"NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE" FOUNDATION

EXPERT PANEL REPORT

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF

SHIRAK REGIONAL STATE COLLEGE

Yerevan – 2021

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Shirak Regional State College (hereinafter referred to as SRSC) is carried out based on the application submitted by SRSC.

The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" Foundation (hereinafter ANQA), guided by regulation on "State Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Programmes in RA" set by RA Government Decree N 978-Ն (dated June 30, 2011) and by Decree N 959-Ն on "Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation" (dated June 30, 2011).

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation in regulation on "Formation of the Expert Panel". The Panel is formed of 4 local experts.

The accreditation process was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter ESCS).

The institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programmes at the institution. Special emphasis was paid to the cooperation of the institution and employers and its impact on the content of education.

The hereby report comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the college in accordance with the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of SRSC institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of "Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel", «National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

While carrying out the evaluation, it was considered the ˝2016-2021 strategic plan˝ of the college, which main mission is˝ Shirak Regional State College is an educational institution with a national-regional role, which main mission is the creation, transfer and dissemination of knowledge within the framework of the state strategy for the development of education. Based on the principles of state policy in the field of education, the college promotes the development of the intellectual and personal qualities of its students and lecturers. The College is always striving for excellence and innovation in the fields of education and public services. As a key part of its mission, the college aims to become a student-centered educational environment, which makes its graduates for an active public life and leadership role, professional career, and lifelong learning in accordance with the modern needs of the globalized society and the labor market˝.

In Shirak Regional State College's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan (hereinafter SP) the vision and strategic goals are also presented.

Today, SRSC implements 5 secondary educational programs.

1. Social work (2 years and 4 semesters)

2. Tourism (2 years and 4 semesters)

3. Software of computer equipment and automated systems (2 years 4 semesters and 4 years, 8 semesters)

4. Computing machines, complexes, systems and computer networks (4 years, 8 semesters)

5. Clothing modeling and design (3 years with 6 semesters).

The SRSC also implements 3 primary vocational education programmes ("Computer operation", "Cooking" and "Advertisement").

The SRSC actively cooperates with partner employers, which has a positive impact on the implementation of educational programmes. Internal stakeholders and employers appreciate the importance of the college for the regional labor market, especially in the fields of IT, garment production and tourism. The stakeholders by being involved in various councils, participate in the development of the AP. In SRCS, there are developed tools for identifying the stakeholders' needs, surveys were conducted, and however, they have not been analyzed and have not served their purpose.

The management system of SRSC ensures a regulated decision-making process; all governing bodies have their own regulations. The college is provided with some human, material, and financial resources to carry out educational activities, which, however, do not correspond to the colleges' set goals of 2016-2021 AP. The college's system of governance provides students and teachers the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes

directed at them, but their initiative is low. The colleges' mid-term plans are generally not interconnected to the colleges' strategic plan.

The lack of an internal monitoring and evaluation system, which is performance-oriented, does not allow evaluating the effectiveness of long-term and mid-term plans. Bottom-up reporting is presented regularly, but they are not analytical and do not include evaluation elements. The principle of the PDCA cycle is not the basis of implementation for the administration of policies and procedures, which puts the efficiency of the management system at risk. The college does not fully study the factors affecting its activities. Due to the lack of reliable mechanisms of analysis and evaluation, the college is not able to rely on reliable data when making decisions.

The educational process in the SRSC is organized by the State Education Standards (hereinafter SES), the college has not developed APs for itself. The specialties of the college correspond to the priorities of the socio-economic development programme of Shirak region, and the five-year development programme of Gyumri city, and the demands of the labor market. The professions of the college are contextually coherent with other relevant specialties of other colleges of the republic; no benchmarking has been made with similar foreign programmes. Due to SP, it is planned to promote the mobility of lecturers and students at the college, but no steps have been taken yet. The lecturers use a variety of interactive teaching methods that have been enriched during the online teaching. Assignments have been established by the lecturers, which contribute to the students' achievement of learning outcomes for each module, but there is no unified database of assignments. The criteria for assignments are presented in the lecturers' curricula, however, the discourse of academic honesty is still lacking in college.

There is an outcome-based approach/ in the college at the level of the module and individual courses, however, due to the lack of description of APs, the collective profile of the graduate according to the competencies, the outcomes are not described. According to the results of the study of the modules and subjects in the college, various teaching and learning methods are used, some of which are quite modern and progressive. The assessment methods are also varied. Students have the opportunity to appeal, but the system needs to be revised. During the final attestation, students can take an exam or submit a diploma thesis.

The monitoring of APs in the college is carried out through class observations, the results of which are discussed at the sessions of the chairs/teaching-methodological council. There are no other effectiveness evaluation mechanisms in college.

The college has mechanisms for student recruitment, selection, and admission. Mechanisms for identifying students' educational needs in the college are limited, and there are no established policies or procedures. The college contributes to increasing the efficiency of learning by carrying out additional (optional) classes, consultations, as well as providing an opportunity for students to satisfy their educational needs through external partners.

There is a career center in the college. The institution is taking steps to ensure the development of students' research skills. The assignments, course and diploma work contribute to the formation of students' analytical, critical, and professional thinking. Students participate in competitions and exhibitions. The rights of students are mainly protected through the course supervisors, the student council does not fully perform this function.

In Shirak Regional State College, teaches a teaching staff with experience in their fields, constantly striving for development. Most of the lecturers are trained. The motivation of the staff is high. The teaching and the administrative staff treat students with great care, creating a student-centered environment as much as possible. The teaching staff is rejuvenated maintaining the most experienced staff with the best qualifications. The qualification of lecturers is appropriate for teaching. There are set mechanisms for staff promotion. There are set mechanisms for identifying the needs of teaching and support staff, which, however, are not yet reliable. The college tries to ensure the stability of its teaching staff, but the human recourse reserve makes it risky.

The college has not yet clarified its research directions, which were presented differently in the strategic document of different years. The goals set by the college in the 2016-2020 strategic plan were ambitious and unattainable, as a very high bar was set, which the college could not reach with its human, financial and material-technical resources. The leadership of the college, realizing this, has made changes in the 2021-2023 strategic development plan, has lowered the bar, and has focused research on developing students' research skills. There are set mechanisms for linking research with teaching, which can be seen from diplomas, course works and assignments. In case of improvement of appropriate mechanisms, they can develop analytical, critical-professional thinking in accordance with the 4th and 5th levels of the NQF, as well as encourage independent research.

The mechanism that promotes lecturers' research activities is not effective. Due to the elimination of the chairs, the implementation of methodological manuals, planning of reports and discussions is endangered. The college has sufficient material and technical base for the implementation of specialties. The documentation in the college is carried out according to the clerical procedure. The college has security and health services. There are no clear mechanisms for assessing the applicability, availability and effectiveness of the resources provided in the college.

The college has a bottom-up reporting mechanism which operates on a regular basis, and shows the implementation of short-term plans, however, the reports do not provide the evaluation of the implementation of the college's strategic plan and are not analytical. The transparency of the college is ensured through social networks, local media, visits to schools of the region, contacts with local authorities, job fairs, participation in exhibitions. The SRSC implements short-term programmes, promoting the transfer of knowledge to the society, especially to vulnerable groups.

Shirak Regional State College does not have policies, procedures, or mechanisms that promote internationalization. The level of knowledge of foreign languages is low among SRSC lecturers and students. The college does not take active actions in this direction. The college has experience in cooperation with international organizations. The SRSC actively cooperates with city employers, rural communities, and schools. Partner employers are involved in matters of organizing practices as much as possible.

The quality assurance system in the college is still in the process of formation. Although the position of QA manager was introduced in 2017, however, the implementation of the QA system has passed with interruptions; the QA policy was approved by the college only in 2020. The college still does not have clear QA procedures, necessary mechanisms, and tools. The college provides some human, material, and financial resources to manage the internal quality assurance processes, however, the involved employees do not have the necessary

skills and abilities to carry out their functions; they need training. The PDCA cycle in governance does not work yet.

Strengths of the Institution:

1. The specialties of the college correspond to the mission and the needs of the labor market of the region.

2. There are mechanisms in governance to ensure stakeholders' participation in decision-making processes.

3. The SRSC closely cooperates with Gyumri State Employment Agency regional employers.

4. Dual educational programmes have been introduced in the college with 2 specialties.

5. Teaching and learning methods are mainly student-centered and in line with the demands of the time.

6. There are elements of interconnection between education and research.

7. The college is provided with the necessary building conditions and a resource base for the implementation of professions.

8. The college has a qualified, motivated teaching staff in accordance with the APs, some of which have participated in trainings in Armenia and abroad.

9. The college has an institute of course instructors, which greatly contributes to identifying the needs of students.

10. The building conditions of the college and the resource base are regularly improved.

11. The college has educational, health and safety services.

12. The college has a bottom-up accountability system.

13. The college has positions for Career Center and QA Officers.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

1. There are no mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategic plan.

2. The long-term, mid-term and short-term action plans of the college do not stem from the strategic plan.

3. Management system efficiency analyzes are not performed.

4. The PDCA cycle is not fully implemented into the management quality assurance process; the components of evaluation and improvement are incomplete.

5. The role of students in the management system of the college is very low.

6. The promotion system for lecturers does not fully work.

7. There are few mechanisms for identifying the needs of teachers and students, their analyzes are not in-depth and comprehensive and do not contribute to improvements.

8. Alternative budget funding is very limited.

9. In SRSC favorable conditions have not been created for internationalization and exchange of experience.

10. The internal quality assurance system is still in the implementation stage.

11. The number of employers cooperating with the college is not large, employers are not interested in cooperating.

12. Resources are not enough for the continuous development of the college.

13. College resources are not designed for people with special needs.

Main recommendations:

Mission and Purposes

1. To improve the 2021-2023 strategic plan by making it long-term.

2. To implement short-term and mid-term planning and accountability in accordance with the SP.

3. To involve internal and external stakeholders in the process of reviewing and implementing the strategic plan.

4. To pursue the improvement of quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing the progress of the goals and objectives of the SP, regularly analyze the results of the implementation of the SP. Introduce a monitoring mechanism.

Governance and Administration

5. To improve the planning system and implement long-term, mid-term and short-term interconnected planning with SP.

6. To review college administration policies and procedures at all levels of government by introducing the PDCA quality management principle. Create a risk management system.

7. To improve the mechanisms for involving stakeholders in the decision-making process. The more active and participatory involvement of internal stakeholders in decision-making will facilitate the accessibility of accepted decisions to each stakeholder.

8. To clarify the policy of distribution of financial resources according to strategic priorities.

9. To organize trainings for administrative staff, aimed at implementing the processes needed for effective governance and their continuous improvement.

10. To introduce a top-down accountability mechanism.

11. To introduce mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of administrative structures, as well as for identification and dissemination best practices.

12. To analyze the quantitative and qualitative data of information received from external and internal environments.

Academic Programmes

13. To develop APs descriptions, because of discussions with internal and external stakeholders, especially employers and benchmarking, where the goals, objectives, educational outcomes of the students, the human and material-technical resources necessary for their provision will be clearly stated.

14. To map student progress for each curriculum (according to the expected results).

15. To collect and coordinate the assignments according to the professions, creating a database of assignments necessary for the achievement of professional educational outcomes.

16. To introduce teaching, learning and assessment methods in terms of matching outcomes and mechanisms evaluating their effectiveness. Continuously monitor student progress through pre-defined assignments.

17. To analyze the effectiveness of practices and make improvements.

18. To ensure norms of academic honesty and fight against plagiarism. Inform students about the importance of academic honesty, plagiarism, its consequences and prevention through special courses.

