is assuming, the Agency will apply for full membership

in INQAAHE (The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education)

- To complete the recruitment procedures for a new member of AVEPRO staff
- To foster the activities of networking and collaboration with stakeholder in particular the Dicastery for Culture and Education, other Dicasteries in the Roman Curia, Bishops' Conferences, IFCU, HE Institutions
- To develop the activities aimed at revising the existing Agency's guidelines, both in terms of content (self-assessment, external evaluation, strategic planning) and in terms of sensitivity to specific territorial and regional needs
- To realise new Position statements and guidelines following recommendations coming from the Boards and the ENQA review panel (eg PS on Sustainability and merging Institutions, research degrees etc)
- To disseminate through its training strategy and other means the papers drafted by the Working groups of the Scientific Council
- To define and implement, in accordance with the partnership with IFCU, a training strategy both for Institutions and experts
- - Define the Agency's Strategic Plan for the next 5 years (2026 - 2030) following the evaluation site visit and the External Evaluation Report by the panel appointed by ENQA, the strategic axes for the development of the Agency derived from the SWOT analysis and other possible sources
- - Organise and implement the follow-up of the Regional Seminars carried out in 2024 North America, Africa and South America
- - Plan and organise a Regional Seminar for Asia
- - Start organising two Regional Seminars for Europe to be held in 2026 together with a follow-up seminar to be held in Canada in 2026
- - Establish a working group for evaluations of Church Academic Institutions in North America with the aim of agreeing an operational modality with The Association of Theological Scholols (ATS)
- Define a priority scale based on the indications in the Agency's SWOT analysis
- - Initiate a reflection on the role of artificial intelligence in learning and evaluation processes
- To organise a targeted strategy on quality promotion mainly oriented to HE Institutional needs
- To schedule, organise and realise evaluations and Institutional activities including the improvement of the reporting processes both in terms of existing cycles and in terms of new global settings

One of the main tasks of the year will be to define. It will be to foster a deep collaboration with the Dicastery for Culture and Education which will have the main responsibility to translate into policies and actions Pope Francis' Magisterium of the Church.

The "concrete" definition of the AOP followed the methodology outlined in the Agency's Strategic plan 2021-25. In detail, it is worth mentioning that the AOP is a document for "internal purposes" aimed at achieving two main goals: monitoring the implementation of the Agency's SP and redefining it where necessary due to changes in circumstances.

The 2025 version of the AOP has two specific features:

- 1) the simplification of the document mainly aimed at organising and planning the activities during the year
- 2) the definition (following the suggestions made by experts appointed by ENQA who took part to AVEPRO's progress visit in October 2022), "a small number of achievable priorities" given the available resources of the Agency.

AOP 2025 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS IN RELATION TO HEADINGS

SP PRIORITY 1 AVEPRO ORGANISATION, GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

The two main goals of this Strategic priority will be to strengthen the organisation of AVEPRO through the reinforcement of the staff capacity and the active participation in International networks such as IFCU, ENQA and INQAAHE

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

Priority Action:

- ✓ Define and revise the number, skills and profiles of the **AVEPRO** workforce
- ✓ Draft the Agency's strategic plan using ENQA's EER and the strategic priorities for actions defined in the SWOT analysis as main sources

1.3 *Enhance the capacity of AVEPRO through the establish a deeper utilisation of Scientific Council and BoD members' expertise, skills and knowledge*

Priority Actions:

- ✓ To continue the activity of WGs on a planned sequence
- ✓ To appoint as needed Associates who may work on particular project

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

Priority Actions:

- ✓ Monitor the implementation of the actions presented in section 5 of the SP
- ✓ Acquire INQAAHE membership as a facilitating tool in extra European contexts

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

Priority Action:

- ✓ Define the opportunity of fundraising strategies

1.8 *Prepare a new SER of AVEPRO for the dual purposes of the Dicastery Culture and Education and/or for ENQA full membership*

Priority Action:

- ✓ Evaluate possible application for membership in other international QA networks

1.9 *To implement the agreement with IFCU for the definition of a training strategy*

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 2

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

The main goal of this Strategic priority will be to develop and implement an enhanced understanding of Quality Culture within Institutions through a strengthening of the network opportunities of the Agency

