

Internationalisation Strategy of the Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kurdistan Regional Government (2020 – 2024)

The role of tertiary education and scientific research in the process of nation-building and socio-economic development is indispensable. Raising standards in higher education institutions as well as facilitating the quality of research has long been a top priority for the people and Government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) is taking the modernisation of the higher education and scientific system as a requisite task and has identified internationalisation a key area of action for attaining this goal.

Therefore, the MHESR together with partners from Europe and selected higher education institutions (HEIs) from the Kurdistan Region has engaged in the TIGRIS project (Transfer of Good Practices and Reinforcement of Internationalisation Strategies in Kurdistan), co-funded by the European Union in the framework of the ERASMUS+ Programme *Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education*, to develop a strategic approach to and capacities for the internationalisation of higher education and science in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Vision

Within the next 4 years, the MHESR together with Kurdish HEIs will:

- Reform higher education according to international standards by implementing the Bologna Process and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);
- Introduce internationalisation as a key policy driver for developing higher education and research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq;
- Develop a comprehensive governance structure and sustainable support system to administer, develop and facilitate internationalisation of Kurdish higher education and research;
- Significantly increase the number of students, staff & scientists engaging in international mobility;
- Modernise the curriculum by internationalisation;
- Enable Kurdish HEIs to support a wide range of international cooperation activities both in the area of education and research.

Mission

In order to achieve this vision, it is the mission of the MHESR to work with Kurdish HEIs and other partners and stakeholders from both the Kurdistan Region/Iraq as well as abroad to establish the preconditions, plans and programmes to conduct and implement the necessary reforms to modernise higher education and science in the Kurdistan Region through internationalisation, thereby creating an open environment which provides high quality education and research opportunities for both national and international students, academics and scientists subsequently creating conditions in which education, research and innovation can thrive.

For this, the MHESR will

- Revise laws, rules and regulations governing the higher education sector.
- Establish new governance structures, processes and tools.
- Develop training programmes to support internationalisation in selected areas.
- Facilitate the internationalisation of the curriculum and the development of joint international study and mobility programmes.
- Raise visibility of Kurdish higher education abroad.

Strategic Objectives

For the purpose of this strategy and as a result of the analysis conducted within the TIGRS Project, the following strategic objectives have been defined:

- I. Providing the preconditions for improving the internationalisation of higher education and research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- II. Internationalisation of teaching and administrative staff by increasing their capacities to engage in internationalisation activities and international mobility.
- III. Increasing the number of students involved in international mobility.
- IV. Internationalisation of study programmes by internationalisation of the curriculum and the development of joint international programmes including modern pedagogical programmes by training certain academic staff in European universities.
- V. Facilitating the internationalisation of research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- VI. Strengthening society through internationalisation of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- VII. Implementing the Bologna Process and ECTS at Kurdish HEIs supported by international experts.

Time schedule, activities and indicators for achieving the strategic objectives

For each of the above stated strategic objectives, the strategy defines short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives as well as corresponding activities and measures to be implemented for achieving the objectives.

In addition, the strategy defines indicators and benchmarks for measuring the achievement of the objectives.

Short-Term Objectives - by end of 2021

Mid-Term Objectives - by end of 2022

Long-Term Objectives - by end of 2024

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: **Providing the preconditions for improving the internationalisation of higher education and science in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**

Removing existing legal, regulatory and technical barriers that hinder the process of internationalisation of higher education and science in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, **establishing a governance structure with key stakeholders** driving and administrating the process of internationalisation as well as **devising a sustainable financial support programme** that provides adequate resources for internationalisation are key precondition for conducting successful internationalisation. As a result, internationalisation will be introduced as a key policy for developing higher education and research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

To establish the necessary condition, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Amendment of initial legal, regulatory and technical barriers that hinder or impede the implementation of all aspects of internationalisation

Activities / Measures

- 1 Establishing a joint working group including representatives of the MHESR, Kurdish HEIs and other stakeholders for mapping of all initial legal, regulatory and technical obstacles.
- 2 Amending and/or newly issuing necessary legislation and regulations in order to eliminate initial obstacles.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Working group established (incl. ministerial council members and key stakeholders such as legislative experts, representatives from relevant department at the KRG council of ministers and legal committee of Kurdistan Parliament) (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2a Number of regulations and laws identified to be amended or newly issued.
- 2b % of laws previously identified successfully amended or newly issued (Benchmark “100”).
- 2c % of previously identified obstacles removed (Benchmark “100”).