19. With the active involvement of internal and external stakeholders (especially employers), carry out regular monitoring of all educational programs, evaluation of effectiveness, and submit appropriate improvement proposals to the authorized bodies.

20. To consider opportunities for internationalization and contribute to the creation of preconditions for the mobility of students and teachers.

Students

21. To develop tools to assess the effectiveness of student recruitment mechanisms and to implement the evaluation and improvement of the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

22. To improve and regulate the existing mechanisms for identifying students' educational needs.

23. To develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating and ensuring the quality of education, counseling and other services provided to students.

24. To support the Student Council in recognizing its role in protecting students' rights and ensuring accountability and regularly informing students about decisions made by governing bodies.

25. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Career Center in accordance with the functions defined in the regulations, develop and implement the follow-up plan.

Faculty and Staff

26. To organize trainings for lecturers based on the identified needs.

27. To evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment system of the teaching staff and improve it.

28. To increase the involvement of employers or lecturers working in the professional field.

29. To develop mechanisms for the sustainability of the teaching staff.

30. To develop clear support mechanisms for professional advancement.

31. To revise and complete the job descriptions/passports of the administrative-teaching staff.

Research and Development

32. To define clear and realistic research interests and goals by assessing the college's resource capabilities.

33. To develop a student research skills development programme.

34. To study and disseminate the best practices of own and other institutions, to develop research and analytical skills through the work done by students (diploma and course work, subject assignments) in accordance with the 5th level of the NQF.

35. To develop and implement effective mechanisms for evaluating and encouraging research activities of the teaching staff, which can contribute to the development of research skills of the teaching staff.

36. To encourage the practice of interrelating research activities with the educational process.

37. To evaluate the possibilities of internationalization of research activities in pedagogical and professional fields.

Infrastructure and Resources

38. Strive to implement short-term projects, providing an alternative inflow of finances.

39. To develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating the applicability, availability and effectiveness of the resources provided to students and teachers.

40. To carry out resource risk assessment and management.

41. To deepen the practice of using shared resources with partners.

42. To evaluate the efficiency of the existing documentation and improve it.

43. To save the colleges' financial resources and reduce costs, consider finding partners and the possibility of creating a solar station.

Societal Responsibility

44. To make accountability more analytical, establish accountability review mechanisms, and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the process and improve them.

45. To restore the official website of SRSC by including information about the college in foreign languages; launch the site to leave comments from visitors and availability to maintain feedback.

46. To enrich the information posted on Facebook with information about all the professions of the college by providing information on the quality of the awarded qualifications to the public.

47. Coordinate the processes done with the public, and implement clear mechanisms for evaluating feedback effectiveness, contributing to the maintenance and strengthening of the positive image of the college, increasing public rating and visibility, by developing partnerships with stakeholders.

48. To expand the forms of paid services and financial inflows through entrepreneurial activities, trainings and additional courses.

External Relations and Internationalisation

49. To develop and implement a programme aimed at raising the level of foreign language knowledge of students, faculty and administrative staff, to promote internationalization.

50. To provide institutional mechanisms for establishing cooperation, including employers; to ensure the stability of cooperation and reduce risk.

51. To assess the possibilities of internationalization and develop a roadmap.

Internal Quality Assurance

52. To plan quality assurance processes clearly.

53. To develop and introduce clear procedures, necessary QA mechanisms and tools for the implementation of newly established QA principles.

54.   To introduce systematic approaches to data collection, analysis of results and dissemination.

55.   To introduce the PDCA cycle at the core of all college processes.

56.   To ensure the stability of QA staff and create an opportunity for training of QA responsible.

57.   To make a needs assessment, identification of issues and development of appropriate steps through quantitative-qualitative research.

58.   To involve internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes, provide feedback and develop a quality culture.

Mariam Movsisyan / Head of expert panel

29.01.2021

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of Shirak Regional State College was carried out by the following expert panel[1].

1. **Mariam Movsisyan**- Armenian National Agrarian University, Director of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Center, Head of the Expert Panel.

2. **Elen Harutyunyan**- Lecturer at the College of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, member of the expert panel,

3. **Arpi Simonyan**- Lecturer at the College of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, member of the expert panel,

4. **David Voskanyan -** Student at Yerevan State College of Informatics.

The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the Institution.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Lilit Zaqaryan, specialist of the ANQA Policy Development and Implementation Division.

All the members of the expert panel and the coordinator have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

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[1] Appendix 1. CVs of the Expert Panel

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The college applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form, copies of the license, and respective appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the appendices in the application package.

According to the decision on accepting the application request (31.07. 2020.), a bilateral agreement was signed between ANQA, SRSC, and ESCS. The timetable of activities was drawn up and approved.

Self-evaluation

Due to COVID-19 epidemic and war situation, the TLI presented the self-evaluation of institutional capacities and the package of documents in the Armenian version two weeks late from the scheduled time according to the guideline set by the ANQA.

As the LRSC was in the process of institutional accreditation for the first time and the process was difficult for the college to implement, ANQA has done some work with the institution, preparing them for the process of self-evaluation and accreditation. In June, SRSC conducted a SWOT analysis within two weeks in accordance with accreditation ten criteria. After presenting the SWOT analysis, the institution recommended two employees, together with the ANQA staff, they reviewed the SWOT analysis presented by the college for a month and identified the main issues. During that period, the employees have been directed on how to make a SWOT analysis, and what to pay special attention to while doing the self-evaluation within the criteria. After observing the SWOT analysis, the college employee, as experts, together with ANQA staff conducted monitoring at SRSC on July 13, 2020.

Institutional Capacity Self-Evaluation of SRSC was presented on 16.10.2020. The self-evaluation was carried out by 16 employees of the institution, including lecturers, teaching, and support staff. External and internal stakeholders, students did not participate in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

ANQA coordinator observed the report to reveal its correspondence to the technical and substantive requirements of ANQA. Although there were shortcomings in the self-evaluation, the texts of most of the criteria were descriptive rather than analytical, as it was the first cycle of accreditation for the college, the self-evaluation package accepted by ANQA.

Then ANQA coordinator sent the self-evaluation report to the expert panel, the members of which were agreed upon with SRSC.

The self-evaluation and attached documents were provided to the expert group for preliminary evaluation, which was agreed upon with the college and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA director

To prepare the expert panel members and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities, training on the following topics were conducted:

- The main functions of the members of the expert panel,
- The ethics and techniques of holding meetings and doing inquiries,
- Defining the specifics of the VET sector and interpretation of accreditation criteria according to the VET sector
- Preliminary assessment as a stage of preparation of the expert report, the main requirements for the report.

Having reviewed the self-evaluation report and documents of the college, the expert panel conducted the preliminary evaluation. According to the format, the lists of questions and objectives for different departments and target groups, as well as additional documents have been prepared.

Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the results of the preliminary evaluation, and the Chair of an expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the schedule of the site visit[2]. According to the ANQA manual, the intended close and open meetings with all the target groups, document observation were included in the schedule, and the resource observations were carried out through video recording.

After having identified the main issues and the investigation of documents, the expert panel highlighted the issues to be discussed at meetings. At regular meetings, the questions on each standard were discussed, and the package of documents on the preliminary visit of the expert panel was prepared. The package included the schedule of the site visit, the questions to be investigated and explained for different target groups, and the list of additional documents needed for observation during the site visit. From the lists provided by the TLI, the representatives of the teaching staff and students, graduates, and employers were selected to participate in the meetings.

Preparatory visit

A preliminary online meeting took place on November 16, 2020. ANQA coordinator and the head of the institutional-program accreditation department were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed with the college, the list of documents has been presented and peculiarities of organizing the online site visit in pandemic conditions (existence of the video, where the main resource base of the college can be seen: classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc., provide an online version of the documents that were required by experts on time, provide technical rules for online site visit such as connected cameras, the ability to see the entire room with a single shared camera, excluding the presence of other people in the room than the target groups, etc.) . The site visit was initially planned to be carried out within three days, however, in the online format, the three-day site visit lasted four days by maintaining the workload of the expert panel.

Site visit

According to the schedule in 30.11.2020, the activities of the site visit were launched with a close meeting aimed at discussing and coming to an agreement with the international expert upon the expert evaluation frame, the issues to be reviewed during the site visit, the strengths, and weaknesses of the institution according to the

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[2] Schedule of the Expert site visit

criteria, the procedure of focus groups, as well as further steps. The expert panel site visit took place from December 01 to December 04, 2020

All members of the expert panel, including the ANQA coordinator, participated in the visit.

The site visit was supposed to start and end with meetings with the director of SRSC, but the meetings did not take place due to the college director's health problem. The meeting with the college started with a meeting with 2 deputy directors. All scheduled meetings were held. According to the schedule, the panel held meetings with the representatives of all departments of the college.

At the end of each working day, the expert panel closed meetings were held to discuss the results of the interim expert assessment, and at the end of the visit the main results were summarized.

The assessment has been carried out within the framework of State Criteria and Standards of Accreditation and ANQA procedures, following which the assessment has two levels: **satisfactory** and **unsatisfactory**.

Expert panel report

The expert panel conducted the preliminary assessment based on the self-evaluation submitted by the college, the study of the attached documents, and the videos of the resources.

The College submitted its observations and remarks on the report to ANQA on 13.01.2021. Examining the preliminary version of the expert report, the college did not present any objections. The expert panel provided the final version of the report, which was approved by the panel on 29.01.2021.

Lilit Zaqaryan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel/ 29.01.2021

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Shirak Regional State College (the former Leninakan Machine-Tool Technical College) was founded in 1960. In 1985, it was renamed as Leninakan Polytechnic; in 1999 as Leninakan Polytechnic College, in 2001 as Gyumri State Engineering College. Based on the 3rd sub-clause of the 1st point of the RA Government Decision No. 199-N of March 3, 2011, Gyumri State Engineering College was renamed as Shirak Regional State College, then included in the list of 12 multifunctional colleges envisaged by the European Union budget support programme.

Shirak Regional State College implements secondary and vocational education programmes.

The college implements secondary vocational education based on basic education in three specialties: "Software for computer equipment and automated systems", "Computing machines, systems, computer networks", "Clothing modeling and design, and on the basis of secondary (full) general education in three specialties: "Software for computer equipment and automated systems", "Social work" and "Tourism", also Primary and Secondary Vocational Education in two specialties: "Computer operation", "Culinary work" on the basis of secondary (full) general education "Advertising", specialty.

Dual educational programmes are also implemented in college: "Software for computer equipment and automated systems", and "Tourism" specialties.

The college has a teaching staff in line with the goals of its specialties; many of them have work experience in the professional field, passed trainings and are quite motivated. The faculty of the college is regularly rejuvenated, retaining the most experienced staff with the best qualifications. Some of the lecturers have passed trainings in international programmes. To improve some professions, the college has established close relations with employers, especially related to the dual programme.

The educational environment of the college is quite favorable for learning, the institute of course guide works especially well, through which the needs of students are identified, and the issues are solved.

The SRSC has not yet clarified what the research is for them, the college does not have established mechanisms for the interconnection of the educational process with research activities; however, some modules have a positive experience of such interconnection. Some of the assignments develop students' creative and independent thinking.

The Shirak Regional State College does not have an international relations department, internationalization policy, and the implemented programmes operate due to personal connections, but not well-designed mechanisms or procedures. Also taking into account the low knowledge of foreign languages, the lack of processes contributing to its improvement, the expert panel finds that the Shirak Regional State College does not meet the requirements of this standard.The internal quality assurance system of SRSC is still in the implementation stage and has no effect on college processes and does not ensure the continuous improvement

of all college processes and the formation of a quality culture. Insufficient work done at the college to ensure awareness of the QA system through internal stakeholders.

