“Reforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Iraq”
A project implemented by UNESCO
in partnership with the Government of Iraq and funded by the European Union.

1. **Main goal**

“Reforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Iraq” is an ambitious and comprehensive project that aims to enhance the role of TVET in Iraq’s economic development. It will reform the TVET sector in Iraq to provide quality education and training in line with international standards to enhance the ability of TVET graduates to compete in the national and international labour markets, be it in the production and services industries or in their own businesses.

2. **TVET as integral entity**

The project looks at TVET as an integral entity dealing with all levels of TVET from non-formal vocational training delivered by the training centers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, through vocational education schools run by the Ministry of Education to higher technical education provided by technical universities, colleges and institutions. With its broad approach, TVET is an essential part of the educational system in Iraq and offers a wide range of choices for students to achieve their career ambitions and aspirations. An important element of integration is its emphasis on ensuring gender equality in aspects of the TVET system.

3. **Governance**

One of the main pillars of the reform project is a revision of the governance and management structures of the TVET system and to re-distribute the administrative and financial powers between central administration, governorates and educational institutions according to the aim of decentralization as stipulated in Iraq’s Constitution. Executive powers are given to the institutions that provide education and training services, while the central administration maintains the powers of planning, supervision, monitoring and evaluation in a general framework of transparency, motivation and accountability.

4. **National qualifications framework**

Another pillar of the project is the creation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for diplomas and certificates that will provide TVET students a structure to pursue their studies according to a clear set of conditions. The NQF will recognize all TVET diplomas and certificates and places them within the general education system. The NQF will also determine the required educational attainments and prerequisites for each diploma and certificate and determine the options for each student depending on her/his competencies, level of education and type of specialization. Moreover, the NQF recognizes the performance skills which may be acquired regardless of the training institution.

The reform project will also adopt a flexible system of higher technical education based on the principle of cumulative credits. This system goes in line with the international system and eases the transitions between technical institutes and colleges. The system also directs education
towards developing and implementing projects and acquiring skills as a way of learning instead of the traditional methods of education that mostly relies on memorization. Moreover, the system will also consider new ways of evaluating and examining students built on the assessment of their performance, competencies and skills.

5. Curricula development and capacity building

In order to achieve high quality TVET, the reform project includes the development of a general framework for TVET curricula. The project will carry out several pilot activities to develop a series of curricula for each level of education after training the curricula developers in setting curriculum objectives, preparing content, establishing teaching methods and evaluation and examinations techniques. The project also includes preparing training material and conducting training for deans, principals, administrators, teachers and inspectors. The training programme will be used as a model when developing future strategies and mechanisms for in-service training and staff development in the TVET sector.

6. Employment centers in higher technical education institutions

The project will establish employment centers in higher education technical institutions to help students find jobs through guidance, counseling and support. This project element will facilitate recruitment and follow up. Moreover, the centers will transmit feedback from the labour market to the educational institutions to improve their performance.

7. Private sector participation

The project will give an active role to employers and the private sector in all aspects of technical and vocational education ranging from policy-making, developing and implementing plans, assisting in determining the current and future needs of the market, participating in the execution of the teaching and learning process and to the evaluation of students and institutions.

8. Summary of project objectives

The project aims to achieve four objectives:

A. The creation of an integrated high quality TVET system up to national and international standards, governed by qualified management that run it according to policies and plans set by a specific supreme body in which the private sector along with the relevant ministries and authorities actively participate in the decision and policy making processes.

B. The establishment of a technical and vocational education and training sector that responds to the current and future needs of the labour market based on reliable information and data obtained from stakeholders, a sector that relies on modern educational curricula, sophisticated means and methods of teaching, along with the use of information and communication technologies, such as the World Wide Web. Such a sector will open many new fields of specialization to students especially girls and cater to students with special needs.

C. The creation of capable and qualified administrative, teaching and supervision bodies that possess the technical, pedagogical and practical abilities to do their job professionally and with high quality.

D. The creation of an easy school-to-work transition for students of technical universities, colleges and institutes to the labour market ensured by specialized employment centers
created within the education institutions. The employment centers will guide the students, help them in finding jobs and provide them with advice and counseling.

9. Direct and indirect beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries of this project are the students of TVET who attend technical colleges, institutes, vocational schools and training centers, who will increase their potential for obtaining better work opportunities in the national and international markets. Other beneficiaries include employers who are in need of a skilled, professional and high performing workforce to increase their performance and compete in the national and international markets.

The indirect beneficiaries are the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and their affiliated technical and vocational education and training institutions. Other indirect beneficiaries include administrators, teachers and other workers in the educational field including the private educational sector and the society in general.

10. Steering committee

A steering committee has been established to follow up on the implementation of the project. The committee includes representatives of the line ministries, the private sector and other public and private authorities along with representatives from UNESCO. The main mission of the steering committee is to facilitate the implementation of project activities, to monitor and evaluate the expected results according to benchmarks and indicators and to ensure the project’s compliance with the National Education Strategy, the national strategy of TVET institutions as well as other the development plans.

11. Duration and Budget

The duration of the implementation of the project is three years; the amount allotted by the European Union is €12,300,000. Implementation of the project started on the 1st of February 2015.

Contact information

UN Compound
Baghdad, Iraq

tvetiraq@unesco.org

www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office

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