Short-term Objective 2: Introduction of internationalisation as a key priority for Kurdish Higher Education Institutions & initiate the development of a strategic and operational approach towards internationalisation

Activities / Measures

- 1 Providing Kurdish Higher Education Institutions with the support for understanding the concept of internationalisation by organising informational events and related supporting activities such as trainings. For this, creating a network of Kurdish internationalisation practitioners (NKIP) carrying the activities.

- 2 Issuing regulations requiring each Kurdish HEI to develop internationalisation strategies. For this, defining minimum requirements for internationalisation strategies.
- 3 Issuing regulations requiring all Kurdish HEIs to establish International Relations Offices to support and administrate the internationalisation activities.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Network of Kurdish internationalisation practitioners created (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b Share of Kurdish universities represented in the network (Benchmark “100%”).
- 2a Regulations requiring the development of internationalisation strategies issued (Benchmark “Yes”).
- 2b Minimum requirements for internationalisation strategies defined (Benchmark “yes”).
- 3 Regulations requiring the establishing of International Relations Offices issued (Benchmark “yes”).

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: All HEIs engage in internationalisation according to their strategic approach previously developed and adhere to common standards for quality assurance in internationalisation

Activities / Measures

- 1 All Kurdish HEIs develop strategies for internationalisation and establish International Relations Offices.
- 2 Developing and adopting common quality standards for the work of International Relations Offices and services supporting internationalisation at HEIs.
- 3 Revising the standards for accreditation of study programmes and HEIs to include the standards for implementation of internationalisation.
- 4 Revising the Law of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Law No. 10/2008) to include all aspects of internationalisation.
- 5 Revising the methodology of the National University Ranking (NUR) to include refined indicators for internationalisation.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a % of HEIs having a strategy for internationalisation developed and adopted (Benchmark “100%”).
- 1b % of HEIs having an International Relations Office established and operational (Benchmark “100%”).
- 2 Standards for the work of International Relations Offices and services supporting internationalisation developed and adopted (Benchmark “yes”).
- 3 Standards for accreditation of study programmes and HEIs revised to include the standards for implementation of internationalisation (Benchmark “yes”).

- 4 Law of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Law No. 10/2008) revised to include all aspects of internationalisation (Benchmark “yes”).
- 5 Methodology of the National University Ranking (NUR) includes refined indicators for internationalisation (Benchmark “yes”).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE II: **Internationalisation of teaching and administrative staff by increasing their capacities to engage in internationalisation activities and international mobility**

If the internationalisation of higher education is to succeed, it is important to prepare and train Kurdish teaching and administrative staff to successfully engage in internationalisation. **Improving English language skills** and **providing opportunities for teaching and training abroad** have been identified as key activities in this regard. **Introducing internationalisation related criteria for staff selection** will increase the motivation of staff to acquire the skills and competences necessary. In addition, **opening staff positions for international candidates** and **increasing the number international staff employed at Kurdish HEIs** will contribute to greater openness and therefore higher quality of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Development of strategic plans on mobility of teaching and administrative staff by Kurdish HEIs

Activities / Measures

- 1 Issuing regulations requiring Kurdish HEIs to define mobility goals and develop strategic plans on mobility of teaching and administrative staff.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Regulations requiring HEIs to define mobility goals and develop strategic plans on mobility of teaching and administrative staff issued (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b % of HEIs that have strategic plans for mobility of teaching and administrative staff developed, adopted and approved by the MHESR (Benchmark “100”).

Short-term Objective 2: Publishing calls for teaching and administrative staff positions internationally.

Activities / Measures

- 1 Issuing regulations requiring Kurdish HEIs to publish calls for teaching and staff position internationally.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Regulations requiring Kurdish HEIs to publish calls for teaching and staff position internationally issued (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b % of calls for position of teaching and administrative staff that are published internationally (Benchmark “20”).

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Acquisition of appropriate English language competences for teaching and administrative staff.

