EVALUATION REPORT

for INQAAHE and RIACES

CONSEJO NACIONAL DE ACREDITACIÓN (CNA)

(National Accreditation Council of Colombia)

Bogota, Colombia

March 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Accreditation Council (*Consejo Nacional de Acreditación, CNA)* of Colombia has asked to be reviewed simultaneously by INQAAHE (International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) and RIACES (*Red Iberoamericana de Agencias de Calidad en la Educación Superior*, Iberian-American Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) on the basis of its compliance with the Guidelines of Good Practice adopted by these networks.

The evaluation was entrusted to an international panel of four highly qualified experts – two of them appointed by INQAHEE and the other two by RIACES, two of them from Latin America and the other two from Europe. The Panel has used as reference the Guidelines of Good Practices in Quality Assurance drawn up by INQAAHE and also accepted by RIACES for the evaluation of the CNA's status, strategies and activities.

After reviewing the extensive self-evaluation report prepared by the CNA the Panel visited the Agency's headquarters in Bogota from 30 January to 2 February 2012 and held a series of interviews with persons belonging to the main groups of stakeholders of the Agency: the members of the Council; the staff of its Academic and Technical Secretariat; representatives of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia (with the personal participation of the Minister of Education and the Vice-Minister for Higher Education); a group of evaluators ("academic peers"); representatives of various national professional councils that were all, at the same time, involved with universities in the corresponding academic disciplines; and delegations of the Rectors, Heads of internal quality assurance systems, Academic Vice-Rectors and students of the public and private universities (and some other Higher Education Institutions – HEIs) that make up the "National Accreditation System" (*Sistema Nacional de Acreditación, SNA*). These universities and HEIs tend to be seen as the best and best-known part of Colombian higher education, even though they enrol but a minority of the country's overall number of "tertiary" education students.

Taking into account the wealth of information provided by the Agency in its self-evaluation report and the additional information and opinions gathered during the interviews conducted at the CNA's office, the Panel felt that all information necessary for a complete, objective and impartial review had been made available to its members.

The Panel came to the conclusion that the CNA of Colombia was adhering to all the Guidelines of Good practice of INQAAHE, which are also accepted by RIACES. The compliance with these Guidelines was found to be complete for 9 of the 12 Guidelines and substantial for the remainder 3.

On top of reviewing CNA's compliance with these Guidelines, the Panel prepared for the Agency a number of suggestions for improvement, with the intention to support the Agency's efforts aimed at enhancing its impact and credibility in the national, Latin American and global context.

The review of the CNA by INQAAHE and RIACES and the visit of the Panel coincide with a very important turning point in the development of the Agency and the SNA; after a phase when the most important in Colombia was to increase access to higher education, the attention has been turning more towards quality aspects and the CNA has played a key role in this new orientation which now needs to find its expression in the international acknowledgment of the value of Colombian accreditation; after a first stage of accreditation focused on undergraduate (*pregrado*) programmes, the system is entering a new era focusing on the evaluation and accreditation of postgraduate (*postgrado*) programmes which will no doubt require additional resources and some adjustments in the processes; finally, after accrediting a vast majority of all programmes and institutions that are in a position to meet the current criteria for "higher quality" and establishing a solid credibility in doing so, the CNA is now considering the adequacy and viability of an opening up of the SNA by way of accreditation mechanisms more accessible to institutions of higher education that are not universities.

INTRODUCTION

The National Council for Accreditation (*Consejo Nacional de Acreditación, CNA*) of Colombia asked INQAAHE and RIACES to undertake a joint evaluation of the Agency's compliance with the "Guidelines of Good Practice" of both networks (i.e. an "adherence review"). These Guidelines were prepared and adopted by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education (INQAAHE) and last revised en August of 2007. They are to be found in the Annex to this report (Annex I). Their purpose is to serve as a reference for the review of those agencies that want to demonstrate to the higher education community of their own country and to their broader regional and global environment that they meet the requirements set out in these Guidelines.

In an *ad hoc* agreement for this review, the Iberian-American Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (*Red Iberoamericana de Agencias de Calidad en la Educación Superior, RIACES*) has accepted to use the same Guidelines as INQAAHE for the evaluation of the CNA of Colombia, which cleared the way for this first joint evaluation between the two networks. The task of the review panel has consisted mainly in evaluating to what extent (completely, substantially, partly or insufficiently) the Agency complies with each of the Guidelines. In addition to revising the "adherence" of the CNA to their standards, the two networks also asked the review Panel to make some suggestions for improvement in those areas showing relative weaknesses or deficiencies.

INQAAHE and RIACES established a review Panel of four highly qualified international experts. Two of them were appointed by INQAAHE and the other two by RIACES. Two of them are from other Latin American countries and the other two from Europe. The CNA was informed of the proposed composition of the Panel and approved it (cf. Annex II).

The review panel received a comprehensive self-evaluation report, together with several annexes, already in November 2011, but the visit was postponed until the end of January 2012 for internal Colombian reasons. The Panel visited the Agency's headquarters from 30 January through 2 February 2012. The Panel wishes to thank the Agency's staff as well as the representative of the Department of International Relations of the Ministry of National Education for their permanent attention to each of their needs.

The Panel held a series of interviews, all of them in Spanish, with persons from the groups of actors and stakeholders:

- the member Councillors (*Consejeros*) of the CNA;

- the staff of its Academic Secretariat and Technical Secretariat;

- representatives of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia, including the Minister of Education and the Vice-Minister for Higher Education in person;

- a group of evaluators ("academic peers");

- representatives of various national professional associations, that were all, at the same time, involved with universities in the corresponding academic disciplines (which the Panel regrets because it missed an opportunity to listen to opinions from outside academia);

- as well as delegations of the Rectors, the Heads of the Internal Quality Assurance System, the Academic Vice-Rectors and the students of the universities (and some non-university HEIs), both public and private, that belong to the National System of Accreditation (SNA). These universities and HEIs are usually considered to be the best and most visible ones in Colombian higher education, even though they are but a minority of the overall "tertiary" education system of the country.

The detailed list of interviews held and of persons met during these interviews is appended as Annex III. The members of the Panel wish to sincerely thank the CNA for the excellent preparation and organisation of the visit in every respect (venue, timetable, coordination), the high level of interest of the interviews and the warm welcome received from the CNA, its staff and all other participants.

REVIEW OF CNA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES

SELF EVALUATION REPORT PROVIDED BY THE CNA

The following pages deal with the review of CNA's "adherence" to each of INQAAHE' and RIACES' Guidelines. The Panel first provides some observations on the self-evaluation report received from the Agency and then reviews the 12 Guidelines, providing for each of them its observations followed by its evaluation of the current situation and of the compliance of the Guideline by the CNA.

The Panel commends the CNA for the excellent quality of its report – a well organised and informative document with much relevant data and analyses and a series of annexes that are well chosen, informative and easy to consult. The report is well structured as it follows the sequence of agreed Guidelines and has thus significantly facilitated the preparatory work of the Panel, the discussions during the interviews and the drafting of the present evaluation report. The Panel was

also grateful for receiving upon its arrival in Bogota an update of various statistical data of the self-evaluation report, and for some additional data it required after the completion of the scheduled interviews.

CNA's self-evaluation report is a single document containing all the information required for the review process for both INQAAHE and RIACES. The Agency's staff determined its content and structure after a consultation process with RIACES followed by a similar one with INQAAHE. The report gathers not only the opinions of the CNA's members and staff, but also the contributions received from the various groups of actors and stakeholders that were consulted – mainly those groups that were also invited to the interviews with the Panel later on. The report was also shared with the Ministry of National Education before it was adopted, with a view for the CNA to be certain that the viewpoints expressed in it are in line with the national priorities (for example in the important area of internationalisation or with respect of the need to integrate more HEIs from the non-university sector).

While the self-evaluation report deals both with the National System of Accreditation (SNA) and the National Council of Accreditation (CNA), the Panel's mandate was only to review the latter – since the system as such consists of universities and other institutions of higher education and is being shaped by public policies whose assessment is evidently beyond the Panel's competency and mandate.

However, the Panel thanks the CNA for the very important and comprehensive information on the Colombian higher education systems a whole provided in the report. Such information is a *sine qua non* requirement for the Panel's correct understanding of the CNA's role and impact in its national context. The Colombian higher education system is experiencing rapid growth (between 2002 and 2010 the total number of students grew from 1 to 1.675 million and the number of doctoral candidates from 350 to 2,300). The public and private sectors enrol approximately the same number of students, although the latter counts 208 HEIs and the former only 80. Colombian higher education counts four different types of institutions: 80 universities, 115 university institutes, 54 technological institutions and 39 technical-professional (vocational) institutions, with a strong majority of private HEIs in the last three categories.

The quality assurance system of Colombia is actually based on two sub-systems which are both under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education's National Council for Higher Education (*Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior, CESU*) – an advisory body to the Ministry whose members are representatives of the main groups of stakeholders: an inclusive system based on what is known

as the "qualifying registration" (*Registro calificado*) and a more exclusive one based on a mechanism for the accreditation of "higher quality" and therefore called National System of Accreditation (*Sistema Nacional de Acreditación, SNA*). In addition to the evaluation tools that govern the admission of programmes and HEIs into the two sub-systems of registration and accreditation, the Ministry also draws on a set of state examinations (like the one called *Saber Pro*) that are seen as supplementary indicators (but not as the most trusted ones) about quality in higher education.

