



AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN  
DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN

**ANECA  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
HORIZON 2010**

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## 1. Introduction

The *ANECA Draft Strategic Plan - Horizon 2010* has resulted from the conclusions of the ANECA management team and their elaboration with the opinions of various ANECA coordinators and technical officers over a series of **participative working sessions**.

These conclusions were enhanced by **summarised details of the more outstanding issues disclosed in the interviews** with:

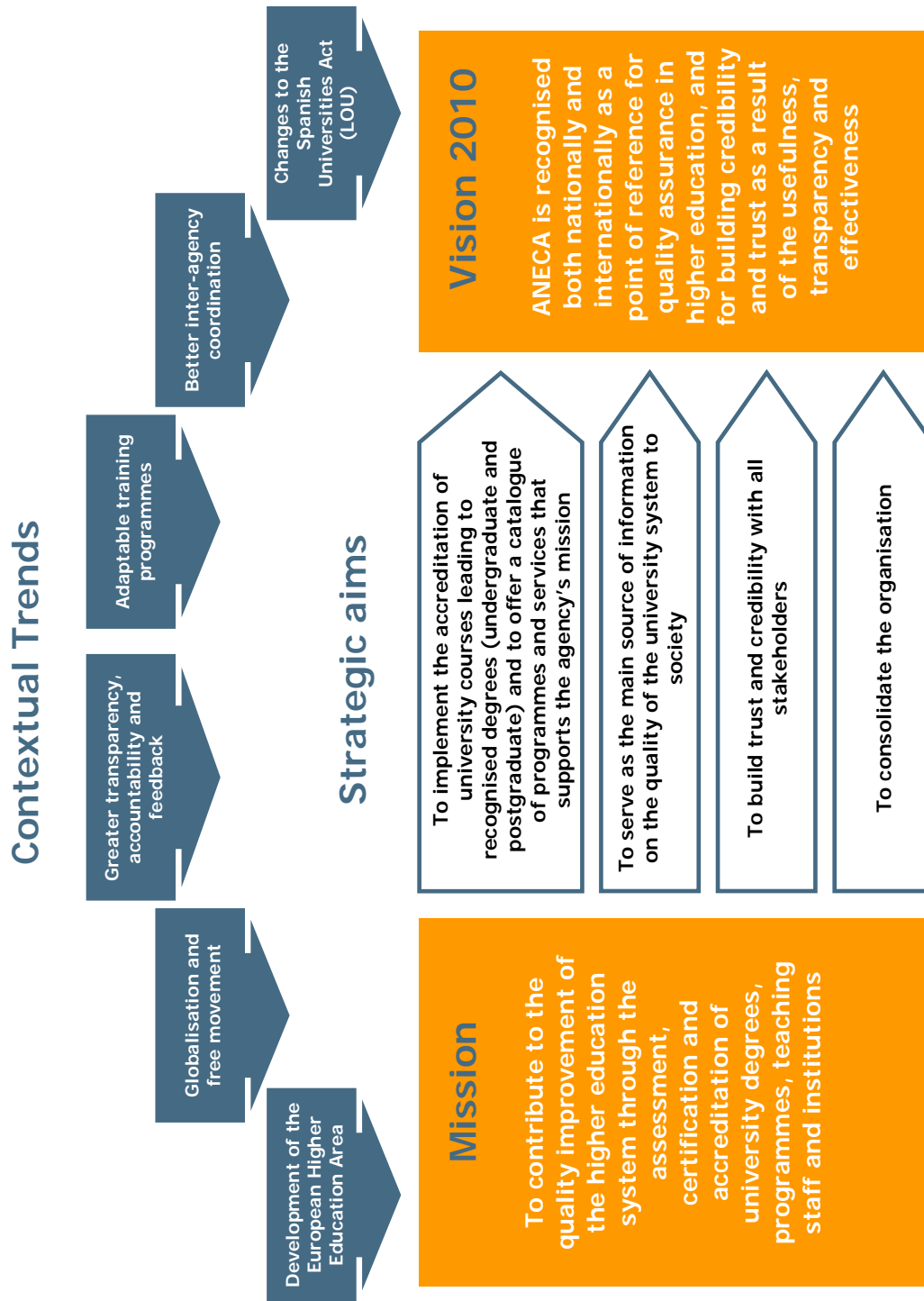
- **Academics of renowned prestige** from both Spanish and foreign universities.
- Representatives of the **Ministry of Education and Science**.
- **Academics that regularly collaborate with the ANECA:** programme coordinators, advisers, experts and evaluators.
- **Technical officers in the various sections of the ANECA:** General Coordination, Programme Management, Institutional and International Relations, Management and Directorship.

