



HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

2022 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

8NDP	Eighth National Development Plan
AU	African Union
COVID-19	Corona virus 2019
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEA-IMIS	Higher Education Authority – Integrated Management Information Systems
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HPCZ	Health Professions Council of Zambia
IA	Institutional Assessment
IMIS	Integrated Management Information Systems
LPEs	Learning Programme Experts
LPs	Learning Programmes
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDD	Management Development Division
MoE	Ministry of Education
NMCZ	Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia
OD	Organisational Development
PESTEL	Policy, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TCZ	Teaching Council of Zambia
TEVETA	Technical, Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority

FOREWORD

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a statutory body established by the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013. The mandate of the Authority is to regulate and monitor standards in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in order to ensure quality services and contribute to the enhancement of human capital and accelerated national development.

The Authority developed this Strategic Plan to set out an operational framework to execute its mandate from 2022 to 2026. The Plan outlines the vision, mission, strategic objectives and key result areas. The Strategic Plan will enable the Authority to be practical and innovative in its approach to promoting quality assurance in higher education in order to catalyse a transformative higher education system.

In this regard, HEA will effectively and efficiently promote standards of higher education that will promote a knowledge-based society.

In carrying out its mandate, the Authority will espouse its shared values, namely Honesty, Integrity, Confidentiality, Reliability, Team Work, Courtesy, and Impartiality. Through this Strategic Plan, the Authority has made a commitment to be “an innovative quality assurance Institution that guarantees transformative higher education.”

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Professor Levy Siaminwe
BOARD CHAIRPERSON
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of developing this Strategic Plan was consultative and comprehensive as it involved participation of various stakeholders at different levels. I wish to thank all those who contributed to the successful development of this Plan.

In particular, I wish to pay tribute to the following for their significant contributions:

- The Management Development Division (MDD) of Cabinet Office for technical guidance and facilitating the development of the Plan;
- The Ministry of Education (MoE) for policy guidance and technical support;
- Management and Staff of HEA for their technical input; and,
- All the representatives of the various organisations who provided valuable information during the strategic planning process.

I am confident that implementation of this Plan will enable HEA successfully execute its mandate and ultimately contribute to creation of a knowledge-based society. Effective implementation of the Plan will require support from all our stakeholders. I, therefore, call upon our stakeholders to continue providing the support exhibited during the development of this Plan.

Professor Stephen Simukanga
DIRECTOR GENERAL
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mandate of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is to develop and foster an innovative quality assurance system in higher education for a knowledge-based society. The Authority draws its mandate from the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013 and the Higher Education (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2021. In particular, Part II Section 6 (1) outlines the specific functions of the HEA.

The purpose for developing this Strategic Plan is to put in place an operational framework that will guide the Authority to enhanced performance and effective implementation of its mandate. The Plan highlights the identified areas of development and, thus, shows the priority where resources will be channelled during the period 2022 to 2026.

The methodology used to develop this Strategic Plan was undertaken in two phases namely: Institutional Assessment and Organisational Development phases underpinned by the Balanced Scorecard principles. The first phase involved undertaking a Performance Assessment, Stakeholder Engagements and conducting an Institutional Capability Assessment to establish the Authority's distinctive competencies. In addition, an assessment of the environment in which the Authority operates was conducted using various tools including the McKinsey 7s Model, Change Management Model, Objective and Problem Trees, SWOT and PESTEL Analyses.

Based on the analyses conducted, the Authority moved to phase II which involved determining the Strategic Direction for the period 2022 to 2026. HEA, thus, set out a strategic direction comprising of the following:

Vision: “An innovative and transformative quality assurance institution.”

To realise the vision, the HEA has identified three (3) thematic areas of focus and their related strategic results as follows:

- a) Higher Education Quality Assurance;
- b) Stakeholder Engagement; and
- c) Institutional Capacity and Governance.

Mission statement:

To develop and foster an innovative quality assurance system in higher education institutions for a knowledge-based society.

Core Values

The Authority will espouse seven core values namely: *Prudence, Integrity, Reliability, Impartiality, Courtesy, Confidentiality; and Team Work.*

Strategic Objectives

HEA has set itself three strategic objectives and will implore allied strategies in order to improve service delivery. The specific objectives are:

- a) Enhance quality assurance systems;
- b) Improve stakeholder relations;
- c) Enhance institutional capacity and governance

To facilitate the achievement of Strategic Plan targets and intended results, an Implementation Plan has been developed outlining specific tasks along with estimated costs of implementing strategies. All Departmental and Individual work plans will be aligned to the Strategic Plan in order to ensure its successful implementation and realisation of the desired impact. In addition, the Plan will be monitored continuously to ensure that necessary interventions are made where necessary. At the end of the plan period, a final review will be undertaken to establish the extent to which the Strategic Plan will be implemented.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Institutional Background

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a statutory body established by the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013. The establishment of the Authority became imperative following legislative changes by Government in the early 1990's that allowed for private sector participation in the provision of higher education services. This resulted in increased access to higher education through private higher education institutions that began to be registered in the Country. These HEIs were, however, not quality assured and thus there were concerns on the quality of higher education that was being provided in the Country. The need for a quality assurance body in higher education led to the establishment of the HEA through the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013 to regulate the sub-sector. Further, Statutory Instrument No. 25 of 2016 was signed to allow for the implementation of the Higher Education Act. The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors which is appointed by the Minister responsible for Education. The Board of Directors is drawn from Government, Civil Society and Private Sector.