- The basic boundary of Colombian higher education is defined by the registration (*Registro Calificado*) that was set up in 2003 in order to check that HEIs meet some basic requirements before they are authorised ("registered") by the Ministry; registration is compulsory for all HEIs that want to operate legally in the country and must the renewed every 6 years.

- From all registered HEIs of the *Registro Calificado,* only a minority offer academic programmes that are accredited by the National Accreditation Council (CNA) which was created by law in 1992 and has been operational since 1998; before registered HEIs may apply for evaluation/accreditation by the CNA, they must first demonstrate that they meet a set of 12 "preliminary conditions" (*Condiciones Previas*); once this is done, their programmes become eligible for accreditation (*acreditables*) and if they are able to get accreditation from the CNA for at least one programme, they become a member of the National System of Accreditation (SNA) – which may thus be defined as the group of universities and other HEIs which have succeeded in accrediting at least one of their programmes with the CNA. Currently the SNA includes 125 HEIs (i.e. 43% of the total number of HEIs in the country) of which two third are universities and only 11 are technical/technological (i.e. vocational) institutions. This distinctive feature of Colombian accreditation is the reason for calling it "higher quality" accreditation, which differs from most other national systems, where accreditation serves to discriminate between what meets the minimal standards acceptable to society and what does not. Contrary to registration, accreditation in Colombia is on a fully voluntary basis – even though CNA's main achievement is that it has *de facto* become compulsory for all those HEIs that are able to get it, either because they seek it for reasons of prestige and competitiveness or because they merely want to document their accountability to society as in the case of the National University of Colombia. Once the majority of their programmes eligible for accreditation are indeed accredited, HEIs may get from the CNA an institutional accreditation: from the minority of HEIs that belong to the SNA, only 23 are institutionally accredited by the CNA, and 20 of these are universities. A fringe benefit of

institutional accreditation is that those HEIs enjoying this status need not to renew their registration in the *Registro Calificado*.

At the inception meeting with the Panel, the CNA's Coordinator drew attention to the two main challenges facing the Agency (and hence also the Colombian higher education system as a whole); they were already set out in the self-evaluation report and could be used by the Panel as very useful background information during its discussions and interviews in Bogota:

- One major challenge is the need to expand the SNA, which currently includes only a minority of Colombia's HEIs (both public and private ones) and a handful of non-university institutions; the weak share of SNA institutions in the overall Colombian tertiary education system and the near absence of non-university HEIs in it imply for Colombian political authorities – and hence for the CESU and the CNA – a pressing need to define the future objectives of accreditation in society and its accessibility to the different categories of HEIs, in particular those that are not university level and are currently nearly fully excluded from the SNA. The main issue that needs to be resolved is whether or not the registration in the *Registro Calificado* offers sufficient quality assurance for them, and whether they could/should be included in an adequate way in the National System of Accreditation. The National Development Plan for the years 2010-2014 clearly goes for the latter option and calls for the creation of incentives for non-university HEIs to consider accreditation, rather than being satisfied with the *Registro Calificado*.

- The second major challenge concerns the internationalisation or internationality of the System, the CNA and universities and other accredited HEIs of Colombia; after an initial stage in which the setting-up of the SNA mainly required the development of a policy for quality assurance in the institutions of higher education that belong to it, the new priority of the government, the CNA and universities is now to increase the value of Colombia's accreditation of "higher quality" by securing international recognition for it.

In the following sections the Panel is presenting its observations for each of the 12 Guidelines for Good Practice that were used as references for the Adherence Review of the CNA carried out on behalf of INQAAHE and RIACES.

GUIDELINE 1: GOVERNANCE OF THE AGENCY

The Agency has a written mission statement or set of objectives that takes into account the cultural and historical context of the Agency. The statement explicitly provides that external quality assurance is a major activity of the Agency, and it requires a systematic approach to achieving the mission or objectives of the Agency. There is evidence that the statement of objectives is implemented pursuant to a practical management plan that is linked to the Agency's resources. The ownership and governance structure is appropriate for the objectives of the Agency.

The creation of the SNA and the setting up of the CNA as its guarantor started with a Colombian law of the year 1992. The CNA was created as an internal body within the Ministry of Education, in a country where public universities had a strong tradition of autonomy from political circles. The CNA is not a separate legal body, has no separate budget and no staff of its own, although its office is physically located outside the Ministry and its activities are carried out by staff seconded from the Ministry to run its Academic Secretariat and Technical Secretariat. The CESU, as the ministerial body in charge, defines (in reality approves) the objectives of the CNA and of those of the accreditation of higher quality and reviews the guidelines (*lineamientos*) submitted to it by the Agency. The CESU also chooses the seven members (*Consejeros*) of the CNA by way of regular public calls for applications for the replacement of Councillors whose term is coming to an end. In this process of selecting new Councillors the most important factor is the academic reputation of candidates and this has allowed the CNA to build-up a high degree of acceptance and trust in the higher education communities and in the country in general. The Councillors of the CNA are not representing any stakeholder or institution; rather, each of them contributes to the CNA his/her personal, individual experience and credibility during the five years of their term, which is not renewable.

The Council has neither a stable President nor a strongly acknowledged internal leadership structure. What exists is merely a position of "coordinator", which rotates annually to one of the seven members – usually to a senior one in terms of years in office. The CNA members never vote, since all decisions are taken by consensus. The *Consejo* normally meets once a month for a 3-4-day session, but the *Consejeros* carry out most of their activities for the Council in between meetings, for example visiting HEIs in order to establish whether they fulfil the 12 "Preliminary Conditions" required for any later accreditation, reviewing draft guidelines for the accreditation of programmes, participating in meetings for the further development of the SNA or in international activities, checking the profile of future "academic peers" before they are admitted into the databank of evaluators or preparing the final accreditation reports on the basis of an assessment by peers.

In spite of its governance and leadership structure, that looks rather unfavourable for the development of an independent and trustworthy evaluation system, the CNA has succeeded in less than two decades (the first accreditation decisions were taken in 1998) in developing an accreditation system that has had an impressive impact – even more so since the accreditation is on a fully voluntary basis in Colombia. Since 1998 the CNA has carried out over 1,000 programme accreditations (over 150 annually in recent years) and 23 institutional accreditations. All stakeholders, without any exception, have expressed to the Panel their trust in the fully autonomous evaluation processes carried out by the CNA, clean of any external or political influence on procedures or decisions, and all see in this the major strength of the CNA and the main reason of its success. This conclusion needs nonetheless to be smoothed, not with regard to CNA's achievements but because its role as guarantor of the (higher) quality of higher education programmes and institutions is restricted to but a minority part of Colombia's overall tertiary education system, since – as already mentioned - the SNA includes only 43 Colombian HEIs (i.e. 99% of universities, but no more than 12% of the technical/technological institutions).

Panel's conclusions

The main role of the CNA in Colombia has been to determine which of the many HEIs registered in the *Registro calificado* actually offer programmes of "higher quality". In order to do this, the Council adopted, in a row, first its Guidelines for the accreditation of undergraduate programmes, then those for the accreditation of higher education institutions and finally in 2009 those for the accreditation of postgraduate programmes (Master programmes, Specialisation programmes in the medical sector and doctoral programmes). The Panel could check that the CNA has an adequate Mission Declaration and is carrying out its evaluation and accreditation activities in a structured way on the basis of multi-annual development plans and annual management plans. This is why the Panel focused its analysis and discussion on CNA's compliance with the last aspect of Guideline 1 and studied in full detail the relationship between the Agency and the Ministry.

It came to the conclusion that in spite of its close ties to the Ministry the CNA enjoys full functional independence in the conduct of its evaluation and accreditation activities. Without such independence, the Council could not have achieved the credibility and trust it actually enjoys, nor the impact it has had in at least the university sector of the Colombian higher education system. The Panel is nonetheless concerned that there is no warranty that this situation would remain as stable as it is; the independence of the CNA could be jeopardised in case of a serious change in the country's political line or in the good relationship that currently exists between the Ministry and the Council. The CNA is fully dependent on the Ministry for the selection of its members as well as for its

human y financial resources and although this situation is not currently entailing any adverse consequences it could, under other circumstances, be a source of problems not to be overcome by the Agency. In other words, while the full functional independence of the CNA makes no doubt at the moment, its structural independence is much very restricted and this could to a certain extent bear on its future credibility and authority in the international community of quality assurance agencies, in particular in regions of the world (like the US or Europe) where there is a much stronger requirement of independence of Agencies with respect to governments. This risk could, therefore, jeopardise the international recognition of Colombian accreditation that the Ministry as well as the CNA and many accredited universities see as of core strategic importance.

The Panel also observes that the current system of a rotating coordination and an automatic termination of all Councillors at the end of their first term implies a real risk of losing (actually, throwing away) of very valuable memory and accumulated experience that could be very useful for the development of the Agency and the quality assurance system of Colombian higher education.