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

CRITERION: The Tertiary Level Institutions' (TLIs) policy and practices are in accordance with its mission, which is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).

FINDINGS:

The SRSC carries out its activities based on its charter, and has a strategic plan from 2016 to 2021, which was approved in 2016. The mission of SRSC defined in the strategic plan is: "The SRSC is an educational institution with a national-regional role, the main mission of which is the creation, transfer and dissemination of knowledge within the framework of the state strategy for the development of education. Based on the principles of state policy in the field of education, the college promotes the development of the intellectual and personal qualities of its students and lecturers. The College is constantly striving for excellence and teaching innovation in the field of public services. As a key part of its mission, the college aims to become a student-centered educational environment that prepares its graduates for active public life, leadership careers, lifelong professional careers in line with the modern needs of a globalized society և labor market."

The document also reflects 3 strategic goals and 6 supporting goals with their objectives, which reflect the mission. The strategic goals are: 1. High quality education, 2. Professional studies, research and innovations, 3. Public involvement, and service. The supporting goals are . Qualified personnel potential, efficient infrastructure, educational and other services, Multiple admission access and compliance, financial stability, effective governance, strategic partnership, and internationalization.

In different documents (Strategic Plan 2016-2021, Action Plan 2018-2020, Strategic Development Plan 2021-2023, Student Guide, etc.) the mission of the college is stated differently, and there is no document that will substantiate the necessity of the change, the justification. It is very ambitious in the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The College is not just a disseminator of knowledge, but also a creator. In the 2021-2023 strategic plan the application for knowledge creation is not submitted anymore. In one mission it emphasizes the conduction of research and their internationalization, in another it is presented more modestly and realistically. All missions highlight the important role of college in the region and the training of qualified specialists for the labor market. The 2016-2021 SP does not have an implementation plan, there are no clear mechanisms and procedures for the implementation of the SP.

As the Strategic Plan of SRSC was a pre-election programme for the college director, the external and internal stakeholders were not directly involved in the development of the college's mission, goals, and objectives, however, the meetings showed that they are actively involved in the development and reform processes of the college. From the meetings, it turned out that the employers had the opportunity to discuss the employers' needs with the college director, but these were not reflected in the 2016-2021SP. Despite this, there are successful examples of close college-employer cooperation: the "Advertising" specialty was opened by the college at the suggestion of the director of "Tsayg" TV, some graduates have already found jobs in that organization. Successful partnerships were established in dual pilot training programmes, where employers were actively involved in both the development of educational content, the organization of internships, and the teaching process. Most of the specialties of SRSC are corresponding to the 4th և 5th levels of the NQF and are in line with the 5-year socio-economic development programmes of the Shirak region.

The college carries out the needs assessment of external stakeholders, has developed mechanisms for it, and conducted surveys, which, as it turned out from the expert online visit, have not been analyzed. Employers' remarks and suggestions were regularly discussed with the college director. The college has an annual, semi-annual reporting mechanism by all departments; respectively, however, they are not always correlated with the assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the objectives and tasks of the SP. The reports mainly record the work done, the problems, the facts, they are not analytical, are more informative, they do not contain enough data to evaluate the effectiveness of the SP. So far, the implementation of the goals set by the SP has not been evaluated and analyzed in the college.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses that the college, considering the previous SP was not feasible, has revised it in 2020, making it more measurable and realistic, which will contribute to a more consistent mission and activities.

For the 2016-2021 SP, no indicators were evaluating the implementation of the goals, the college has never evaluated the performance of the SP, which made it risky the implementation of the mission and the goals adopted by the college. However, in 2016-2021 SP, the college has set outcomes and their check indicators, and has developed an action plan that can contribute to effective strategic management and regular evaluation of objectives.

The expert panel positively assesses that the management of the college actively cooperates with partner employers, which has a positive impact on the implementation of academic programmes. The employers are generally satisfied with their cooperation. However, the internal stakeholders are less involved, and their needs are not reflected in SP. The mission defined in the colleges' 2016-2020 SP was very ambitious compared to the 5th level of the NQF and with its activities could not provide it with the available resources.

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the college has revised its mission in 2016-2020 SP, making it in line with its role in the region.

The analysis of the expert panel showed that the strategic planning was not implemented in the activities of the college, it was mainly developed as a requirement of the authorized body. The panel welcomes the fact that, in preparation for accreditation, the College's governing body has reconsidered the operational significance of the document. As evidence, the strategic plan includes an "Action Plan" with clear timelines, responsibilities, outcomes, indicators, and financial resources.

Surveys were conducted at the college to identify the needs of stakeholders, however, those in charge did not have a clear idea of the purpose and effectiveness of the tool, so the surveys were not conducted regularly, were not analyzed, and their results did not serve to improve. However, it is positively assessed by the expert panel that the college has taken the first steps by developing some mechanisms and tools to identify the needs of stakeholders, which will help to reflect the needs in the upcoming strategic planning.

SUMMARY:

Taking into consideration, that the activities of the college and the revised mission meet the requirements of the region, the resulting goals and the steps taken to achieve them, the external and internal stakeholders have partial participation in the development and implementation of the strategic plan, the external stakeholders highlight the mission of the college, the activities of the college are mainly in line with the mission, the expert panel finds that the college meets the requirements of criterion 1.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 1 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: The TLIs' system of governance, administrative structures and their practices are effective and intend to the accomplishment of its mission and purposes by keeping the governance code of ethics.

FINDINGS:

According to the charter of Shirak Regional State College, the college is managed by the founder, the state body authorized by him is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. The collegial governing body of the college is the college board, and the executive body is the director. The charter of the college provides a combination of collegial and sole management. The collective governing bodies of the College are the Governing Board, the Pedagogical Council, and the Teaching-Methodological Council, which operate in accordance with their regulations. The self-governing body of the college is the students' council.

The administration and management of educational processes, financial and economic activities are carried out through administrative and economic responsibles. Applications for the resources required for the job are usually submitted orally to the Deputy Directors. The financial resources of the college are formed mainly from the state budget, tuition fees, as well as the result of the implementation of various grant-short-term programmes. The college owns property and buildings with the right of gratuitous use.

In SRSC, the decision-making processes are regulated by relevant documents. The decision making in college is regulated in accordance with the document "Internal disciplinary rules of employees", but it does not set rules of ethics. There is also the " The rules of Ethics for Teachers of the Administrative Part of Shirak Regional State College " document, which has not been approved yet.

All vacancies are filled with relevant staff; however, job descriptions/passports have not been developed for all positions.

The colleges' governing system, current regulations give the opportunity to lecturers and students to be involved in various governing bodies and to participate directly or indirectly in management processes. It became clear from the expert online visit, that Both lecturers (two lecturers) and students (three students) on the College Board participate in Board meetings but are not active in raising issues and in terms of informing other faculty and students.

All the lecturers are included in the Pedagogical Council, and some of them are included in the Educational-Methodological Council, where they raise their concerns. In councils at this level of government, decisions are made on a more participatory basis, as they relate primarily to the learning process. There is no assessment of teachers' and students' satisfaction from the decision-making processes.

In addition to long-term planning, it has been implementing mid-term planning for 3 years since 2010 and there are available activity plans for 2010-2012, 2013-2015, 2015-2017, 2018-2020 years. The college implements long-term and mid-term planning, and at the level of subdivisions, annual (short-term) planning. It became clear from the analysis of the documents that the mid-term plans are not related to the college's strategic plan. Mid-term and long-term goals and monitoring mechanisms have not been established by the college, and no reports are submitted about the implementation of monitoring plans. Short-term planning is made without outcomes and financial planning in the form of curricula. There is clear bottom-up accountability in the college, but the reports are not analytical.

The publicity of the college activities is provided mainly by the Facebook page, through social networks, booklets, where materials about college educational processes are posted, and the activity of the official website has been interrupted. The disseminated materials do not contain qualitative-quantitative data on educational programs and qualifications awarded. The College does not have mechanisms to assess the availability of publications objectivity.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses that the SRSC is making efforts to improve the management system; all governing bodies have their regulations. According to the analysis of the expert panel, the college is mainly provided with human, material, and financial resources to carry out educational activities, but they do not correspond to the mission and goals set by the current SP of the college (2016-2021). The colleges' governing bodies have made efforts to improve the resource base, teaching and learning systems. A few years ago, the college's material resources were updated (computer, software, internet connection). The college has achievements in its relations with employers. However, as it is mentioned in the mission, to become a center of excellence in the field of education and public services, to prepare graduates for a globalized society, to meet the demands of the labor market, the college should have been provided with large financial resources, material, and technical base, had a strong trained human potential, had used the benchmarking mechanism, had created favorable conditions for the exchange of professors and students. Meanwhile, the existing resources of the college do not provide that opportunity.

For the same reason, the college failed to create "preconditions-facilitating mechanisms" for the significant increase in the number of research, to increase the involvement of students in research projects, as well as it is stated in the objectives of the SP, to promote "internationalization of research work, to ensure college integration into European research area." The goal of introducing an internal quality assurance system has not been achieved. In fact, the strategic plan has not been implemented; it is a problem of the governing bodies. Although the management of the college believes that the college should participate in some grant programmes, within which it plans to replenish and renew material resources, but at that moment they are lacking.

The employment relations in the college are regulated by the established internal disciplinary rules, but there are no established rules of ethics yet. The management of the college is often based on the standards developed by the authorized body, which the college must adapt and as well as adapt to its conditions. However, more often those documents remain unchanged, which endangers the specifics of the college, and the implementation of the existing documents.

The expert panel positively assesses that the college management system and current regulations allow faculty and students to participate in decision-making processes related to them, however, meetings with faculty, especially with students, showed that their initiative was low. As a result, sometimes decisions are made, which are not perceived by all employees. For example, it became clear from the meetings with different groups that the elimination of chairs/professional commissions was not perceived by the staff. It became clear from the expert analysis that the chair system worked effectively, informally it still works today. The newly formed Educational-Methodological Council does not completely fill the lack of chairs. It became clear from the analysis of documents that the short-term and mid-term plans are largely unrelated to the college's strategic plan. The lack of internal performance monitoring and evaluation system does not allow to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of long-term and mid-term plans. According to the expert panel, the accountability mechanism does not serve that purpose either. The bottom-up reports are presented regularly, but they are not analytical, they do not include evaluation elements, they are not related to strategic objectives. Moreover, the expert panel states that sometimes there are passages in the reports that are repeated the same way year after year, which shows their low efficiency as an evaluation mechanism (For example, 2018 and 2019 reports). Meanwhile, the improvement of the from top to bottom analytical accountability mechanism can help to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses.

Data collection processes are not directly related to strategic planning or review processes, and they are not regulated. It is worrying that the PDCA cycle, as a culture and principle of improving the management system, is not at the heart of the implementation of policies and procedures, which endangers the efficiency of the management system. The expert panel highlighted this process only in class observations, which contributes to the continuous improvement of teaching. But even in that case the evaluation mechanisms do not work fully.

The college does not fully study the factors affecting its activities, clear mechanisms and procedures are not developed for this, which endangers the decision-making processes based on reliable data. In SRSC there are no objective mechanisms for evaluating the publication of quantitative and qualitative information on the quality of academic programmes and qualifications awarded, which weakens the college's position in the education market and reduces its visibility in the labor market.

The expert group, analyzing the situation, concluded that the college lacks strategic management, the situation prevails, which is the result of the lack of a systematic and effective management system.

It is positive that the college has a good staff-student relationship, which allows students to interact directly with management or through supervisors and to raise their concerns.