2.1 Symposia and briefings on Quality and strategic cultures using the recent Position Statements developed for this purpose

Priority Action:

- ✓ Reinforce the positive loop between evaluation, awareness driven choices, strategy, decision making and improvement of an Institution
- ✓ Publication and dissemination of PS using training symposia, both face to face and on line

2.3 Refinement of strategic planning guidelines

Priority Action:

- ✓ Revise the existing Guidelines for SP to be sensitive to different settings and factors and also to correlate with new documentation

2.4 Addition of new guidelines, papers or publications on key aspects of sustainability and QA for future scenarios and critical areas

Priority Actions:

- ✓ Generate positive feedback on guidelines and organise meetings in order to disseminate good practices
- ✓ Ensure new documentation is used in Institutional reviews
- ✓ To develop new documentations to assists Institutions in areas such as sustainability, mergers, alliances and partnerships, technologies with particular attention to the role of Ai in learning and evaluation processes

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 3

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

The main goal of this Strategic priority will be an improvement of the capacity of the Institutions to be self-evaluating in a systematic manner employing a whole Institutional approach

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

Priority Action:

- ✓ Prepare for a redefinition of the next edition of QA Guidelines for SER and EER, updated and systematised in the light of ENQA and other recommendations to reflect a “whole institutional” approach

3.2 Provision of country/international training appropriate for particular settings

Priority Action:

- ✓ Develop and Organise training seminars to deliver materials and disseminate good practices on a fitness for purpose basis
- ✓ Organise seminars (in Europe and Asia) aimed at presenting AVEPRO methodology and the promotion of a Quality culture

3.4 Monitoring of follow up implementation

Priority Action:

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

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 4

QUALITY EVALUATION: STRENGTHENING EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCESSES

The main goal of this Strategic priority will be to update the documentation and formats for external evaluation reports fostering coherence between internal and external evaluation

4.1 Selection, training and evaluation of external panellists

Priority Action:

- ✓ Provision of training programs for external panellists

4.2 Templates and guidance for SER analysis and panel report writing (EER)

Priority Action:

- ✓ Redefine a model and a format for external review reports

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

Action items:

- ✓ Activate of new mechanisms for monitoring follow up and implementation of external evaluation reports

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 5

ESTABLISH EVALUATION CYCLES AND A STRATEGY TO FOSTER THE ROLE OF AVEPRO AT GLOBAL LEVEL RESPECTING DIVERSITIES AND SPECIFIC REGIONAL SETTINGS

The main objectives of this strategic priority will be to follow up the achievement of the Seminars realised in 2024 and to organise the same event for Asian HEI

5.1 Plans for evaluation outside the European area

Priority Action:

- ✓ Define a specific plan of action for informative seminars (when necessary) in specific countries (to be delivered in Asia in 2025 and North America in 2026)

5.2. 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.

Priority Action:

- ✓ Foster the networks with partner Universities, QA Agencies and Institutions in Americas and Africa. Set up of an alliance in Asia

5.4. Conduct of pilot projects in selected regions / countries

Priority Action:

- ✓ Evaluate the project for future applications in a specific country/area

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 6

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

The main goal of this Strategic priority will be to link, as much as possible, the teaching of the Magisterium of Pope Francis with the definition and operational manifestation of Quality in Ecclesiastical HEI

6.1. *Dissemination of findings of position Statements written by WG 3*

Priority Action:

- ✓ Conduct seminars to launch the existing documentation relating to *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti*, *Veritatis Gaudium* and *Praedicate Evangelium* in order to spread good practice and receive feedback on the implementation of the elements in the above in the work of Institutions.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY 7

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING STRATEGY DIFFERENTIATED FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS

The main goal of this Strategic priority will be to synthesise the elements of communication and networking of SPP 1 to 6 into a coherent strategy

7.1 *Deliver papers oriented to specific target groups*

Priority Action:

- ✓ Produce appropriate papers and statements on issues related to AVEPRO's activities

7.2 *Participate in international events, training and conferences*

Priority Action:

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

ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2025

AVEPRO: Strategic Priorities

Strategic priority	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1 Organisation												
2 Q Promotion												
3 Internal Eva												
4 External Eva												
5 Cycles												
6 Magisterium												
7 Networking												