Hence, the Panel concludes that the CNA meets substantially, but not fully, the requirements set out in Guideline 1.

GUIDELINE 2: RESOURCES OF THE AGENCY
The Agency has adequate and accessible human and financial resources to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach. The Agency's resources are also adequate for the appropriate development of the Agency.

The CNA is drawing on financial, human and technical resources made available to it by the Ministry. Staff's employer is not the CNA, but the Ministry, from whom the CNA is requesting additional or substitute staff after determining the profile of the person(s) it needs; the Ministry decides whether the request is acceptable and carries out the necessary steps for the search, selection and hiring of the right person. CNA's finances are also administered by the Ministry (for current expenses and the costs of evaluation procedures) or by another external public body (for investments). The CNA has no income of its own, since the services it provides is fully free of charge for the HEIs and it has no other, independent source of income.

Although the CNA is apparently fully dependent and in a precarious position with regard to resources, the Agency has access to well-located and well-equipped office space and to qualified and

motivated staff working for it in the Academic Secretariat and Technical Secretariat – even though most of them are relatively new in their positions following a change in the Ministry's policy with regard to human resources (substitution of civil servants by persons employment on the basis of an ordinary labour contract). The CNA has also been able to draw on qualified external staff, e.g. in the case of the series of regional workshops that was organised in 2011 and farmed out to a Vice-Rector of an accredited university.

It seems fair to say that the resources available to the CNA are currently adequate for good quality evaluation and accreditation operations, i.e. for the payment of academic peers, trips, reports and documents, the maintenance of a website of good quality, the organisation of dissemination events and the Agency's participation in international activities.

Panel's conclusions

The Panel was satisfied that the risks of dependency and of a shortage of resources mentioned in the previous paragraphs are only virtual: the reality is that the resources currently available to the CNA are adequate for the running and development of its activities, even though these resources do not belong to the CNA as such. These resources are however already fully put at use (and are actually over-utilised in some areas, in particular in the case of the Academic Secretariat) and this situation entails that a significant number of accreditation procedures tend to last far too long. The current level of resourcing of the Agency does not allow the CNA any flexibility (for example in case the Academic Secretary were to fall ill) and would soon become insufficient in the event of a sharp increase in the Agency's volume of activity.

From the Panel's perspective the current situation of CNA with regard to its resources raises three main issues:

- A lack of security for the Agency, for want of a budget, financial resources and human resources of its own; although the Panel acknowledges that in many countries the medium term sustainability of national quality assurance agencies hinges on public monies made available by government, it is of opinion that few Agencies are as vulnerable as the CNA might be;

- Another risk is related to the structure of the Academic Secretariat, which is headed by a highly qualified and motivated Secretary, but this person is faced with an enormous amount of work and enormous responsibilities; the CNA does not currently have the resources

needed to support its Academic Secretary and for someone to stand in for him in case he were absent from his work for an extended period of time;

- The CNA is not prepared to face the new flood of applications that can be expected as a result of the new possibility to seek accreditation for postgraduate programmes; the preparation of this entirely new activity (the first four programmes were accredited in 2011) have drawn on the Agency's normal resources, but it is unlikely that these would be sufficient to run in a satisfactory way the dozens of applications for accreditation that are currently in progress (there are already 21 of them) or in preparation at universities (there are already 32 doctoral programmes and 115 master programmes eligible for accreditation, not including the specialisation programmes in the health sector). The Panel sees a serious risk that the CNA might become a victim of its own success: a flood of new applications from universities interested in getting their postgraduate programmes accredited by the CNA as early as possible is basically a welcome situation, except that the Agency would not be able to handle these applications unless additional human resources were urgently made available and adequately trained; the risk is either to create an administrative failure or to bring about a decrease in the quality of service, e.g. in case the duration of accreditation procedures were allowed to further increase.

For these reasons, considering the foreseeable future, the Panel concludes that the CNA complies substantially, but not fully, with the requirements of Guideline 2.

GUIDELINE 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE AGENCY ITSELF

The Agency has a system of continuous quality assurance of its own activities that emphasises flexibility in response to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives.

The Agency conducts internal self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data and analysis.

The Agency is subject to external reviews at regular intervals. There is evidence that any required action is being implemented and disclosed.

The CNA has set in place – under the name of "Continuous Improvement System" – a set of mechanisms for the permanent improvement of its own activities and the gathering of information about the satisfaction of the main groups of stakeholders from Colombian society. Since accreditation is on a completely voluntary basis the Agency can only develop its activities if it is able to gain and retain enough respect and trust from the HEIs belonging to the National System of Accreditation (SNA) or eager to become a member of it. The Agency is also keen to attend the special needs faced by non-university institutions and is considering the possibility of defining a medium-term strategy more suitable for them. The CNA has demonstrated its ability to adopt and implement remedial measures whenever specific shortfalls or difficulties are encountered.

From this viewpoint it is important to mention the series of regional meetings (or "workshops") organised by the CNA throughout the year 2011, each one with the participation of two CNA Councillors. Their main objective was to strengthen the culture of self-evaluation (and self-improvement) at HEIs that do not (yet) belong to the SNA and have not considered, hitherto, the possibility of an application for accreditation; it is therefore clear that these regional workshops were fully in line with the Colombian government's strategic goal to create incentives for non-university HEIs to seek accreditation and not be satisfied with just being part of the *Registro Calificado,* in accordance with the National Development Plan for the period 2010-2014. The majority of the more than 700 participants were heads of the quality services at their institution and 80% of all participants came from HEIs outside the SNA. Another objective was to identify and train more "academic peers". These workshops also allowed the gathering of data about the real impact of accreditation both on universities and other accredited HEIs (i.e. on the expansion of the SNA) and the remainder of higher education institutions, which are for the CNA the main stock from which more applications for accreditation could emerge in the future. From this viewpoint it is important to draw attention to two special initiatives related to these regional workshops: firstly, they have boosted a dialogue at regional level between HEIs already belonging to the SNA and the others, on the basis of some coaching of the latter by the former in the areas of quality improvement and internationalisation; secondly, the regional workshops served to gather observations and suggestions that the CNA plans to use as inputs for the forthcoming revision of the Accreditation Guidelines, with a view to broadening the consultative basis underlying this revision and possibly making them more accessible to HEIs of the non-university sector. The Panel's only area of doubt is whether the views of the professional world outside academia are adequately being taken in account (because in the interviews, the "professional" associations were represented only by persons linked to universities).

The Agency's self-evaluation as established in its report and confirmed in the interviews, demonstrates a clear determination and a real ability to identify weak points in its actuation, assess them realistically and search for solutions suiting the expectations of the SNA community.

The present external review is the first one that is being carried out at CNA's request. It is worth mentioning, however, that in April 2011 the Agency decided to adopt for itself the Code of Good Practice of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) – the network of those QA agencies involved in the accreditation of higher education programmes and institutions in Europe. According to a declaration made by the Coordinator of the CNA, the present adherence review carried out on behalf of INQAHEE and RIACES will also allow the Agency to demonstrate its compliance with ECA's Standard 7 (which requires as a "good practice" that agencies should undergo an external evaluation).

Panel's conclusions

The CNA fully complies with Guideline 3.

GUIDELINE 4: REPORTING PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Agency informs and responds to the public in accordance with applicable legislation and the cultural context of the Agency. This includes full and clear disclosures of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.
The Agency also demonstrates public accountability by reporting its decisions about higher education institutions and programs. The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.
If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or program, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.
The Agency also discloses to the public the decisions about the Agency resulting from any external review of its own performance.

All documents that HEIs may need, whether they wish to present an application for accreditation or merely find out about what services the CNA might have to offer to them, are easily available from the Secretariat or via the Agency's website. The procedures and criteria that are being applied for accreditation purposes are well documented and easy to understand. The only aspect that looks

unusual is that CNA's accreditations decisions (if positive) are not being published as such as they are made, but only later on, together with the publication of the official Ministerial Resolution that concludes the accreditation procedure. The Panel is not questioning this practice, since the Guideline explicitly provides that the publication of decisions may be different in content and extent according to the cultural context and legal framework of each country.

The CNA pays much attention to the appointment of "peers" and the selection of evaluating teams, with a view to ensuring equal treatment to all applications for accreditation although each of them is being evaluated by a different team of "peers".

A core feature of CNA's practice is that it only applies a single set of criteria when evaluating applications for accreditation, irrespective of the institutional category of the applying HEI (Technical Institutes, Technological Institutes, University Institutes or Universities). This guarantees a high level of transparency of the accreditation criteria that are being applied and a high degree of consistency in the type of "higher quality" that warranties accreditation in Colombia. This has led to a situation where all accredited institutions except three belong to the category of "universities". The CNA is involved in an on-going discussion, with the Ministry on the one hand (via the CESU) and with higher education institutions (in particular those belonging to the non-university sector) on the other, about whether or not it should consider defining differential criteria according to the various categories of applying HEIs. This is a question of higher education policy that the Agency cannot and should not try to answer by itself. As an evaluating body, the Panel can only observe that the criteria that were adopted are being applied with the highest possible degree of transparency and consistency.