SUMMARY:

Considering, that the human, material and financial resources are not fully in line with the strategic goals of the college, there are no analysis of the efficiency of the management system, the decisions are not made on the basis of collected, analyzed and evaluated data, the management system is situational, the principle of quality management is not the basis for the implementation of policies and procedures, the expert panel finds that the Shirak Regional State College does not meet the requirements of the standard.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 2 is **unsatisfactory.**

CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

CRITERION: The programmes are in concord with the institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internationalization.

FINDINGS:

The college implements education in the secondary vocational education programmes on the basis of basic education in three specialties: " Software of computer equipment and automated systems", " Computing machines, complexes, systems and computer networks ", " Clothing modelling and design", and on the basis of secondary (full) general education: " Software of computer equipment and automated systems "," Social work "," Tourism " specialties. As well as primary vocational education programmes in two specialties based on basic education: "Computer operation", "Culinary work", "Advertising" based on secondary (full) general education. In 2009 the modular system of teaching organization was introduced in the college.

From the 2017-2018 academic year, the specialty " Software of computer equipment and automated systems " is implemented through dual educational programmes (based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Gyumri Information Technology Center, Brain Force, and Instigate Design College of Companies), and from the 2018-2019 academic year for the specialty "Tourism".

All curricula implemented at the college have been developed based on state standards of secondary vocational education approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. When introducing specialties in the college, they tried to consider the needs of the labor market of the region. However, they were made mostly through oral discussions, and the college has not yet conducted a comprehensive analysis in this regard. The director of Gyumri State Employment Agency is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the College, and the Director of the College is a member of the Board of Employers. It should be noted that because of cooperation with employers, the specialty "Advertising" was introduced in the college, a number of modules of which were developed by the joint efforts of the college staff, partner "Tsayg" regional TV company, where professional subjects are taught. Through such courses, theoretical-practical knowledge is combined, developing theoretical knowledge, skills, and abilities in the students.

From the lesson observation and analysis of documents it became clear that various interactive methods are used during the theoretical courses (material discussion, debate, social case presentation, SWOT analysis of the tourism package, presentations, group work). The practical classes are carried out in the classroom, during the internship and through homework assignments (creating a tour package, creating a website, building a network for the firm, modeling models, completing term papers, projects, etc.). It is also important that the lecturers respond to the assignments by making judgments, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses, and making a concluding assessment.

There are generally no content repetitions between the educational programmes studied by the expert panel, and the content sequence of the subjects is preserved. In the chairs (now in the Teaching-Methodological Council) the results of the lessons, the methods of teaching and learning are discussed, which contributes to the improvement of the processes.

The objectives and learning outcomes are described for all modules according to the state standards of secondary vocational education. Teaching methods are defined for each result of the modules, which are reflected in the modular curricula developed by each teacher. Based on modular programmes, the lecturers make thematic plans, then, learning plans, the implementation of which is supervised by superior bodies.

The theoretical knowledge often prevails in emphasizing the expected outcomes mentioned in the modular programmes. The picture is different in dual education specialties, where the practical component prevails, which was confirmed by the lecturers, students and employers. The assignments of the existing specialties describe the works in detail and correspond to the learning outcomes of the module. There are elective subjects in the curriculum (according to the NQF), but they are chosen by the departments, the students do not participate in the choice. Only in the case of the "Tourism" profession do the students and employers participate in the election process.

It became clear from the expert meetings that the "Tourism" specialty was opened based on the needs of potential applicants, as many applicants have been interested in the profession during the open day or when applying, as well as, that the education received in the college corresponds to the expectations and needs of the students and graduates.

Due to the pandemic, the college had some difficulties with online learning. The lecturers were forced to review the teaching-learning methods, to develop new sets of assignments to ensure the described learning outcomes. Some of the lecturers have been trained in local and various international programs: the knowledge gained, teaching methods and skills have been applied during online teaching.

The college uses the following methods of student assessment: oral examinations, homework, test assignments, seminars, final exams, essays, diploma theses, projects, etc. Practical tasks are used for capacity assessment, such as website development, tourism package preparation, SWOT team analysis, the sample of design, etc. The College combines formative and summative assessment methods. During the site visit, it was found that students are not always informed about the assessment criteria, but after the assessment, the lecturers substantiate its credibility for the students. In addition, if necessary, they are given the opportunity to improve the results. There are modular programmes, for example, The "Fashion Designer - Clothing" qualification programme, where the learning outcomes of each module are presented, the performance criteria and the

assessment tools are described in detail. However, there are also modular programmes where they are not described in the same detail.

The college has developed the regulations for "Organization of final state examinations", " Final diploma thesis design, defense organization". It is stated that "the topics of the diploma thesis should correspond to the modern requirements of science and technology, the amount of knowledge acquired by the student, including key issues that they may have to deal with in the future." The regulations also present the structure of the diploma thesis, performance review, defense procedure, evaluation criteria.

Thesis topics include market research topics. At the same time, the discourse of academic honesty is missing in college. There are no effective mechanisms to maintain academic integrity and control plagiarism.

Although the college has developed an appeal regulation for student assessment of the knowledge, there is no set appeal schedule. The students and lecturers at the college assured that there was no need for it, as there were no appeals, and in case of problems they were resolved through the mediation of the supervisors.

There are no clear mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the choice of teaching methods, except for surveys and class observations. After the class observations discussions take place between lecturers. The results are summarized in the class observation books.

The college has a regulation of cooperation with Enterprises. The internships are mainly organized on the basis of signed contracts. The college has internship programmes, internships are followed by attached supervisors or college interns. At the end of the internship, students submit a report (diary). There are no studies on the effectiveness of internships in college.

The SRCS does not have a benchmarking policy, methodology, or mobility programmes. One of the achievements of the college is the memorandum on dual education, which was signed with the support of the German Government's Private Sector Development, Vocational Education and Training Program in the South Caucasus, commissioned by the German Government. Within the framework of which it is planned to ensure the exchange and mobility of lecturers in the future. Some lecturers have attempted to do comparative analysis, best practice studies using the Internet or foreign language literature. The results are presented in the form of methodological reports, compiled methodological manuals for their work, also reviewed and improved the modular programmes, thematic work plans, study materials, assessment sheets.

The institution does not have a " Quality Assessment Policy and Procedure for academic programmes". The evaluation of the effectiveness of educational programs is carried out in a non-systematic way. The basis for this is mostly the results of the final attestation, the reports of the chairmen of the final examination commissions, the ongoing discussions, the dialogue with the employers.

Not all graduates work in their profession. According to ANQA e-questionnaire from 2014-2019, 101 graduates work in the profession, 67 in the non-profession. However, the college started collecting detailed information about the graduates only in recent years, after the establishment of the career center.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The professions of the college correspond to the priorities mentioned in the socio-economic development program of Shirak region, the structure of the labor market of the region, they are in line with the revised mission of the college and are described in detail according to the learning outcomes of the modules. The educational process is organized in accordance with the NQF, the college has not developed APs for itself (except for "Tourism" and "Advertising, professions), the development of which would contribute to the existence of a collective description of the graduate and the implementation of outcome-based education. As the educational process is organized according to state educational standards. The professions of the college are in terms of content in line with the professions of other colleges in the country with the characteristics of the 5th level of the NQF. No comparison has been made with similar programmes abroad. It is planned to promote the mobility of students and lecturers in the Colleges' SP, however, no steps have been taken in that direction.

The expert panel states that the lecturers use many interactive teaching methods, which have been enriched during the online teaching. Some of them are quite modern and progressive, which contributes to the creation of a student-centered environment. The lecturers have developed assignments that contribute to the effective learning of students and achievement of the learning outcomes of each module by them. Some assignments are done in the classroom, while others are given as homework. At the same time, in the opinion of the expert panel, as a database of assignments has not been created, it does not allow to assess the extent to which they contribute to the student's progress and the achievement of all educational outcomes. During the pandemic, the teaching-learning methods became very risky, but during the meeting, the experts were convinced that the teaching staff had developed a new set of assignments, through which they tried to ensure the learning outcomes, reducing the risks.

There are advantages to the student assessment system: some modular programmes include a detailed description of the assessment tools. However, since it is not available in other modular programmes, it can be concluded that due to the lack of mechanisms for evaluating this positive experience, it has not been disseminated or institutionalized. The expert panel positively assesses that the college uses not only summative but also evaluative assessment, which helps to improve student achievement. During the final attestation, students can take an exam or submit a diploma thesis It is also positive, that the diploma thesis is carried out according to the developed procedure, and in the list of topics there are quite practical topics, which contributes to the development of students' professional skills, selection of pro-market-current topics and closer cooperation with the employer.

The expert panel positively assesses that the diploma theses are often supervised by employers, which contributes to their future employment of graduates. The college monitors the academic programmes only through class observations, the results of which are discussed at the meetings of the chairs/teaching-methodological council; there are no other mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness in the college yet. Meanwhile, the introduction of other mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness could contribute to the identification of new issues, their solution, which would increase the efficiency of the educational process.

SUMMARY:

Considering, that the college organizes the educational process in accordance with state educational standards, the demand for college specialties in the region, using various methods of student-centered teaching and learning, some of which are quite up-to-date, the variety of assignments and their compliance with the output

requirements of the profession, the cooperation with employers in the performance of diploma thesis, it can be concluded that the college generally meets the requirements of Criterion 3.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 3 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION: The TLI provides relevant student support services ensuring the effectiveness of the learning environment.

FINDINGS:

The SRSC carried out the process of admission of applicants in accordance with the procedure for admission to the initial (vocational) and secondary vocational education programmes. The college uses different recruitment mechanisms: booklets about college are being prepared, the list of specialties is presented in the informant of vocational colleges of Armenia, is making a video about the college, which is shown on the local "Tsayg" TV channel, "Open Doors Days" are announced, through which cognitive visits to the college are organized among the students, as well as awareness-raising, professional orientation visits to schools by the staff, etc. However, no analysis of the effectiveness of student recruitment mechanisms has been conducted. During the meeting with the students, the expert panel found out that most of them were admitted to the college on the advice of an acquaintance.

The college does not yet have policies and procedures for studying students' educational needs, however, the needs of students are identified through surveys, regular meetings of students on various boards, as well as faculty and management.

It became clear from the analysis of the expert group that not all the students participated in the survey, they were not conducted at a regular frequency, the results of the survey were not analyzed, and they had no effect. While having some issues, the students apply to course instructors, who are involved in identifying the students' educational needs. The student's involvement in the college board can help to identify the educational needs. It became clear from the analysis that most of the students are not aware of the functions of the student council and are not perceived as a body representing the interests of students.

The students are less informed about the functions of the QA manager and are more informed about the functions of the Career Center and organized events.

The college does not have clear procedures for additional counseling, but each lecturer provides additional counseling, both for a specific subject and for the course and diploma work. Students can get advice from lecturers and course instructors. The college uses the resources of other organizations operating in the city by directing them to meet the needs of their students. For example, the students from the ˝Tourism˝ faculty participated in in-depth foreign language courses organized at the Youth Palace under the direction of a college.

To provide additional educational support, pre-school courses were organized for students (Russian language, foreign language (English), the technology of painting materials, painting). Although the college does not have clear procedures for applying to administrative staff to provide support and guidance to students, there is a schedule for applying to the director, and for other administrative staff, students can ask any question at any time to all departments of the college and get answers to their questions. During the expert online visit, it became clear that the course instructors are assisting the students in this matter, and the seniors, who are officially members of the Student Council, are assisted by the Deputy Director for Education.

