

Network of Iraqi Scientists Abroad



The Network of Iraqi Scientists Abroad was established to provide expertise and support in the sciences, technology and other disciplines of knowledge as a vital part of progress and development in Iraq. The Network supports the exchange of knowledge, training scientists and technicians, discussions in education and innovation and also the transfer of technology.

Vision

Science and technology is crucial to the economic and social development of Iraq and in improving the lives of everyone. To best achieve this objective the Network believes that there is need for the following:

- Highlighting the importance of the sciences, technology and knowledge in economical development and progress
- Affirming the link of sciences and technology with society
- Affirming the cultural and humane values of sciences and technology
- Utilizing scientists' huge potential for achieving wellbeing, peace and sustainable development and for the contribution of sciences and technology in combating poverty, discrimination and injustice
- Encouraging multiculturalism and mutual understanding among the components of the Iraqi nation through science, technology and education
- Activating Iraqi/ international cooperation in the fields of research & development and enhancing cooperation with other international organisations

Defining NISA

The Network of Iraqi Scientists Abroad is an international, independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation established by scientists who work in universities across Europe, America and Australia. Its members can meet anywhere in the world, with Baghdad considered the central meeting point. Communications among members are maintained through the Internet and other electronic facilities.

Membership

Members of the Network are distinguished Iraqi scientists working in Western universities in the position of professor, senior researcher, director of a scientific centre or higher.. They present scientific contributions representing various scientific, industrial and economic disciplines.



Mission

The Network aims to provide advice, assistance and support to Iraqi academic, research, industrial, agricultural, medical, administrative and economic institutions in order to promote development activity and further academic and scientific research activities undertaken by Iraqi universities. The Network also enhances the capacities of Iraqi academics, technicians and experts by giving courses and holding workshops in their universities and scientific institutions. NISA also seeks to become a centre for evaluating the performance of implemented scientific programs and an Iraqi body of international influence for defending Iraqi interests and Iraqis towards achieving progress in scientific and technological fields.

NISA's other objectives include mobilising Iraqi human resources to be utilised in distinguished scientific research and technology relevant to development priorities. The Network will conduct studies, organise meetings of scientists and experts and also hold workshops and seminars dealing with scientific issues, which have impact on the development priorities in Iraq.

NISA is an organisation aiming to utilise Iraqi expertise overseas for the benefit of Iraq; thus responding to the overwhelming desire among scientists overseas to compensate part of the damage suffered by their country of origin as a result of their migration. Hence, NISA seeks to consolidate links among universities and research centres within and outside Iraq through the principle of participation in programs and agreements. NISA also seeks to attract businesses, corporations and rich people to provide financing for implemented research at universities in fields considered vital for Iraq.

The current situation necessitated the establishment of NISA due to Iraq's need to bring together Iraqi intellects that migrated and mustering all the country's scientific and technological capacities, by motivating scientific migrants to invest their expertise and energy inside Iraq. This is based on the option of investment as an alternative to the option of return, which has failed in developing countries. NISA will place all its efforts in contributing to the establishment of a modern technological culture and in serving progress and development in cooperation with government institutions.

Recent selected activities

Establishing Quality Assurance system in Iraqi Engineering Colleges

The UNESCO Iraq Office is sustaining its on-going efforts to support higher education in several aspects, within the scope of implementing the Rehabilitation of Iraqi Higher Education System project. The project encompasses reforming and developing major components of the higher education system in Iraq such as the establishment of a Quality Assurance system, revitalising Scientific Research, strengthening networks and twinning programmes within international universities abroad, fellowships/ scholarships management in addition to capacity building of HE managers on planning and management of higher Education Institutions. One of the key outcomes of this project was to train quality officers in selected colleges of engineering in Iraqi universities on quality assurance and to develop self-assessment reports. This was achieved by several activities including a workshop on preparing SARs in Doha and most recently, a meeting in Erbil. In Erbil, NISA members (Review Group, RG) presented a refresher on preparation of SARs, learning assessment, and SWOT analysis. All twelve universities were represented in the Erbil meeting. The Iraqi

university representatives gave presentations on their respective universities outlining their progress on the development of their SARs. At the conclusion of Erbil meeting, the RG provided feedback on the SAR presentations in a PowerPoint format. After the meeting, the RG also provided a written feedback to each participating institution. The Iraqi universities embarked on revising their SARs based on feedback received from the Erbil meeting. The RG already conducted site visits to 7 universities and will visit another 3 next week. A report is prepared by the RG for each of the site visits. The reports include overall analysis, commendations and recommendations for improvement.