CNA's decision making process is well organised, systematic, clearly known and highly appreciated by those who have gone through it – even though some of them regret that after being adopted by consensus by the Council as a whole the Agency's final reports, if positive about the award of the accreditation, are being sent first to the Ministry and only at a later stage to the applying institution, together with the publication of the Ministry's official accreditation "Resolution".

The Agency has already confirmed that it would publish on its website the outcome of the present "adherence review" carried out jointly by INQAAHE and RIACES.

Panel's conclusion:

The CNA fully complies with Guideline 4.

GUIDELINE 5: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Agency:

- *recognises that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves;*
- *respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions or programs;*
- *applies standards or criteria that have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders; and*
- *aims to contribute to both quality improvement and accountability of the institution.*

CNA's compliance with this Guideline can only be properly assessed bearing in mind that in Colombia the accreditation is a fully voluntary process that acknowledges quality and quality assurance as responsibilities of each individual HEI. All categories of stakeholders have confirmed to the Panel that they were consulted by the CNA and the CESU in the course of the debate leading to the adoption of the procedures and criteria for the accreditation procedures, first with respect to the accreditation of undergraduate programmes and higher education institutions and more recently with respect to the accreditation of postgraduate programmes.

The deep respect shown by the CNA for the autonomy, identity and integrity of each higher education institution submitting itself to an accreditation procedure has been crucial for the acceptance and dissemination of accreditation in Colombia's higher education – even though the unusual notion of "accreditation of higher quality" has implied that hitherto the vast majority of institutions of the non-university sector have *de facto* remained excluded from the National System of Accreditation. There is not the least doubt that this situation is due to the CNA's option for a single model of accreditation, in the clear intention to be fully consistent in what it requires from all accredited institutions, irrespective of whether they are public or private or belong to the university or non-university sector.

Yet, at the same time, the CNA's single model has been applied in a flexible way. The other main feature of CNA's record of activity is that the accreditation criteria and indicators, while being the same for all, are applied in each case with a significant degree of "plasticity". The CNA has no specific guidelines for the various disciplines. But it is clear in CNA's model that there are various ways in which a given requirement or criterion may be met and HEIs may – to a certain extent – select from the extensive list of indicators proposed by the Agency those that are best suited to their institutional profile or to the goals of the programme they wish to get accredited. This notion of flexibility (*plasticidad*) is in itself an adequate response to the need to take into account the characteristics and peculiarities of each HEI – including whether it is public or private or, to a certain extent, whether it is a university or university institute or a technical or technological institution. The

core importance of this notion was strongly emphasised during the interviews with the Panel, both by the CNA's Councillors themselves and by the representatives of higher education institutions and of evaluating teams (*pares*). The Panel found it particularly important to hear the opinion of the academic peers, who see plasticity not as a source of difficulty but rather as a possibility to actually take into account the personality of each HEI at the time of making their conclusions.

In its self-evaluation report as well as in the presentation to, and interviews with the Panel, the CNA emphasised that accreditation should not be seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a means towards a process of quality improvement – all the more when the accreditation process is fully voluntary as in the case of Colombia. All representatives of stakeholders met by the Panel agreed that the accreditation had an obvious impact on the improvement of the quality of programmes offered by accredited HEIs, maybe for the sheer reason that the CNA requires not just a basic but rather a "higher" level of quality and that in the opinion of all actors involved this level has been more and more demanding over time.

It was already mentioned in the present report that being accredited by the CNA is now seen as nearly compulsory by HEIs that want to enjoy the trust of employers and society and to demonstrate their attention to their social responsibility. Accreditation is seen as a demanding process (in spite of being free of charge, it requires much preparatory and follow-up work) but also as a legitimate one, because it is transparent and rigorous and provides real added value to accredited institutions. For the majority of them, accreditation is not just an assessment or a judgment, but also a sign-posted road to quality improvement. Its impact is seen as particularly positive on the improvement of curricular quality and the social responsibility of those institutions belonging to the SNA, even though accreditation has not made obsolete the more traditional signs of quality accepted in Colombian society – e.g. the well-established reputation of a few major, historical universities (those mentioned during the interviews were the National, the Javeriana and the Andean University) that is still playing a strong role in the decision of students when choosing a university or of employers when selecting graduates.

Panel's conclusion

The CNA fully complies with Guideline 5.

GUIDELINE 6: AGENCY'S REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMME /INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

The Agency has documents that indicate clearly what the Agency expects of the institution.

Those expectations (which may for example be called standards or factors or precepts) are appropriate for the core activities of an institution of higher education or program. The standards should explicitly address all areas of institutional activity that fall within the Agency's scope, such as teaching, learning, research. community work, etc. and necessary resources such as finances, staff/faculty, and learning resources. Standards may refer to specific areas, levels of achievement, relative benchmarking and types of measures, and may provide general guidelines. They may also include specific learning goals.

In its self-evaluation report as well as during the interviews (those with the Councillors, but also those with the "peers") the CNA strongly emphasised the "academic" character of the accreditation in Colombia. This repeated assertion first surprised the evaluating panel, because it might mean that the required "higher quality" was only referring to purely academic quality (i.e. to teaching and investigation and the level of academic qualification of staff) disregarding the social and economic aspects of universities' role, e.g. the relevance of what student learn, the employability of graduates or the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process in terms of reducing the dropout rate or the average duration of studies. During the interviews, however, this fear was promptly dissipated and it became clear that the issue was purely semantic: when referring to accreditation as a purely "academic" process, the CNA – as well as the Ministry, the evaluating peers and the accredited institutions themselves – mean to make it clear that the process is:

- fully exempt of any "commercial" dimension: HEIs do not pay any accreditation fee, hence there is no room for any possible doubt that the Agency may be "selling" its accreditations for a fee or a honorary charged to "customers";

- fully exempt of any external interference from either political or other third party.

The evaluating panel was also wondering about the declared priority of "academic" factors in the nomination and selection of the CNA's Councillors and evaluators – even more so since the latter are called, explicitly, "academic" peers. Again, the Panel was satisfied that even though Councillors and evaluators are being chosen on the basis of their experience and prestige in academia, there is an explicit and clear expectation that they would also take into account dimensions such as social relevance, the satisfaction of stakeholders and the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process.

Until now the CNA has accredited mainly undergraduate programmes (over 1,000) and a small number (24 in total) of institutions of higher education; institutional accreditation is accessible only to HEIs (nearly all them universities) that already have accredited most of their programmes. Since 2011 the CNA offers to institutionally accredited HEIs a somewhat simplified procedure for the accreditation or reaccreditation of their programmes, but the CNA is not considering that institutional accreditation should entail the "automatic" accreditation of programmes. This simplified procedure applies only to the accreditation of postgraduate programmes, for which a new set of guidelines was adopted in 2009. The first programmes of this type have just been accredited and it is quite easy to predict there will be a boom of applications for postgraduate programmes in the coming months and years.

Panel's conclusions

The CNA's accreditation standards and procedures adequately take in account all the factors, dimensions and resources that contribute to the delivery of "quality" in higher education, in line with what is seen as good practice in the community of practitioners in higher education worldwide. The list of statistical data and indicators used as references in the self-evaluation reports and in the course of the external evaluation by "peers" may seem surprisingly long, but becomes easily understandable and acceptable once it is clear that the expectation is not that all HEIs should use all indicators, but rather that they should choose the most relevant ones according to the programme or institutions seeking accreditation (in accordance with the already mentioned principle of "plasticity"). The Panel is aware that too much "plasticity" could entail a lack of transparency in the criteria that are actually applied in the evaluation of each programme or institution, but agrees that this is not the case with CNA's accreditations: CNA's guidelines and indicators provide HEIs with useful guidance for their self-evaluation and with a framework defining the key dimensions of quality and quality improvement.

Hence, the Panel is of opinion that the CNA fully complies with Guideline 6.

GUIDELINE 7: INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELF-EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The documentation concerning self-evaluation explains to the institutions of higher education the purposes, procedures, process and expectations in the self-evaluation process. The documents also include the standards used, the decision criteria, the reporting format, and other information needed by the higher education institution.

Typically, an Agency review process includes a self-evaluation through self-study by the institution or program, external peer review, and a follow-up procedure.
As necessary and appropriate, the Agency guides the institution or program in the application of the procedures of the quality assurance process, such as self-evaluation, external review, or solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituencies.

The documentation available from the CNA provides HEIs with the full information they may need about the goals, contents and expectations of the self-evaluation process for programmes or institutions seeking accreditation. The Panel was also satisfied that - according to the CNA and HEIs as well - the Agency is always prepared (through its Academic Secretariat) to provide the HEIs with additional information and guide them through the various stages of the process, above all in the initial phase of self-evaluation (the Panel was presented with some critical observations about the final stages of the accreditation procedure, after the submission of the Rector's comments to the Agency, but with none at all about the earlier stages).