The first Board of Directors was appointed in 2014 and operated with an interim secretariat drawn from the then Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education. The recruitment of fulltime staff begun in 2016 and this has continued in a phased manner.

After implementing the Higher Education Act for 8 years a number of weaknesses were identified among them were the following:

- a) Narrow definition of higher education and limited types of higher education institutions – the Act only recognized two types of higher education institutions (i.e. colleges and universities) and excluded a range other types of higher education and higher education institutions;
- b) It excluded colleges such as those under the Teaching Council of Zambia and those established by other laws from the purview of the Authority;
- c) It did not provide for accreditation of professional training programmes;

- d) It did not address overlaps with professional bodies in learning programme accreditation;
- e) It did not provide for maintenance of database of students in higher education;
- f) It did not provide for classification of higher education institutions; and
- g) It did not provide for annual institutional audits.

In order to address these gaps the Higher Education Act was amended through enactment of the Higher Education (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2021.

1.2 Institutional Mandate

The mandate of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is to develop and foster an innovative quality assurance system in higher education for a knowledge-based society. The Authority draws its mandate from the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013.

After implementing the Act for 8 years there were provisions that were identified to be amended in order to strengthen the quality assurance functions of the Authority among other provisions. This culminated into the enactment of the Higher Education (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2021.

The functions of the Authority as provided for in the Higher Education Act, 2013 Section 6 (1) as amended by the Higher Education (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2021 are outlined as follows:

- 1) Advise the Minister on any aspect of higher education;
- 2) Develop and recommend policy on higher education, including the establishment of public higher education institutions and the registration of private higher education institutions;
- 3) Establish a coordinated higher education system which promotes corporate governance and provides for a programme based higher education;
- 4) Regulate higher education institutions and coordinate the development of higher education;
- 5) Promote quality assurance in higher education;
- 6) Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education;

- 7) Restructure and transform higher education institutions and programmes to be responsive to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic;
- 8) In consultation with relevant professional institutions set standards for higher education institutions;
- 9) Design and recommend an institutional quality assurance system for higher education institutions, and recommend to the Minister institutional quality assurance standards for:
 - a. The establishment, standardisation and registration of higher education institutions, including standards of plant and equipment;
 - b. The preparation and amendment of statutes;
 - c. The development of curricula;
 - d. Libraries, laboratories, workshops and other facilities;
 - e. Student transfers between academic programmes among higher education institutions; and
 - f. classification of higher education institutions
- 10) Promote cooperation among higher education institutions at national, regional, and international level and facilitate their linkages with industry; and
- 11) Create a database of students studying in higher education institutions.

The amendment of the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013 and the subsequent realignment of the functions has resulted in the following:

- a) Expansion in the mandate of the Authority in terms of oversight of higher education institutions and accreditation functions – the amendments have resulted in the Authority taking over regulatory functions for institutions that were previously under other regulatory bodies such as Health Professional Council of Zambia, Nurses and Midwifery Council of Zambia and Teaching Council of Zambia. In addition, the Authority has oversight over newly introduced types of higher education institutions such as technical universities, university colleges, technical university colleges, institutes, institution for the specialised training of professionals in a specified field;

- b) Introduction of annual audits for all higher education institutions regulated by the Authority including public higher education institutions which were previously not subject to institutional audits;
- c) The Authority has accreditation oversight over all learning programmes in all higher education institutions including professional training programmes which were previously not accredited by the Authority; and
- d) The Authority is required to maintain a database of all students in higher education institutions regulated by the Authority.

The implication of the realignment of the functions has resulted in increased workload for the Authority due to the increased number of higher education institutions, learning programmes and other quality assurance activities. In order to be effectively fulfil these functions under the expanded mandate the Authority will require restructuring and strengthening in terms of human resource, technical and financial capacity.

1.3 Operational and Governance Structure

The overall policy direction is provided by a Board of Directors comprising a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and seven (7) other members. All Board Members are appointed by the Minister responsible for Education.

The Director General superintends over the day-to-day operations of HEA and is assisted by a management team comprising of Directors and Managers.

Geographically, the Authority is headquartered in Lusaka. Some of its services can be accessed through various platforms such as the Higher Education Authority website.

1.4 Strategic Operational Linkages

The operational strategic linkages relate to the interaction between HEA and its strategic partners in dealing with the Higher Education sub-sector. The Authority collaborates with various regulators/professional institutions such as Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA), Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) and Nursing and Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ) on Programme Accreditation. The Authority also collaborates

with various private/public institutions such as Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC), Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) and Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) on Quality Assurance. Further, on Registration, Institutional Audits and Evaluation of Learning Programmes (LPs) the Authority works closely with individual experts.

1.5 Rationale for Developing the 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

The 2022 – 2026 Higher Education Authority Strategic Plan is guided by several key factors and aligns with various national and global frameworks. This alignment will ensure that the Higher Education Authority's actions contribute effectively and efficiently towards the country's overall development goals and aspirations. The Strategic Plan is intended to complement the following frameworks and policies:

1. Strategic Development Goals (SDGs)

The Strategic Plan aligns with the SDGs, which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The plan particularly focuses on SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure), aiming to enhance the quality of higher education, increase access, promote innovation, and contribute to socio-economic development.

2. New Dawn Government Education Policy

The Strategic Plan is in line with the education policy of the New Dawn Government, which emphasizes the importance of education as a key driver of socio-economic development and poverty reduction. The plan seeks to support the government's efforts in expanding access to quality higher education, enhancing teaching and learning outcomes, improving research and innovation, and fostering closer collaboration between academia and industry.