The college has had a professional career center since 2013 and it works according to a detailed work schedule. The goal of the Career Center is to promote the competitiveness of students and graduates in the labor market, to strengthen the graduate-college relationship, to regulate college-employer relations, and to organize internships. Students regularly have meetings with the career manager, watch movies and participate in discussions. The college did not evaluate the effectiveness of the center. At the Career Center, students learn to write a CV, have professional orientation classes, study how to apply to the employer and how to apply for a job interview. The Career Center has an "Announcement Corner" where information about the labor market is posted, which the Career Center receives in cooperation with the State Employment Agency.

Studies have shown that students can participate in exhibitions, competitions, where creative works are presented. The assignments are given to them, the course and diploma theses contain elements of research.

There are no institutional mechanisms in the college for evaluating the effectiveness of its activities. The college has not yet implemented an evaluation of educational, counseling, and other services provided to students.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The college has mechanisms for student recruitment, selection, and admission. Admission is carried out in accordance with the procedure developed by the authorized body. According to the expert panel, the college could improve the recruitment and selection mechanisms, if they evaluate the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

According to the analysis of the expert panel, the restriction of the mechanisms for revealing the educational needs of students only by the institute of course instructors does not allow them to find out the real needs. The college conducts regular surveys, but they are not analyzed and have no effect.

On the positive side, the college contributes to the effectiveness of learning by carrying out additional (preferential) classes, consultations, as well as creating an opportunity for students to meet their educational needs through external partners, which contributes to the students' progress.

Although the college only has a schedule for applying to the director, however, being a small educational institution, there is an opportunity for direct contact with the "administrative" and "teaching" staff. Assessing the atmosphere created for applying to the administration, however, the expert panel considers it necessary to regulate the process, which will allow to record and evaluate the efficiency of the work done, identify gaps and improve the process.

Although the career center has been operating since 2013, the effectiveness of the structure has not been assessed yet. There were many functions in the document regulating the work of the career center, in the direction of which no work was done yet (for example, to summarize information on local and international labor market development trends).

The effective and targeted work of the Career Center will help strengthen the college-employer relationship, improve practices, as well as identify labor market needs and localization in APs.

Although the institution has not yet clarified the scope of its research, however it is positive that the college takes steps to ensure that students' research skills are developed through analytical, critical, and professional thinking assignments, term papers, and diploma works. It is positive that students can choose the topics of their studies. Some students also participate in competitions and exhibitions.

The rights of students are mainly protected through the institution of course instructors. The student council does not carry out its statutory function of protecting the rights of students. It limits the growth of students' civic activity, initiative behavior and independence.

The College has taken the first steps towards evaluating the educational services, however, from the experts' point of view, the questionnaire and survey methodology needs to be improved. It is also important not only the averaging of received data, but their analysis and discussion with stakeholders. The college has a student guide; however, it does not meet the requirements of such standard guidelines and does not provide students with the information they need to know about college services.

SUMMARY:

Considering, that the college has some mechanisms aimed at identifying the educational needs of students, each student receives appropriate support and individual approach from the administration and lecturers, as well as students have the opportunity to participate in additional classes, to receive advices, the college has established mechanisms for student recruitment and admission, generally provided with an effective educational environment for students, the panel finds that the college meets the requirements of the standard.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 4 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: The TLI has a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to accomplish the institution's mission and to implement the goals set for academic programmes

FINDINGS:

The policy of selecting the teaching and support staff of Shirak Regional State College is based on the RA Labor Code. There is a procedure for selecting the teaching staff. From time to time, the College announces a competition and informs about it through media, however, it often applies for the position to other partner

institutions, such as the Shirak State University. Applicants for the vacancy are interviewed, consisting of two stages: first with the HR manager, then with the director of the SRSC, in case of compliance with all the documents. In case of suitability for the position, the applicant goes through a probationary period, which, after successfully overcoming, a contract is signed with him. There are main, and jointly working lecturers in the college.

There are many young lecturers in the college. More than 55% of lecturers are under 40 years old. The teaching staff of the college meets the requirements of NQF, which is based on the relevance of professional education and/or qualifications, as well as the desired work experience in the field. As there are no APs developed in the SRSC, there are no clear requirements for the professional qualities of the teaching staff outside the NQF.

The given modules are presented to the already working lecturers during the distribution of new subjects, considering the relevance of the lecturer's profession. If the lecturer's qualification does not correspond to the module being taught, he/she undergoes training and only after that he/she receives the lessons of the given subject.

There are no job passports in the college, but there are job descriptions in the contracts. The college does not have a mechanism for identifying the needs of the teaching staff, however, according to the administrative staff, the lecturers can present their needs in writing. For example, lecturers can submit a written application if they need the necessary literature, equipment, or stationery. It is provided in case of financial resources.

The college has the document "Professional qualities of the teachers at Shirak Regional State College - the procedure for evaluating their work", but it is not valid yet.

The assessment of teaching staff is carried out through mutual class observations, class observations conducted by the Deputy Director for Education, on the teacher's personal sheet, as well as on student surveys. The class observations are obligatorily implemented, their results are discussed and contribute to the improvement of the quality of teaching. While the surveys were not regular, the existing surveys were not analyzed. In fact, the only mechanism for evaluating lecturers in the College is carried out through class observations, which are conducted according to pre-established schedules, ensuring the PDCA cycle.

In total, 62% of the lecturers are trained in the College. The training of lecturers is mainly conducted by MKUZAK. To obtain new professional qualifications within the framework of the dual educational program, five days of trainings were held at the College by the German company International Cooperation (GIZ) in 2018, in July, which was attended by 8 lectures of the college. In October of 2018, one training session was held by the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), which was attended by the director of SRSC, the head of the Dual Education Program and one lecturer.

There are lecturers who have been trained abroad. One of the lecturers participated in the German International Cooperation Company in Germany's "Private Sector Development in the South Caucasus" training. Within the framework of the programme, received a certificate of international specialist in the field of Technical Vocational Education (VET) in the field of master courses. The willingness to participate in the new trainings and development programmes of the teaching staff is great, which was revealed during the online visit. Employers also teach at the college and those with practical work experience in the relevant professional field.

However, during the expert online visit, it turned out that there has been a lack of training among lecturers recently. The frequency of trainings is small, and lecturers need professional trainings, otherwise they fall behind in professional innovations. The outflow of lecturers from the College during the recent years is not big, lecturers have years of work experience at Shirak Regional State College, even the youngest ones have been teaching for several years. The teaching staff consists of staff with practical experience in the field, some of which are direct employers.

The College considers the provision of the basis for ensuring the stability of the teaching staff as the distribution of the lecturer's workload (full-time provision) and provision of additional payments. During the visits it was found out that the College does not have a reserve of human resources, one subject is taught in the college mainly by one lecturer.

During the expert online visit, it became clear that the teaching staff is motivated, and is not indifferent to students' progress. There is no clear policy or procedure for ensuring the professional development of the teaching staff in the college. Mutual class observations of the teaching staff and their oral discussions are presented by the college as the main mechanism for ensuring the professional development of the teaching staff. In general, the lecturers note that the class observations are an effective mechanism, which gives an opportunity to notice each other's possible omissions, make additions, and use the best experience.

The trainings are carried out not according to the demand, but according to the possibility. There are mechanisms for teaching staff promotion. In 2016 the college approved the document "Regulation on establishing a promotion procedure for the employees of Shirak Regional State College". According to the College Charter, the types of promotions are expressing gratitude, awarding a diploma and financial promotion. A financial promotion gets one lecturer for his extra work in developing new curricula. The College has a responsible staff that are sufficient to meet the College's strategic goals and basic requirements.

The educational process is organized by the Deputy Director for Educational Affairs, the Head of the Educational Department. All departments operate in accordance with the regulations established by the College, in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Armenia.

CONSIDERATIONS:

At Shirak Regional State College, teaches a teaching staff with experience in their fields, constantly striving for development, and constantly evolving teaching staff, for the selection of which there are established mechanisms.

It is positive that most of the lecturers have been trained by MKUZAK experts, but there is a lack of professional-pedagogical trainings, the organization of which will contribute to the professional development of the teaching staff and the provision of educational services in line with the requirements of the labor market. The expert panel found out that there is a need for professional training among lecturers, which requires financial investment, but now the SRSC does not have that opportunity. The reason for such an exception is the limited financial resources of the College, which make it impossible for lecturers to participate in paid trainings. The mechanisms for identifying and assessing the needs of lecturers need to be improved. It is positive that the

motivation of the staff towards work is high, which contributes to the creation of a favorable environment for education.

The expert panel sees a positive tendency in the rejuvenation of the teaching staff, in the retention of more experienced staff with the best qualifications, which ensures a smooth generation change. Some of the lecturers have also been trained in international programmes. The college has mechanisms for the teaching staff promotion, both moral and financial, which need to be revised and to be put into circulation more actively, which will further increase the work efficiency.

It is positive that the college is taking steps for stabilizing its teaching staff. However, the promotion mechanisms and the workload provision (full-time support) do not aspire to confidence. They contain underestimated risks, as evidenced during the online visit of the expert panel, it became clear that all bonuses have been deducted in the last academic year due to the reduction of the allocated budget provided by MoESCS. The lack of staff in the college, the teaching of several subjects by one lecturer makes the stability of the teaching staff risky, such a phenomenon requires at least the availability of staff reserve to avoid force majeure situations.

The involvement of lecturers in research work is limited to methodological reports and manuals. It is a positive experience, that can be enriched by studying the international experience of cooperation with employers. The experts evaluate it positively the teaching practice in the college of employers and specialists with professional experience in the field, as it considers an effective mechanism to link theoretical-practical skills and gives students the opportunity to get directly acquainted with the changes taking place in the field.

SUMMARY:

Considering the existence of teaching staff in the college in accordance with the goals of the educational programme, with years of work experience in the field, trained, and involvement of highly motivated teachers in the educational process, the panel considers that the SRSC meets the requirements of Criterion 5.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 5 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION: **The TLI ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.**

FINDINGS:

In the 2016-2021 strategic plan the college has a strategic goal that reflects its research interests and aspirations. "Professional studies, research and innovation. To maximize the contribution of the college's teaching potential to economic development and public welfare, by establishing centers of excellence, to encourage the

improvement of the college staff, in particular the teaching staff, facilitate their initiative work, and encourage active involvement in research work. To achieve this goal, 2 tasks have been set .

1. Establish preconditions and facilitate mechanisms for significant growth in research, and increase faculty and student involvement in research projects.
2. Promote the internationalization of college research by ensuring the integration of the college into the European Research Area.

The college planned the following steps to address these issues:

·   To evaluate the results of the research according to the criteria of the defined problems, relevance, and applicability,
·   To promote the secondary professional research programmes and directions,
·   To encourage student research management,
·   To encourage the practical-research direction of practices,
·   Regularly organize high-ranking international conferences at the college,
·   To support the participation of college specialists in the development and implementation of state, local, international grant, and credit programs,
·   To Achieve sustainable collaborative inter-college collaboration mechanisms through group formation,
·   To create the preconditions and prepare the necessary research potential for the effective participation of the college in European framework programmes and for the active involvement in the European Research Area.

Most of these steps have not been implemented, and there is no line in the budget aimed at achieving those goals. Only steps have been taken to make student internships practical and research, as well as to manage the student's diploma thesis management process. Now, the college has mechanisms for linking research activities with the educational process, as they contain weakly expressed elements of research and independent work in diploma, course, and subject assignments. Methodological guidelines and manuals have been developed by the lecturers, some of whom have tendencies to study the best practices and localize them in the teaching process.

In the 2021-2023 strategic plan, the ambitions of the college have become more realistic, the new vision of the college has been emphasized, that the SRSC ˝strives to become an institution that provides students with comprehensive knowledge, skills, and skills-based educational programmes based on research, creative work, and innovation, provides students and staff with high-quality education and modern infrastructure needed for research and favorable environment˝.