Activities / Measures

- 1 Developing and implementing a support programme for teaching and administrative staff to achieve required proficiency level. For this, defining the minimum level of English proficiency of teaching and administrative staff.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Developing a support programme for teaching and administrative staff to achieve required proficiency level (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b % of teaching staff that can proof English proficiency at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Benchmark “50%”).
- 1c % of administrative staff that can proof English proficiency at level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Benchmark “30%”).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2024)

Long-term Objective 1: Increase of the number of foreign teaching staff permanently employed at Kurdish HEIs

Activities / Measures

- 1 Developing a financial support programme for contracting with foreign teaching staff.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Financial support programme developed (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b Annual increase in number of foreign teaching staff permanently employed at local HEIs (Benchmark “+30%”).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE III: Increasing the number of students involved in international student mobility

Student mobility is an important part of contemporary higher education and is considered a **major contribution to the students' socialisation, personality development and qualification**. Sending students abroad provides them with an opportunity to **develop their intercultural competences**, to **complement their local education with an international study experience** as well as to **improve their language skills**, all in all **enabling them to work and compete internationally** and to **build successful international careers**. Additionally, providing students with these experiences and skills is key for them to engage successfully in any form of international activity, which nowadays is considered a core competence of every future employee. On the other hand, increasing the number of international students coming to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is important for **attracting foreign talent** and subsequently rendering it accessible for the local labour market while it also **contributes to the internationalisation at home efforts** providing the possibility of international experiences for those students not able to engage in international mobility. Furthermore, it **improves the quality of education** by bringing in new experiences and knowledge.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Revised regulation for student admission in order for Kurdish HEIs to acceptation foreign students

Activities / Measures

- 1 Revising the regulations for student admission for foreign students. For this, developing a recognition scheme for foreign degrees in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Regulation for student admission revised to accommodate for the admission of international students (Benchmark "yes").
- 1b Recognition scheme for foreign degrees developed (Benchmark "yes").
- 1c Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention achieved (Benchmark "yes").

Short-term Objective 2: Development of strategic plans for mobility of incoming and outgoing students by Kurdish HEIs

Activities / Measures

- 1 Issuing regulations requiring HEIs to define mobility goals and develop strategic plans for mobility of Kurdish students going abroad and international students coming to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Regulations requiring HEIs to define mobility goals and develop strategic plans on mobility of Kurdish students going abroad and international students coming to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq issued to be developed and adopted. (Benchmark “yes”).

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Increasing the number of foreign students studying at Kurdish HEIs and increasing the visibility of Kurdish higher education internationally, especially within the European Higher Education Area

Activities / Measures

- 1 Together with Kurdish HEIs establishing a number of study programmes to be offered in a foreign language, preferably English.
- 2 Creating a website in English and Arabic (similar to the “study-in”-websites of European countries) that provides comprehensive information about study opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The websites to be developed and supervised by the Network of Kurdistan Internationalisation Practitioners (NKIP).

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Annual increase in number of study programmes offered in a foreign language (Benchmark “+30%”).
- 1b % of HEIs that offer at least 1 study programme in English (Benchmark “50%”).
- 2 Website with comprehensive information about study opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq created developed by NKIP. (Benchmark “yes”).

Mid-term Objective 2: Providing opportunities to learn Kurdish as a foreign language for all foreign students and introduction to Kurdish culture and history

Activities / Measures

- 1 Together with Kurdish HEIs develop a course programme for learning Kurdish as a foreign language and introduction to Kurdish culture and history.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Course programme developed (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b Annual increase in number of foreign students participating in course programme to learn Kurdish language, culture and history (Benchmark “+10%”).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2024)

Long-term Objective 1: Increasing student mobility at all levels of study

Activities / Measures

- 1 Participating in networks for student exchange.
- 2 Providing the conditions for various forms of mobility incl. student exchange, summer schools, internships and volunteering abroad.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Number of foreign universities cooperating with Kurdish HEIs in student exchange (Benchmark “-”).
- 2 Conditions for various forms of mobility are provided (Benchmark “yes”).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IV: Internationalisation of study programmes by internationalisation of the curriculum and the development of joint international programmes

Internationalising the curriculum and developing joint study programmes with international partner institutions will greatly increase the quality of education in the Kurdistan Region, since it allows for **better preparing students for a globalised world** and **renders high quality education accessible** in the Kurdistan Region. In addition, cooperating with foreign HEIs will **facilitate the transfer of internationally recognised educational standards and best practices** in contemporary higher education and curriculum development. Introducing **additional internationalisation at home activities as part of the study experience** as well as **increasing the level of English language proficiency of students** will further enhance the quality of education offered in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Defining selected courses and programmes to be offered in English language by Kurdish HEIs

Activities / Measures

- 1 Together with Kurdish HEIs establishing courses to be offered in English to Kurdish students as part of their studies.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Courses to be offered in English to Kurdish students as part of their studies established (Benchmark “yes”).