3. Higher Education Act

The Strategic Plan adheres to the provisions of the Higher Education Act, which establishes the HEA as the regulatory body overseeing higher education in Zambia. The plan aims to strengthen the HEA's role in promoting quality assurance, accreditation, and relevance of higher education institutions. It also focuses on enhancing the HEA's capacity to effectively regulate and monitor the sector, ensuring compliance with standards and regulations.

4. Agenda 2063 of the African Union

In line with the Agenda 2063 vision of the African Union (AU), Africa by 2063 will be the world's most populous continent with the largest population segment being the youth, of which 70 per cent or more will be highly skilled. The continent will have the largest concentration of middle-class citizens as a percentage of the population with a significant spending power. A key driver of Africa's prosperity will be its world class human capital developed through quality education focused on achieving 100 per cent literacy and numeracy, and clear emphasis on science, technology and engineering. Universal access to quality, accredited education at all levels will be enshrined in law.

From early childhood education to primary, secondary, technical, vocational and higher education, Africa will witness a true renaissance, through investments made by governments and the private sector in education and through growth and expansion of industries in the fields of technology, science, research and innovation. In the Africa of 2063, at least 70 per cent of all high school graduates will go on to have tertiary education at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and Universities with 70 per cent of them graduating in the sciences, technology and innovation programmes, to lay the foundation for competitive economies built upon human capital to complement the African continent's rich endowments in natural resources.

Africa of 2063 will have harmonized education and professional qualifications systems, with the Pan African University and several centers of excellence across the continent, a Pan African Virtual University that uses technology to provide mass post-secondary school education and indeed 32 Agenda 2063 The AFRICA We Want the university sector and

intelligentsia playing an instrumental role. Millions of Africans will have been trained, educated and skilled with special emphasis on science, technology, research and innovation, as well as vocational training in every sector.

The Strategic Plan seeks to develop a highly skilled and knowledgeable human capital through higher education, enabling innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. It aligns with the vision's focus on industrialization, economic diversification, and inclusive growth, fostering a knowledge-driven society that can compete in the global economy.

5. Zambia Vision 2030

This long-term development plan seeks to provide a diversified curricular that are responsive to the knowledge, values, attitude, and practical skill needs of individuals and society. It sets out the country's aspirations for sustainable development, encompassing the need for curricular that is responsive to the needs of our time. The Higher Education Authority's Strategic Plan identifies the need to lead the process of curricular reforms in the country in line with Zambia Vision 2030.

6. Eighth National Development Plan

The Strategic Plan aligns with the objectives and strategies outlined in the Eight National Development Plan. The Higher Education Authority has a pivotal role to play in contributing towards the implementation of the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP). The 8NDP outlines a comprehensive, long-term strategic vision for the development of the country and sets ambitious goals for socio-economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. In this regard, the Strategic Plan is well-positioned to contribute towards the implementation of the Eighth National Development Plan by focusing on strengthening the quality of education, promoting innovation and research, enhancing access and equity, strengthening technical and vocational education, and fostering collaboration. Therefore, 2021-2026 Strategic Plan is carefully designed to ensure that higher education plays a significant role in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the 8NDP.

To achieve these objectives, the 2022 – 2026 Higher Education Authority Strategic Plan outlines key strategies and interventions, including:

- a) Strengthening governance and regulatory frameworks to ensure quality, relevance, and accountability in higher education institutions.
- b) Expanding access to higher education for disadvantaged groups, promoting equity in enrolment, and reducing gender disparities.
- c) Enhancing teaching and learning outcomes by improving pedagogical approaches, upgrading infrastructure, and integrating technology in education delivery.
- d) Fostering research, innovation, and entrepreneurship by supporting research activities, establishing technology transfer offices, and facilitating collaboration between academia and industry.
- e) Promoting internationalization of higher education and improving the mobility of students and staff through partnerships, exchange programs, and recognition of qualifications.
- f) Enhancing institutional capacity and human resource development within the HEA, to ensure effective regulation, monitoring, and coordination of the higher education sector.

By aligning with the 8NDP, Zambia Vision 2030, SDGs, Government Education Policy, Higher Education Act, and Vision 2063, the 2022 – 2026 Higher Education Authority Strategic Plan aims to contribute to the overall development agenda of Zambia, transforming higher education to become a catalyst for sustainable development, economic growth, and social progress.

Therefore, 2022-2026 HEA Strategic Plan will not only ensure a focused, coordinated, and holistic approach to higher education development but also contribute to the overall development goals of the country, addressing immediate needs while also planning for the long-term transformation of the higher education sector in alignment with national development aspirations.

1.6 Methodology

The development of the 2022 to 2026 Strategic Plan followed the methodology adopted by the Management Development Division, Cabinet Office. A two-pronged approach consisting of the Institutional Assessment (IA) on one hand and on the other hand, the Organisational Development (OD) with the Balanced Scorecard principles applied. The IA involved conducting an internal capability assessment of the Authority's distinctive competencies. Analysis of the micro and macro environment was done using various tools such as the McKinsey 7s Model, Lewin's Simple Change Management Model, Objective and Problem Trees, Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), and Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environment and Legal (PESTEL).

In addition, Management, Staff, Clients and Stakeholder of the HEA were engaged to solicit for information on the current and future outlook of the Institution. They suggested areas of focus to enhance the execution of the Authority's mandate. The views of stakeholders were obtained through questionnaires and interviews, which allowed respondents to freely provide their opinions and building consensus on a number of key issues.