There is no clear research policy in the college. During the site visit, it became clear that no one was encouraged to do the research. In fact, to date, the college has not launched mechanisms to promote research development and innovation. According to point 5 of the SRSC staff promotion procedure, the lecturer is given 1 point for publishing textbooks, educational or methodological manuals (during the whole academic year), which is quite low, as the lecturer can get the same point for holding public activities and organizing an event in the college. However, it should be noted that studies have been conducted by the teaching staff

to provide dual education. Two specialists from the teaching staff of the college in 2016 Participated in research organized by MKUZAK. Modular standards have been revised for ″Social work″ (which is not currently implemented by the College), and ″Cashier″ professions. Thoroughly revised and changed ″Basics of social work″, ″Social case management″ and ″ Cashier″ modular programmes. Students are given the opportunity to choose and suggest research topics that interest them.

Lecturers presented methodological reports in the chairs, some methodological manuals are developed, which also contain research elements. Some professors have one or two articles published in scientific journals or collections, which, however, are not continuous. Some lecturers had collected lecture materials, which they intended to publish. In the plans of the chairs and professional committees there is the planning of methodological manuals and reports.

It is stated in the SER of the college, the "Professional chairs play an important role in increasing the efficiency of students′′ involvement in scientific research, which prepares students for individual classes and engages them in scientific work." It should be noted that because of the structural changes, the chair was eliminated as a subdivision, which made the preparation of scientific works risky.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The panel assesses positively the College's efforts to create a creative environment, but at the same time mentions that it is not clear what the research is for the college, that is why it is presented differently in the various strategic documents of the college, which promotes the misunderstanding of research activities by all stakeholders.

In the 2016-2021 SP, the goals and tasks set by the college in the strategic plan were very ambitious and unattainable. In the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, the college lowered the bar and focuses its research on developing students' research skills. Although there are elements of the interrelationship between the educational process and research activities, but this process is not systematic, and their effectiveness is low. There are examples of good practice of such assignments in the college, for "social work" case management. There were also some examples in diplomas, course works, subject assignments. However, the lack of appropriate sustainable mechanisms makes the development and dissemination of positive practices risky, whereas if such mechanisms are developed, they can develop analytical, critical, and professional thinking in line with the NQF Level 5, as well as lead to independent research. All this can be a good basis for developing a strategy for developing students' research skills.

The research of the curricula/modules of the professions carried out by the lecturers is mainly interconnected with the participation in the process of developing new professions or changing the standards. The mechanism that encourages research activities is not effective, it does not motivate lecturers to do research, and to publish articles. Due to the elimination of the chairs, the implementation of methodological manuals, planning of reports and discussions are endangered, as now the structure coordinating that process has not been clarified. The College is not doing anything to create the preconditions for the internationalization of research.

SUMMARY:

Considering the strategy of expressing its interests and aspirations in the research field of the college is unrealistic, the resources provided by the college are not sufficient to carry out research activities, the effectiveness of the current promotion system is low, there is no internationalization of college research activities, the link between research and study is weak, and the panel finds that the SRSC does not meet the requirements of Criterion 6.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 6 is **unsatisfactory**

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

CRITERION: The TLI has necessary resources to create learning environment and to effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives.

FINDINGS:

The total area of the building of Shirak Regional State College is 998 m. the yard area is 1050 m. The total number of classrooms in the college is 295, of which 118 are in the first, 73 in the second and 104 in the third building. The college has laboratories and classrooms for all its specialties, equipment necessary for the profession. In particular, they are computers, printers, projectors, and smart whiteboards. In the classroom for the specialty "Clothing Design and Design" there are quite new sewing machines, ironing tables and other accessories to fully organize the lessons. Now, the lack of resources is supplemented by the joint use of resources of partner employers. The 6.4% of the college classroom is technically fully equipped. In addition, in 4.4% of the rooms there is internet access. 35% of college computers are connected to the college computer network.

The college has 2 research laboratories for general education subjects: physics, chemistry and biology. There is a professional workshop in the college, which was built in 2020, and it consists of 4 rooms. During the online visits of the expert panel, it became clear that the college is currently undergoing repair works. The gym of SRSC is also being renovated. The college has a heating system, but it is very expensive. The college has an aid station with an area of 12 m., equipped with necessary supplies, two beds, and medicines. In the first and third building, there is a restroom for men and women, but in the second building, there is no restroom for men.

According to self-evaluation, the existing library in the college and the amount and variety of literature in the library seemed to be sufficient, however, during the site visit, it turned out that the professional literature available in the library was not sufficient, both in terms of type and quantity. To provide students with books quantitatively, college textbooks have been digitized, and students can download college textbooks by scanning the QR code. In 202-2021, the college plans an electronic library transaction. During the expert visits, it was also revealed that lecturers and students need more powerful computers, which are essential for the full implementation of some educational programmes.

During the expert visits of the expert group, it was found out that the College had recently acquired a new laptop computer, due to the request of one of the lecturers. There has been a survey about computer satisfaction, but this survey has not yet been processed by the College. However, it became clear that they are expected to be equipped with new computers within the framework of the grant program/s in the near

future. Some of the classrooms in the college are small (in particular, the areas of computer and sewing workshop were mentioned), which hinders some programmes, in particular, the full organization of dual programmes. However, it was mentioned, that certain steps are already being taken to address the problem of scarcity of space, taking into account the ongoing renovation work. General students are satisfied with the resources available in the college, especially due to the dual educational programmes, the gaps of the College resources are mainly compensated. The college's budget provides annual funding (up to 20% of the budget) for the renovation and modernization of buildings, laboratories, and other buildings. During the online visits, it became clear that the money is allocated as needed. In college, most resource replenishment is done through grants.

The budget of the College is sufficient to ensure the existence of the College (salaries, heating), but not in terms of the implementation of strategic goals. The College does not have a policy of budgeting or allocating strategic goals, there are certain mechanisms for the distribution of finances. Each year in January-February, the work on planning the funds allocated from the RA state budget for next year begins. The Governing Board approves the College's budget and extra-budgetary funds, inputs and outputs outlay. The College distributes funds in accordance with the procedure established by the RA legislation.

During the site visits, it turned out, that although the College does not have a budget-allocation policy, however, the existing mechanisms are effective, due to which the College does not accumulate debts, and if there is a balance of the year's budget, it is redistributed to the next year's budget. The Charter of Shirak Regional State College states that the college may have additional sources of funding, in particular, own funds generated by entrepreneurial activities and from other types of activities not prohibited by law; investments, grants and loans made by foreign legal entities, individuals and community budgets. However, during the online visit, it became clear that after the last short-term programme, the College currently has no additional financial resources and additional sources of funding. However, if possible, the college participates in tenders announced for the implementation of short-term projects. The SRSC has a serious strategic issue related to the diversification of financial sources.

From the data provided by the College and from the online visits of the expert panel, it became clear that the College has a material and technical base for the implementation of APs. The material and technical base of the college is mainly replenished through grant programs and partner organizations. At Shirak Regional State College, the planning of each year of financial resources is done at the beginning of the previous year. The documentation of the office is being implemented in accordance with the ″clerical work″ procedure. Internal documentation is mainly done in paper form, via internal network and e-mail. The college's Facebook page promotes the dissemination of information. The document archiving process is done by the Clerk-Archivist. The aid station is equipped with the minimum necessary medicine, and everything is maintained in the register. There are guards at the college. The college's adjacent yard area is under video surveillance. An alarm system has been set up at the college, which also operates in laboratories. The college has a fire alarm system. Shirak Regional State College has developed the "Civil Defense" document, and the College has a civil defense headquarters. Students with special needs also study at the college, but it is not possible to organize the education of students with mobility disabilities at the College, although there are ramps inside and outside the College, there are no other necessary facilities.

There are no clear mechanisms for assessing the applicability, availability, and effectiveness of the resources provided by the college, as they are conducted orally and the surveys are not analyzed. During the online visits of the expert panel, it became clear that the lecturers submit in writing to the director their observations on the lack of necessary materials and equipment. It became clear that surveys were made

among the students, but they were not analyzed. Students raise up their needs through course instructors. It became clear from the analysis that the students presented their need for resources to the director; he pursued the students' wishes by providing them with the mentioned resource.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel assesses positively the college's efforts to create the necessary learning environment for the implementation of its specialties, despite the fact that the resources of the SRSC are not updated on a regular basis. At the same time, it should be noted that in the conditions of reducing the funds allocated to the college from the budget, the college fills the lack of material and technical equipment necessary for the implementation of the specialties with grant programmes. In general, the resource base of the college allows to provide the necessary teaching and learning environment, available resources are available to learners and employers, especially for dual education. Students are given the opportunity to use the available resources out of classes if needed.

The evaluation of applicability, accessibility and effectiveness of resources provided to college students and faculty is carried out through discussions in the chairs. There is also a mechanism for submitting an individual application. The experts collected sufficient examples of the fact that, if possible, the college satisfies these applications by providing new resources. It can be seen as proof of that is the current construction work aimed at improving learning conditions. As a small structure, the existing documentation processes are sufficient to ensure its management process. The internal network of the college ensures that the administrative staff is informed about the decisions. The expert panel research also showed that the college is taking steps to create a safe and secure environment for students and faculty.

According to the expert panel, the budget of the college, the material and the technical base are sufficient to solve today's educational issues, to organize the teaching-learning process at a sufficient level; however, it does not contribute to the development. That is why the expert panel positively assesses the activity of the college in terms of participating in grant programmes and cooperating with employers.

SUMMARY:

Considering that, the Shirak Regional State College has sufficient resources for the implementation of academic programmes, to create an educational environment for the implementation of the College's defined mission and strategic goals, which, if necessary, are supplemented by the joint use of employers' resources, as well as within its budget renovates and modernizes buildings, laboratories, other buildings, the expert panel finds that the college meets the requirements of Criterion 7.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 7 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION: The TLI is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts

FINDINGS:

Shirak Regional State College has a clear procedure of internal and external accountability, according to which a part of the subdivisions, in accordance with the pre-defined dimensions, submits reports to the administrative body coordinating its work, which in turn to the director. However, the reports are not analytical but record the performed actions. The reports of the subdivisions are summarized in the report of the director, which is submitted to the College Council and the authorized body such as The Ministry of Education, Science Culture and Sports of The Republic of Armenia.

The accountability system in the college is hierarchical. One of the mechanisms of accountability to external stakeholders is the submission of reports to the MoESCS and other state agencies in accordance with the law. Analysis of the effectiveness of existing accountability mechanisms is not performed in college.

The College's ambitions regarding college procedures, educational processes, information system transparency and accessibility were expressed in the 3-rd goal of the 2021-2023 SP. To achieve this, the college has defined the following actions .

- To activate college collaboration opportunities with different community groups.
- To improve the official website of the college, increase the scope of information attractiveness, develop, and expand the level of educational materials, supplement and develop materials.
- To conduct public opinion polls about the college to bring its activities in line with current societal needs.
- To develop effective mechanisms for organizing and implementing additional educational programmes, which will enable to initiate, respond to orders, or implement programmes based on the professional development needs of the person.
- To study, develop and suggest additional educational programme according to target groups, including social partnership beneficiaries.
- To provide opportunities for college students, alumni, and faculty to continue their education through additional educational programmes.

Different platforms used to make the college more transparent and accessible to the public: Tsayg TV, social networks, visits of faculty and students to schools of the region, participation in job fairs, exhibitions, various competitions, etc. The College publishes booklets and Student Guides to engage applicants. The college prepares informative video reports, articles, photo reports about the most interesting events, which spread on social media, as well as in the media.