A final stage involved the **analysis** of different documents and information on similar organisations, the consideration of which was necessary for the drawing up of the Strategic Plan and included:

- All existing **ANECA documentation** (statutes, activities of the various directorates, technical papers, etc.).
- **Benchmarking** carried out over the Internet on international agencies for quality assurance in higher education.
- **Code of Best Practices** approved by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).
- The document titled **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area**, drawn up by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Work involving the preparation and drawing up of this document was carried out during the **first quarter of 2005**.

## 2. Summary of the Draft Strategic Plan



## **3. Context and stakeholders**

### **3.1 The main contextual trends affecting the ANECA now and in the future**

#### **Development of the European Higher Education Area**

The Bologna declaration (1999) established higher education as one of the main focal points for creating a common Europe, and the processes under way lend weight to convergence at the European as to the national level. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) presents the higher education system in Spain with numerous challenges, such as the incorporating of degree programmes into a coordinated system, the difficulties that the universities will have to face during the process and, in particular, the reaction of teaching staff and students to the adaptation of courses and teaching methods to the European credit system.

#### **Globalisation and free movement**

The EHEA in turn forms part of a worldwide process involving the internationalisation of higher education. In addition to increased student mobility, there will be more free movement and the recognition of professional qualifications, and in general countries will, through their universities, compete for the best qualified students, teaching staff and researchers. The United States and Latin America, with their very distinct characteristics, are, in addition to Europe itself, the priority areas with regard to the future.

#### **Greater transparency, accountability and feedback to society**

Society places increasing demands on the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of public administration. The universities must be accountable in terms of the achievement of aims and strategies for dealing with the challenges being faced. There is therefore the need and increasing demand for higher education in Spain to assure specific levels of quality through processes of evaluation, certification and accreditation developed for this purpose, and their consequences. The development of an effective quality assurance system to this effect implies certain repercussions, which the system is not accustomed to. On the other hand, evaluation, certification and accreditation processes must promote innovation and diversity, and avoid standardised methodologies.

### **Adaptable training programmes**

The speed at which the context is changing puts pressure on training programmes to continually adapt in terms of content and methodology to ensure that students have the knowledge and competences that will be inherently related to their needs in their professional careers.