The information collected from the IA facilitated the OD process of determining the strategic direction for the Higher Education Authority for the period 2022 - 2026 in relation to its Vision, Mission, Core Values, Strategic Themes, Strategic Objectives, Targets, Strategic Results and Strategies.

The entire process was facilitated by MDD and involved the participation of a Core Team constituted by HEA with representation from Management and Staff from all the Sections and Units. The Plan was validated by various stakeholders and approved by the Board.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

2.1 External Environmental Analysis

An analysis of the external environment in which the Higher Education Authority operates was conducted focusing on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) developments. The analysis involved analysing factors that had or may in future have an impact on the operations of the Authority. The analysis revealed that HEA was affected by PESTEL developments as follows: -

2.1.1 PESTEL ANALYSIS

PESTEL	Measure	Impact	Challenge	Mitigation
Policy	Cabinet Circular No. 71/2/1 of 2018 on measures to address fiscal and debt challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It provided an opportunity for the Authority to review its activities and channel resources to priority areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Circular negatively affected HEA's operations, especially field activities. Compliance levels among HEIs were impacted negatively. Further, international collaborations in external quality assurance were reduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize the use of online platforms to conduct some of its meetings; Reduce the number of officers undertaking fieldwork; and Combine field activities to reduce costs
	Higher Education Policy of 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It provides an opportunity for the efficient management of quality assurance in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The major development of the Policy relates to increased workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEA will continue engaging relevant authorities for additional resources

		higher education. The Authority will <u>re-align programme implementations to the provisions of the Higher Education Policy.</u>	due to expanded functions. This has not resulted in increased availability of needed resources for effective execution of the expanded mandate.	from the Government and recruit more staff.
	Circular CO.53/9/1 of 6 th September, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of staff movement in the public service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suspension imposed on movement and recruitment of staff in the Public Service resulted in the delay to recruit additional staff at the time the Authority planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority will continue engaging relevant authorities on waivers where need arises and when such restrictions are in force.
Economic	Fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were fluctuations in the exchange rate ranging from K10.0677/\$ in January 2018 to K22.60/\$ in June 2021 before closing at K16.50/\$ in December 2021. In addition, inflation rates rose from 7.9% in 2018 to 26.5% in July 2021 before closing at 16.4% in December 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fluctuating foreign exchange rates and inflation rates negatively affected implementation of programmes due to unstable prices. In particular, budget implementation was negatively affected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek budget variation approvals from the Board. • Rationalize procurement and prioritize the use of available resources. • Explore alternative financing.

Social	COVID -19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic from March 2020 provided an opportunity for HEA to enhance use of digital platforms to deliver services to internal and external clients 	The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in stoppage of field operations and scaling down on face-to-face activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority will expedite automation of systems and deployment of an Integrated Management Information Systems (IMIS).
	The incidents of gas attacks on institutions and people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were incidences of gassing attacks on institutions and people in early 2020 that negatively affected HEA's operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gassing incidents on institutions resulted in stoppage of field operations and scaling down on face-to-face activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority will continue exploring the use of digital platforms to facilitate meetings.
Technological	Evolution of digital platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancements and availability of digital platforms and improved internet connectivity have led to increased demand for e-services. These provide an opportunity for seamless provision of services by HEA. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite the full development and operationalization of online platforms to facilitate registration of HEIs, accreditation of LPs and other quality assurance services. Upgrade subscriptions to virtual platforms to benefit from available resources.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore available Cloud storage facilities. • Strengthen collaboration with external partners such as INFRATEL on access to virtual servers and SMART Zambia Institute on development of systems.
Legal	Higher Education (Amendment) Act, No. 23 of 2021	<p>The enactment of the Higher Education (Amendment) Act, 2021 and consequential amendments to the Acts of some professional institutions and regulatory bodies provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of fees for Annual Institutional Audits, Affiliation, Learning Programme Accreditation Renewal and Registration of other categories of HEIs. • Collaboration with professional institutions. • Enabling environment for HEA to coordinate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Higher Education (Amendment) Act, 2021 has resulted in increased workload for the Authority due to expanded functions, there has been no significant increase in the budgetary allocation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEA will continue engaging relevant authorities for increased resources from the Government and recruitment of more staff. <p>To optimize the provisions in the Act, the Authority will implement the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the Ministry of Education on issuance of Regulations; • Engage the Business Regulatory Review Agency on the introduction of new fees as outlined in the Act;

		the higher education sub sector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign MoUs with regulators/professional institutions to enhance collaboration; and • Enhance sensitizations of HEIs on the new legislative framework.
	The Nurses and Midwives Act No. 10 of 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nurses and Midwives Act provides for the regulation of nurses and midwives colleges by HEA. This provides an opportunity for HEA to extend quality assurance to colleges of nursing and midwifery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will result in more workload for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority will develop standards and tools for enhancing quality assurance of colleges of nursing and midwifery. • The Authority will restructure its operations and employ more staff to accommodate the extended functions.