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Developing a training programme on the development of joint study programmes and conducting pilot projects

Activities / Measures

- 1 Supporting Kurdish HEIs by offering trainings for staff in the development of joint study programmes.
- 2 Starting piloting projects with Kurdish HEIs to develop joint programmes with foreign universities; in this, establishing best practices for Kurdish HEIs to develop joint programmes.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Share of staff trained on the development of joint study programmes (Benchmark “25%”).
- 2a Annual increase in number of pilot projects developed (Benchmark “+30%”).

- 2b Best practices for Kurdish HEIs to develop joint programmes established and disseminated (Benchmark “yes”).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2024)

Long-term Objective 1: Developing and implementing joint study programmes through partnerships with foreign higher education institutions.

Activities / Measures

- 1 Starting projects with Kurdish and foreign HEIs with the aim of developing and implementing joint study programmes.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Annual increase in number of accredited joint study programmes with foreign HEIs.
1b Annual increase in number of foreign higher education institutions that offer joint study (Benchmark “-”).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE V: **Facilitating the internationalisation of research**

Facilitating the internationalisation of research is key in increasing the quality of research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, since **greater openness and cooperation** with international partners will **contribute to the transfer and exchange of knowledge and technology** while also **providing additional resources, knowhow and funding** for researchers to be used in finding solution for contemporary and future challenges facing the Kurdistan Region, Iraq as well as the broader region.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Revised rules for academic promotion by including indicators of internationalisation as promotion criteria

Activities / Measures

- 1 Revising the rules for academic promotion by including indicators of internationalisation such as international publications, scholarships and grants as promotion criteria.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Rules for academic promotion revised to include indicators of internationalisation (such as international publications, scholarships and grants) as promotion criteria (Benchmark “yes”).

Short-term Objective 2: Defining priority areas for the internationalisation of research and establishing a coordination and advisory body for internationalisation of research

Activities / Measures

- 1 Define priority areas for the internationalisation of research.
- 2 Establishing a coordination and advisory body for internationalisation of research with local and foreign experts.
- 3 Establish a network of Kurdish researchers that supports the internationalisation of research and later on can develop initiatives, organise conferences, information events, trainings and workshops and generally serves to mobilise the Kurdish research community;

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Priority areas defined (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2a Coordination and advisory body for internationalisation of research established (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2b Local and foreign experts appointed (Benchmark “yes”).
- 3 Network of Kurdish researchers that supports the internationalisation of research established (Benchmark “yes”).

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Pilot programme for developing joint international research projects according to the priorities previously defined

Activities / Measures

- 1 Develop a pilot programme with selected projects. For this, issuing a call for proposals and develop award criteria.
- 2 Establishing best practices for Kurdish HEIs to develop joint international research projects.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Pilot programme developed and projects selected (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2 Best practices for Kurdish HEIs to develop joint international research projects established and shared (Benchmark “yes”).

Mid-term Objective 2: Development of a support programme for researchers and scientists from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to engage in international research activities

Activities / Measures

- 1 Reinforcing the existing programme for offering research grants by allocating additional funding. For this, revising the award criteria to set emphasis on research conducted abroad or with an international partner.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Award criteria for research grants revised to place emphasis international research (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b Increase in the number of research grants awarded to scientists conducting research abroad or with an international partner (Benchmark “10%”).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2024)

Long-term Objective 1: Increasing the number of joint international research projects with Kurdish participation and increasing the number of foreign researchers and scientists coming to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to conduct research

Activities / Measures

- 1 Providing support for Kurdish researchers to prepare proposals for research projects with international partners. For this, building capacity for consultation and trainings, e.g. on proposal writing and fundraising.
- 2 Promoting research opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- 3 Opening the programme for research grants to foreign applicants for coming to the Kurdistan Region to conduct research.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 Capacities for providing support to Kurdish researchers established.
- 2 Programme for promotion of research opportunities in the Kurdistan Region developed and implemented (Benchmark “yes”).
- 3 Foreign researchers are able to apply for research grants by the Kurdistan Regional Government (Benchmark: “yes”).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE VI: **Strengthening society through internationalisation of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**

Acknowledging an ever increasing globalising world as well as the need for the Kurdistan Region and its people to adapt to the process of globalisation, the MHESR through its higher education institutions as key facilitators of transnational and intercultural relations aims to **strengthen the international outlook of society**.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Strengthen the international outlook of society