The internal (faculty, students, staff, etc.) and external (employers, parents, government, etc.) stakeholders are involved in the various processes of the college and provide access to the various processes of

the college to the public. The institution transfers knowledge to the public through short-term courses. In particular, in 2020 from September 9 to November 23, was held ″Disability as a Challenge in Shirak region″. ″Arming women with disabilities with skills and knowledge″ is a short-term programme, during which 12 women with disabilities were trained. The college is supported by the Regional Employment Center and employers in identifying the public demand for the transfer of knowledge and values to the public.

It should be noted, that the college does not have mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of public relations, analyzes, how satisfied are the stakeholders with these processes, do they meet the requirements of the society, or what are the achievements and shortcomings as a result. The college considers the official Facebook page the most flexible feedback tool, where besides receiving information about college activities, anyone can share their concerns and get relevant feedback. As it mentioned in the SER, the college had an official web page, which is currently down. Due to the absence of the website, the director's annual report is not available for the public. However, there are informal mechanisms for this purpose (meetings, various events, open doors meetings, counseling services, training for community village students, etc.).

CONSIDERATION:

The panel welcomes the fact that the College has a bottom-up accountability mechanism that operates regularly and demonstrates the implementation of short-term plans. Although the reports are not directly related to the College's strategic plan, they do not address the issues raised in previous years' reports, but do highlight the performance of short-term plans, covering a variety of areas of activity.

The transparency of the college is ensured by local TV channels, through local media, social networks, visits to schools in the region, contacts with local governments, job fairs, exhibitions, participation in various competitions, etc. Tsayg TV especially helps to ensure transparency and access to the college, which is one of the active employers of the college. All of this helps to increase the visibility of the college to the public.

The SRSC implements short-term programs, promoting the transfer of knowledge to the public, especially for vulnerable groups. However, the college does not have a data collection policy and mechanisms and does not evaluate the effectiveness of its activities in that direction. Alumni feedback mechanisms are very weakly designed, feedback from partner employers is active, but the processes are not systematic. These circumstances hinder the identification and analysis of the needs of external stakeholders, which in turn does not contribute to the improvement of the college.

SUMMARY:

Considering, that the SRSC has a clear accountability mechanism, finds platforms to inform the public about its activities and ensure transparency, has mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of relations with employers and local governments, implements programmes for the transfer of knowledge (values) to the public, the expert panel finds that the college meets the requirements of Criterion 8.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 8 is **satisfactory.**

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALISATION

CRITERION: The TLI promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.
FINDINGS:

The Shirak Regional State College states in its strategic plan that the College is striving for internationalization and to study the international best practices. However, most of the mentioned provisions have not been implemented. There are no special policies or procedures for this purpose. There are no annual action plans for internationalization. However, the College tries to manifest in this field through various international programmes, actively using all the provided opportunities. From the study of the submitted documents and the online visit of the expert panel, it became clear that the College does a lot of work in terms of establishing foreign relations in the region, has a number of employers whose field of activity corresponds to the main professional directions of the College.

Dual educational programs are implemented in SRSC. During the site visit it became clear, that the main employers are interested in working with the college, and expressed readiness to hire college students in the future. However, there is no connection with the colleges in the region, and there are no cooperation plans. There is no exchange of experience between colleges, of course, there are some exceptions, which are based on the personal initiative of the lecturers.

Employers teach at the college, as do their employees. The college has no infrastructure to promote internationalization. Certain activities in the field have been fully implemented by the director. Shirak Regional State College cooperates with the local government. As a result of the cooperation, students should be provided with a 50% discount in case of using public transport by using student tickets.

During the site visit, it became clear that the College participated in grant progammes. Due to several collaborations (including UN programs with the Government of the Republic of Armenia), some students have had the opportunity for professional growth, including the acquisition of a new profession.

In particular, four students have passed paid internships within the framework of the ˝Kolba Lab˝ programme. The college participates in some international educational programmes. In 2018 Shirak Regional State College signed a memorandum of understanding With the Center for Youth Initiatives NGO (YIC). Later, in 2019, due to this cooperation, a study visit to Italy was organized within the framework of the "Erasmus +" project, in which participated students and lecturers of the "Clothes Modeling-Design" specialty.

During the expert online visits, it became clear that the executive members of the Board of Directors have a great role to play in promoting foreign relations of the College. The latter, through their personal connections, support the College's external relations. During the expert online visits, it became clear that most of the lecturers are fluent in Russian, and some in English, there are also lecturers with knowledge of other foreign languages. No special steps have been taken at the College to ensure the required level of foreign

language proficiency. No mechanism is mentioned in this direction for the future either. Most students have a low level of knowledge of foreign languages. There are no clear steps to improve students' English language skills. Additional English classes are offered only to students who have studied other foreign languages before admitting to College. During the expert online visits, it turned out that within the framework of cooperation with the Gyumri Youth Chamber, there were students (three in number) who had the opportunity to study more in-depth English there.

CONSIDERATION:

There are no clear mechanisms, procedures, policies, or structures responsible for internationalization in SRSC. The implemented programs work due to personal connections, so they are at risk because in the future they can be interrupted due to the person and hinder stability. The college has experience of cooperation with international organizations, which activation contributes to the accumulation and dissemination of best practices.

During the site visit, it became clear whether the partner employers are involved in the work of the SRSC as much as possible, in particular organizing internships and dual education programmes, which contributes to the improvement of the College's work and constant awareness of market requirements. However, as it is presented in its SER and 2021-2023 SWOT analysis, there is a lack of motivation from other employers, who are not interested in working more closely with the college. Sustainable and planned work with employers will facilitate the development of external relations and the introduction of employer requirements into college APs. The involvement of employers in the teaching processes contributes students to acquire practical skills in this field.

The college has connections with local governments, regional schools, and media, but as a regional college, it does not cooperate with other colleges in the region. The creation of a foreign language environment is strongly important for internationalization processes.

The level of knowledge of foreign languages among the faculty and students of the College is at a low communication level. The SRSC does not take active steps in this direction, has no vision of programmes aimed at raising the level of knowledge of foreign languages.

SUMMARY:

Considering, that Shirak Regional State College does not have a stable system of international relations and internationalization, there is no policy to promote internationalization, and the implemented programs are due to personal connections, not due to unclear mechanisms and/or procedures, the low rate of foreign language proficiency in the college and the lack of processes contributing to its increase, the expert panel finds that the Shirak Regional State College does not meet the requirements of Criterion 9.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 9 is **unsatisfactory.**

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

CRITERION: The TLI has an internal quality assurance system for promoting establishment of a quality culture and continuous improvement of all the processes of TLI.

FINDINGS:

Since 2017, the position of quality assurance responsible has been created in the college, which aims to support the institution's QA processes. It is mentioned in the SER "The Quality Center was established in 2017. The staff of the center includes one position, who is responsible for the quality of education. The position of the responsible divided between 2 employees to ensure a system of multi-content work." The QA responsibles provided with working conditions, provided with the necessary office equipment, furniture, and material resources. Financial resources are the salary provided for the staff by the budget.

The QA principles, policy, structure of the quality assurance system approved in 2020 are included in the QA manual, but it does not have clear procedures, necessary mechanisms, and tools for its implementation. In the annual reports for the years 2017-2019 the QA reports are the same, only the year has changed according to the reporting year. It all starts with the following: In January-December of the reporting year, the college was in the process of self-evaluation, preparing for external institutional accreditation. During that time, a number of qualitative-quantitative researches were carried out and the results were presented by the QA Center to professional commissions for reforms." This fact already substantiates that the QA responsibles conducted some inquiries, but no steps were done at the college to implement and establish an internal quality assurance system. The studies also showed that there are no analyzed results of the surveys, identified problems, and developed reform steps. There is only a summary of the survey conducted among the lecturers and the evaluation of the lecturers' courses.

There is no clear methodology for organizing, conducting surveys, collecting and processing data, and evaluating the effectiveness of the surveys. However, there are various questionnaires developed. In college, surveys are considered a key quality assurance mechanism conducted among faculty, students, and employers. However, as it turned out during the visit, these surveys were not regular, systematic and their goals were not specified, their effectiveness has not been assessed yet. It became clear from the examples of the questionnaires that the college did not clearly assess the role of the tool but developed it as a requirement.

Apart from surveys, there are no internal, external stakeholder engagement mechanisms. Some students mentioned that they had participated in the surveys before, but again they were not informed about the purpose of the surveys, they were not aware of the existence of the structure.

The PDCA cycle is not closed in any process of the college, except for the class observations. The internal quality assurance system of the college is still in the implementation stage, the staff has changed several times since 2017, and the new staff has not been trained yet. During the site visit, it became clear that the internal-external stakeholders who are involved in the Quality Assurance processes do not have clear expectations from the QA processes; there is no clear understanding of the role. The staff of the college is generally

unaware of the requirements of the college QA manual, including the responsibilities set out therein. That is, there is a lack of knowledge and experience of college staff on quality assurance functions.

One of the most important mechanisms for ensuring transparency in the internal quality assurance system may be the website of the college, which is non-functioning. The quality assurance system in the college is in the development stage. The quality assurance system monitoring and evaluation has not been implemented yet. The data collection process is not systematic and complete, which greatly makes it difficult to assess the college performance during external quality evaluation. The presented self-evaluation report is descriptive, there is no analytical approach, for some criteria, the information is missing, and in some cases, the information had a different statute of limitations.

CONSIDERATION:

It became clear from the site visit, that most of the shortcomings of college management are due to the fact that the quality assurance system in the college is still in its development stage, and there is no system for evaluating the effectiveness of management mechanisms. Although there is a responsible for QA activities since 2017, the quality assurance policy was developed only in 2020; so far, there are no clear procedures for implementation, necessary mechanisms, and tools, which will enable the QA system to be implemented and to develop a quality culture.

The College provides some human, material, and financial resources for internal quality assurance processes; however, the employees need the training to carry out their functions. Strengthening the skills and knowledge of employees on quality assurance will help to establish the center and will contribute to the development of quality culture and good practice, as well as problem solving. The internal and external stakeholders of the college are not aware of the quality assurance processes. A systematic approach to data collection, analysis and dissemination has not yet been introduced. The PDCA cycle is not working yet, the class observations are an exception. The college gives no importance to these processes, otherwise the fact that in the 2017-2019 reports, since the establishment of the Center, the same text is presented as a result of annual activities.

SUMMARY:

Considering the fact, that the College's internal quality assurance system is still in its development stage, has no effect on the college's processes, does not ensure the continuous improvement of all college processes and the formation of a quality culture, there are not implemented steps for ensuring awareness of the QA system among internal stakeholders, there is no mechanism for data collection and analysis, decisions are not made on the basis of data, there is no documented and systematic approach to quality assurance, the panel finds that the college does not meet the requirements of Criterion 10.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of SRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 10 is **unsatisfactory.**

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
I. Mission and Purposes	**Satisfactory**
II. Governance and Administration	**Unsatisfactory**
III. Academic Programmes	**Satisfactory**
IV. Students	**Satisfactory**
V. Faculty and Staff	**Satisfactory**
VI.Research and Development	**Unsatisfactory**
VII. Infrastructure and Resources	**Satisfactory**
VIII. Societal Responsibility	**Satisfactory**
IX. External Relations and Internationalization	**Unsatisfactory**
X. Internl Quality Assurane System	**Unsatisfactory**

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Mariam Movsisyan

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Mariam Movsisyan- Graduated from Yerevan State University in 2006 with a master's degree in Philosophy. The scope of scientific research includes topics related to the philosophy of law and education, litigation. Since 2006 has been teaching philosophy, communication skills and social sciences at the National Agrarian University of Armenia. Worked on strategic planning of ANAU educational reforms, Quality Control, Education Quality Supervision, at the Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University as a researcher within the framework of a scientific topic, Chief Specialist of the Employment and Counselling Department of ANAU. Since 2018, she has been the Director of the ANAU Quality Assessment and Assurance Center. In 2012 she participated in the institutional accreditation process of ANAU, has passed ANQA trainings in 2013 within the framework of ANQA Foundation CIF programme as a trainer of the quality assurance staff of RA universities. Involved in GOVERN, VERITAS TEMPUS programmes. Participated in programme monitorings, external evaluations, and in the framework of exchange programmes had the opportunity to teach at the Universities of Minho (Braga) in Portugal and Jagellania in Poland. Fluent in Russian and English.