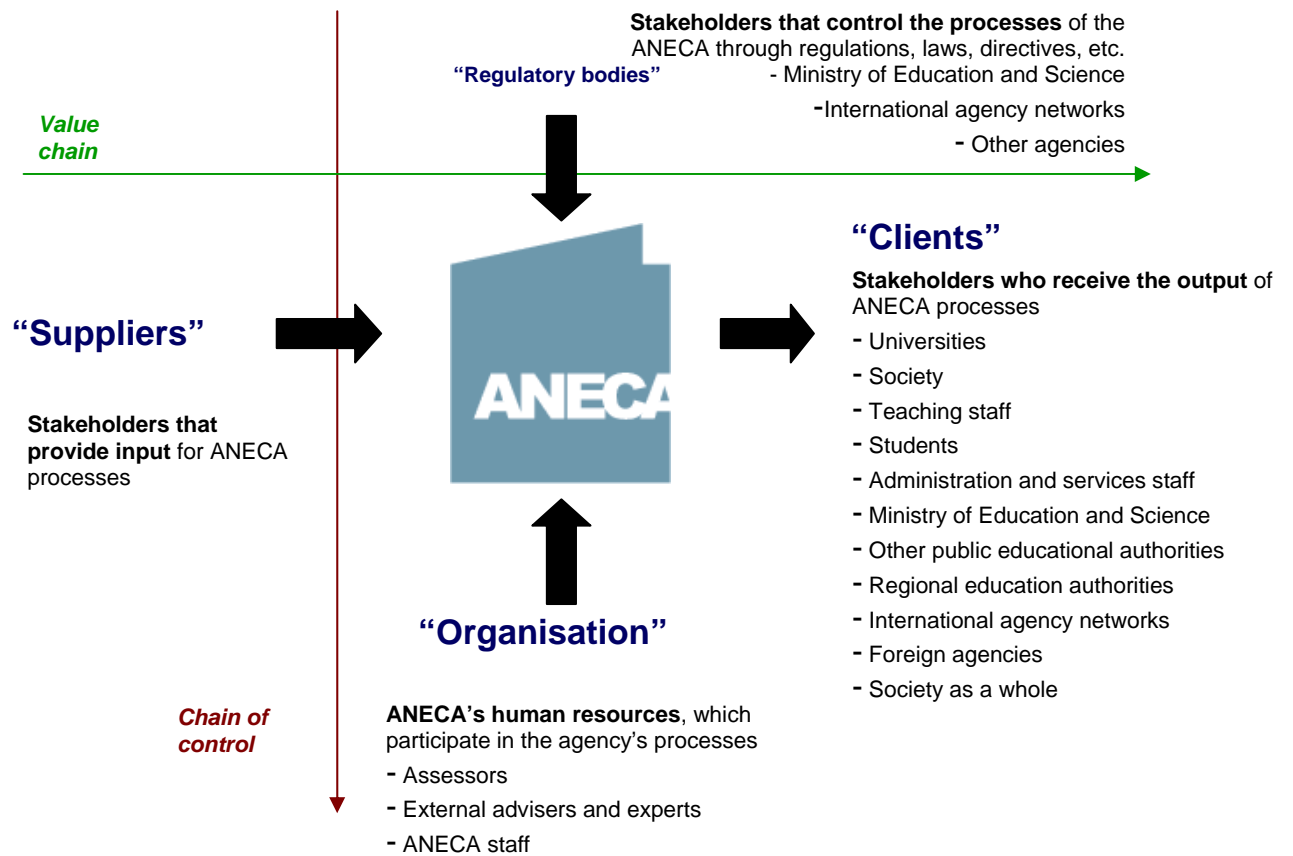
### **Better interagency coordination**

The articulating of the different agencies is a process occurring on three levels: at the national level (between the ANECA and the agencies set up in the regional Autonomous Communities), at the European level (bilaterally and through the various networks), and at the international level (with agencies from all around the world). Mutual recognition between the European agencies is also envisaged.

### **Changes to the Spanish Universities Act**

Policy on the universities, which is still a long way from being totally defined, will lead to changes in the Spanish Universities Act (LOU, *Ley Orgánica de Universidades*) that may affect both the aims and legal set-up of the ANECA.

### 3.2. Needs and requirements of the main stakeholders



**NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS**

**Regulators**

**MES and other education authorities**

- Degree accreditation
- Certification (PhDs, library services)
- Teaching staff assessment (Spain and Europe)
- Accreditation of foreign institutions
- Advice
- Technical back-up
- Assessment of the UNED (national distance learning university)
- Monitoring of the results of the university system (indicators, graduate employment, other studies)

**International agency networks and the agencies themselves**

- Adjustment to common criteria and procedures (mutual recognition and exchange of know-how)

**Suppliers**

**Private enterprise**

- Product specifications
- Rapid performance of contracts

**Organisation**

**Evaluators**

- Recognition
- Training (criteria and tools)
- Information
- Logistics
- Professional regulation

**External advisers and experts**

- Specified (functional) collaboration
- Requirements and needs to carry out their work

**ANECA staff**

- Coordination
- Information / Communication
- Training
- Defining functions
- Recognition
- Motivation
- Professional career
- Stability
- Management by processes

**Clients**

**Universities**

- Quality assessment (services, degrees, teaching staff and research personnel)
- Certification (services, degrees and teaching staff)
- Information (long range studies, comparative data, etc.)
- Backing for the quality culture (directives, methodologies, training, improvement plans)

**Teaching staff**

- Accreditation (acc. to Sp. Univs. Law)

**Administration and Services staff (AASS)**

- Training in ANECA processes (technical units, AASS of assessed units)
- Backing for the quality culture

**Agencies and agency networks**

- Coordination
- Collaboration in programmes, assessors, training, etc.
- Services (contracted out from the ANECA)

**Ministry of Ed. & Sc.**

- Assessment reports in MES-commissioned programmes (to certify, accredit, etc.)
- Accountability
- Information for decision-making
- Collaboration in disseminating quality within the scope of higher education

**Public education authorities**

- Training
- Fulfil the role of a regional agency (where these do not exist)
- Information for decision-making

**Students**

- Information
- Involvement in the processes
- Trust
- Publicness

**Society**

- Information
- Trust
- Publicness

## 4. Mission and vision

### **MISSION**

To contribute to the quality improvement of the higher education system through the assessment, certification and accreditation of university degrees, programmes, teaching staff and institutions.

### **VISION 2010**

The ANECA is recognised both nationally and internationally as a point of reference for quality assurance in higher education, and for building credibility and trust as a result of the usefulness, transparency and effectiveness.