2.2 Stakeholder and Client Analysis

a) Clients and their needs

An analysis of the clients' needs is presented in the table below:

No.	Client Category	Needs
1.	HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration• Recognition• Accreditation of Learning Programmes (LPs)
2.	Professional Bodies offering learning programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Institutional Audits• Affiliation• Capacity Building
3.	Professional Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation of Learning Programmes• Learning Programme Audits• Annual Institutional Audits• Capacity Building
4.	Research Institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration• Recognition• Affiliation• Annual Institutional Audits
5.	Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation of learning programmes• Registration of HEIs
6.	Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation of learning programmes• Registration of HEIs

b) Stakeholders and their interests

Regarding stakeholders, the analysis revealed their major interests / concerns as presented in the table below:

No.	Stakeholders	Interests
1.	Professional Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assurance that LPs meet required standards• Development of Higher Education standards
2.	Regulatory Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration on registration of LPs as qualifications• Collaboration on best practices in quality assurance• Information sharing• Accreditation of LPs• Collaboration on registration of HEIs• Assurance that LPs meet required standards• Finalisation and approval of Regulatory Impact Assessment of cost of doing business
3.	Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assurance that graduates meet required skills• Assurance that LPs meet required standards
4.	Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of higher education• Effective policy implementation• Prudent management of financial resources• Collaboration on legal matters• Collaboration on policy development and best practices in quality assurance• Recognition of HEIs• Accreditation of LPs
5.	Non-Governmental Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration on quality assurance in higher education• Promotion of quality higher education
6.	General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to accurate information relating to HEA operations• Accreditation of learning programmes• Registration of Higher Education Institutions

2.3 Internal Environmental Analysis

This section highlights the past and current performance of the Authority. Internal capabilities were analysed. The strengths and opportunities and weaknesses and threats in the operations as well as optimisation and / or mitigation measures respectively were identified.

2.3.1 Past Performance

An analysis of the past performance was conducted to determine the extent of achievement of set targets in the 2018 to 2021 Strategic Plan and ultimately establish the overall

institutional performance over the Plan period. A three-tier rating was used to classify the performance of the Authority as highlighted below:

- *Code 1* - **Red** for below Average Performance (0% to 49%);
- *Code 2* - **Yellow** for Average Performance (50% to 79%); and
- *Code 3* - **Green** for Above Average Performance (80% to 100%).

During the period 2018 to 2021, the Authority recorded an Average performance with a rating of 2 as shown in the table below.

Overall Performance	
Institutional Average Score	58.14%
Institutional Rating	2

This performance was attributed to the following enablers:

- a) Government goodwill and support;
- b) Acceptance of the Strategic Plan and continued support by stakeholders;
- c) Increased compliance levels by HEIs to quality standards; and
- d) Increased awareness of the higher education legislative framework among stakeholders.

Nonetheless the Authority’s performance was weighed down by the following factors:

- a) Erratic and inadequate funding;
- b) Slow rate of submission of learning programmes for accreditation;
- c) Sub-standard quality of LPs submitted for accreditation;
- d) Lack of M&E framework to track the performance across all targets;
- e) Some targets were outside the control of the Authority;
- f) Inadequate staffing levels across sections of the Authority; and
- g) Lack of adequate LPEs in certain fields.

2.3.2 Institutional Capability Assessment

An Institutional Capability Assessment was conducted to establish the Authority's status using the McKinsey 7S Model. A number of challenges were noted which included the following among others:

- a) Some targets in the strategic plan were outside the control of the Authority, while some objectives and targets were not specific thus difficult to measure;
- b) The number of some staff positions provided on the current structure were low. In addition, the structure was highly centralized;
- c) Inadequate systems as some were partially manual and integration was incomplete;
- d) Inadequate staffing as some positions in the structure had not been filled;
- e) Inadequacies among some members of staff relating to quality assurance, ICT and M&E
- f) Some members of staff were not fully aware of shared values and in some cases, non-adherent to some values; and
- g) Perceived inadequacies in exercising HEA's prevalent styles of leadership.

The Authority will implement strategies identified during the assessment to ensure that challenges are addressed for effective implementation of the Strategic Plan.

2.3.3 SWOT Analysis

An analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) identified issues that would respectively facilitate or hinder the implementation of identified interventions during the Institutional Capabilities Assessment. The table below highlights the findings of the SWOT analysis.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Availability of qualified and dedicated staff ii. Existence of some requisite Systems iii. Availability of documented shared values iv. Availability of standards and guidelines v. Availability of a Quality Assurance Handbook vi. Enhanced Legal framework vii. Availability of Database of trained Quality Assurance experts 	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Availability of ICT professionals in development and implementation of systems ii. Availability of off-the-shelf ICT packages iii. AExpanded mandate of quality assurance activities to more higher education institutions iv. Willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with HEA v. Continued political will vi. Pool of local and international experts to provide technical support vii. Stakeholder buy-in of external Quality Assurance mechanisms
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inadequate organisational structure ii. Inadequate number of Staff iii. Highly centralised services iv. Not all requisite Systems are automated v. Uncompetitive conditions of service vi. Lack of an Integrity Committee vii. User fees are very low and have remained below cost viii. Inadequate office space 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Delayed release of grants ii. Exposure to hacking and disruption of the IMIS by unauthorised persons iii. Continued COVID-19 Pandemic iv. Resistance to comply with the Higher Education Legal Framework by some stakeholders. v. Inadequate appreciation of quality assurance by some stakeholders vi. Inadequate funding vii. Non -appointment of the Board

3.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Higher Education Authority seeks to continue effectively executing its mandate. During the strategic period covering 2022 to 2026, the Authority has set itself an operational framework that will propel it into better performance and achievement of desired strategic results. The operational framework highlights the strategic direction for the Authority and is premised on the aspirations of Government as articulated in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

For the period **2022 to 2026**, the Strategic focus for the Authority hinges on the following:

3.1 Vision

The Authority envisions itself in the next five years as **“An innovative and transformative quality assurance institution.”** Through this vision the Authority will contribute to creating a knowledge-based society. To realise this, the Authority will endeavour to promote an innovative and transformative quality assurance environment that fosters higher education.