Elen Harutyunyan- In 1992 graduated from Yerevan K . Marx Polytechnic Institute received qualifications in two specialties: electronics engineer and medical cybernetics. In 2009 graduated from the State Pedagogical University of Armenia named after K.Apovyan qualification of mathematics and informatics teacher. She worked as a physics teacher in Yerevan School No. 144, in Yerevan School No. 5 after Mushegh Ishkhan as a teacher of Mathematics and Drawing. She worked as a Chairman of the Methodological Association of Physics and Natural Sciences, Deputy Director for Educational Affairs, Deputy Director for Educational Affairs at College of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia. Currently works as deputy Dean at the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Physics, and as a lecturer of mathematics in college. Has passed ANQA trainings.

Arpi Simonyan- In 2016 graduated from the "Cybernetics" department of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia with honors and received a bachelor's degree in "Electronic Engineering". In 2018 graduated from the "Electronic Technology" department of the "Institute of Information and Telecommunication Technologies and Electronics" with honores of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia and received a master's degree in "Electronics". 2017-2018 In parallel with studies she worked in "IDT-ARM" LLC as a junior software specialist.

David Voskanyan- In 2019 graduated from "Usum" public school and entered Yerevan State Informatics College majoring in programming. Participated in Microsoft Innovation Center programming courses. In 2020 he participated in the training of student-experts organized by ANQA.

APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

	01.12.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with the Head of the College	9:30	10:30	*60* minutes
2.	Meeting with the Deputy Heads of the College	11:00	11:50	50 minutes
3.	Meeting with the Board of the College	12:35	13:25	50 minutes
4.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	13:45	14:45	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with the members of the Educational-Methodological Council	15:00	16:00	60 minutes
6.	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel	16:30	18:30	120 minutes
	02.12.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with teaching staff (including 3 APs)	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Meeting with alumni of the College (8-12 representatives)	11:00	12:00	60 minutes
3.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	12:30	13:30	60 minutes
4.	Meeting with representatives of employers (8-12 representatives)	13:45	14:45	60 minutes
5	Meeting with members of the Student Council	15:00	15:40	40 minutes
6	Meeting with students (8-12 representatives)	16:25	17:25	60 minutes
7	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel	17:00	19:00	120 minutes
	03.12.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with the representatives of the subdivisions of the institution (Human Resources Manager, Head of General Education Department, Head of Internship, Accountant, Legal Advisor, Librarian, Career Officer, Head of Dual Education Programs, Laboratory assistant, pedagogue-psychologist)	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Parallel meeting with teaching staff of Clothing modelling and design AP (8-12 representatives) — Teaching staff of Computing machines, complexes, systems, networks "and " Computing equipment and automated systems software APs (8-12 representatives)	11:00	12:30	90 minutes
3.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	12:50	13:50	60 minutes

4.	Parallel meeting with the students of Clothing modelling and design AP (8-12 representatives)	Students of Computing machines, complexes, systems, networks AP (8-12 representatives)	Students of Computing equipment and automated systems software AP (8-12 representatives)	14:10	15:10	60 minutes
5.	Expert panel discussions			15:20	15:50	30 minutes
6.	Meeting with the members of the Educational-Methodological Council			16:00	17:00	60 minutes
7.	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel			17:45	19:00	120 minutes
	04.12.2020р.			*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with quality assurance responsibles			9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Open meeting with the expert panel			11:00	11:40	40 minutes
3	Meeting with the staff member(s) selected by the expert panel			12:20	13:20	40 minutes
4.	Lunch, expert panel discussions			13:30	14:30	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with the staff member(s) selected by the expert panel			15:00	16:00	60 minutes
6.	Close meeting of the expert panel			16:00	17: 00	90 minutes
7.	Meeting with the Head of the College			17:30	18:00	30 minutes

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

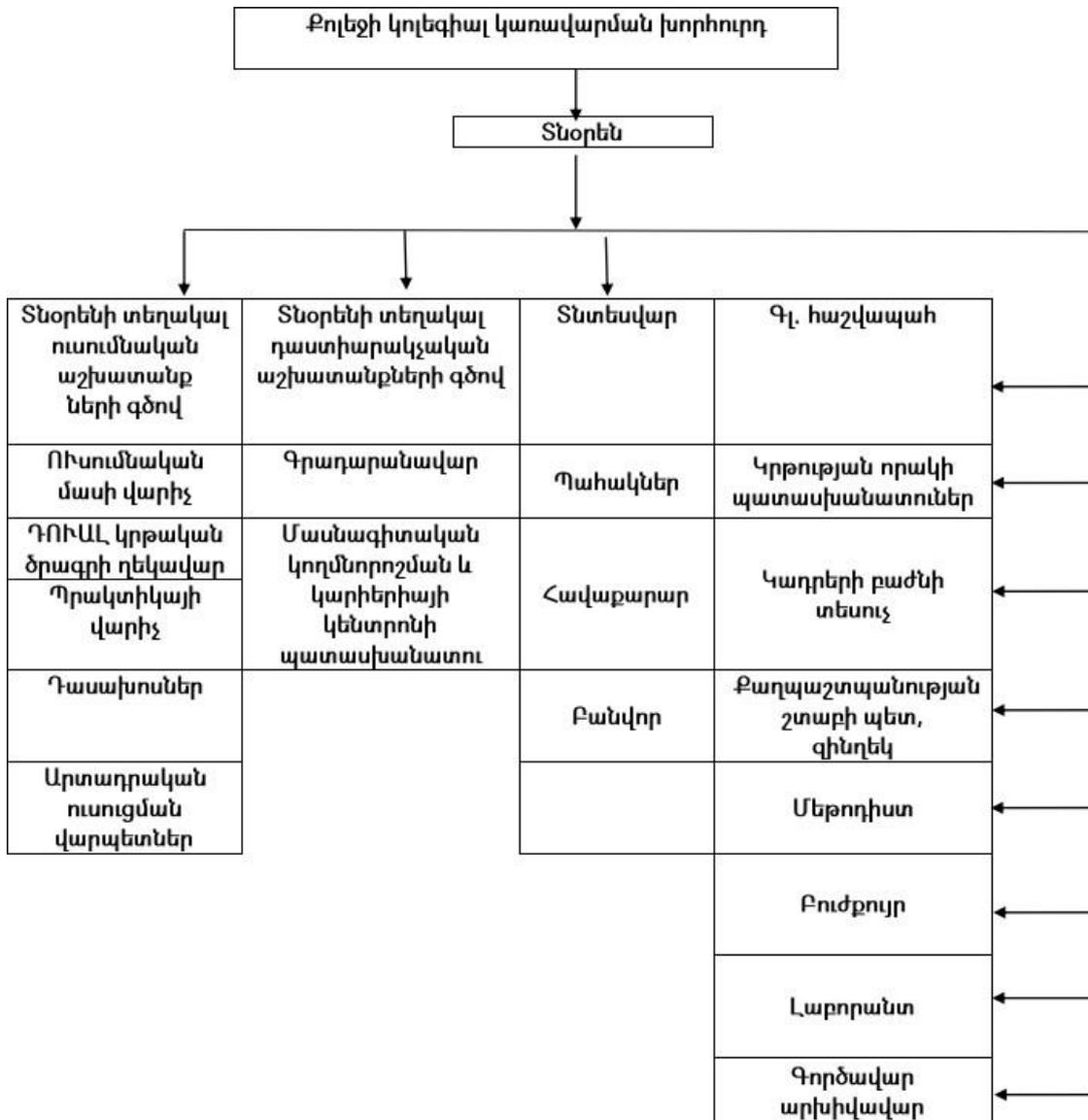| N	Name of Document	Criterion
1.	Course Plans and Reports	2
2.	The plans and reports of the teaching-methodological council, Chairs, professional commissions	2
3.	The staff of the lecturers of the chairs	2
4.	Examples of chair work plans	2
5.	Lecturers' work plans	2, 5
6.	Examples of newsletters	2
7.	Regulation of Chairs	2
8.	Schedule of course work consultations	2
9.	Staff list	2, 3, 5
10.	Curriculum plans of 3 APs	3
11.	final attestation commissions opinions of 3 APs	3
12.	Examples of APs module assignments	3
13.	Class schedules	3
14.	Grounds for APs review (analysis, protocol, etc.)	3
15.	Class observation protocols	3
16.	Example of evaluation sheet	3
17.	Regulation of organization, execution and evaluation of course works	3
18.	Curriculum / calendar plan /	3

19.	Examples of the student's individual summaries	3
20.	Topics of the last 3 years of course works for 3 APs	3, 6
21.	Topics of the last 3 years of graduation works for 3 APs	3, 6
22.	Topics of the last 3 years of course works for 3 APs	3, 6
23.	Topics of the last 3 years of graduation works for 3 APs	3, 6
24.	Employer details and Contract terms	3
25.	Examples of course works	3, 6
26.	Examples of graduation works	3, 6
27.	Examples of lecturers' methodological manuals	3, 5
28.	Methodological reports of lecturers	3, 4, 5, 6
29.	Career Center reports for the last 3 years,Protocols	4
30.	Minutes of Student Council Meetings	4
31.	Completed examples of internship diaries	4
32.	Internship agreements / Svet-Tex /	3, 4
33.	Examples of tourism package, their SWOT analysis	3
34.	Data of lecturers teaching specialties by subjects	3
35.	Analysis of faculty and student surveys	10
36.	Analysis of graduate and employer surveys	10

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

Construction work was underway at the college at the time of the visit, so it was not possible to consider all the resources. The experts saw the following resources .

- 2 computer classrooms
- Sewing workshop
- Pre-military training room
- Library
- Classrooms

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Քոլեջի կոլեգիալ կառավարման խորհուրդ

Տնօրեն

Տնօրենի տեղակալ ուսումնական աշխատանք ների գծով	Տնօրենի տեղակալ դաստիարակչական աշխատանքների գծով	Տնտեսվար	Գլ. հաշվապահ	
Ուսումնական մասի վարիչ	Գրադարանավար	Պահակներ	Կրթության որակի պատասխանատուներ	
ԴՈԻԱԼ կրթական ծրագրի ղեկավար	Մասնագիտական կողմնորոշման և կարիերայի կենտրոնի պատասխանատու	Հավաքարար	Կադրերի բաժնի տեսուչ	
Պրակտիկայի վարիչ				
Դասախոսներ		Բանվոր	Քաղպաշտպանության շտաբի պետ, գինդեկ	
Արտադրական ուսուցման վարպետներ			Մեթոդիստ	
			Բուժքույր	
			Լաբորանտ	
			Գործավար արխիվավար	

APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **RA**- Republic of Armenia
2. **SRSC**- Shirak regional state college
3. **AP**- Academic Programme
4. **QA**- Quality assurance
5. **ANQA** - National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance
6. **SP**- Strategic Plan
7. **SC** - Student Council