## **5. Strategic and general objectives**

**To implement the accreditation of degree programmes leading to recognised degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate) and to offer a catalogue of programmes and services that supports the agency's mission.**

1. Prioritise implementation of the programmes guided to the accreditation of recognised undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses as a key programme.
2. Offer a catalogue of programmes and services that support the agency's mission and adapt to the stakeholders' needs.

**To serve as the main source of information to society on the quality of the university system**

3. Provide useful information on the quality of the university system for decision-making purposes.

**To build trust and credibility with all stakeholders**

4. Establish and maintain a clear, transparent relationship with regulators.
5. Intensify cooperation with regional agencies and international networks of quality assurance in higher education.
6. Provide excellent feedback to society on its programmes and services.

**To consolidate the organisation**

7. Organise the ANECA using flexible processes with ICT support.
8. Develop the in-house team of human resources and collaborators.
9. Implement a quality management system and obtain accreditation for the ANECA.

## **5.1. To implement the accreditation of university undergraduate and postgraduate courses leading to recognised degrees and to offer a catalogue of programmes and services geared to the Agency's mission**

### **1. Prioritise implementation of the Accreditation Programme of recognised undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses as a key programme.**

The accreditation of recognised degree programmes is, in accordance with the prevailing legislation, the exclusive jurisdiction of the ANECA, which plays a key role in defining the position of the Spanish university system in the European Higher Education Area. Special attention is merited for the accreditation of postgraduate degrees for a twofold reason: firstly, because they will be the first to be assessed as a result of the fact that they are of shorter duration and, secondly, because it is these degrees that will mainly define the excellence of the universities, with those of higher quality being the true promoters of mobility within the EHEA and at the international level. While undergraduate degrees will be more uniform with their content more predetermined, they do need to prepare the student for employment in the labour market or the study of a postgraduate degree in the EHEA. Nevertheless, the accreditation model must stimulate innovation by the universities and prevent this from leading to homogenisation. It would be highly advisable to bring about changes in the Institutional Assessment Plan (*Plan de Evaluación Institucional, PEI*) and to transform it into a preparatory stage for accreditation, thereby assisting the universities to make best use of the work undertaken so far by the PEI.

### **2. Offer a catalogue of programmes and services that support the agency's mission and adapt to the stakeholders' needs**

ANECA must clearly delimit its scope of action and gradually eliminate initiatives that do not comply with its mission or contribute to its vision. On the other hand, initiatives that do so must be enhanced and improved, such as teaching staff assessment. At the same time, a mechanism needs to be established to systematically detect the needs and demands of the agency's clients/users and update its catalogue of programmes and services in an orderly and consistent way, focusing on those having the greatest impact as a whole on the university system.

The catalogue needs to be accompanied by directions to help the universities establish a schedule connected with their strategic plans and

understand their contribution to improving quality. Ideas to be explored in this respect include:

- Prepare the universities for accreditation and, parallel to this, continue to evaluate services and their peripheral elements.
- Clarify the concepts of *evaluation*, *certification* and *accreditation* in order to facilitate communication

## **5.2. To become the main source of information on the quality of the university system to society.**

### **3. Provide useful information on the quality of the university system for decision-making purposes**

ANECA must become the main source of information on the quality of the Spanish university system, and as such a benchmark for decision-making by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the education authorities in the regional Autonomous Communities, other public education authorities, the universities, and society as a whole (employers, students, etc.). From its independent position, it must offer information in the form of indicators and objective rulings in order for the different stakeholders (the universities themselves, the Ministry of Education and Science, Education Offices, other educational authorities, employees, students, etc.) to be able to reach conclusions and make decisions.

It is also fundamental to carry out long-range studies for strategic purposes in order to anticipate key trends, in addition to validating and disseminating studies of particular interest carried out by other institutions.

Moreover, measurement of this strategic aim through the monitoring of decisions made by the users of the information is necessary in order to assess the ANECA's influence and impact on improvement in the system.

In order for the ANECA to firmly make progress with this aim, it is important to systematise management of the knowledge generated by the ANECA in its different activities and studies.

### **5.3. To build trust and credibility with the stakeholders**

#### **4. Establish and maintain a clear and transparent relationship with the agency's regulators**

As a basis for its image as an autonomous and strictly technically orientated agency, the ANECA must establish a clear and transparent relationship with the various regulatory bodies. This means delimiting and clearly communicating the nature of each one's competences, ensuring that they are scrupulously respected, and establishing transparent relationship mechanisms, which will vary in each case. The Advisory Council plays an important role in this regard.