Activities / Measures

- 1 Kurdish HEIs, as part of their outreach activities, engage with the civil society through activities and events on relevant social topics (e.g. globalised labour market, migration, women's rights and gender equality, etc.) according to their competences. In this, involving incoming foreign students, academics and staff and/or Kurdish outgoings (students, academics and staff) having returned from their stays abroad. These activities will also increase the awareness of society on the benefit and importance of internationalisation.
- 2 Coordination with the international envoys and organisations in the Kurdistan Region for fundraising in regard to capacity building programmes and gender equality training for the staff of Centres of Gender Equality at HEIs.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Annual increase in number of activities/events implemented (Benchmark "10%").
- 1b Annual increase in number of foreign students, academics and staff who participated in the activities and events (Benchmark "5%").
- 1c Annual increase in number of returned Kurdish outgoings (students, academics and staff) who participated in the activities and events (Benchmark "5%").
- 1d % of Kurdish HEIs having conducted outreach activities/events (Benchmark "100%").
- 2 Support programme for outreach activities developed (Benchmark "yes").

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE VII: **Implementation of the Bologna Process and ECTS at Kurdish HEIs supported by international experts**

In order to increase the quality of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the MHESR has already begun the process of reforming and modernising higher education according to Bologna standards by **implementing the Bologna system and European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)**. Besides increasing the quality of higher education this will **enhance the overall compatibility and interoperability** of Kurdish higher education with foreign higher education systems, thereby **facilitating cooperation with foreign high education institutions**, especially within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It will also **facilitate the recognition of studies** both in the Kurdistan Region and abroad. Finally, offering Bologna-compatible and at a later stage Bologna-certified education will render Kurdish higher education more attractive to international students.

To achieve this, the MHESR will implement the following activities / measures:

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2021)

Short-term Objective 1: Providing the conditions for the implementation of the Bologna Process and ECTS in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Activities / Measures

- 1 Establishing an official Bologna Working Group & Bologna Promoters' Group under the auspices of the MHESR that include representatives of all main stakeholder within the higher education sector (MHESR, Council of the MHESR/University Presidents, academic staff and students' representatives, representatives of employers' institutions and industry).
- 2 Revise and/or issue new laws and regulations enabling the implementation of Bologna-style reforms in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- 3 Contracting with international experts to review the framework developed and reform activities implemented so far; by this, establishing a continuous consultation process by international experts, who advice during the implementation process.
- 4 Establish a connection with the European Bologna Follow-up group (BFUG).

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Bologna Working Group & Bologna Promoters' Group established (Benchmark "yes").
- 1b Inclusion of stakeholder achieved (Benchmark "yes").
- 2 Number of laws and regulations revised or newly issued (Benchmark "-").
- 3a Review report by international experts conducted including recommendations (Benchmark "yes").
- 3b Continuous consultation process by international experts established (Benchmark "yes").
- 4 Connection with the BFUG establish (Benchmark "yes").

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2022)

Mid-term Objective 1: Implementing the Bologna Process and ECTS in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Activities / Measures

- 1 Establishing a Bologna Training Centre with dedicated experts that support the implementation of the Bologna Process in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; in this, developing and implementing training programme with international expert.
- 2 Establishing Centres for Teaching and Learning at Kurdish HEIs promoting the paradigm shift to a student-centred and competence-based approach in teaching and learning.
- 3 Implementing ECTS as well as other Bologna reform elements at Kurdish HEIs.
- 4 Adopting quality assurance standards and procedures according to the ENQA “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1a Bologna Training Centre established (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1b Training programme with international experts developed and implemented (Benchmark “yes”).
- 1c Annual increase in number of Kurdish staff trained by experts on the implementation of the Bologna Process and ECTS.
- 2a Centres for Teaching and Learning at Kurdish HEIs established (Benchmarks “yes”).
- 2b Training programme at institutional level for teaching staff with international experts developed and implemented (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2c Number of Kurdish staff trained by experts on the student-centred and competence-based approach in teaching and learning.
- 3 % of Kurdish HEIs having ECTS fully adopted and implemented (Benchmark “100%”).
- 4a Quality Assurance standards and procedures according to the ENQA “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” adopted (Benchmark “yes”).
- 4b % of Kurdish HEIs having quality standards and procedures implemented (Benchmark “100%”).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (by end of 2024)

Long-term Objective 1: Development of a National Qualifications Framework

Activities / Measures

- 1 Initiating a project together with the Iraqi central government to develop a National Qualifications Framework (in addition to the already existing Qualifications Framework for Technical and Vocational Education) as the main reference points for developing study programmes and defining learning outcomes as well as competences to be acquired during study.

- 2 Including international experts in the development process.

Indicators and Benchmarks

- 1 National Qualifications Framework developed (Benchmark “yes”).
- 2 Inclusion of international experts achieved (Benchmark “yes”).