The Panel acknowledges that in a system where accreditation is on a fully voluntary basis the decision to submit an application and start with a self-evaluation process complying with CNA's Guidelines is already a clear signal that the HEI is serious in its commitment to quality and quality improvement. In this respect, it may be important to recall that the self-evaluation phase is not really the first step towards accreditation, since the possibility to submit an application for accreditation requires a prior checking by the CNA that the HEI fulfils the so-called 12 "preliminary conditions" – which means that by the time of going through the self-evaluation process the HEI already maintains with the Agency a relationship focused on the theme of quality. In the interviews with Rectors and Academic Vice-Rectors, as well as with evaluating peers, all agreed that under these circumstances the self-evaluation process was a very useful and fruitful exercise. They underlined in particular the relevance of CNA's guidelines for the identification of those factors and indicators that contribute most to the generation of "quality" in activities and institutions of higher education.

In spite of the "eminently academic" profile of CNA's accreditation process, there is evidence that the self-evaluation phase pays considerable attention to contributions from society, students and alumni as well as from enterprises. The self-evaluation reports need to use as reference a set of indicators reflecting the specific profile and objectives of the institution; in this ways the key principle of flexibility (*plasticidad*), which lies at the core of CNA's practice of accreditation, applies right from the initial phases, i.e. since the preparation of the self-evaluation report and in anticipation of the

forthcoming site visit by the evaluating peers. Several interviews, including the one attended by the Minister, underlined that the dissemination of a culture of (self) evaluation, through the development of internal mechanisms for quality assurance and quality improvement, may well be the most important achievement of the decade of the 2000' in the Colombian higher education system, or at least in the part of it that belongs (or aspires to belong) to the SNA.

Panel's conclusions

The Panel commends the CNA for emphasising the key role of self-evaluation and for making available to the HEIs all the information and support they may need for it, and concludes that the Agency fully complies with Guideline 7.

GUIDELINE 8: EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONS BY THE AGENCY

The Agency has clear documentation concerning the external evaluation that states the standards used, assessment methods and processes, decision criteria, and other information necessary for external review. The Agency also has specifications on the characteristics, selection and training of reviewers. The Agency's system must ensure that each institution or program will be evaluated in an equivalent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees (together, the "external panels") are different.
The system ensures that:
-   The external reviewers meet the Agency's specifications, and the external reviewers are adequate to the tasks to be accomplished;
-   External reviewers have no conflicts of interest;
-   External reviewers receive necessary training;
-   External reviewers' reports are evidence-based and clear, with precisely stated conclusions. When practicable, the agency should include at least one external reviewer from another country or jurisdiction in the external panel.

CNA' accreditation process is organised in stages. It begins with the need for HEIs who wish to enter the SNA to demonstrate that they meet the 12 "preliminary conditions"; this requires a site visit by one of CNA's Councillors aimed at gathering a first impression about the HEI as a whole and establishing whether or not it is in a position to submit applications for accreditation with reasonable good chances of success. The next stage in the process is for the HEI to prepare a self-evaluation report in accordance with the Agency's Guidelines (including indicators) and possibly with its

guidance as the need may emerge, and then present this report to the CNA. When it receives the self-evaluation report, the Agency's Academic Secretariat checks it from a technical viewpoint to ascertain that it contains all the necessary information and then passes it on to the Council who assigns it to one of its members.

The Agency's Technical Secretariat then draws up a list of suitable evaluating peers, using the bank of names of "peers" (*banco de pares*) maintained by the CNA. This "bank" includes the names of some 3,000 "peers" who were initially invited to apply and reviewed by the CNA on the basis of academic criteria and who have confirmed that they are prepared, in principle, to participate in the accreditation procedures for which the CNA is seeking their collaboration. While all Councillors proceed from the academic world, the bank of "evaluating peers" includes the names of some (not many) persons who have been active outside the academic community (or are retired university professors) but bring the kind of expertise and credibility required from all evaluators, as well as the names of some (not many) foreign professors and Colombian professors living abroad or with an extended international experience. The "bank" does not include the names of any students and they do not participate in evaluation teams or site visits.

The Agency's Secretariat also takes responsibility for the regular organisation of training sessions for the development (*capacitación*) of the evaluation skills of "peers".

On the basis of the short list of names proposed by the Academic Secretariat the CNA chooses a number of peers that may vary according to the type of accreditation: for the accreditation of programmes the evaluating team usually consists of two peers for undergraduate and three (including one from abroad) for postgraduate programmes; for institutional evaluations their number is usually 5 or 6, but they were 15 for the accreditation of the National University of Colombia and its different regional campus across the country. One of the least foreseeable achievements of the CNA is that it has succeeded in getting peers from public universities to be accepted as evaluators of private ones, and *vice versa*. For reaccreditations and institutional accreditations and for the recently started evaluation of postgraduate programmes the evaluating team normally includes one or more international peers. For reaccreditation procedures the evaluating team normally includes one peer that was involved in the initial accreditation while the others are "new". In case an already appointed peer cannot participate in the site visit, the CNA appoints a substitute. When the list of peers in the evaluating team is complete and finalised, the CNA communicates it to the HEI that is submitting the application. In a few cases HEIs requested changes in the team of peers; such requests are considered by the CNA who may decide either to change the list or to stick to the original one.

The date of the site visit is being agreed directly between the HEI that is being evaluated and the team of peers on duty. The visits do not include a representative of the Academic Secretariat (except in the case of the evaluations carried out within the framework of the Mercosur). However, the Agency's Secretariat is responsible for arranging the site visit and setting the agenda of meetings, which always needs to include interviews with representatives of stakeholders like students, enterprises and alumni. The Panel was surprised that the date of the site visit was not being set by the CNA in consultation with the peers and the HEI, but directly between the HEI and the peers. In not few cases, they find it difficult to agree on a date and sometimes it takes a long time before a date suiting everybody involved can be found. As a consequence, the duration of these negotiations often account for the very long overall duration of many accreditation procedures – which is one of few points about which universities and HEIs are complaining. The time between the completion of the self-evaluation report and the visit of the evaluation team tends to last several months, often over a semester and sometimes up to one year. As a consequence the information provided by the HEI in its self-evaluation report becomes outdated and the applicant has to invest extra work in its updating and to wait longer for the CNA's decision about its application. The Panel was informed that in some cases this led to the withdrawal of the application for accreditation.

The responsibility of the peers is to evaluate the programme or HEI in accordance with the single list of criteria set out in CNA's guidelines, but to apply them with the suitable "plasticity" in line with the respect due to the autonomy, identity and integrity of each institution. The most important task of peers is to assess the degree of coherence between objectives and action. Hence, the expectation is that peers should evaluate according to each concrete situation, applying the same criteria but in a flexible way, e.g. with respect to the level of qualification required from academic staff. This fundamental characteristic of CNA's site visits and evaluations explains why the various groups of actors and stakeholders involved in the interviews during the site visit tend to highly value the opportunity it provides them to discuss with a team of peers respected for their academic stature and impartiality. The value of these discussions as part of the overall quality improvement process was confirmed even by HEIs that were denied accreditation at the end of the procedure.

After the site visit the team of peers prepares a single, joint evaluation report. In case of differing opinions between them, they have to resolve them within the team and then pass on to the Agency's Academic Secretariat an evaluation report approved by all of them. According to the peers' experience with this situation, such difficulties can be more easily overcome when the team includes three or more peers, but they may become really complicated with a team of two when each of them is fully certain of his/her opinion. The search for an agreement between all evaluators may thus result in an extension of the duration of the procedure, but it may also mean a loss of information for

the CNA, since the Councillors see only the outcome of an interpersonal negotiation and do not know the terms of the disagreement that opened the discussion.

After a conformity check by the Academic Secretariat, the peers' evaluation report is sent to the Rector of the HEI together with an invitation to send back his/her observations to the Agency. This stage of the process is seen as very important and useful by the HEIs, since it allows them to correct possible factual mistakes and make comments about the peers' interpretations and judgments. The "Rector's Comments" and the peers' evaluation report are then forwarded together to the Council and one of the Councillors is assigned the responsibility to draw up the final evaluation report. In the vast majority of cases, this final report is in line with the peers' conclusions, but in about 5% of the procedures the Rector's Comments lead the Council to adopt a position different from the peers'.

Panel's conclusions

The CNA's accreditation model guarantees in a satisfactory way the consistency and impartiality of the evaluations, thanks to the use of a single set of criteria and their flexible application taking into account the specific characteristics of the institution or programme under evaluation. The Panel acknowledges CNA's "plasticity" as a welcome good practice and even as a distinctive feature of CNA's accreditation process, but also thinks that this practice should be adequately documented in the Agency's official documents in order to make certain that it will not be questioned in case of a change of attitude of a majority of Councillors, or in the CESU's position or in the orientation of the Ministry's policy. The Agency's guidelines explain the role of peers and guarantee that evaluators are adequately qualified and selected. Higher education Institutions have a real possibility to make observations about the peers' conclusions. The peers' evaluation is seen as legitimate – a major change with respect to the time when the CNA started its work- and provides HEIs with information that they value very positively.

Therefore the evaluating panel has not the least doubt that the CNA meets fully, and maybe surpasses the requirements of Guideline 8.

GUIDELINE 9: DECISIONS

The Agency's evaluations address both the higher education institution's own self assessment and external reference points, such as judgments by knowledgeable peers or relevant legislation. An Agency must be independent, i.e. it has autonomous responsibility for its operations, and its judgments cannot be influenced by third parties.