3.2 Mission Statement

The mission statement of HEA is **“To develop and foster an innovative quality assurance system in higher education institutions for a knowledge-based society”**. Through this mission, the Authority will develop and implement innovative higher education quality improvement mechanisms in order to catalyse transformative education in Zambia.

3.3 Shared Values

The institutional culture will be drawn from observing the following shared values:

a) Prudence

We utilise all our resources for their intended purposes and we are always accountable.

b) Integrity

We put HEA’s obligations above our personal interests and conduct ourselves in a manner that is beyond reproach.

c) Reliability

We are dedicated to duty and uphold trustworthiness in all our dealings.

d) Impartiality

We are objective, fair and non-discriminatory in the execution of our duties.

e) Courtesy

We are polite in our internal and external interactions.

f) Confidentiality

We do not reveal or disclose privileged information to unauthorized persons.

g) Team Work

We cooperate with others and work to the best of our abilities, despite any personal conflict that may arise between individuals in order to foster unity of purpose.

3.4 Strategic Themes and Strategic Results

The Authority will focus on the following key result areas and associated strategic results:

- a) **Higher Education Quality Assurance** resulting in *Competitive Higher Education*;
- b) **Stakeholder Engagement** resulting in *Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Buy-in*; and
- c) **Institutional Capacity and Governance** resulting in *High Quality Service delivery*.

3.4.1 Higher Education Quality Assurance

The key result area on Higher Education Quality Assurance requires HEA to implement interventions that will lead to effective execution of its mandate. The Authority will focus on optimising existing strides in Quality Assurance in the sub-sector and build on opportunities for improvement while addressing bottlenecks identified. The focus in this area will involve enhancing external quality assurance processes and enforcing development of Internal Quality Assurance systems in HEIs. The desired strategic result in this focus area is Competitive Higher Education.

3.4.2 Stakeholder Engagement

The mandate of the Authority requires working with different stakeholders in developing standards, regulations and guidelines in the sub-sector. This allows for wider acceptance of external quality assurance mechanisms among stakeholders. The focus on Stakeholder Engagement will provide an opportunity for HEA to tap into external experts' experience in the sub-sector. In addition, the Authority will be able to benefit from any support from stakeholders ranging from joint programme implementation and technical advice to material and financial support. This focus area will require HEA to improve stakeholder networking. It is anticipated that focus in this area will result in Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Buy-in.

3.4.3 Institutional Capacity and Governance

The third area of focus relates to Institutional Capacity and Governance of the Authority. This will involve addressing challenges that HEA is facing in relation to inputs and how services are delivered. This will entail strengthening the Governance Structure of the Authority, improving financial performance, enhancing use of technology, and improving human capital and innovation capabilities among members of staff. In addition, it will entail improving requisite facilities and infrastructure at the disposal of the Authority. The expected strategic result from the focus on Institutional Capacity and Governance is Quality Service Delivery.

3.5 Strategic Objectives, Intended Results, Measures, Targets and Strategies

The achievement of anticipated results will depend on successful implementation of strategic objectives. HEA envisages that by successfully making continuous improvements in specific areas, there are certain desired results that will be attained. In this regard, the Authority will pursue three (3) strategic objectives covering specific strategic issues identified during the Strategic Plan development process. The table below highlights the strategic themes, strategic results and specific objectives.

Strategic Themes	Higher Education Quality Assurance	Stakeholder Engagement	Institutional Capacity and Governance
Strategic Results	Competitive Higher Education	Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Buy-in	Quality Service Delivery
Strategic Objectives			
1.	Enhance quality assurance systems		
2.	Improve stakeholder relations		
3.	Enhance institutional capacity and governance		

3.5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Enhance quality assurance systems

To enhance quality assurance systems, the Authority will implement the following strategies:

- a) Develop and maintain a database of students in HEIs and Learning Programmes;
- b) Enhance capacity building for HEIs and Learning Programme Experts (LPEs);
- c) Review and develop quality assurance standards and guidelines;
- d) Enhance research on developments in higher education;
- e) Enhance quality assurance audits for HEIs and Learning Programmes;
- f) Strengthen sensitisation of HEIs on higher education legislation and external and internal quality assurance systems;
- g) Enhance surveillances and inspections.

These strategies are intended to result in high quality learning programmes and adherence to standards and regulations by HEIs.

3.5.2 Strategic Objective 2: Improve stakeholder relations

The focus on Stakeholder Engagement will be facilitated through improving stakeholder networking. This will entail:

- a) Expedite the finalisation and implementation of the Communication Strategy;
- b) Develop and implement a Stakeholder Management Plan

- c) Develop and implement a Service Charter
- d) Develop and implement Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey Tools.

These interventions are intended to result in Well Informed and Satisfied Stakeholders.