In Support of Scientific Research

In cooperation with the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Baghdad and Erbil, UNESCO Iraq conducted a workshop in Beirut on the status of Scientific Research in Iraq within the framework of the project “Rehabilitating Higher Education in Iraq”, funded by the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. Held from 27-28 September, it brought together 15 senior Iraqis including the Director Generals of Scientific Research in line ministries as well as the Ministries of Planning, Industry and Minerals and Science and Technology to discuss the state of scientific research in Iraq.

The first version of the report under discussion was the result of a preliminary review that UNESCO has been conducting for four months based on data gathered from 90 research centers across Iraq. Participants provided their first-hand experiences and expertise to enrich the report, and discussed the regulatory, policy and technical aspects of developing the scientific research sector in the country. A team of seven Iraqi professors from the Network of Iraqi Scientists Abroad (NISA) further enhanced the outcomes of the meeting by providing experiences and benchmarks applied in the US, UK and Australia as well as lessons learnt, and took steps towards linking Iraqi Scientific Research institutions with their peers worldwide. Most importantly, they identified the priorities and urgent needs for the sector in the future.

Based on such fruitful exchanges, a final version of the report will be developed and discussed with a wide range of stakeholders at the next meeting in early December with the aim of developing a roadmap for the rehabilitation of scientific research in Iraq. **Source:** UNESCO Office for Iraq [<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/home/>]

International conference on the development of higher education held in Iraq

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in collaboration with NISA held an international conference on developing higher education in Iraq, from the 27-29 November 2012, under the patronage of Mr Ali Al-Adeed, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The conference was held at the Universities of Baghdad, Mustansiriya, Nahrein, and Technology under slogan (Development towards Society of knowledge) where it was attended by 10 NISA experts from UK, US, Holland, Australia, and Ireland.

The conference discussed the national strategy for education and higher education until 2020, and methods to develop higher education



in the light of the strategy. The conference also discussed scholarship programs and cultural exchange and its role in building the educational system, investment in higher education, as well as the development of scientific research. The conference addressed the realistic requirements of the changing higher education landscape in the 21st century, placing an emphasis on dynamic curricula, educational techniques, methods of cooperation with foreign universities, IT infrastructure, the admission policy of the Iraqi universities, the needs of the market and society for graduates, alternative funding resources of higher education and research, research and technology incubators and their impact on sustainable development and issues of quality assurance and accreditation.

Summary of proposed programme of cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research and Universities in Iraq

1. To develop a graduate dual supervision system whereby graduates can draw on the research and expertise of NISA members.
2. NISA members prepared to join Iraqi universities for short to medium term periods for the purpose of lecturing and presenting programmes, courses and workshops for students and staff.
3. To contribute to the evaluation of research proposals, papers and theses.
4. To play a role in the assessment of academic staff for the purpose of promotion.
5. To develop joint research projects between NISA members and Iraqi academics and researchers.
6. To contribute to the development of a road map to achieve academic accreditation and international recognition, and to work with the Iraqi universities to improve quality of teaching, learning and research.
7. To contribute to the development and improvement of curricula and scientific programmes.
8. To contribute to the development of strategies and policies in higher education.
9. Training academic staff on the latest teaching methods and student assessments according to international standards of quality in higher education.
10. To organise scientific conferences in Iraq and to make significant contributions to conferences organised by the Ministry of higher Education and universities.
11. To organise training programmes in university leadership and management aimed at existing or potential academic managers/ leaders within the universities to enhance skills in key areas such as people management, resource management, strategic planning and leadership.
12. To assist students obtain places at universities in UK, Europe, US and Australia.

For further information please see our website: www.nisairaq.com

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