The Agency's decisions must be impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair, and consistent, even if the judgments are made by different panels. Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action. The Agency's reported decisions are clear and precise.
When the Agency advises the government or other public bodies, the decisions made by each agency should be made as independently as practicable.

In the previous Section dealing with Guideline 8 it was already mentioned that for each application for accreditation the CNA's assigns the preparation of the final report to one of the Councillors. This final report draws on all available information: it uses as inputs the HEI's self-evaluation report, together with the updating notes whenever there are any, the peers' evaluation report following the site visit and the "comments" which the Rector is systematically invited to produce. The final report includes a summary of the judgment items underlying the decision, a conclusion about the accreditation (yes or no) and its duration and a list of recommendations that the HEI will be invited to consider during the follow-up phase. The validity of the accreditation may vary significantly: 4-6 years in most cases, but on occasions 8 or even 10 years (as was the case for the institutional reaccreditation of the National University of Colombia). The final report for each accreditation procedure needs to be formally adopted by the Council as a whole at one of its meetings, which adds even further to the guaranty of consistency and comparability between accreditation decisions: while the evaluations proposals are first the responsibility of different teams of peers, the final decision is always made by the CNA as a collective body.

When the CNA comes to the conclusion that accreditation <u>should not</u> be awarded it prepares a final report which includes recommendations for improvement and sends it directly to the HEI. But in those cases where the CNA comes to the conclusion that the accreditation <u>should</u> be awarded, it does not communicate its final report to the HEI, but to the Ministry who then prepares its publication by way of an official "Resolution". The sharing of tasks between the Ministry and the Council is clear and well respected. The CNA takes responsibility only for the analysis and the conclusions about the quality of the programme or institution seeking accreditation and prepares its final report fully independently. Once this is done, it is the Minister's responsibility to publish the decision and give it legal authority through an official Act (*Resolución ministerial*) that includes the major conclusions of the evaluation, the duration of the accreditation and CNA's recommendations (whose implementation will be monitored by the Agency as part of the follow-up process). In the over one thousand accreditation procedures already completed by the CNA, there were two cases in

which the Ministry was in disagreement with the Council's conclusion but ultimately accepted it in both instances.

Panel's conclusions

There is no doubt that the CNA takes its decisions independently and assumes responsibility for them. The procedures it applies present enough security that the decisions that are being taken and the follow-up measures that are being required are well documented, impartial and consistent across accreditation procedures, even though the judgment about the programme or institution is made in each case by a different team of peers.

There is only one point where the evaluating Panel is not fully satisfied: after the sending of the Rector's comments, the handling of the application is not as transparent to applicants as in the earlier stages of the procedure. Some HEIs regretted during the interviews that they received no information at all from CNA between the time of sending their comments and the date of the publication of the accreditation Resolution by the Ministry. Only at that time are they also being informed of the duration of the accreditation and the requirements of the follow-up plan. Nevertheless, HEIs complaining about this information vacuum are not questioning the integrity and the legitimacy of the process, but only regret its duration and the lack of information during the final stages.

Therefore the evaluating Panel concludes that the CNA complies fully with Guideline 9.

GUIDELINE 10: APPEALS

The Agency has appropriate methods and policies for appeals. Appeals should be conducted by reviewers who were not responsible for the original decision and who have no conflict of interest, but appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the Agency.

The Agency's procedures include mechanisms allowing HEIs to present a complaint (that is not called an "appeal" in CNA's guidelines, but a request to "reconsider") at different points in the evaluation and accreditation procedure. HEIs may request a change in the evaluating team in case they believe that there may be a conflict of interest of which the CNA was not aware at the time of appointing the members of the team of peers. There were a few cases of such complaints in the past. HEI's may also present extensive observations after receiving the draft report of the peers and include them in their "Rector's Comments" to the CNA. In total, the CNA received between 3 and 5 such complaints - or

rather "requests to reconsider" – annually and there were a few cases where the Council decided to send a new team of peers after receiving the Rector's Comments.

HEIs may also request that a negative decision of the CNA be "reconsidered" once they are informed of it and of the recommendations of the Agency based on its evaluation of the programme or institution; HEIs may provide reasons and evidences and the CNA then re-examines the case and decides accordingly, either awarding the accreditation or sticking to its original conclusion; in a few cases in such situations the CNA may appoint new peers or designate one of the Councillors to make the necessary verifications.

In addition, when a HEI receives the Ministerial Resolution and disagrees with it, it may introduce a request asking for its "revocation". Various such requests were introduced e.g. in order to get a longer period of validity of the accreditation or smoothen the requirements of the follow-up process. In such cases the Ministry passes on the request to the CNA and the Agency deals with it in the same way as with a request for "reconsideration", i.e. it may either give way to the HEI's reasons and ask the Ministry to amend the Resolution, or stick to its original conclusion.

Panel's conclusions

The Panel concludes that the CNA fully complies with the requirements of Guideline 10.

GUIDELINE 11: COLLABORATION

The EQAA collaborates with other EQAAs, if possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, review of decisions, provision of transnational education, joint projects, and staff exchanges.

In the case of the CNA, cooperation with other quality assurance agencies is only possible in an international context. The CNA participates very actively in cooperation activities of this type with other agencies and in joint projects with a regional Latin American focus. The most salient of these are: CNA' participation in the ARCU-SUR system (Regional accreditation of university programmes in the Mercosur) that includes seven South American countries and requires a substantial and highly relevant effort of internationalisation of accreditation procedures; the joint accreditation of programmes within the framework of the Andean Community; as well as a first programme accreditation outside Colombia (in Peru). The Agency is a member of networks of quality assurance agencies like RIACES and INQAAHE and contributes to two international quality assurance web

portals. CNA's Councillors as well as staff members of its Academic and Technical Secretariat participate in such projects in the regional, Latin American or worldwide context. The CNA has also "adopted" the Code of Good Practice of the network of those European quality assurance agencies that actually "accredit" the quality of higher education programmes and institutions in Europe (i.e. the European Consortium for Accreditation, ECA).

In addition, the development of more activities of this type is a strategic priority of the Agency – as well as of the Ministry on behalf of whom it operates. Therefore the CNA may choose between various avenues that would allow it to enhance the international dimension of its own activities with a view to favouring in this way the internationalisation of Colombian's higher education system – or at least of the part of this system that belongs to the SNA. The Panel shares the CNA's view that the internationalisation of the Agency and of the higher education system (or at least of the SNA) are inter-related and that only a significantly more international CNA, with even more international capacities and activities, will be in a position to include in its Guidelines higher requirements with respect to the internationalisation of the programmes and HEIs submitting themselves to accreditation. It seems also important to underline that this movement towards a higher level of internationalisation is a common objective of the Ministry, the Council and the higher education institutions, which have an obvious interest in strengthening the international credibility of their accreditation through the CNA.

The CNA already takes into account various different international aspects when it evaluates and accredits programmes and HEIs, e.g. the mobility and partnerships with foreign HEIs or the international visibility of the outcomes of research activities; more and more universities belonging to the SNA count internationalisation among their main strategic priorities. Internationalisation has also become a strategic priority of the CNA: the challenge now is to obtain and train the additional human resources required for this and to draw up a specific, medium-term action plan dealing with all key dimensions of internationalisation; some of these measures can only be implemented effectively if a number of changes are introduced in the functioning and legal setting of the CNA – such as, for example, the appointment of one or several non-Colombian Councillors or the development of a stronger database of international "peers" – and the Agency can draw on the necessary resources (e.g. in order to develop the linguistic capacities of CNA's staff and its participation in international activities and projects). Other measures, such as the enhancement of the international dimension in the Agency's Guidelines, could be introduces without major changes in the Agency's operations, but their outcomes will hinge on the necessary change in the regulation and funding for public higher education, e.g. through the provision of more mobility grants for students and young academic staff.

Panel's conclusions

The Panel commends the CNA for the development of its cooperation activities with other agencies, which in the case of the CNA necessarily means international cooperation. There is no doubt that the CNA complies or even exceeds the requirements of Guideline 11.

The Panel encourages the Agency to further develop in a gradual and organised way all various aspects of the internationalisation of the agency and its activities, through more intensive cooperation with other quality assurances in Latin American, Europe and the world in order to contribute to the internationalisation of Colombian higher education superior (starting with the HEIs that belong to the SNA) and the international prestige of CNA's accreditation – as recommended by the accredited HEIs themselves during the interviews with the Panel.

GUIDELINE 12: TRANSNATIONAL / CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies may be the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision. In formulating its policies and practices, the EQAA should consider relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations. All EQAAs should consult with appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, although this might not be possible or appropriate in situations such as those involving distance learning or small enrolment.

The Panel is not aware of any specific provision dealing with transnational, cross-border higher education in CNA's guidelines or policies. However, the Agency's accreditation is accessible to foreign or international higher education programmes and institutions active in Colombia, and the SNA actually counts with such programmes and institutions.