3.5.3 Strategic Objective 3: Enhance institutional capacity and governance

Institutional Capacity and Governance of the Authority will be facilitated through enhancing the use the technology in service delivery; improving human capital and innovation capabilities of staff; improving financial performance; and improving requisite facilities to aid smooth and effective operations. The following strategies will be implemented:

- a) Review the organisational structure;
- b) Develop and implement a Staff Recruitment Plan;
- c) Enhance Performance Management;
- d) Continue engaging relevant authorities on expediting the appointment of the Board;
- e) Develop, automate and integrate internal processes;
- f) Strengthen engagement with stakeholders through integration of quality assurance systems in the HEA-IMIS;
- g) Strengthen implementation of capacity building programmes;
- h) Enhance Internal Audit Function and internal controls; and
- i) Develop and implement a Risk Management Strategy.
- j) Continuously engage the Ministry responsible for Education for increased and timely grants;
- k) Explore alternative sources of funding
- l) Strengthen capacity in budget management;
- m) Strengthen sensitisation of institutional shared values and principles;
- n) Develop and implement a Staff Welfare Framework.
- o) Develop and implement an Office Administration Plan.

Refer to the table below for the detailed Strategic Plan log-frame and the Balanced Scorecard at Appendix I.

Detailed Matrix of Strategic Themes, Strategic Results, strategic objectives, measures, targets and strategies

Strategic Theme	Higher Education Quality Assurance	Stakeholder Engagement	Institutional Capacity and Governance	
Strategic Result	Competitive Higher Education	Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Buy-in	Quality Service Delivery	
Strategic Objective 1: Enhance quality assurance systems				
Intended Results	Measures	Baseline (2021)	Targets	Strategies
High quality learning programmes	Percentage accredited learning programmes in all HEIs	54%	100% of learning programmes in all HEIs accredited by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a database of students in HEIs and learning programmes Enhance capacity building for HEIs and Learning Programme Experts (LPEs) Review and develop quality assurance Standards and Guidelines Enhance research on developments in higher education Enhance quality assurance audits for HEIs and learning programmes Enhance surveillances and inspections
HEIs adherence to standards and regulations	Proportion of HEIs subjected to Institutional Audits	0%	100% HEIs subjected to Institutional Audits annually	
	Percentage HEIs performance against set standards	0%	100% HEIs with satisfactory performance and above against set standards annually	
Compliance to Higher Education regulations	Percentage of incidences of breaches to higher education regulations	To be established	80% reduction of incidences of breaches by 2026	

Strategic Objective 2: Improve stakeholder relations				
Intended Results	Measures	Baseline (2021)	Targets	Strategies
Well informed and satisfied stakeholders	Percentage stakeholder satisfaction	0%	75% stakeholder satisfaction levels annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a Service Charter • Expedite the finalisation and implementation of the Communication Strategy • Develop and implement a Stakeholder Management Plan • Develop and implement stakeholder satisfaction survey tools • Strengthen sensitisation of HEIs on higher education legislation, external and internal quality assurance systems.

Strategic Objective 3: Enhance Institutional Capacity and Governance				
Intended Results	Measures	Baseline (2021)	Targets	Strategies
Increased revenue	Percentage revenue	K3,543,893.52	80% increase in revenue by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement systems for management of user fees Explore alternative sources of funding
Optimal utilisation of resources	Standard of Financial Audit Reports	2020 Unqualified Audit Report	Unqualified Financial Audit Report Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity in budget management Enhance internal audit function and internal controls Develop and implement a Risk Management Strategy
Increased efficiency	Percentage of key services	Not established	70% of key services automated by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, automate and integrate internal processes Strengthen engagement with stakeholders through integration of quality assurance systems in the HEA IMIS
	Percentage of services delivered	Not established	90% of services delivered in line with the Service Charter annually	
High staff performance	Percentage staff performance	76.18% (2021)	85% average Staff performance against agreed annual targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen implementation of capacity building programmes Enhance Performance Management
Positive work culture	Percentage adherence to core values	0%	100% adherence to core values annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Staff Welfare Framework
Optimal staffing	Proportion staff establishment filled	67%	100% staff establishment filled by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the organisational structure Develop and implement a Staff Recruitment Plan
Conducive work environment	Percentage staff satisfaction	0%	75% positive Staff feedback on the work environment annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Office Administration Plan

4.0 ENABLING FACTORS

The successful implementation of this Strategic Plan is, to a larger extent, dependent on the following pre-conditions and assumptions:

4.1 Pre – Conditions

Pre-conditions are the critical success factors within the control of the Authority that will be necessary to ensure successful implementation of the 2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan. The following are the pre-conditions:

a) Attainment of an optimal organisational structure

The Authority will review its organisational structure and develop one that responds to the expanded mandate and functions. The Authority's structure will provide adequate positions for effective operations.

b) Availability of qualified and competent staff

The Authority will continue recruiting adequately qualified and skilled staff. The staff will be competent to implement the Plan.

c) Availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure

A conducive work environment will be facilitated by availability of equipment, office space and transport logistics.

d) Availability of management systems

Efficient operations will require Policies, Regulations, Communication Strategy, Technical Systems, Leadership and other systems to be in place. The Authority will strive to automate and integrate systems to facilitate efficient service delivery to internal and external stakeholders.

e) Ownership of the strategic plan by staff

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will require Staff to fully appreciate and understand its content. Having participated in the development, the staff will be fully involved in the implementation of the Strategy. The activities at both individual and institutional levels will therefore be guided by targets in the Strategic Plan.