#### **5. Intensify cooperation with regional agencies and international networks of quality assurance in higher education**

This aim is the key to ensuring the agency's independence, which generates and justifies society's trust and credibility in it. The ANECA should thus instigate protocols of mutual recognition with the agencies in the regional Autonomous Communities to facilitate cooperation and coordination.

With a view to mainly giving impetus to the participation of the Spanish university system in the construction of the EHEA and the prospective evaluation of the ANECA, alliances and cooperation with the international networks of quality assurance in higher education need to be intensified and made proactive, and use made of the ANECA's particular know-how in areas where it has most knowledge and experience.

#### **6. Provide excellent feedback to society on its programmes and services**

ANECA must pay attention to and encourage communication and dissemination campaigns before, during and after all of its initiatives, programmes and services, with the aim of fitting them in context and demonstrating the need for assessment, certification and accreditation, and to inform on the results. In terms of communication in general with society about the ANECA, explanation is necessary of changes taking place at the present time and in the future as a result of a process of continuous improvement, as well as accentuating the technical character of the ANECA and ensuring the coherency of messages transmitted by both ANECA staff and external collaborators. Communication, in both senses of the word (transmitting and receiving), must be agile and effective.

## **5.4. To consolidate the organisation**

### **7. Organise the ANECA using flexible processes with ICT support**

ANECA must show itself to be active, well supported, professionally orientated and with flexible mechanisms for decision-making by making best use of ICT to reduce bureaucracy. An outline process map on the next page shows the organisational structure of the ANECA. At the same time, it needs to become an organisation that practices lifelong learning by ensuring that it sets aside part of its energy for strategic reflection and knowledge management.

### **8. Develop the in-house team of human resources and collaborators**

In order to deal with the challenges put forward in this Strategic Plan, an in-house team of technical experts with defined professional careers and in continuous training in the most up-to-date quality assessment and management methodologies needs to be consolidated.

A network of external collaborators trained in internal ANECA processes also needs to be consolidated at the same time, with comprehensive support for their activity, and mechanisms to assess this.

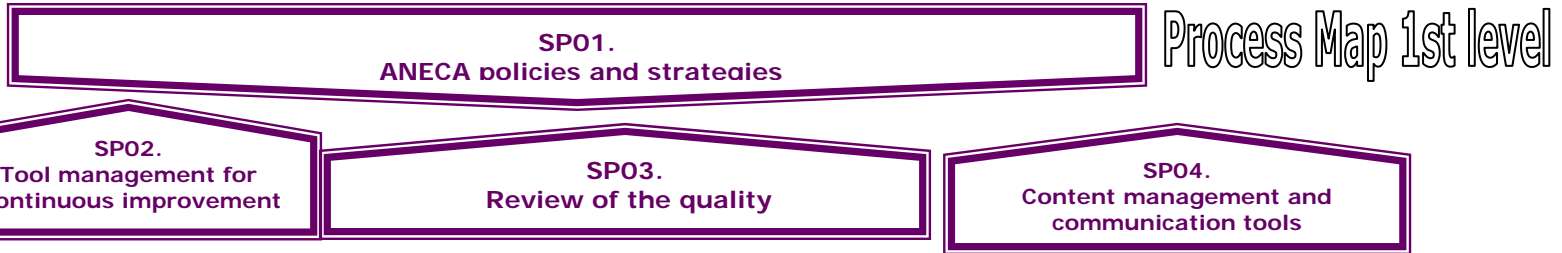
### **9. Implement a quality management system and obtain the accreditation of the ANECA**

The aim is to set up a quality management system and, once this has been implemented, obtain UNE ISO 9001:2000 certification. Using the Strategic Plan, the details and information for a process map will be brought together and the remaining stages of implementation, internal audit, improvement and certification will then be subsequently carried out.

The external assessment of the ANECA, envisaged for 2007, is a key element in its projection. It is anticipated that the accreditation agencies (members of the ECA) will be examined cyclically every five years, thereby complying with a series of quality standards that, while respecting the individual characteristics of each agency, lay down certain principles of quality assurance. The European and international agencies that comply with these standards (by way of peer-based assessment processes) will appear in the prospective European register.

## 6. PROCESS MAP

**Strategic processes**



**Key processes** Management of programmes that assure the quality and competitiveness of the Spanish university system



**Process medium**