But the main thrust of Guideline 12 is to better protect the students enrolled in imported or exported higher education programmes – a goal that is not really relevant to CNA's accreditation of programmes and institutions with "higher quality". Therefore, in the opinion of the Panel, the responsibility to enforce the objectives of Guideline 12 in Colombia lies mainly with the *Registro Calificado*, not with the CNA. Foreign institutions of higher education who want to offer their courses in Colombia need to comply with the requirements of the *Registro Calificado*, the same as Colombian HEIs. Before they may even envisage applying for CNA's accreditation of "higher quality" they would

first need to demonstrate that they meet the 12 "preliminary conditions" required by CNA and - only later - that they fulfil all usual requirements for accreditation. The main risk that Guideline 12 aims to address lies not with the kind of HEIS that are in a position to seek accreditation from the CNA, but rather with those operating without a licence, either through ICT-delivered courses or with a limited physical presence in Colombia that does not qualify them for a possible accreditation by the CNA or even for their registration in the *Registro Calificado*. During the interviews, the Panel was informed that the number of "pirate" (illegitimate) programmes and institutions of higher education (that may as well be Colombian as foreign) has decreased in Colombia since the CNA has been active in the country, which may mean that the *Registro Calificado* and indirectly also CNA's accreditation have had a positive impact in this area.

The Panel is aware that the challenges from the commercial orientation of some types and institutions of higher education are not easier in Colombia than in other countries of Latin America, but these challenges concern mainly sectors of higher education that are not those that submit an application for evaluation and accreditation by the CNA and want to belong to the SNA. Furthermore, the Panel is convinced that in the event of a change in this situation, the ties already built-up by the CNA with international agencies and networks who have a solid experience with the specific issues raised by transnational and cross-border education are strong enough to allow the CNA to adjust its guidelines and procedures inasmuch as necessary, with neither delay or any particular difficulty. In the short term the Agency seems to be in a position to effectively cope with the desirable move towards more joint and double-degree programmes at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, evaluating them on the basis of its current guidelines and procedures.

Panel's conclusions

The Panel considers that the specific features of the accreditation of "higher quality" as applied by the CNA situate it outside the scope of Guideline 12 and that therefore it would not be justified to require the Agency to comply with a Guideline that is not relevant to the segment of higher education in which it operates. Therefore the Panel considers that the CNA should be deemed to comply with Guideline 12, even though such compliance is at the moment more virtual than real.

Nonetheless, the Panel also considers that one of the specific features of INQAAHE is precisely its work with higher education delivered physically or electronically in a country that is not the country of the HEI offering it, and that quality assurance agencies should be fully prepared to deal with the need to carry out evaluations/accreditations in this area if necessary; with the current profile of accreditation in Colombia the chances that this may happen in the foreseeable future are very low (in

particular concerning the importation of higher education) but cannot be formally ruled out (in particular concerning the exportation of higher education).

Therefore, considering the specific identity of the INQAAHE network and the impossibility to rule out that the CNA be faced with the need to address the issue in the coming years, the Panel considers that the CNA complies substantially, but not fully, with Guideline 12.

FINAL, TRANSVERSAL AND OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

The Panel concludes that the CNA complies with all the Guidelines that were used as references for this joint adherence review for INQAAHE and RIACES: from the 12 Guidelines, 9 are being fully met (or even surpassed) and the remainder 3 are being substantially met.

The Panel wishes to commend the *Consejo Nacional de Acreditación* of Colombia, together with its Councillors and the staff of its Academic Secretariat and Technical Secretariat, for the results they have already achieved. The accreditation of "higher quality" is on a voluntary basis in Colombia but has become a quality seal that even the most prestigious universities, which initially were unconvinced about accreditation, now see as a beneficial tool demonstrating their quality and accountability to society. The CNA has also shown its determination to create better conditions allowing more non-university HEIs to be convinced that they should prepare themselves for an accreditation of "higher quality" and may be successful with it; several steps in this direction have already been taken and some positive results have been achieved.

At the same time the Panel wishes to draw the attention of the CNA, as well as of the overseeing authorities (CESU, MEN) to some risk areas that are likely to shape not only its own future but also, fairly directly, the future of Colombian higher education as a whole:

- One is the need to define a more inclusive national policy: in spite of the use of the principle of "plasticity" the current approach about the accreditation of higher quality is reaching its limits: the vast majority of programmes and institutions that may meet the current accreditation criteria already belong to the SNA (except with respect to their postgraduate programmes); it is of utmost importance to define at national level a policy for quality that induces more technical and technological institutions to develop a culture of quality and allows them to demonstrate that they have reached an adequate or higher level of quality, but the Panel doubts that this is actually achievable (except in a few special cases) if they are required to meet the same criteria as universities. If it is not to be emptied of its purpose the

"plasticity" principles must have its limits – even if the National Development Plan calls for the creation of special incentives for technical-technological HEIs. This implies that the development of the *Registro Calificado* and the Accreditation must be adequately coordinated, and/or that new ways to the accreditation of higher quality be opened to non-university institutions. In other words, what is required is a clear medium-term policy for the configuration of the National System of Accreditation and its role in the overall Colombian system of tertiary education.

- The second is related to the resources available to the CNA for its operations: the Agency is entering into a new stage marked by the accreditation of postgraduate programmes and the increasing number of reaccreditations of undergraduate programmes and whole institutions; with the current resources and procedures the duration required for accreditation processes is already very long and the CNA could soon enter a zone of turbulences where the loss of experience due to the system of rotation of Councillors and the instability of staff in the Academic/technical Secretariat could well result in adverse consequences; the response to this situation could consist in a combination of an increase of resources (starting with the Academic Secretariat and the hiring and training of more "peers"), a better use of the most valuable of them (Councillors, staff) and an adjustment in procedures in order to avoid that the Agency be flooded with maybe not unstoppable accreditation applications. Possible solutions could consist in extending the validity period of the accreditation by one or two more years, delivering HEIs benefitting from an institutional accreditation from the need to seek the accreditation/reaccreditation of programmes, or offering the possibility to accredit whole "*clusters*" of programmes, above all at the postgraduate level.

- Thirdly, it is foreseeable that the full recognition of Colombia's accreditation at Latin American level and worldwide – a shared objective of the Ministry, the CNA and the universities – will require the substantial development of all various internationalisation features in the structure, guidelines and operations of the CAN, as well as marked increase of its structural independence from the Ministry - in addition to the functional autonomy it already enjoys.

These observations from the Panel are but an invitation extended to the CNA and the authorities of Colombia to take them in account at the time of making decisions about the Agency's future. With regard to the current situation, there is no doubt – from the Panel's viewpoint – that INQAAHE and

RIACES may be assured that the *Consejo Nacional de Acreditación* of Colombia complies with the Guidelines they have set for its adherence review.

ANNEX I: INQAAHE GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Section I. THE EQAA - ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND RESOURCES

- Guideline1. Governance of the EQAA

The EQAA has a written mission statement or set of objectives that takes into account the cultural and historical context of the EQAA. The statement explicitly provides that external quality assurance is a major activity of the EQAA, and it requires a systematic approach to achieving the mission or objectives of the EQAA. There is evidence that the statement of objectives is implemented pursuant to a practical management plan that is linked to EQAA resources. The ownership and governance structure is appropriate for the objectives of the agency.

- Guideline 2. Resources

The EQAA has adequate and accessible human and financial resources to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach. The EQAA's resources are also adequate for the appropriate development of the agency.

- Guideline 3. Quality Assurance of the EQAA

The EQAA has a system of continuous quality assurance of its own activities that emphasises flexibility in response to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives.
The EQAA conducts internal self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data and analysis.
The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.

- Guideline 4. Reporting Public Information

The EQAA informs and responds to the public in accordance with applicable legislation and the cultural context of the EQAA. This includes full and clear disclosures of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.
The EQAA also demonstrates public accountability by reporting its decisions about higher education institutions and programs. The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.
If the external evaluation leads to a decision about the higher education institution or program, the procedures applied and the criteria for decision-making are public, and the criteria for review are transparent, public, and ensure equality of treatment.
The EQAA also discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.

SECTION II. THE EQAA AND HEIs - RELATIONSHIP, STANDARDS, AND INTERNAL REVIEWS

- Guideline5. The Relationship between the EQAA and Higher Education Institutions
The EQAA:
- recognises that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves;
- respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions or programs;

- applies standards or criteria that have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders; and
- aims to contribute to both quality improvement and accountability of the institution.

- **Guideline 6. The EQAA's Requirements for Institutional/Program Performance**
The EQAA has documents that indicate clearly what the EQAA expects of the institution. Those expectations (which may for example be called standards or factors or precepts) are appropriate for the core activities of an institution of higher education or program. The standards should explicitly address all areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA's scope, such as teaching, learning, research. community work, etc. and necessary resources such as finances, staff/faculty, and learning resources. Standards may refer to specific areas, levels of achievement, relative benchmarking and types of measures, and may provide general guidelines. They may also include specific learning goals.