4.2 Assumptions

Assumptions are critical success factors outside the control of HEA deemed important for the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. The following are the assumptions:

a) Appointment of a Board of Directors

Having operated for 4 years without a Board, the Authority will continue engaging relevant authorities on expediting the appointment of a Board. The presence of a Board is critical to strengthening the governance of the Authority.

b) Enabling Policy and Legal Framework

Government will continue providing a conducive Policy and Legal Framework to support the operations of the Authority. In this regard, the Authority will continue engaging Policy makers on harmonizing the Policy and Legal Framework to have a streamlined Quality Assurance System in the sub-sector.

c) Continued Stakeholder support

There will be stakeholder buy-in of the Strategic Plan which will result in increased support towards quality assurance programme implementation. In addition, external quality assurance experts will be readily available to be involved in quality assurance programmes.

d) Adequate and fully funded grant from Government

The macro-economic environment will be favourable to facilitate adequate and timely funding from Government.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Authority will put in place an effective implementation framework that will direct efforts towards realisation of the vision, strategic results and objectives. The strategies identified by the Authority require adequate resources for their successful implementation. Further, Annual Operational Plans and Individual Work Plans with SMART targets will be developed, in line with the Strategic Plan taking into account the available resources.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will coordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Strategic Plan. The Unit will ensure that programmes and activities are aligned towards the attainment of the Vision, Strategic Results and objectives outlined in this Plan.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is a structured process to identify, assess, manage and control possible events or situations to provide assurance regarding the achievement of objectives. The Authority undertook an assessment of the environment within which it operates and identified factors that are likely to positively and negatively impact its operations. However, the environment within which HEA operates is susceptible to changes that may not be predictable immediately. The Authority will, therefore, continuously monitor its operations and environment in order to identify and quickly address unfolding risks in a timely manner. To ensure successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Authority will develop and implement a robust Risk Management Strategy.

7.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the Strategic Plan will be vital for effective implementation and ascertaining its impact. The M&E Framework will be developed to track progress and evaluate performance against set strategic results, strategic objectives, intended results and targets as well as institute corrective measures timely. The monitoring and evaluation will be done at Individual, Departmental and Institutional levels. Accordingly, quarterly and annual progress reports on the implementation of the Plan will be coordinated by

the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The Unit will ensure that each Unit/ Section prepares progress reports and submits to Management for consideration.

Consolidated progress reports will be submitted to the Board by end of every year indicating the progress made towards set targets. The Operational Plan will be the basis for monitoring and evaluating the performance of Authority at three levels, namely: Individual, Departmental and Institutional.

The Authority will enhance Performance Management to ensure effective setting and implementation of targets. Staff will be coached, monitored and trained to ensure that programmes are effectively implemented and targets met.

A mid-term review of this plan will be undertaken in 2024 and will take into account challenges, if any, encountered during implementation and recommend appropriate measures for addressing the challenges. During the midterm review, the Authority may realign the programmes and strategies to ensure effective implementation of its mandate and attainment of overall desired results envisaged in this Plan. A terminal review will be undertaken at the end of the Plan period to determine the full extent of implementation and overall impact created. The terminal review will inform the preparation of the next Strategic Plan.

APPENDIX I: 2022 – 2026 BALANCED SCORECARD FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Vision	An innovative quality assurance institution that guarantees transformative higher education		
Mission	To develop and foster an innovative quality assurance system in higher education for a knowledge-based society		
Core Values	Prudence; Integrity; Transparency; Impartiality; Accountability; Confidentiality; Team Work		
Strategic Themes	Higher Education Quality Assurance	Stakeholder Engagement	Institutional Capacity and Governance
Strategic Results	Competitive higher education	Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Buy-in	Quality Service Delivery

	Strategic Objectives and Strategy Map	Measures	Targets	Strategies
Client/ Stakeholder		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage accredited learning programmes in all HEIs Proportion of HEIs subjected to Institutional Audits Percentage HEIs performance against set standards Percentage of incidences of breaches to higher education regulations Percentage stakeholder satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of learning programmes in all HEIs accredited by 2026 100% HEIs subjected to Institutional Audits annually 100% HEIs with satisfactory performance and above against set standards annually 80% reduction of incidences of breaches by 2026 75% stakeholder satisfaction levels annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a database of students in HEIs and learning programmes Enhance capacity building for HEIs and Learning Programme Experts (LPEs) Review and develop quality assurance Standards and Guidelines Enhance research on developments in higher education Enhance quality assurance audits for HEIs and learning programmes
Finance/ Stewardship		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage revenue Standard of Financial Audit Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% increase in revenue by 2026 Unqualified Financial Audit Report Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance surveillances and inspections Develop and implement Service Charter Expedite the finalisation and implementation of the Communication Strategy Develop and implement a Stakeholder Management Plan Develop and implement stakeholder satisfaction survey tools
Internal Processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of key services delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of key services automated by 2026 90% of services delivered in line with the Service Charter annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen sensitisation of HEIs on higher education legislation and quality assurance systems. Develop and implement systems for management of user fees Explore alternative sources of funding Strengthen capacity in budget management Enhance internal audit function and internal controls
Organisation Capacity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage staff performance Percentage adherence to core values Proportion staff establishment filled Percentage staff satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% Staff performance against agreed annual targets 100% adherence to core values annually 100% staff establishment filled by 2026 75% positive Staff feedback on the work environment annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Risk Management Strategy Develop, automate and integrate internal processes Strengthen engagement with stakeholders through integration of quality assurance systems in the HEA IMIS Strengthen implementation of capacity building programmes Enhance Performance Management Develop and implement a Staff Welfare Framework Review the organisational structure Develop and implement a Staff Recruitment Plan Develop and implement an Office Administration Plan