- **Guideline 7. The EQAA's Requirements for Institutional Self-Evaluation and Reporting**
The documentation concerning self-evaluation explains to the institutions of higher education the purposes, procedures, process and expectations in the self-evaluation process. The documents also include the standards used, the decision criteria, the reporting format, and other information needed by the higher education institution. Typically, an EQAA review process includes a self-evaluation through self-study by the institution or program, external peer review, and a follow-up procedure.
As necessary and appropriate, the EQAA guides the institution or program in the application of the procedures of the quality assurance process, such as self-evaluation, external review, or solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents.

SECTION III. EQAA's REVIEW OF HEIs - EVALUATION, DECISION, AND APPEALS

- **Guideline 8. The EQAA's Evaluation of the Institution and/or Program**
The EQAA has clear documentation concerning the external evaluation that states the standards used, assessment methods and processes, decision criteria, and other information necessary for external review. The EQAA also has specifications on the characteristics, selection and training of reviewers. The EQAA's system must ensure that each institution or program will be evaluated in an equivalent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees (together, the "external panels") are different. The system ensures that:
- The external reviewers meet the EQAA specifications, and the external reviewers are adequate to the tasks to be accomplished;
- External reviewers have no conflicts of interest;
- External reviewers receive necessary training;
- External reviewers' reports are evidence-based and clear, with precisely stated conclusions.
When practicable, the EQAA should include at least one external reviewer from another country or jurisdiction in the external panel.

- **Guideline 9. Decisions**
The EQAA evaluations address both the higher education institution's own self-assessment and external reference points, such as judgments by knowledgeable peers or relevant legislation. An EQAA must be independent, i.e. it has autonomous responsibility for its operations, and its judgments cannot be influenced by third parties. The EQAA's decisions must be impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair, and consistent, even if

the judgments are made by different panels. Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action. The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.

When the EQAA advises the government or other public bodies, the decisions made by each agency should be made as independently as practicable.

- Guideline 10. Appeals

The EQAA has appropriate methods and policies for appeals. Appeals should be conducted by reviewers who were not responsible for the original decision and who have no conflict of interest, but appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.

SECTION IV. EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES - COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND TRANSNATIONAL/CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION

- Guideline 11. Collaboration

The EQAA collaborates with other EQAAs, if possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, review of decisions, provision of transnational education, joint projects, and staff exchanges.

- Guideline 12. Transnational/Cross-Border Higher Education

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies may be the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision. In formulating its policies and practices, the EQAA should consider relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations. All EQAAs should consult with appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, although this might not be possible or appropriate in situations such as those involving distance learning or small enrolment.

ANNEX II: MEMBERS OF THE EVALUATING PANEL

President:

Gemma RAURET, University of Barcelona, former Director of the Catalan Quality Assurance Agency (AQU), former Director of the National Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality (ANECA) of Spain.

Secretary:

Guy HAUG, expert on the European Higher Education Area and on the evaluation/accreditation of quality in Europe and Latin America, advisor to the Rector of the University of Technology of Valencia (Spain).

Member:

Juan Miguel Esquivel, Board Member of the National Accreditation Council of the National System for the Higher Education Accreditation (SINAES) of Costa Rica, Advisor in matters of educational quality, Full Professor of the University of Costa Rica.

Member:

Ernesto Villanueva, former President of the National Commission for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Universities (CONEAU) of Argentina and of the Iberian-American Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (RIACES), Rector of the Universidad Nacional Arturo Jaretche (Argentina).

ANNEX III: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT AND LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Programme of the evaluating Panel's visit to CNA's Headquarters in Bogota

Monday, 30 January

Morning:	Arrival of Panel to Bogota
14:00 pm:	Preparatory meeting Participants: Evaluating Panel, Coordinating Councillor of the CNA

Tuesday, 31 January

9: 00 am -10: 30 am	Meeting 1: Councillors of the CNA Participants: Evaluating Panel, Councillors of the CNA
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Coffee break
11:00 am – 12:30 m	Meeting 2: Staff of the Agency Participants: Evaluating Panel, professional and administrative staff of CNA
12:30 m – 2:30 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Meeting 3: Ministry of National Education of Colombia Participants: Evaluating Panel, Minister of National Education, Vice-Minister for Higher Education, representatives of the Ministry
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Coffee break
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Meeting 4: Professional organisations Participants: Evaluating Panel, representatives of professional organisations

Wednesday, 1 February

9:00 am - 10:30 am:	Meeting 5: Academic Peers Participants: Evaluating Panel, Academic Peers
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Coffee break
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Meeting 6: Rectors Participants: Evaluating Panel, Rectors accredited HEIs
12:30 pm – 2: 30 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Meeting 7: Directors in charge of Quality Participants: Evaluating Panel, Directors in charge of Quality, Accreditation or Academic Planning of accredited HEIs
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Coffee break
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Meeting 8: Students Participants: Evaluating Panel, representatives of students of accredited HEIs

Thursday, 2 February

9:00 am - 10:30 am:	Meeting 9: Academic Vice-Rectors

	Participants: Evaluating Panel, Academic Vice-Rectors or Directors of HEIs with experience with accreditation
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Coffee break
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Questions and clarifications Participants: Evaluating Panel, Academic Secretary of the Agency
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Internal coordination meeting of the Evaluating Panel Participants: Evaluating Panel
12:30 pm - 13:00 pm	Feedback Participants: Evaluating Panel, Councillors, Academic Secretary
13:00 pm – 14:00 pm	Lunch

List of participants in the interviews

Meeting 1: Councillors

Pedro Antonio Prieto Pulido, CNA Councillor and Coordinator

Jaime Bernal Villegas, CNA Councillor

Diana María Ramírez, CNA Councillor

Álvaro Zapata Domínguez, CNA Councillor

Franco Alirio Vallejo Cabrera, CNA Councillor

Lorena Gartner Isaza, CNA Councillor

Carl Henrik Langebaek Rueda, CNA Councillor

Meeting 2: Staff

Luz Amanda Viviescas, CNA

Luis Enrique Silva, CNA

Marta Rocio Suancha, CNA

Clarena Castro, CNA

Johana Castillo, CNA

Mauro Hernández, CNA

Carlos Arias, CNA

Juana Hoyos, CNA

Alba Luz Muñoz, Responsible for the Regional Workshops

Reunión 3: Ministry of National Education

María Fernanda Campo, MNE

Javier Botero, MNE

Alexandra Hernández, MNE

Yasmin Molina, MNE

Natalia Ruiz, MNE

Natalia Jaramillo, MNE

Meeting 4: Professional associations

Eduardo Silva, Colombian Association of Faculties of Engineering ACOFI

Ricardo Escobar, Colombian Association of Faculties of Medicine ASCOFAME

Carlos Arturo Sandoval Casilimas, Colombian Association of Faculties of Education ASCOFADE

Orlando Salinas, Colombian Association of Faculties of Administration ASCOLFA

Prospero Posada, Colombian Association of HEIs with programmes in Technology ACIET

Bernardo Rivera, Colombian Association of Universities ASCUN

Jaime Cantera, Association of Faculties of Science

Danilo Vivas, State University System SUE

Meeting 5: Peers

Oscar Rojas Renteria, Universidad del Valle

Marco Enrique Sanjuan Mejía, Universidad del Norte

Hernán de Jesús Jaramillo Salazar, Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora del Rosario

Graciela Amaya de Ochoa, independent

Rebeca Puche Navarro, Universidad del Valle

Claudia Lucia Velandia, Universidad de los Andes

José Luis Villaveces, Universidad de los Andes

Meeting 6: Rectors

Moises Wasserman, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Alberto Uribe Correa, Universidad de Antioquia

Hans Peter Knudsen, Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora del Rosario

Pablo Navas Sanz de Santamaría, Universidad de los Andes

Álvaro Enrique Medina Rodríguez, Escuela Naval de Suboficiales ARC- Barranquilla

Jaime Alberto Camacho Pico, Universidad Industrial de Santander

Patricia Martínez Barrios, Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar

Meeting 7: Directors in charge of quality

Víctor Henry Molina, Universidad de los Andes

Jackeline Ospina Rodríguez, Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora del Rosario

Cruz Elvira Correa, Universidad de Medellín

Ana María Sanabria, Universidad del Valle

María Eulalia Buenahora, Universidad de la Sabana

Kary Cabrera, Universidad del Norte

Miryam Ochoa, Universidad Externado

Julia Fernanda Marta, Universidad Santo Tomas

Diana Barragán, ESUFA

Meeting 8: Students

Juan Sebastián García, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana

Tatiana Quiñonez Yepes, Universidad Javeriana

Lina Vanessa Rodríguez Serna, ICESI

Roger Alejandro Jiménez Fernández, Universidad de Medellín

Dania Camila Pulido Barrera, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

Edna Johanna Pacate Espinosa, Universidad Militar

Jesús Manuel Sinesterra, Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

Angélica María Sánchez Barona, Universidad del Valle

Meeting 9: Academic Vice-Rectors

Orlando Vergel Portillo, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia

William Ardila Ureña, Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

Luis Alfredo Guerrero Torres, Universidad Mariana

Fabio Humberto Coronado, Universidad de la Salle

Alfonso Correa, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Edgar Parra Chacón, Universidad de Cartagena

Eduardo González Gil, O.P., Universidad Santo Tomas

Mónica Haddad, Universidad del Sinú